

A Protocol to Conserve Glazed Paper After Water Damage

Following water damage in the Art and Literature Department at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), the question came of how to handle the wet glazed papers. The company in charge of freezing and drying the damaged documents was reluctant to take care of them because the quantity of water that impregnated each document was very variable. They knew from previous experience that if glazed papers were not totally soaked with water, the sheets would stick together and freeze-drying would have essentially no effect. As a consequence, we had to find a way to separate the sheet of glazed paper stuck together. We investigated the composition of the glazing, and found that most papers were glazed with Styrene-Butadiene latex. One of the solvents of SB latex is Tetrahydrofuran (THF). THF is toxic, but it can be replaced with a mix of ethanol and toluene (50/50 v/v). Tests were carried out on a sample of damaged documents. They gave excellent results on paper sheets which were stuck on their entire surface; however, the results were not as good, as the solvent also seems to have an effect on many of the inks. Following these investigations, we were able to establish an emergency protocol applicable to massive amounts of wet glazed papers. In this presentation, we will report on our results and present the protocol that was established from our experience.

CÉLINE ALLAIN
Emergency Response Coordinator
Bibliothèque nationale de France
Paris, France
celine.allain@bnf.fr

LUCILE DESSENNES
Paper Conservator
Bibliothèque nationale de France
Paris, France
Dessennes.lucile@bnf.fr

Presented at the Book and Paper Group Session, AIC's 44rd Annual Meeting, May 13–17, 2016, Montreal, Canada