

GILBERT WARD

Sculpture Collection

Information about restoration / French polishing

INTRODUCTION

Gilbert Ward's sculptures show their history. Gilbert wasn't precious about his work. He experimented with form and shape, and achieved a result which embraced texture and sculptural dynamic.

Whilst some sculptures are without damage, others have cracks and blemishes caused by long term outside (covered) storage in a barn.

Some have scratches, woodworm holes, knot-holes and cracks & splits where the wood has dried and contracted. This can, of course, be seen as an integral part of the process, and accepted as that. Alternatively, part or full restoration and repair may be desired.

This document shows the impact on one piece before and after restoration by a French polisher.

Meander III (now sold) suffered from woodworm flight-holes, wood splits, a knot-hole and general scuffing and marking of the wood.

A number of French polishers were approached for costs of restoration. They were all sent a picture document so they could assess the work initially and give an estimate of cost.

Although generally the estimates were similar, one French polisher responded with a detailed account of the work that could be undertaken. (See next page).

This gave a high level of confidence that the work would be carried out well.

The buyer of the work kindly send pictures of the work after restoration and repair, which are included for comparison.

Lists of French polishers are available on-line or in trade directories. Buyers are advised to make their own checks before placing any work.

FRENCH POLISHER'S RESPONSE

Thank you for your enquiry. This looks interesting. Do you know the provenance for the piece?

The splits are due to shrinkage, the loss of moisture. I think any further loss of moisture unlikely and that equilibrium has been reached.

I use two types of filler. One, is a hard-ish wax which comes in an assortment of colours and is flexible. It is warmed and poured into the fault. The other is a neutral colour polyester into which I put powder pigments to match the finished colour. This, I think is the one to use. It takes polish well and the result would physically hide the splits. The filler though, I would make fractionally darker. The image of the split would remain but unobtrusively.

Woodworm, these are the flight holes left by the departing insects. I would be surprised if there were live larvae present. The dryness of the timber would preclude infestation. Whenever I find affected timber, I routinely inject chemicals as a precaution into the flight holes.

Quotation.

Remove all existing polish.

Prepare surfaces for re-polishing. Fill splits and sand back. Treat woodworm and fill flight holes. (These cannot be hidden easily)

Surface covering.

A wide range of options are available.

Staining/colouring. Natural colour.

Oiled, Simple beeswax, sealed with beeswax, Button polish seal and beeswax. Lacquer / gloss, silk, matt. And more.

I do not think I would exceed eight hours in restoring this piece, probably less if you opt for a simple finish.

BEFORE



AFTER



CLOSE UPS SHOWING CONDITION



CLOSE UPS SHOWING CONDITION



CLOSE UPS SHOWING CONDITION



AFTER RESTORATION



AFTER RESTORATION

