Exhibition Highlight   NEWS
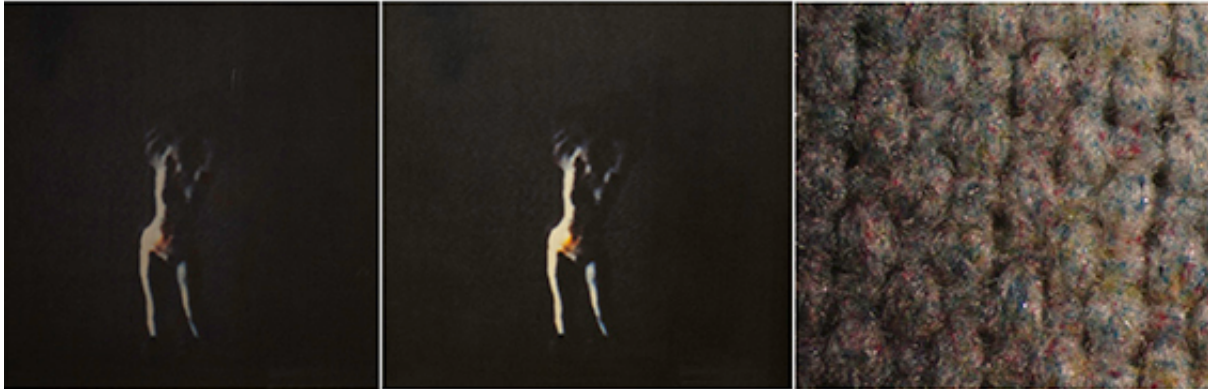

before   after   detail

David Levinthal's recently conserved work *Undressing* (1986) is part of the Haggerty's permanent collection and is currently on view in the exhibition *The Body, The Self*. In his series *Modern Romance*, Levinthal creates ambiguous, provocative images to explore the ways we perceive and interpret visual information. Using a Polaroid SX-70 camera, he photographed toys and figurines arranged to look like characters in suggestively-staged tableaux. In *Undressing*, what appears to be a voyeuristic view of a faceless, nude woman posing in a private space is in fact a grainy image of a doll.

To further obscure the visual details of each scene, Levinthal employed a photo-transfer process. A color transparency of the polaroid was scanned by a special printer that translated the information to four airbrush guns, which transferred the image onto canvas with acrylic paint.
When *Undressing* arrived at the Haggerty, it was faded, with several surface abrasions. Before beginning their treatment, conservators from Parma Conservation examined the work under a microscope. As the detail above illustrates, the independent spray globules of acrylic paint were visible on the fabric threads of the canvas. To repair the surface, the conservators inpainted the scratches, taking special care to match the four color acrylic emulsion created by the original airbrush.

The Body, The Self is on view through May 31, 2015.

David Levinthal
American, b. 1949

Undressing, 1986

Acrylic on canvas

35 x 35 in

2013.17.4

Museum purchase with the Avis and James K. Heller Art Acquisition Endowment, partial gift of J. Michael Parish

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