REPORT ON THE RESTORATION OF THE PAINTING "RETRATO DE JUAN MARTORELL Y SQUELLA" ("PORTRAIT OF JUAN MARTORELL Y SQUELLA")

Object:	Painting.
Support:	Cloth.
Technique:	Oil.
Dimensions:	79.5 x 101 cm.
Description:	Portrait of Juan Martorell y Squella. Next to the portrait the text reads "The Most Illustrious Dr. Don Juan Martorell y Squella, Regent of the Royal Academy of Mallorca and General Visitor of the Balearic Islands for the King Don Felipe IV, born 1600 died 1665". The family coat of arms can be seen in the upper left of the painting appears.
Period:	Late 17th Century (1690).
Author:	Unknown artist. Although the artist's signature does not appear, the year that the painting was created is stated together with the text "JPA Martorell, Atnepos eius, Fecit 1690". The translation of the text written in Latin is "JPA. Martorell. Of their grandchildren or nephews. Made in 1690" (Atnepos can have both meanings of nephew or grandson depending on the context).
Property:	Carlos de Salort Sintes. Palau Salort.

Previous Restoration: Past restoration can be seen, although it is evident that this was not been carried out by a professional. The "treatment" consisted of cutting the margins of the fabric, placing it on a fixed frame and adhering a cloth on the back in order to correct the presence of cuts in the fabric.

CONDITION REPORT

This painting has not been previously professionally restored.
Its condition was generally good despite its age and the previous treatment that was undertaken more than likely at some point at the beginning of the twentieth century. This treatment involved trimming the edges of the canvas and nailing it into a fixed frame at the front, without tensioning. Due to this "treatment" the canvas presented deformations and loss of original support in the areas around the nails caused by rusting and losses to the paint layer.

RESTORATION PROCESS

Start of restoration: April 2023
Completion of restoration: July 2023

As the painting had not been previously professionally restored, an exhaustive evaluation and analysis was carried out to determine the true condition and treatment plan.

Despite the cuts and tears on the edges of the fabric, the decision was made to adhere linen strips and patches to the cuts from the back.
The priority was to place strips in order to tension the fabric on a new frame with a skirt system and central crossbar and thus stabilize the fabric.
Once the canvas had been stretched on the new stretcher, the painting layer was cleaned.

A dense layer of old lacquer was removed, which over time had oxidized giving a yellowish tone to the entire surface. In some areas this layer was of a significant thickness, so this process was slow as each of the layers was removed in the least aggressive way so as not to damage the paint layer.
Cleaning was carried out with various concentrations of dimethylformamide in solvents such as Chilean or White spirit.

Once the entire surface was cleaned, a light layer of touch-up varnish was applied, before treating the preparation layer.

It was necessary to apply gesso to the areas of loss of the paint layer, especially at the edges of the canvas where cuts and tears and damage from the nails had caused losses of original support.

Following the gesso fills another application of retouching varnish was applied, followed by retouching to these areas.
In addition to retouching the gesso fills, two areas located in the subject's clothing were retouched where the original preparation layer was preserved and the paint layer had been lost.

Finally, a light final coat of powdered varnish was applied, thus evening out the entire surface. On the back of the frame, the clamping anchors were changed.

COMPONENTS

Frame

This is not the original fixed frame. The frame is much later (made to measure with a skirt system and central crossbar) than the painting but as it matches other paintings exhibited in the same room, it was decided to treat the damage rather than change it. The frame was glued and lost areas of the original support and painting were filled.

GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION OF THE RESTORATION

Image of the portrait, prior to restoration showing the deformation of the fabric, the losses of the paint layer and the darkened surface.

Detail of the painting. Upper left-hand side, where the text that narrates the identity, positions and chronology of the subject can be seen.
In this image you can clearly see the nailing of the fabric on the front side.

Righthand side detail. The family coat of arms appears; consisting of a red background with a marten in the centre, framed with volutes and ornamental motifs of a vegetable or plant type. It would appear that the crown that appears in the upper part of the shield was added later, as the title of marquisate is later than when the painting was painted.

Detail of the lower righthand corner where the text appears "JPA. Martorell, Atnepos eius, Fecit 1690". The text is overlaid on top of other text that is practically impossible to read, with only the year of its completion, 1690, visible.

Detail of the bottom lefthand corner, where the loss of original support and the deformation of the fabric due to its de-tensioning can be seen.

Image of the painting prior to restoration. On the back of the canvas you can see a partly detached piece of cloth that was more than likely placed there when the fabric was cut and placed on this fixed frame.

This image shows the painting during cleaning. The difference in tone can be seen once the oxidized varnish that gave a dark and yellowish appearance to the entire surface has been removed. In this case you can see how the original tone of the flesh has been restored.

In the cleaning process, the light tones in hair, clothing and brocades have also been restored.

Detail of the gesso process. All the losses to the paint layer were filled as were all holes left by the nails and in the margins of the canvas.

Image of the painting, once the gesso filling had been completed.

Image showing the back of the painting, new frame and the new anchors.

Image of the painting after the entire restoration process was complete.

Lina Torres Camps
Conservator-Restorer
Ciutadella de Menorca, 28th July 2023