

Midwest Art Conservation Center

2400 Third Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55404 612-870-3120

Owner: Marquette Public Art Commission
Contact: Tiina Morin, Arts and Culture Manager
Address: City Hall
300 West Baraga Ave
Marquette, MI 49855
Phone: (906) 225-8641
Project No.: 24.17444.1
Artist: Gaetano Trentanove, c. 1897
Title: Father Jacques (James) Marquette
Medium: bronze, sandstone base
Dimensions: approximately 15' tall, total height
Marks: Sculpture self base inscription, left side: "G. TRENTANOVE | FECIT"

Project Proposal

DESCRIPTION:

The artwork is a larger-than-life sized bronze sculpture depicting Father Jacques Marquette, by Gaetano Trentanove. The figure stands looking forward, wearing a cloak, cassock (clerical robe), and cincture with tucked crucifix and rosary. A square self base is inscribed on the left side: "G. TRENTANOVE | FECIT." The patina is brown, varying in tone somewhat from warm to cool.

The sculpture is installed atop a tiered sandstone base that is inscribed on the front: "JAMES MARQUETTE, | INTREPID EXPLORER". Note that Jacques Marquette was also known as James. Two bronze bas reliefs are set into the right and left sides of the tiered sandstone base. Each measures approximately 27 x 22."

Per client records, the sculpture weighs approximately 1.5 tons.

CONDITION:

The sculpture is in good condition overall and is structurally stable at this time.

The patina is largely intact, with localized areas of wear and stable corrosion. Previously applied protective coatings are lost on horizontal and upward-facing surfaces. They should be reapplied to prevent further corrosion and loss of the patina.

Core material and/or salt is migrating out of the sculpture, crystallizing on undercut areas following drip patterns and gravity. The material is easily removed from the surfaces and does not appear to be causing structural damage. In at least one location (underside of right finger) a prior drilled weep hole is present and functional.

The bas relief on the right side of the sandstone base has a split seam in the bronze plate that occurs approximately 3 1/2" from the proper left edge. The plate is out of plane along the split, but neither side is loose or mobile. It is possible that the plate has been like this for some time. A number of prior repairs are present on the bas reliefs. These are brazed metal fills that are patinated to blend with the surrounding surfaces. They are distinguishable upon close examination and are further documented via a series of images held by the client. Repair was undertaken by Venus Bronzeworks in 2013.

The tiered sandstone base is worn with numerous losses. Some spalling and pitting is noted, with granular disintegration (sanding) throughout. It was noted that the sculpture has been previously pressure-washed, which may have exacerbated some of the stone's condition issues. The exposed site at the top of a hill (wind, rain, snow, etc.) also certainly will continue to contribute to the wear patterns observed.

Lichens, mold, and other micro-organisms are present on the concrete pad and lower sections of the sandstone. These are visually disruptive but do not appear to be causing structural damage.

The mortar joints have been repaired in the past, likely more than once. More than one type of repair material appears to be present, and the repairs vary in density and permeability. While they are stable at this time, they should continue to be monitored. In addition, areas where mortar is lost or eroded back in joint seams will likely require remedial repointing in the future. No loose or crumbling mortar was observed during this examination.

There is carved graffiti on the right side of the stone base. The carving patterns are worn, and the graffiti blends in somewhat with the surrounding surfaces. Fills are not recommended at this time.

TREATMENT PROPOSAL:

Treatment is proposed to wash and apply a protective hot wax layer to the bronze sculpture. The sandstone base will be washed as well to reduce grime and biological staining. Mortar does not appear to require repair at this time but will be additionally documented and monitored at the time of treatment.

Treatment will occur over the course of three days. Conservators will wash and hot wax the sculpture and will then train a small group (less than 10) on basic paste waxing maintenance protocols for Jacques Marquette and for washing at least one other sculpture in the Marquette Public Art Commission's collection.

This proposal assumes that the Marquette Public Art Commission will provide and assemble scaffolding around the sculpture. Ground water access is requested, ideally with a hose. Treatment should occur in a warm weather month with no risk of frost.

- 1 Travel to and from Marquette, MI.
- 2 Wash the sculpture overall. Remove or reduce encrustations and biological material on the bronze and sandstone.
- 3 Allow to fully dry.

- 4 As needed, add a weep hole on the underside of the cloak in an effort to better control efflorescence.
- 5 Hot wax the sculpture. A slightly cooler 'warm wax' will be applied to the bas reliefs; due to past repairs and proximity to the sandstone, heat must be carefully controlled.
- 6 When dry, apply a layer of paste wax overall; this step is being undertaken to train local volunteers and staff on an annual maintenance protocol.
- 7 Buff.
- 8 Train a group of local artists and/or volunteers on washing and application of paste wax.

Total Project Cost \$17,245.00

Conservator: Courtney Murray
Proposal Date: 4/23/2024
Client: Marquette Public Art Commission
Project No.: 24.17444.1

The undersigned authorizes and directs the Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC) to examine, photograph and perform the steps/treatment outlined above and specifically authorizes the commencement of work as written in the Project Proposal and further consents for MACC to take such action as MACC deems appropriate in connection with the steps/treatment, subject to all terms and conditions appearing on the MACC TERMS AND CONDITIONS document which are expressly incorporated into this agreement. The undersigned also warrants: (i) that the undersigned is the sole owner or MACC client of the object(s) described above; (ii) that they have full authority to deliver the object(s) to MACC for the steps/treatment proposed above; (iii) the proposed steps/treatment is for the benefit of the object(s) described above, and that (iv) the object(s) is/are fully insured by the owner or MACC client against any and all losses and that such insurance will be in place from the time the object(s) is/are delivered to MACC or MACC assumes control onsite of the object(s) until received back by the owner/MACC client. In addition, if the undersigned is not the owner, the undersigned warrants that s/he/it has authority to authorize MACC to commence work and bind the owner, or applicable party, to pay MACC for services rendered and to be rendered. The MACC client agrees to pay the costs of all conservation work not exceeding the above estimated cost by more than ten percent (10%) without the express written approval of the owner or MACC client, and hereby grants MACC a lien on the item to secure payment of such charges. The owner and MACC client hereby grants release to MACC of all claims to make or use images of the item for archival, educational, website or any other publications. All transportation and insurance costs are the responsibility of the MACC client of the item.

Authorized by: _____ **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____ **Title:** _____

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Would you like images of this project? _____ **Yes** _____ **No**