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## Judith and Holofernes: reconstructing the history of a painting attributed to Artemisia Gentileschi

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Recently, a new painting attributed to Artemisia Gentileschi, have been found in Ferrara, representing Judith exposing the head of Holofernes. Some analyses have been required to verify the history of this canvas,



*Judith and Holofernes, XVII century, oil on canvas, 97.5 x 133 cm, Ferrara, private collection*

because another painting is known, which is very similar to this one, except for the heads of Judith and Holofernes. This last one has been attributed to the father of Artemisia, Orazio Gentileschi (Biscottin, 2011).

Many diagnostics have been performed, starting from imaging techniques, from the raking light, to UV fluorescence, IR-reflectography and X-ray radiography. All of them have highlighted peculiarities mainly about the head of the female protagonist. The results indicate that the face of Judith has been subjected to various reworks in the same artistic period because of the historic materials still present. This has given to it a peculiar fragility and for this reason restoration of 19<sup>th</sup> century has focused on this detail.

However, in this contribution we want to highlight the results obtained with XRF spot analysis. In fact, the artistic palette and the restoration materials have been fully characterised. For example, reds are in Cinnabar, but the Judith's lips have been restored with Cadmium Red, which gives an indication about the restoration period.

The more interesting results regard the use of Umber Earths. In this painting, this iron-based pigment rich of manganese has been revealed

### References

Biscottin P., Orazio Gentileschi e aiuti, in: Artemisia Gentileschi storia di una passione, mostra Palazzo Reale, Milano, 24Ore Cultura (2011), 138