

# 2019 AIC PMG & ICOM-CC PMWG Joint Meeting

## PROGRAM OF TALKS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19<sup>th</sup>

### OFF-SITE TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

---

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>

9:00 AM

#### **Welcome**

**NYPL Representative and Jessica Keister, Associate Conservator for Photographs, NYPL**

9:25 AM

#### **Accidental Images, The Negative Before Photography?**

Speaker(s): Bertrand Lavedrine

Co-Author(s): Marie-Angélique Languille and Céline Daher

Institution(s)/Country(s): Centre de Recherche sur la Conservation, CNRS, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Ministère de la Culture, Sorbonne-Universités, FRANCE

#### Abstract

The photographic negative is a primordial stage of the analog photographic process. As an intermediary creation, it has acquired an aesthetic value, becoming an object of study and a valuable historical object for the technical history of Art. Whether on paper, on glass or on film, a negative is beyond visual content, being a vessel for both important technical and technological information. The move to digital photography heralds the end of the negative, whose use will now only subsist in digital applications. This obsolescence threatens collections of negatives (either on glass or on plastic supports) that are now considered useless and may be discarded for recovering space. However, this has also contributed to the valorization of these photographic techniques of the past and created a patrimony of them, placing them in an historical perspective and a scarcity that can only increase. The ease with which it is possible to digitally invert a negative and disseminate the image on the internet, has engendered a renewed interest in the exploitation of these long neglected collections. Thanks to this, collections of negatives are more easily exploited for documentation, in databases or for commercial uses. The negative is more than ever a familiar object. However, as it is the base of the photographic processes of past centuries, does that mean that the negative image is a purely photographic invention? After some reflection on the terminology and the relationship between negativity and multiplicity, this presentation seeks to identify manifestations of the negative image outside the field of photography, in order to answer the question: did the negative exist before photography? This paper focuses on exploring the very first manifestations of the negative image.

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

9:50 AM

### **Recent History of Kodak EKATCOLOR Papers – A Guide for Conservators**

Speaker(s): Joseph LaBarca

Institution(s)/Country(s): Pixel Preservation International, Rochester, NY, USA

#### Abstract

The past 40 years of product development in Kodak EKATCOLOR papers has been a very interesting one. Many changes to the emulsion and imaging technologies were related to image quality, image permanence, and product performance for the photographic processing labs. Several required major changes to the processing chemistry to enable product improvements. The revolution of printing technology from analog to digital was also a key driver of product changes over the past 20 years as EKTACOLOR papers evolved from analog capability only, to both analog and digital capabilities. For the conservator, the knowledge of these technology changes can be important regarding restoration and treatment of image collections. While changes to the emulsion technologies may not be relevant to the conservator, changes to other technologies, including imaging and processing technologies, as well as paper base technology, can be critical. Development and enhancements of the paper base in the late 90s and early 2000s resulted in several specialty products that can also be found in collections and require unique treatment. Knowledge of these technology changes and how to identify one generation of EKTACOLOR paper from another is also critically important. This paper will review the product history of EKTACOLOR papers from 1975 to the present, and will include technology changes and the means to identify them from generation to generation.

10:15 – 11:00 AM

#### **BREAK**

11:00 AM

### **Research and testing fill materials and methods for conservation treatment on photographs face-mounted with poly (methyl methacrylate) (PMMA)**

Speaker(s): Anna Laganà and Sarah Freeman

Co-Author(s): Julia Langenbacher (c), Rachel Rivenc (a), Maëlle Caro (a), Vincent Dion (a), Tom Learner (a)

Institution(s)/Country(s): (a) Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) Los Angeles, CA, USA (b) J. Paul Getty Museum (JPGM) Los Angeles, CA, USA (c) Hamburg, GERMANY

#### Abstract

In the mid-1980s, photographers began using poly (methyl methacrylate) (PMMA) for face-mounting prints, a process that permanently adheres a clear sheet of PMMA to the surface of a print with silicone or acrylic emulsion adhesive. Face-mounting provides several aesthetic and functional advantages: it eliminates the need for framing, facilitates handling and adds depth and color saturation to photographs, creating the so called “wet look”.

However, the process of face-mounting also has disadvantages. The surface is susceptible to mechanical damage such as scratching and chipping. Surface damages frequently occur during handling or transportation, which can be disfiguring to the image. Treatment options to reduce

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

these damages are currently limited and results are often unsatisfactory. The most common repair technique is polishing, which is not always suitable, especially when scratches and chips are very deep. Polishing often entails the removal of significant quantities of PMMA to achieve an even surface, which alters the image appearance. Face-mounting is very difficult to remove without damage to the surface of the print; therefore, face-mounting is considered a permanent mount system.

As part of its Preservation of Plastics project, the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) is investigating with the J. Paul Getty Museum (JPGM) a suitable filling technique (material and method) to repair scratches and chips on face-mounted photographs. The goal is to find a fill material and method that re-integrates the image without altering or removing the original PMMA surface. Treatment tests were conducted on samples made of clear cast and extruded PMMA. The potential of each fill material to minimize the appearance of scratches and chips was assessed with visual-eye observations and optical microscopy. Refractive index (RI) measurements were carried out to determine a close match between the RI of the fill material and that of PMMA. The composition of the fill materials was determined using Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) analysis, and their stability was evaluated before and after accelerated light aging using FTIR and color measurements. The fill materials and methods which provided the best results were further tested on non-reflective and reflective face-mounted samples including black and white and color images. An introduction to the face-mounting technique in photography and related conservation concerns, along with the results of the study, including a detailed presentation of the most successful treatment technique will be presented.

11:25 AM

### **The 'Stradivarius' of Photographic Papers: Gevaluxe Velours**

Speaker(s): Hanako Murata

Institution(s)/Country(s): The Better Image, New York City, NY, USA

#### Abstract

The early twentieth century was a flourishing period for gelatin silver photographic papers, with rich varieties of surface; color, texture, and tonality, which satisfied the demands of professional and amateur photographers around the world. In this period, a gelatin silver paper named Gevaluxe Velours was manufactured by Gevaert Photo-Producten NV (now Agfa-Gevaert N.V.) in Belgium. This photographic paper has a matte surface with a rich tonal range and a very deep black D-max which gives the image a distinguishing three dimensional velvet-like appearance, furthermore when viewed at an angle, sparkling highlights. Due to its distinguished beauty, the paper was advertised as the 'Stradivarius' of photographic papers. However, how this unusual surface texture was made is not well known. Further, despite its outstanding characteristics and beauty, the Gevaluxe Velours paper itself is little known among people who deal with photograph collections such as curators and conservators. The paper is easily damaged physically and many prints display surface abrasion marks with loss of the unique emulsion layer or altered surface texture. Numerous prints also display grime, with dust particles trapped within the emulsion. Knowing how to identify the paper and how the surface was made will help to preserve the photographs that were made on Gevaluxe Velours paper.

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

The talk will introduce the unique qualities of the Gevaluxe Velours paper through various scientific analyses of actual photographic paper (cross section, XRF, SEM), known photographers who used the paper, as well as various printed materials. The published materials expanded to technical reports, manuals, advertisements in periodicals such as photographic journals, and other internal documents of the Gevaert Company including published photographic catalogues, brochures and patent documents. Without bringing together printed materials research at libraries and archives and the results of scientific analyses, it would not have been possible to do the comprehensive study of Gevaluxe Velours papers or its history.

11:50 AM

### **It's All That: Standardization of the material characterization of photographs in the age of the extended medium field.**

Speaker(s): Jan Burandt and Jennifer McGlinchy Sexton

Institution(s)/Country(s): The Menil Collection, Houston, TX, USA; McGlinchy Sexton Conservation LLC, Colorado Springs, CO, USA

#### Abstract

Concise public facing medium descriptions of photographs do not begin to convey the visual richness of photographic images. With conservation controlling the content of an “extended medium” field in the Menil Collection’s newly acquired database, I was inspired to reach beyond process to develop a standardized style guide for thorough physical characterization of photographic materials. PMG’s Photograph Information Record and the PMA’s Descriptive Terminology for Works of Art on Paper: Guidelines for the Accurate and Consistent Description of the Materials and Techniques of Drawings, Prints, and Collages served as inspiration. Contemporary Photography: Digital Prints Sample Set and The Print Council of America Paper Sample Book: A Practical Guide to the Description of Paper are used as references. In collaboration with photo conservator, Jennifer McGlinchy Sexton, and Editor for Publications at the Menil, Sarah Robinson, we articulated a comprehensive list of physical attributes of photographs and a grammatical structure to create a formula for consistent description of photographs with a high level of detail. Each photograph entering the collection is now described following the format, and as historic works in the collection are re-examined, they are brought to the same standard. These descriptions, through text alone - produce a clear picture of the materiality of the photographs, and invite the reader to visualize the subtle nuances that make each image unique.

### **12:15 – 2:00 PM LUNCH**

(12:15 – 1:00 PM AIC PMG BUSINESS MEETING)

(1:20 – 1:55 PM NYPL JEROME ROBBINS TOUR)

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

2:00 – 2:30 PM (Three talks 7 min each, 9 minutes of questions following)

### **Photograph Preservation and Conservation in Slovakia**

Speaker(s): Janka Križanová

Institution(s)/Country(s): Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Bratislava, SLOVAKIA

#### Abstract

The Academy of Fine Arts and Design (AFAD) in Bratislava, Slovakia is the sole fully accredited institution of higher education in the Slovak Republic that provides education in the field of visual arts on three levels: undergraduate (BA), graduate (M.A.), and doctorate (Ph.D.). The objective of AFAD is to provide the highest-level education to qualified students in main disciplines such as Fine Arts, Architecture, Design, and Art Conservation. Photograph Conservation was established as a specialization in 2006, as part of the Paper Conservation studio within the Conservation Department at AFAD. Students could then receive an MA degree in Photograph Conservation in the Slovak language. This accomplishment was only possible after more than a decade of collaboration and educational initiatives between AFAD and its American partners, mainly The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), and The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met). Workshops were held primarily at AFAD and focused on educating conservation professionals employed in institutions throughout Eastern Europe. The establishment of the photograph conservation discipline at AFAD was accompanied by advanced educational opportunities and continued learning experiences for current and future educators. These offerings were provided predominantly by the NEDCC, the University of Delaware, the GCI and The Met in the form of workshops, courses, internships, and fellowships. This talk will retrace the complicated history and development of the photograph preservation program and curriculum at AFAD over the last decade. It will also describe the awarding of two three-year grants from the Ministry of Education of Slovakia, which provide support for the ongoing development of photograph conservation and its educational and material needs at AFAD, as well as for research of Slovak photography collections in libraries, archives and museums. This favorable outcome resulted in various exhibitions and presentations to educate conservation professionals and a broader public. Future goals and how to ensure the program's sustainability, not only as part of the academic system but also as vehicle for increasing advocacy and awareness of photographic collections throughout Slovakia and Central Europe, will be addressed.

### **Lessons Learned from the Platinum and Palladium Project: Applications to the Alfred Stieglitz Key Set at the National Gallery of Art**

Speaker(s): Joan Walker

Co-Author(s): Constance McCabe

Institution(s)/Country(s): Department of Scientific Research, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA

#### Abstract

The 2017 book *Platinum and Palladium Photographs: Technical History, Connoisseurship, and Preservation* was the culmination of a six-year multidisciplinary investigation into the material and aesthetic characteristics of platinum and palladium prints. This collaborative research initiative unearthed long-forgotten methods artists used to manipulate these rare and beautiful photographs to achieve specific colors and surface qualities, and how these so-called

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

“permanent” photographs may degrade over time. Rediscovered knowledge and recent advancements in analytical methods for studying these photographs have provided a scientific basis to reexamine collections.

Among the most important findings of the platinum and palladium project is that an immense variety of chemical and physical manipulations were commonly employed to adjust the image color in platinum prints. Often-repeated assumptions regarding how certain tonalities were achieved may or may not be true – many possibilities exist that may explain the appearance of a given print. For example, platinum salts were commonly used to tone silver prints to a more neutral hue. Moreover, a multitude of commercial products claimed to achieve platinum effects, often using pure silver with a matte finish or combinations of platinum and silver, as in the Platinotype Company’s Satista papers.

Scholars of the platinum and palladium processes know of William Willis Jr.’s invention and commercialization of these photographic papers. Many are also familiar with the platinum process of Giuseppe Pizzighelli and Baron von Hübl. It is possible to produce a platinum print in black or sepia with both of these processes – but only with Pizzighelli and Hübl’s “direct platinum” process may a sepia print be achieved without the use of mercury. The National Gallery of Art received its first photographs in 1949 when Georgia O’Keeffe gave the museum the largest and most important collection of photographs by her late husband, Alfred Stieglitz, to the Gallery, a “Key Set” that now numbers more than 1,640 photographs. Stieglitz experimented with and published articles about both Willis’s and Pizzighelli-Hübl’s processes, platinum as a toning element for silver prints, and other platinum process variations. Examples of some of these processes are represented in the Key Set. His early platinum prints, which range in hue from black to sepia, provide a small subset of diverse photographs for study. Knowledge of the materials and methods used to make photographs and the ability to accurately identify the components of existing photographs are key to their preservation. Recognizing these factors, the authors and colleagues at the National Gallery of Art undertook a reinvestigation into platinum and related prints by Alfred Stieglitz. The authors will present the results of their investigations, including determinations regarding the processes that may have been used to produce Stieglitz’s early platinum prints, along with a discussion of storage, display, and treatment considerations.

### **From Teleprompters to TEDx: Lessons Learned in Public Outreach, Advocacy and Fundraising**

Speaker(s): Debra Hess Norris

Institution(s)/Country(s): Art Conservation Department, University of Delaware, USA

#### Abstract

Photographic materials are treasured worldwide. Their commanding images connect humanity globally. As we work to preserve photographic collection held in museums, archives, libraries, historic sites and private homes, we have the capacity, and indeed the responsibility, to connect communities to our work. As we deploy our technical skills and knowledge, we must do so with quickly with confidence, passion, and an intentional commitment to engage professional and public audiences. By using assessable language and connecting stories to facts, we will build excitement, inspiring others to support our mission and vision.

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

From blockbuster exhibitions, to public lectures, and via social media our profession is visible and exciting, connecting the arts, humanities and sciences in powerful ways. Building on personal experiences, from TedX to teleprompters to testimony on the Hill, the author will share some basic lesson learned in advocacy – and given their close association, fundraising as well. This lightning round presentation aims to inspire each of us to continue to work together to deploy our communication, diplomatic, and collaborative skills to strengthen the profession of photographic conservation, advance scholarship, and foster new development and fundraising opportunities – today and tomorrow.

2:30 – 3:00 PM (Three talks 7 min each, 9 minutes of questions following)

### **Conservation and Mass-Digitization, Implementation of a Workflow**

Speaker(s): Jessica Régimbald

Institution(s)/Country(s): Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ), CANADA

#### Abstract

La Presse, an important Montreal-based newspaper, donated its entire analog archive of photographic material to Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec in 2015. Spanning from the 1930's to 2001, the collection represents over 1 million photographs. It was decided during acquisition that the documents would be digitized to allow better public access to the fund. The content is divided in five different series. The first four series contain 97 000 prints, sorted by personality and events before and after 1948. The fifth series consists of negatives. This paper will discuss only the four series consisting of prints.

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec started its mass-digitization program in 2013 and has acquired much experience in the last years. However, due to the massive number of photographs to digitize and the time constraints of the project, creating an efficient workflow for the preparation and conservation of the fund was essential before starting any digitizing work. This project had to be integrated within the usual workflow and had to be realized by the regular personnel.

A summary assessment of the photographs was undertaken to evaluate the types of photographs and their general physical state. The post-1948 photographs were mostly all standard size 8" x 10" silver gelatine prints. The biggest issues with these two series were surface soil and sticky adhesive residue. Some photographs presented the usual losses, folds and cracked emulsion. Therefore, these series of photographs allowed for a more standardized approach to the workflow.

The other two series, the pre-1948 photographs, were of different sizes, sometimes mounted in collage form and not all silver gelatine prints. Therefore, a more individualized approach needed to be made. These two series also presented the usual losses, folds and cracked emulsion. All four series showed evidence of use in the journalism industry, such as pen or pencil marks on the emulsion, numerous inscriptions and stamps on the back and the printed cutline attached to the photograph.

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

Before beginning the project, a standardized treatment plan was established in relation to the requirements of digitization and the historic use of the photographs. The level of treatment was developed to ensure rapidity, as well as a high quality of the final image. Normally, most of the document preparation is undertaken by the conservator, such as the evaluation of the photographs and the conservation treatments. The sheer amount of work made it apparent that another approach was necessary and that some of the work needed to be delegated to the support personnel. This method allowed us to establish a clear and systematic approach to this project. It also allowed for clear statistics to emerge, enabling easier planning and the targeting of achievable objectives over the next few years.

### **Two case studies of the treatment of photographic albums: between emic and etic approaches**

Speaker(s): Barbara Cattaneo (OPD)

Co-Author(s): Gisella Guasti (BNCF), Alessandro Sidoti (BNCF); Letizia Montalbano (OPD), Giulia Fraticelli (OPD); Stefano Anastasio (BAP Firenze); Giovanni Pagliarulo (Villa I Tatti)

Institution(s)/Country(s): Opificio delle Pietre Dure (OPD), Florence, ITALY

#### Abstract

Photographic albums are complex objects and sometimes major treatment must be considered in order to fulfil the institutional owner's needs and assure their preservation in the long-term. Since albums bear a double nature—they display both the author's narrative and later attributed documental value—the decision-making process can be prolonged and delicate. This paper describes choices, solutions and treatments discussed and performed on two photographic albums belonging to the National Archeology Museum of Florence (Doro Levi – First Archeology Campaign in Mesopotamia) and Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence (Giuseppe Salvadori - Inventory of Furniture and Small Objects), carried out at the Conservation Laboratory of the National Central Library of Florence and “Opificio delle Pietre Dure” in Florence.

The first album, damaged by the Florence flood in 1966, consisted of 231 contact prints on Lupex Agfa and Kodak Velox dating from 1925 and 1935. Some of the prints were loose while others still adhered to the thick black pages typical of albums from the 1930s and 1940s. The photographs were in very bad condition: many showed heavy losses to the image layer; prints were often stuck together, emulsion against emulsion; and white and black pencil marks were found both on the pages and on the back of the loose photographs, leading us to believe that notes could be present on the back of the glued images too. Removal, surface cleaning, separating the images, consolidating the layers, mending tears, loss compensation and finally a new mounting solution were necessary to save the album's form and help to retrace the history of Doro Levi's journey to Mesopotamia.

The second album consisted of more than 200 prints pasted—sometimes overlappingly—on acidic mechanical pulp cardboard. These were mainly albumen prints, but the album also contained a few DOP silver gelatin prints, collodion and gelatin POP prints, and one platinum print. Many of the photographs were affected by folds, wrinkles, cracks, skinning of the primary supports, and heavy oxidation. Four different types of adhesives were identified, and twelve

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

different inks and pencils had been used to write notes and numbers both on the photographs and on the cardboard supports. Cleaning, the removal of the photographs, and deacidification of secondary supports with Calcium nanoparticles were carried out, while a new mounting technique was implemented.

A strict workflow had to be put into action due to the large number of photographs involved. In both cases, physical gels (Agar Art, Gellan Gum) or chemical gels (Nanorestore®) were used and their use proved to be fundamental to the success of the treatment. New mounting solutions were required to ensure the safe handling and storage of the albums, in line with the expectations of the Institutional owners and respecting the albums' original forms.

### **Electrotyping Daguerreotypes: Reconstruction of an Early Reproduction Technique**

Speaker(s): Magdalena Pilko

Co-Author(s): Martin Jürgens

Institution(s)/Country(s): University of Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS

#### Abstract

The daguerreotype was the first commercially successful photographic process in the 19th century, but its major disadvantage was that the image was mirrored and difficult to reproduce. Several attempts were therefore made early on to find a method for reproducing daguerreotypes. This presentation will describe the reconstruction of one historical method that proved successful, the electrotype process as applied to daguerreotypes. With this technique, a daguerreotype is copied by means of the electrodeposition of copper ions upon the daguerreotype's conductive surface, resulting in a physical copy – a copper plate – that is subsequently separated from the daguerreotype.

Daguerreotype electrotypes were mentioned as early as 1840. Hippolyte Fizeau, Alphonse Poitevin and Walter Woodbury were pioneering experimental photographers to whom some of the known existing daguerreotype electrotypes are currently attributed.

To date, only fourteen copper plates have been identified worldwide as probable electrotypes in different collections. Of these, only four are kept together with their master daguerreotypes, resulting in a very small number of confirmed plate pairs. The rarity and value of these cultural heritage objects justified an in-depth study, especially given that the technique of electrotyping daguerreotypes was still poorly understood, and that little had been published on the topic. A reconstruction of the process was attempted with the goal of understanding whether the historical daguerreotype electrotypes could be considered to have typical characteristics of the process.

In addition to a study of historical and modern technical sources, eight historical objects and three modern reconstructions were photographically documented and examined visually in ambient and ultraviolet light. Three historical objects and one modern reconstruction were analysed with X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (XRF). Three historical objects and two modern

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

reconstructions were analysed in a Scanning Electron Microscope with Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy (SEM-EDS).

Reconstruction attempts following historical descriptions as precisely as possible did not lead to results similar to historical electrotypes. However, findings suggested that likely some kind of surface treatment of the daguerreotype has been carried out prior to electrotyping, even though such treatment is not mentioned in the historical instructions. By applying a thin separation layer of beeswax to the daguerreotype surface, electrotypes were subsequently obtained that closely resemble the historical objects by visual examination with the naked eye as well as by SEM.

Ultimately, several features as observed on historical daguerreotype electrotypes appeared to be reproducible in the reconstruction and may be considered characteristic to the process. Although further research on the reconstruction is required, the findings of this study may prove useful in identifying yet unidentified daguerreotype electrotypes and in studying their mechanisms of aging. It is hoped that the reconstruction of this historical process will contribute to the field of photograph conservation, and that this presentation will raise awareness for these rare and beautiful objects.

3:00 PM

### **Emerging photograph conservators of the 2020s**

Speaker(s): Millard Schisler and Patricia de Filippi

Institution(s)/Country(s): Private Practice in BRAZIL; Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

#### Abstract

Photography has gone through many changes since the first experiences by Niepce and Daguerre. Many different techniques and processes were invented, some lasting longer than others, but all of them gave their contribution to the extraordinary rich history of photography. Photograph conservators have had the privilege of caring for all these diverse materials.

The surge of digital photography has created new challenges as now we not only deal with the preservation of objects, but also with caring for digital information, and all the complexities that are wrapped in with digital conservation. How will the emerging photograph conservators be trained to work with analog and digital photographs?

Through this 20-minute talk, I will speak about the need for an educational program built for the emerging photograph conservators that will have to deal with these complexities throughout their career and give a perspective on how this program can be designed.

As GLAMs start receiving born digital collections containing digital photographs and also take advantage of the resources of digitization to give access and as a means of preservation of their analog collections, we see an increase in the need of conservators that can bridge the gap, from analog photographs, their digitization, and dealing with born digital photographs. This can be the role of a Media conservator, but in most cases, these professionals are caring for audio and

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

moving images, with tape and film collections and other born digital materials. What will be the role for a photograph conservator to care for still digital photographs? Digital photographs are composed of digital data, zeros and ones, just like all other forms of digital data. But, there are specific issues of digital photographs that can and need to be addressed by professionals whose job has been to care for the production of photographs from our cultural heritage.

These emerging photograph conservators will care for photographs, either analog or digital, and be able to interact with other professionals caring for the analog and digital preservation of other materials and be an important component in the preservation of contemporary born-digital photographs.

3:25 – 4:00 PM

### **BREAK**

4:00 PM

#### **The Kodak Colorama Collection at Museums Victoria**

Speaker(s): Belinda Gourley

Co-Author(s): Rosemary Goodall and Fiona Kinsey

Institution(s)/Country(s): Museums Victoria, AUSTRALIA

#### Abstract

In 2005 Museums Victoria began working with Kodak Australasia to acquire a large and significant collection, now known as the Kodak Heritage Collection, from its Coburg factory that it closed down in November 2004. Part of this acquisition has included a small collection of Kodak Coloramas (large scale photographic transparencies) and associated archival material. Kodak Australasia supplied Coloramas and a display box to Spencer Street Station in Melbourne for many years until 1986. Smaller versions were also distributed as visual merchandising to Kodak branches throughout Australia from around 1980. Available sizes in Australia reportedly ranged from around 16 x 20 inches to 3 x 10 feet.

So while the Australian Colorama campaign was not as grand (in terms of physical size and timespan) as that which Eastman Kodak provided for Grand Central Station in New York City, the collection that has been amassed at Museums Victoria is interesting for various reasons. It includes copies of some iconic 'Aussie' images that were added to the Colorama catalogue, and examples of what appear to have been used working copies.

This paper will briefly discuss the Kodak Colorama collection at Museums Victoria, in terms of its scope and history. It will then go onto discuss the conservation work that has been undertaken to integrate the items into the collection, which includes documentation, digitisation, analysis of materials and their degradation products with Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy, selective remedial treatment, and rehousing of oversized photographic transparencies for long term storage.

The approach taken to this conservation work has been shaped by numerous factors which will also be explored in the presentation. These include workspace and capacity restrictions; and a

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

desire to blend remedial conservation work (so as to make the items accessible now and in the future) whilst striving to retain a sense of their working history and their significance as examples of historically significant image technology.

4:25 PM

### **Mouldy matters: Conserving Ed van der Elsken's 45.000 colour slides**

Speaker(s): Katrin Pietsch and Lénia Oliveira Fernandes

Institution(s)/Country(s): Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam, NETHERLANDS

#### Abstract

Colour slides are a modern and yet outdated medium that was produced from the 1940s until the 2000s and is associated with both amateur photography and fine-art collections. Conservation professionals have only recently started producing in depth knowledge about these objects, mainly focusing on preventive conservation. As slides are especially known for being prone to colour fading and biological decay, this is indeed essential. However, sources on how to actively treat damaged objects are scarce and insufficient. Given the nature of these photographs, it is more common that the same problem will affect large collections rather than just a single object.

Such was the case at the Nederlands Fotomuseum, where a group of about 45.000 colour slides from Dutch artist Ed van der Elsken (1925-1990) had been waiting for treatment since the acquisition of the photographer's entire archive in 1993. Ed was a frequent user of colour slides since the early 1950s, particularly of Ektachrome and Kodachrome 35mm film. He lived with his family in Edam - a rural area known for its dykes - where his negatives and slides were stored throughout the years in a house heavily influenced by seasonal climate changes. Humid conditions lead to mould growth that fed on the gelatine emulsion surfaces, affecting over 85% of this collection.

Although keeping the collection in the museum's cold storage slowed down its degradation, the urge to act against this irreversible problem grew even more when some of Ed's very early slides were found to be damaged beyond repair. It took several years of research to finally develop a safe, time and cost effective treatment method, which was put to the test in a pilot restoration project during the summer of 2015. As a result, about one thousand slides were cleaned and digitized to reprint van der Elsken's 1974 "Eye Love You" book.

Funding campaigns for the treatment of the entire collection followed. Surprisingly as successful, after several months enough financial support was collected to finance the conservation of the rest of Ed van der Elsken's slide archive. Starting in October 2016, the remaining slides were assessed individually and submitted to mass wet treatment. The developed restoration methodology - coupled with digitization and cataloguing efforts - made van der Elsken's colour slides after a project time of about two years accessible once again. Furthermore, the understanding of van der Elsken's oeuvre has been enhanced by a deeper look into its materiality. For example, film identification helped to better understand the aesthetics and conservation state of each image, as well as to more accurately define its

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

production date. As a conclusion to this project, the Nederlands Fotomuseum is planning an exhibition in 2019 that will be entirely dedicated to van der Elsken's colour work.

This presentation will reflect upon the journey that led to the restoration of van der Elsken's mouldy colour slides and how the acquired knowledge can be applied to similar plastic based photographic materials.

4:50 PM

### **Discovering, preserving and promoting the photographic collections at the National Library of Scotland.**

Speaker(s): Ioannis Vasallos

Institution(s)/Country(s): National Library of Scotland, UK

#### Abstract

The National Library of Scotland holds large and important photographic collections dating from the 1840s to the present day, and covering a broad range of themes and photographic formats and processes. A surveying project was initiated in July 2017 to locate, assess and record the condition of the photographic collections, with the aim of creating a prioritised conservation plan, thereby ensuring the preservation of the collections and improving their accessibility to the public. The survey documented more than 1000 collections, containing more than 380,000 photographs. The images show the history of Scottish life and culture over the past 170 years, and cover other themes including science, travel, exploration and military and missionary activities. The survey findings demonstrate the scale and significance of the library's photographic collections, making their preservation of paramount importance.

This talk will give a short account of the survey, reviewing the pros and cons of the approach taken, and will describe the preservation challenges now facing the library. The process for prioritising and implementing actions will be explained, with reference to the range of formats encountered and the ways in which the collections have been organised and catalogued in the past. It is proposed that the library will now prepare a funding bid for a project involving the cataloguing, conservation and digitization of some of the photographic collections, and the criteria for creating a successful application will be discussed.

The talk will also explore the opportunities arising as a result of the survey to promote the collections through social media and develop community projects, including working with volunteers and other public engagement activities. These projects will allow the public to engage with the conservation of cultural heritage and the history of photography and photographic processes.

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21<sup>st</sup>

9:00 AM

### **Conserving the Matrix: Investigation of the Ernest J. Bellocq glass plate negative collection**

Speaker(s): Elsa Thyss

Institution(s)/Country(s): The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY, USA

#### Abstract

Ernest J. Bellocq's Storyville photographs, made in the early-twentieth century in New Orleans, have been the subject of many fantasies. Discovered by Lee Friedlander in an antique store in 1958, they were revealed to the public through an exhibition, with a related catalog and organized by MoMA in 1970, featuring Friedlander's prints made from the original negatives. So far, any original prints from Bellocq's days have not been found. In 2013, The Met acquired the collection of 88 original Storyville glass negatives, where they became available for further investigation. This 3-year research comprises gaining a better understanding of the technical history of glass plate negatives while undertaking the conservation steps necessary to preserve and give access to the objects. The reasons for this project stem from the extraordinary historic and artistic value of these negatives, and from the fact that they belong to a major institution possessing the resources to carry out the highest standards of conservation. In the 1910s, the materials for gelatin silver photographs on glass were manufactured, which allowed the photographer to focus on his exposure and composition skills to produce suitable matrices for printing. This talk will cover the materials that make up the plates, including the media intentionally added in the post-processing steps. Finally, we will present the conservation efforts carried out to stabilize the physical damage. The design and conception of transparent conservation housings will foster access for scholars to view these objects, which still have many mysteries yet to be uncovered.

9:25 AM

### **Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War: A case study for the manufacture and deterioration of photographic albums**

Speakers(s): Laura Panadero

Institution(s)/Country(s): Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, USA

#### Abstract

Alexander Gardner published Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War in 1866, immediately following the end of the American Civil War. The two-volume book contained 100 albumen photographs, each mounted to a lithographically printed mount page, and preceded by a page with letterpress text describing the image. Gardner's Washington D.C. studio printed the photographs using negatives from eleven photographers. Gardner is thought to have produced approximately 150 copies of the Sketch Book, of which 67 extant copies have been identified.

The copy of the Sketch Book at the Harvard Art Museums was frequently in demand for exhibition and study. An in-depth technical study was prompted by concern over the light stability of the photographs, and an interest in several unexplained condition issues. The albumen photographs were dramatically faded in patterns which appeared to be a result of

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

interactions between the photographs and the lithographically printed elements of the book. The photographs themselves seemed to have caused degradation in the paper of facing album leaves. Comparison of HAM's copy with several other copies in North American collections further defined patterns of deterioration present across copies of the Sketch Book.

Close examination and analysis of the photographs and printed pages provided some insight into the nature of the interactions between the photographic and non-photographic elements of the book. Analysis included XRF of the photographic image material and lithographic inks, FTIR of coatings and adhesives, and fiber analysis of text and photographic mount papers. The light stability of the photographs was also directly measured with microfade testing, followed by spectrophotometry before and after exhibition. The results of this analysis will be presented along with possible explanations for some of the unusual patterns of deterioration observed in the Sketch Book.

Albumen photographs were extremely common in photographic albums and books of the 19th century. Much scholarship has been devoted to the manufacture and aging of albumen photographs, and some to the binding structures and mounting methods used in photographic albums. However, the material interactions between albumen prints and other components of photographically illustrated books and albums are less well documented. This research on the Sketch Book is a step towards a better understanding of the photographic book as a whole object. This type of technical research is common to photograph conservation in a museum setting. Research undertaken not in service of eventual treatment, but rather to prevent further deterioration that might result from exhibition and handling. Although less immediate than physical treatment, this technical historical work has a lasting impact on the preservation of photographic heritage.

9:50 AM

### **Why recreate rare processes? The case of the printed daguerreotype.**

Speaker(s): Martin Jürgens

Institution(s)/Country(s): Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS

#### Abstract

This talk will explore an important how and why of photograph conservation: the tool of process recreation. This technique enhances our understanding of historical materials and practice and also allows us to experience the challenges that photographic pioneers encountered. By practicing the process ourselves, we are better able to distinguish original flaws from later deterioration, and we can identify and describe photographs more accurately. This leads to informed decision-making when treating original objects, resulting in an overall improvement of our professional practice. This talk will examine process recreation specifically in the context of the etched and printed daguerreotype, a rare technique that has not yet been studied in sufficient detail.

In the past, research in photograph conservation was often concerned with large, global topics, resulting in broad agreement on fundamental issues such as storage conditions, PAT testing or

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

exhibition guidelines. More recently, however, studies have increasingly focused on less thoroughly examined subjects, such as individual processes, mounting techniques or specific adhesives. For example, the National Gallery of Art's collaborative research on platinum/palladium prints started out on a path that may have seemed narrow at first, but that ended up in vastly expanding (and sometimes contradicting) our former understanding of one process family. The project's approach of combining (art-)historical research, technical analysis and conservation expertise benefitted greatly from recreations of original photographic processes. In recreation, we are examining the processes from a distance – looking back into the past – with what we believe to be a more advanced state of knowledge and much more complex set of instruments of measurement and analysis. However, often enough we find that we cannot satisfactorily replicate historic photographs, even with modern equipment and science. Such was the experience that we had during a study at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: the replication of the daguerreotype acid etching process practiced by Dr Joseph Berres in Vienna in the 1840s.

Berres converted daguerreotypes into intaglio printing plates with the goal of multiplying photomicrographs for his articles in medical journals. All over Europe (and possibly even in the USA), a number of other pioneers also experimented with etching daguerreotypes. In the 1840s and 50s, Alphonse Poitevin developed yet other methods of printing daguerreotypes, among them the gelatin transfer and the gravure photochimique. Together with Nicéphore Niepce's héliographie and Talbot's photoglyphic engraving, these processes form a sort of proto-soil from which photomechanical processes would gradually grow and branch out, finally coming into full bloom as a medium for the mass dissemination of photographic imagery. Since much innovative research (and much process recreation) would help in better understanding and preserving the many variants of photomechanical processes, this talk will conclude with a call for partnership in a large collaborative project that will examine the materials, techniques, and history of photomechanical printing of the 19th century.

10:15 – 11:00 AM

### **BREAK**

11:00 AM

### **Reproduction as a strategy for photograph conservation: theory and practice.**

Speaker(s): Marta García Celma

Institution(s)/Country(s): CICS – Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, Cologne University of Applied Sciences, Cologne, GERMANY

#### Abstract

The State-of-the-art conservation of photographic materials has introduced reproduction as a suitable tool for the recovering of selected aspects of contemporary photographs presenting apparent changes of condition. Since the early 2000s, artists from The Düsseldorf School of Photography have made use of photographic reproduction to recreate the original aesthetics of formerly faded photographs. However, reproduction places conservation approaches for photographic materials and ethics for conservation under scrutiny and opens discussions over the concept of authenticity on reproduced photographic artworks.

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

This presentation considers that reproduction as a conservation strategy follows a *value-led* decision-making process, in which photographs values are ascribed or related to stakeholders' opinions (Muñoz Viñas 2005:179). As such, when different stakeholders' sociocultural and professional backgrounds are taken into account, photographs' values, or photographs realms of authenticity, are often found to be multiple, dynamic and in a state of flux. Additionally, photographic reproduction is strongly influenced and directed by obsolescence and by the affordances given by or to the available technologies and materials: the possibilities for action relative to the subject-artifacts relationship. (Davis and Chouinard 2017:6).

Through collaboration with conservators, curators, artists, and Grieger printing lab, this study retrospectively researches case-studies belonging to the Düsseldorf School of Photography' artists in which reproduction has been used as a conservation strategy. This area of the research nurtures itself from sociological studies focusing on heritage's values and theory on the conservation of modern and contemporary artworks, and it investigates how reproduction impacted stakeholder's visualizations over the artworks' realms of authenticities.

11:25 AM

### **SFMOMA Artist Initiative: Interdisciplinary research on reprinting color photographs as a preservation solution.**

Speaker(s): Roberta Piantavigna and Erin O'Toole

Co-Author(s): Theresa Andrews

Institution(s)/Country(s): San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, USA

#### Abstract

The practice of reprinting damaged photographic artworks as a preservation solution has increasingly become a topic of research in conservation, as well as a matter of debate amongst conservators, curators, and artists. Of central concern are photographic materials such as chromogenic and RC prints produced from the 1970s to the 1990s, which are known for their inherent instability. Recent innovations in digital technology and the improved quality of papers and inks have enabled artists and museums to refabricate vintage prints for preservation and exhibition purposes. Although some museums have been undertaking such projects for many years, only a handful of studies have addressed the topic. While they typically outline the philosophical foundations of the art historical and ethical implications of reprinting, these studies tend to lack a more holistic perspective that takes into account the viewpoints of artists, curators, art historians and the market.

SFMOMA's rich collection includes a large number of color photographs, and the museum has long been concerned with the proper handling of this material. Prudent display guidelines have limited the progressive deterioration of color works, and with the recent expansion of the building, the museum has added cool and cold vaults for color photographs, which will further extend the life of these fragile objects. Over the last two decades, curators and conservators at SFMOMA have worked in tandem with several artists to reprint photographs that were deemed unexhibitable due to changes in their appearance. As more and more artists have approached the museum to discuss the possibility of reprinting their work, SFMOMA felt the need to

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

investigate the matter more deeply, with the goal of developing a policy to help guide the decision-making process in the future. Such a policy will balance the museum's ethical responsibilities to artists with the importance of maintaining its independence with regard to art historical interpretation and conservation.

The SFMOMA Artist Initiative, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and launched in 2014, aims to redefine the museum's approach to reprinting, and more broadly to acquisition, stewardship and display of contemporary photography. As part of the project, SFMOMA interviewed five American photographers with prints in the collection that had either already showed signs of change, or were made on unstable material prone to deterioration. During the summer of 2018, the Artist Initiative team, made up of conservators, curators, registrars and other staff of the museum's Collections division, drafted a policy, and met with colleagues at various American and European institutions to share our findings and learn about their experiences. In April 2019, SFMOMA will host a colloquium where we will share research findings and invite artists, curators, conservators, dealers, and other experts from the field of photography and contemporary art to contribute and engage in an open discussion on this important subject. Focus, methodology, objectives and most recent findings of the SFMOMA Artist Initiative on Photography will be discussed.

11:50 AM

### **Complications with "My Birth"**

Speaker(s): Krista Lough

Institution(s)/Country(s): The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, NY, USA

#### Abstract

In March 2018 the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) opened their biennial exhibition celebrating New Photography. Established in 1985, the series is a significant part of the Museum's contemporary photography program and has introduced new work by over 100 artists from around the world. The 2018 exhibition, *Being*, focused on how photography can capture what it means to be human.

Two weeks before the close of *Being* the Department of Photography at MoMA specified interest in acquiring a site-specific installation from the exhibition. The installation "My Birth" by Carmen Winant consists of approximately three thousand images of women in various stages of childbirth, all taped, floor to ceiling to the gallery walls of a narrow corridor. The artist collected the images for the installation from books, pamphlets, newspapers, and other ephemera, creating a passageway of images with various colors and textures.

The objects were installed in the gallery, under the direction of the artist, with blue painter's tape. Several tape loops were used to secure the pieces to the walls, while a small piece of blue tape was used on the recto for aesthetic purposes. Occasionally, tape had been employed on verso to repair tears and join images that were separated by book spines. Some of the materials had been used by the artist in smaller installations and exhibited skinned areas from previous tape removal.

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

This talk will focus on the acquisition considerations and conservation implications of acquiring a tape installed work of this magnitude. It will outline the decisions surrounding the when, how and why to remove tape, repair tears, and consolidate skinned areas on around three thousand objects. It will address how the museum in conjunction with the artist can develop an installation methodology that is safe for the works but respects the artist installation desires; and when and if it is appropriate to make facsimiles of inherently fragile components.

As artists stretch the bounds of museum installations, conservators should work with the artist to devise safe and appropriate installation methods. As a result of the installation of “My Birth”, conservation is developing a document of talking points to initiate discussions with artists and museum stake-holders surrounding complicated installations. The goal of the document is to raise awareness of the need to work with the artist to safely install works while preserving the artist’s intent and aesthetic. This presentation will discuss the trials and tribulations of the exhibition and potential acquisition of this large installation with the goal of providing insight to other museum conservators who may encounter similar complicated objects.

### **12:15 – 2:00 PM LUNCH**

**(12:15 – 1:00 PM ICOM-CC PMWG BUSINESS MEETING)**

**(1:20 – 1:55 PM NYPL JEROME ROBBINS TOUR)**

2:00 – 2:30 PM (Three talks 7 min each, 9 minutes of questions following)

### **Conserving the Knights-Whittome Negative Collection: A Pain in the Glass?**

Speaker: Sarah Allen

Institution(s)/Country(s): ABCD Conservation Studio, UK

#### Abstract

What happens when you’re unable to find a satisfactory conservation treatment? When the balance between budget and time constraints against the research needed to find a solution means that no resolution can be reached? This paper discusses this dilemma using the case study of the Knights Whittome project, and admits that despite best efforts, no treatment was able to be carried out on the severely blocked glass plate negatives in the collection. The various remedial conservation treatments tested and analytical techniques used (and eventually discarded) are discussed – in the hope that opening up this question to the international photographic materials conservation community, an answer will be found! The Knights-Whittome photographic archive of 10,000 Edwardian glass plate negatives was rescued from a skip in a London high street in 1988, having previously been abandoned and then forgotten about in a damp basement since the closure of the photographic studio in 1918. Unsurprisingly, the collection was consequently in very poor condition and only begun to be tackled after a successful UK Heritage Lottery Funded bid in 2014, under the banner of the “Past on Glass” (see the project blog here <https://pastonglass.wordpress.com/>). The project aimed to conserve, catalogue and digitise this unique time capsule of a high-street studio, who was also photographer to the King and active during a seminal period of British History.

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

This paper discusses the challenges of conserving a glass plate negative collection in such poor condition against budget and time constraints. Over 2500 negatives were conserved over the 2-year project, with the exception of a small but significant number of severely blocked negatives. These negatives were unusual in that their envelopes were deeply embedded within the gelatine emulsion, but the underlying image was still intact (i.e. the water ingress had not dissolved the gelatine layer). Various remedial techniques were explored (including 'backing removal' of the envelope – successful but too time consuming within project parameters; humidification by various means – the gelatine was denatured and too fragile; use of enzymes on the paper – too expensive and again too time consuming; etc) as well as other non-invasive means of gaining access to the image including multispectral imaging; Xradiography; etc.

### **“Larger Than Life”- Edwin Forrest Mammoth Daguerreotype Conservation Challenges**

Speaker: Elena Bulat

Institution(s)/Country(s): Weissman Preservation Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

#### Abstract

This paper focuses on the conservation challenges and opportunities presented by a mammoth plate daguerreotype of American stage actor Edwin Forrest from the Theatre Collection at Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Although mammoth daguerreotypes are very rare, the Theatre Collection has two of these photographs, both depicting the same person- the famous American actor Edwin Forrest.

The daguerreotypes have no attribution or provenance. Both Imperial photographs have similar housing styles, which include a frame and window mat with velvet and metal decorative elements. The size, decorative style, and the image aesthetic suggest that they were made by the same photographer possibly just a few years apart. Who created these two mammoth daguerreotypes of Edwin Forrest? How did they come to Harvard? Why is there no information about such important objects?

Mammoth daguerreotypes pose conservation challenges not just because of their size, but also because they usually do not have a standard housing. Framed daguerreotypes often have the plate pasted directly to a mat or other housing elements with animal or starch based glue. If the adhesion fails, the plate ends up floating loosely inside of the housing package making it vulnerable to damage. This was the case with one of the Edwin Forrest's daguerreotypes. This daguerreotype also came to the Weissman Preservation Center with severe glass deterioration which dramatically obscured the image. Also the plate sat loosely under a water damaged and moldy window mat.

To provide a proper housing for such a large format daguerreotype plate and also keep the historic appearance required some level of engineering and creative thinking. The author will give a report on the techniques used for preserving one of these daguerreotypes and will share some thoughts from the investigation into its attribution.

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

### **Digitizing collections – A reflection on archive negative collections, prioritizing treatments and what is lost.**

Speaker: Catarina Pereira (a,c)

Co-Authors: Laura Castro (a), Carolina Barata (a,b), Margarita San Andrés (c)

Institution(s)/Country(s): (a)School of Arts, CITAR Portuguese Catholic University (Porto), Porto, PORTUGAL; (b) GEOBIOTEC – Geoscience Department, Aveiro University, Aveiro, PORTUGAL; (c) Complutense University of Madrid. Faculty of Fine Arts. Dep. Painting and Restoration. Materials Laboratory [LabMat], Madrid, SPAIN

#### Abstract

A common practice today, for photograph collections, is to create images databases available, or not, on-line. Usually, this is regarded as an added value to the collection, especially for making it available outside its community. The proposed presentation focus on the factors that define and prioritize the digitizing process and other conservation treatments of archive negative photograph collections. Also, a reflection is made to what possible impact the access to images on-line will have in, eventual, decreasing value, or interest, for the original object. The memory of important historical photographic studios is now safeguarded in archives, usually in the form of large negative collections. Like other collections, it is necessary to consider time and resources when prioritizing different procedures. This comes down to the question of value and what values ensure and justify the need for preservation of the specific photographic object. There are several, such as artistic or historical values, among others and an object may be valued for more than one. For example, a photograph by Nadar will have artistic value but now also historical value.

But, unlike other archive, or other museum collections, photography has a particular ambiguity between the value of its reproducible image and the unique original matrix, or photographic object. In the example above, Nadar's subjects were often his contemporary cultural figures, so the image also has remembrance value. The photographic object itself would have also archeological value, in the sense that it is a testimony for its period technology. Another example is to consider that archives, that have both the negative and the original print, will digitize the negative, for viewing online, and use the print, for public display.

A photographic negative object is presented on-line in its converted positive form, because the image has more value than the object. Here it will be argued that steps in the photographic process are lost in this procedure, such as retouching, differences in printing technique or even choice of support, which are not reproduced in the digital image.

It might be argued that, with the digital process, negative collection will have an increase in historical value. But this will not be reflected in individual objects, when there are thousands of similar ones. Still, each one has its own nuances that make the difference.

Those who closely contact, and study negative collections, conservators, archivists, historians, or others, should be aware to promote and broadcast these differences. Including additional images or in written text, about the characteristic of the physical object and other interventions, such as retouching, will be a complement to the description of the digital image. This will add value to negative collections and its individual objects and hence ensure their preservation.

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

2:30 – 3:00 PM (Three talks 7 min each, 9 minutes of questions following)

### **Coming in from the cold**

Speaker: Mark Strange

Co-Author(s): Lizzie Meek

Institution(s)/Country(s): Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, NEW ZEALAND

#### Abstract

In 2012 a small cardboard box of processed sheet film negatives was discovered in Antarctica. The box had been left in a darkroom at the hut at Cape Evans, built during Robert Falcon Scott's expedition in January 1911. The box was found by conservators employed by Antarctic Heritage Trust, that cares for the expedition bases in the Ross Sea region that were built by the explorers Borchgrevink, Scott, Shackleton and Hillary.

The box had been in the Antarctic climate for just over a century and the enclosed 22 sheets were in a fair to poor condition. While cold and frozen for most of the time, the film appeared to have been exposed to annual thaws and condensation during the summer months. The film nitrate film base was yellowing, there were areas of loss and some mould damage to the gelatin, and all the sheets were blocked together in a single stack – with two sheets folded over on each other. Examination of the images was restricted; they were unable to be viewed or scanned to interpret the image content.

The films had been hand-cut and varied in size, most slightly smaller than 4x5". From the edges of the film and in few places where the film was not attached it was possible to partially view various seascapes, icebergs, skyscapes, and a couple of portraits of individual men, although this was limited. This paper gives an account of the process of separating the blocked sheets, re-establishing enough flatness to enable them to be scanned, and the image content that was revealed.

### **The photography and the work of an artist: albumen and gelatin photographs from the Arturo Viligiardi's corpus. Conservation treatment and study for Idrogels application.**

Speaker: Giulia Fraticelli (OPD)

Co-Author(s): Barbara Cattaneo (OPD), Gabriele Coccolini (OPD), Emanuela Sesti (ALINARI), Isetta Tosini (OPD), Rodorico Giorgi (CSGI-UNIFI)

Institution(s)/Country(s): Opificio delle Pietre Dure of Florence (OPD), Alinari Foundation for the History of Photograph (ALINARI), CSGI Solutions for Conservation of Cultural Heritage, University of Chemistry of Florence (CSGI-UNIFI), ITALY

#### Abstract

The aim of this project has been the conservation treatment of nine albumen and gelatine photographic prints from the Italian artist Arturo Viligiardi's (1869-1936) fund, held among the Fratelli Alinari Collections, Florence (Italy). The conservation work on the prints has been carried out thanks to the results obtained by a preliminary experimental application of gelify systems (chemical Hidrogels created by the University of Florence Department of Chemistry within the NANOFORART project) on photographic surfaces, adapting the use of this new

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

technology to the conservative needs of each item. The goal of this experimentation was to evaluate if such systems had the potential to confine the action of solvents and allow an elevated wetting control, even on extremely delicate surfaces like photographic ones. Thanks to the identification of several graphic sketches and colour stains on the photographic surface, a revived attention was placed on artists' widespread use of photography as a working tool and on the importance of preserving these "stains" which document the use of the photographs in artist's workshop.

This conservation treatment has been the result of a thesis work at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure of Florence, which took one year. During this time, several professionals contributed in defining scientific, ethical and methodological aspects involved in the project.

### **Elevating Photography to Fine Art: Stieglitz's Carbon Prints**

Speaker: Courtney Helion

Co-Author(s): Joan M. Walker, and Constance McCabe

Institution(s)/Country(s): Art Conservation Department at SUNY Buffalo State, USA; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA

#### Abstract

Alfred Stieglitz is well known for his platinum and silver gelatin photographs, but early in his career he also made carbon prints and wrote about the process, promoting it as an effective tool to create works of art. Unlike the more familiar printed-out and developed-out silver and iron-based processes, carbon prints depend on the light-sensitivity of dichromated colloids. Pigmented dichromated gelatin tissues act as intermediary substrates that are ultimately transferred to a receiving support. Traditionally, carbon was one of many final image materials in the prints—other pigments were also used to produce carbon prints in a wide range of colors.

The National Gallery of Art's collection of photographs by Alfred Stieglitz, known as the "Key Set," numbers more than 1,640 photographs including eleven carbon prints made in the late 1890s. The carbon prints in Stieglitz's Key Set were analyzed to determine the binder, pigment, and presence of coatings. They range in color from sepia to shades of gray-black, with paper surface textures ranging from smooth to rough. Several of the prints display evidence of the carbon transfer process, such as burst bubbles from the transfer process and varying sheen from the densest to lightest image areas. Evidence of a coating was also observed in one print. An additional twelfth print had been identified as a "carbon or gum bichromate print," but through technical and visual analysis it was determined to be a photogravure.

This type of investigation highlights the need for non-invasive analysis to more accurately determine the materials and processes used to produce a print, which helps to guide preservation decisions for photograph collections. Proper conservation treatment depends on a thorough knowledge of materials and methods of production and the specific photograph's physical and aesthetic character.

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

### **PMG is turning 40! A look back as the group celebrates a major anniversary and approaches a generational shift**

3:00 PM

Speaker(s): Zach Long and Amanda Maloney

Co-Author(s): Rachel Wetzel

Institution(s)/Country(s): George Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY, and the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), Andover, MA, USA

#### Abstract

On August 20, 1979 the Photographic Materials Group (PMG) became the first specialty group in the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC). The formation of PMG blazed a trail for other specialties to follow and brought about a major organizational change in AIC. At the time photograph conservation was still very much in its infancy and the newly formed group would act as a venue for the exchange of new techniques and information. The group grew slowly at first, but would eventually increase to hundreds and have an international reach. This presentation is a slideshow with a multitude of images covering the group's history, publications, and collaborations. To shed some light on a period little known to the later generations, particular effort was placed on drumming up material from the first seven years, before the creation of Topics in Photographic Preservation. Those of the founding generation, come reminisce of meetings and colleagues past. Younger generation, learn a little of your lineage and come see what your supervisors looked like when they were your age! A summary of an impressive four decades with a lot of accomplishments and a lot to celebrate!

3:25 – 4:00 PM

#### **BREAK**

4:00 PM

### **Attributions, Working Methods and Scientific Analysis of Robert Cornelius' Daguerreotypes- How a collaborative partnership of conservators, curators, scientists and artists help to collectively broaden the understanding of the history of early photography in America.**

Speaker: Rachel Wetzel

Institution(s)/Country(s): CCAHA - Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, Philadelphia, PA, USA

#### Abstract

From 2017 to the present a team of photograph conservators, photograph curators, a conservation scientist and a modern-day daguerreotypist have worked on a National Endowment for the Humanities Research & Development Grant to catalog and document the collective works of Philadelphia-based daguerreotypist Robert Cornelius. In his short but prolific period of creating portraiture in Philadelphia between 1839-1842, Cornelius left behind a body of less than 60 daguerreotypes all produced on hand-made plates with unique cases and frames, all marked with his signature. Research project leader, Rachel Wetzel, spent the better part of the two years traveling and examining all of the known daguerreotypes plates made by Cornelius. She gained not only a better understanding of his working methods but of the changes to the daguerreotype in the early development of the process to the destructive consequences of the historic cleaning agents, all within this body of one man's work. Many

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

daguerreotypes were presented along the way that didn't fit the physical attributes of Robert Cornelius' work but were likely made in the same time era, possibly even in Philadelphia during the early part of the Daguerreian era. This talk will focus on notating the specific attributes of Robert Cornelius' daguerreotypes and how through the collaborative work of this team, one daguerreotype that was previously attributed to Cornelius through scientific analysis was attributed to another daguerreotypist connected to Cornelius. Simultaneously, it will uncover the myth behind the "Cornelius" American-style case which is so often an incorrect source of attribution of his daguerreotypes. Finally, it will draw conclusions on how the collaborative nature of nineteenth century commerce in Philadelphia parallels the alliance between various museum professionals today who are assembling a historic puzzle with a lot of missing pieces.

4:25 PM

### **Visualizing the nanoscale: new developments in the understanding and preservation of the daguerreotype image.**

Speaker: Andrea E. Schlather (a)

Co-Author(s): Paul Gieri (b), Alejandro Manjavacas (b), Silvia A. Centeno (a)

Institution(s)/Country(s): (a) The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY, USA (b)

Department of Physics, University of New Mexico, USA

#### Abstract

The past decade has witnessed a surge of new materials science research revolving around the daguerreotype, ranging from high resolution nanoscale imaging of the surface and sub-surface, to spectroscopic studies to probe the image composition and changes in surface chemistry that can lead to visible image changes. A prime example of this is the white haze that can develop over the daguerreotype image due to the reaction with chloride-containing compounds. Previous studies 1-2 have identified the spectroscopic signature and nanoscale morphology of the chloride-induced haze, still many questions exist surrounding the mechanism and conditions of chloride adsorption and of the chloride- induced surface changes.

Overcoming the challenges that the preservation of daguerreotypes presents requires new tools and novel ways of understanding the properties of the images and the deterioration processes. Because of the nanoscale size and metallic composition of the silver-mercury or silver-mercury-gold image particles, the daguerreotype surface supports specific light-matter interactions called localized surface plasmons (LSPs). Briefly, LSPs allow for the focusing and scattering of light at dimensions much smaller than the wavelength of light, giving rise to optical properties that are sensitive to the nanoscale surface morphology and composition. Consequently, the unique optical features of the daguerreotype image as a whole can be explained by considering the characteristics of the individual image particles, and visual changes of the daguerreotype image can be characterized by the nanoscale changes on the daguerreotype surface. Correlating these two responses opens the possibility to detect nanoscale surface reactions at an early stage using non-invasive optical techniques.

This presentation will outline a novel, LSP-based methodology that can aid in the preservation and care of daguerreotype collections. It will detail the experimental and computational techniques that have been used to characterize image particle composition and morphology on

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

both model and historical daguerreotypes, giving insight into the distinctive angle-dependent optical properties of images. Also, the mechanism of chloride-induced surface change was explored on model daguerreotype samples, combining precise surface morphology measurements with light scattering data. The result is a non-invasive methodology that is capable of detecting chloride-induced surface changes before they are visible to the naked eye and that can be implemented at a relatively low cost in conservation laboratories.

4:50 PM

### **Refining the Daguerreotype Package**

Speaker: Natasha Kung

Co-Author(s): Nora W. Kennedy and Eric Breitung

Institution(s)/Country(s): The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, NY, USA

#### Abstract

The preparation for a major exhibition of Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey daguerreotypes at The Metropolitan Museum of Art presented the opportunity to reconsider the design of daguerreotype housing currently in use at this institution. The Girault de Prangey plates arrived at the Museum housed between glass, with wooden spacers along all four edges, and bound with brown paper tapes. For daguerreotypes that lack an original intact housing, the Met often utilizes a polyester film Z-tray to secure the plate nestled into a matboard spacer and bound between glass. Research commenced to replace the matboard spacer with a material that was not hygroscopic, was less complex, and potentially less reactive. Ideally, the amount of air within the package would be reduced as much as possible. Other considerations included expense, the ability to be assembled in-house, and a desire to fulfill basic aesthetic criteria. This talk will trace the history of daguerreotype packaging, highlighting those materials and designs with favorable characteristics. We will review the materials identified and tested as well as the technologies used to create a range of spacer styles. The tests carried out will be discussed and the results evaluated. The final solutions provide a further refinement and additional options for conservators to choose from when making conservation treatment decisions in this continually evolving area of our profession.

---

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>

9:00 AM

### **Disaster Recovery of Flood Damaged Glass Plates**

Speaker: Erin L. Murphy

Co-Author(s): Elena Bulat and Brenda Bernier

Institution(s)/Country(s): Harvard Library, Cambridge, MA, USA

#### Abstract

Conservators are regularly faced with the possibility and/or reality of collections emergencies which call on their experience, preparation, and knowledge and that of their colleagues. However, how is response and recovery altered when the nature of a disaster reaches beyond

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

collective experience, preparation and knowledge and requires more resources than your team can provide? How are decisions made when the collection is not under your jurisdiction but you are the primary caretaker of photograph materials for your institution? What steps need to be taken to recover items that are inherently fragile and are valued for their reliable scientific data rather than any aesthetic or artistic purposes? Conservators from Harvard Library's Weissman Preservation Center and Collections Care faced just such an emergency in January 2016 when the basement level of the Plate Stacks at the Center for Astrophysics at the Harvard College Observatory was found to be submerged under three feet of murky water due to a water main break. Approximately 60,000 glass plate negatives dating from 1885-1993 were at risk of permanent damage from mold growth, emulsion loss and embedded particulates from prolonged submersion in water. More than just an archive of historic images, the glass plates are still in use by researchers today and the collection is considered one of the most important resources for astrophysicist working world-wide. The plates and their envelopes contain historically important notations and calculations which relate date, location, telescope and points of interest on the plates.

This paper presents an overview of the emergency response and recovery of the 60,000 glass plate negatives at the Harvard Observatory/Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. The discussion will focus on how the historical and contemporary function of the glass plate collection influenced multiple decisions throughout recovery and treatment. Lessons learned about glass plate photographic materials, their ability to withstand water damage, freezing and subsequent aqueous treatments as well as a frank discussion of the event and evaluation of its outcomes will be shared with the audience.

9:25 AM

### **Safely handle moldy photos might be worth a few stains**

Speaker: Susana A. Hoyos Velasco

Institution(s)/Country(s): National Archives of Mexico, MEXICO

#### Abstract

The best thing we can do about a mold outbreak is to dry the objects, vacuum them and then store them in a controlled environment area. Or at least so we are told and try to do the best we can. But what about those archives, museums or other buildings where you cannot have them in a proper environment? What can we do about those moldy items when they need to be handled (e.g. digitization or reprography) in order to save the image and avoid contamination on other areas?

Most of the archives in Mexico have to face many problems: from May to September we have the rain and hurricanes season (or just a very high relative humidity due to the geographic and topographic situation of the country and the tropical climate it generates); buildings many times have damages and even those who are "in good condition" don't have proper environmental control. As you can imagine, mold problems in those archives go beyond any preventive conservation methods. This is why many people, not only in Mexico but also in Latin America, have been trying to develop a response to those outbreaks and look for a solution effective enough to kill mold growth on paper-based

## PROGRAM OF TALKS continued

items, and lately focusing on photographs considering the special characteristics of the binder.

For my bachelors' degree thesis, I tested two different products as antifungals (one natural, based on grapefruit seed extract, and a chemical one made with nanoparticles of a wide variety of compounds) and read many studies focused on antifungals properties of different ones. Based on all that research and the experiments I developed, I've been coming up to the conclusion that the premise about mold not being killed is not completely true in many ways, since not all species react the same way to a single product or concentration of that product. It is true that more research is needed, but my hypothesis at this point is that it is not about what we do, but about how we do it, and that there is a way to have it under control, at least for a short period of time, even if we don't have the right environmental conditions.

Based on that, I also evaluated possible changes in a short-term period on the gelatin finding out that, indeed, those two products had secondary effects on my prints (silver gelatin prints on fiber paper with ferrotyping), but what is more important? Some "minor" changes on color or texture, or a safer life for our photographs, the information they contain and, more important, people who will be in contact with them (mainly when they do not have proper equipment and conditions)?

9:50 AM

### **Refrigeration of nitrate film negatives: the case of "Inmigrantes Japoneses" of the Historical Archive of Centro de la Imagen / Jan Mulder Collection**

Speaker: Natalia Ulloa Rodriguez

Institution(s)/Country(s): Centro de la Imagen, PERU

#### Abstract

Centro de la Imagen is a private institution that began in 1999 as an art institute and a gallery for photography. It focuses mainly on education and exhibitions of contemporary photography. However, since 2012, the cultural area expanded and acquired the Historical Archive / Jan Mulder Collection. This is an archive formed by 11 different collections, one of them Rikio Sugano's "Inmigrantes Japoneses".

Sugano was a Japanese explorer who made 7 world expeditions, one of them to South America, coming to Peru from 1923 to 1924. During his stay in our country, he contacted various groups of Japanese immigrants, especially those from the Fukushima prefecture, where he was originally from. He visited the towns of Huaral, Chancay, Chiclayo, Cañete and Mollendo, as well as Lima, and places of the mountains and jungle. This was recorded in photographic negatives that Sugano commissioned to the Shirasaka Photographic House, opened by his countrymen in Peru. Through these images, we can reconstruct not only the interests of Mr. Sugano, but everything that was considered representative of Peru for a foreigner: geography, history, tradition, agriculture and industry.

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

“Inmigrantes Japoneses” is the first collection in Peru that has been stored in cold temperatures. We had the urgent need of giving a proper treatment to this collection because the negatives were between stages 3 and 4 of nitrate film deterioration. The first obstacle that we faced was that we would not be able to freeze the collection because we did not have the certainty that the electrical power would work properly and that there would not be any power cuts. The second one was the budget that we had, as it would not be enough to buy the freezer and implement a security power system, like a generator. So, we decided to store the collection at 40-46°F and 30-40%RH, conditions that we could achieve with a common refrigerator and moisture-proof housing. The third obstacle was that we did not have enough personnel to implement this project in short time: it took us almost two years to complete it.

We could not have done the project without the financing we received in 2016 when we were asked for reproductions for an art exhibition in Brazil. We took this as an opportunity to clean and digitize the entire collection, to do the moisture pre-conditioning of the negatives, and the manufacturing of the enclosures and moisture-proof housing.

As the cultural area, the archive and the gallery have a joint budget for the year and it is mostly spent for exhibitions. So, we had to wait until 2018 when a new budget opened to finally buy the refrigerator. We installed exit signs and a fire extinguisher in the separate room where we keep the refrigerator; and for monitoring, we use a digital thermo-hygrometer and transfer the data manually every week for analysis. It has been a big effort, even for us, to implement this kind of project in a country where there are no specific government policies for photographic heritage and so, public and private photographic archives cannot apply for government funds.

10:15 – 11:00

### **BREAK**

11:00 AM

### **Current Photograph Conservation Practices in Egypt: What To Do and What Not To Do**

Speaker: Maha Ahmed (a)

Co-Author(s): Emil Henin (b), Mervat Abdallah (c), Francis Mohareb (d)

Institution(s)/Country(s): (a) Cairo University, Giza, EGYPT; (b) Ministry of Antiquities, Cairo, EGYPT; (c) Helwan University, Giza, EGYPT; (d) Luxor University, Luxor, EGYPT

#### Abstract

Photographic collections form a fundamental part of Egypt’s cultural heritage for their documentary and artistic value. Photography reached Egypt in 1839, presumably through François Arago’s presentation of the daguerreotype process to the French Academy of Science. It was greatly encouraged by its Ottoman ruler Muhammad Ali Pasha who gave it special attention as he always did with all new inventions. In the early 19th century, Armenians played a leading role in spreading photography in Egypt by establishing small downtown studios. Later in the 19th and early 20th century, Egypt became a destination for many photographers who were attracted by the beauty and mystery of its ancient treasures. Among the notable photographers who photographed Egypt are Maxime Du Camp, Félix Teynard, J.B. Greene, Francis Frith, Antonio Beato, the Zangaki Brothers, Gabriel Lekegian, Louis Saboungi, Leichter

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

and W. Hanselman. Early photographs of Egypt remain witness to the evolution of photography in the Middle East and to a time long gone. Today, these images are held by archives, libraries and museums all across Egypt, from Cairo to Nubia. Until recently, Egypt had a lack of interest in photographs due to the existence of much more ancient documentaries (e.g. papyri) which were thought to be more worthy of preservation. However, with a number of Egyptian scholars dedicating their studies to the importance of photograph preservation, the concern for historical photographs has significantly increased. Damaged photographs present a challenge in the conservation field. Photographs with their complex structure are prone to deterioration and degradation by many factors (i.e. natural aging, poor manufacture, poor processing, temperature and relative humidity, air pollution, light and irradiation, biological threats, inappropriate handling and misuse and disasters). Resultant damage forms can be divided into four categories: i) physical forms (e.g. tears); ii) chemical forms (e.g. discoloration); iii) biological damage (e.g. fungal stains); and iv) deposited matter. Unlike other records, photographs have special conservation requirements. Photograph conservation is a relatively new specialism in Egypt. Accordingly, the work of a photograph conservator is not as clear to conservation institutions and collection holders as might be assumed. In many cases, when photographs deteriorate, there is a strong desire to restore them to their original appearance and condition. There are many treatments that may be employed to restore the physical and chemical stability of damaged photographs as well as improve their aesthetic appearance. However, there are ethical issues which must be taken into consideration when treating photographs to ensure that their integrity is not compromised. One also must take into account that almost all treatments can possibly do much harm as good. We have selected different types of photographs (i.e. albumen prints, silver gelatin prints and others) suffering from various damage forms for this study with aim of sharing the current photograph conservation practices in Egypt with other professionals, scholars, and international organizations through discussing what we do, what we do not do and why. We believe that this would greatly assist in developing criteria and better strategies for the preservation of our photographic heritage.

11:25 AM

### **Sudden damage to obsolete print materials**

Speaker: Teresa Mesquit

Institution(s)/Country(s): Moderna Museet, Stockholm, SWEDEN

#### Abstract

Sudden damage to collections will trigger responses that for good reason are action-oriented and guided by protocols in order to ensure containment, timely assessment, and recovery from unforeseen events. Undetected damage runs a slightly different course.

While most staff were on vacation in the summer of 2017, a water leak in one of the inner vaults at Moderna Museet's off-site storage was discovered, affecting nearly 30 large-format color photographs hung in the compact system. The leak event had happened more than a month before and the spillage had dried. No flooding occurred but the water had traveled from a story above when workers pressure-washed what they thought was a sealed floor. That water traveled through building materials and between ceiling panels, splattering onto framed prints as well as unglazed, laminated works. An inventory of the damage followed, possible microbial

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

presence was ruled out in a report by an outside vendor, and eventually staff could begin the task of assessing whether the artworks could be successfully treated.

Given the reproducibility of photographs, it is not a far reach for stakeholders to ask whether reprinting and replacing could be a viable option to address the damage. For example, museums have tested the idea of surrogate prints in some cases of critical color shift over a photograph's lifetime. Was it valid in our case to weigh the costs of reprinting against time-consuming testing and treatment? A defining point was that the damaged works were produced with materials that no longer were available: in one case a series of chromogenic prints from 2001, in another, an editioned suite of Cibachrome prints from the early 1990s. Considering the singularity of the artworks, the course of action seemed straightforward and all attempts were made to recover them. The series of chromogenic prints was successfully treated while the group of Cibachrome prints does not appear to be salvable.

This presentation reviews the initial line of response and lessons learned, the treatment efforts, and the considerations made in arriving at replacements for the damaged works, something that has yet to be resolved.

11:50 AM

### **Ethical considerations when exhibiting, studying and treating photographic albums: the Asser albums at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.**

Speaker: Rosina Herrera Garrido

Institution(s)/Country(s): Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS

#### Abstract

The Rijksmuseum holds the collection of Eduard Isaac Asser (1809-1894), one of the pioneers in photography in the Netherlands. Besides a few daguerreotypes and photolithographs, the bulk of his oeuvre consists of 187 photographs kept in four albums. Asser's work was donated to the State of the Netherlands in 1994 by the Asser Family Foundation. An exhibition was then organized and opened in 1998. At that time, exhibiting a few objects and the albums showing just one page would not have made a big impact. A difficult decision was made, and 42 prints were taken out of the albums, framed and hung onto the walls. This was done in the Nationaal Fotorestauratie Atelier in Rotterdam, in two ways: 1. Prints that were mounted with local spots of adhesive were mechanically detached. 2. When the prints were completely adhered to the page, the entire page was cut along the spine. After the exhibition, these prints and pages were hinged back in their place with Japanese paper. Since there is not a detailed report, contact with the people involved was pursued. Unfortunately, not everybody could be reached but, the book conservator was pleased to discuss the decision and the controversy around them. It appears that she had no choice but to make possible the exhibition plan designed by the curatorial team.

It is surprising to us now that in 1998, the desire for the exhibition outweighed the integrity of an object. However, situations like this are recurrent and, in 2017, another print from an Asser's album was requested to be taken out for display. That particular print was already used in 1998. Nowadays we would not have accepted to cut the original album page, which means that

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

something has changed in the last ten years. However, we did accept to cut the modern Japanese paper hinge. This act is definitely less invasive, but, is it still justifiable? The story of these albums does not finish here. Currently, the prints in the albums are the subject of technical research. In order to fit the ATR Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) device, 24 objects (now hinged with Japanese paper) were detached. Also, in 11 prints that could not be separated, samples were taken to perform Absorbance FTIR. The author of this abstract is responsible for these interventions. Destroying the original mounting today is objectionable, but disturbing previous treatments or taking samples could be justified (although only after long deliberations).

Looking back to preceding interventions without judgment is an excellent exercise to learn and grow professionally. One can take opposite decisions on similar cases in different moments of their career. There is always a way to justify our present actions and, in hindsight, regret years later. However, one thing remains the same. The most popular objects are always the ones treated and re-treated. Perhaps it is time to look critically to the reasons why we alter those objects and when our treatments should start being considered part of their history.

12:15 PM

### **Once upon a time ; The history of the photograph conservation lab at the Art Institute of Chicago**

Speaker: Marie-Lou Beauchamp

Institution(s)/Country(s): Department of Conservation and Science, The Art Institute of Chicago, USA

#### Abstract

Photograph conservation today is the result of the pioneering work of devoted conservators and allied professionals, eager to better understand and preserve photographs. In a field dedicated to a medium that does not yet have 200 years of existence, we have the unique opportunity to document the history of photograph conservation from its beginning and often, from primary sources. Projects like the FAIC Oral History and the Archival Records of Art Conservators at Winterthur are structures that already support the preservation of the history of conservation in North America. However, only with our contributions will they become an accurate and complete recollection of the field's history.

Between the incorporation of AIC Photographic Materials Group in 1979 and the creation of the Image Permanence Institute in 1985, the Art Institute of Chicago became one of the first fine art museums in the world to establish a facility dedicated to the examination, analysis, preservation, and conservation of photographs in 1982, and hired Doug Severson as its first photograph conservator. Through an exploration of the institution's archive, as well as interviews of former and current museum staff, this project retraces the history of the museum's photograph conservation lab over the past 37 years. It highlights its impact on the Department of Photography and its collecting, as well as its contributions to the field of photograph conservation, from the building of cool and cold storage vaults and pioneer densitometry monitoring to better understand the effects of light on photographs, to in-depth technical and scientific research on artists' practices and cutting edge conservation treatments.

## **PROGRAM OF TALKS continued**

This research project constitutes only one piece of the history of our field. Recording how photograph conservation have evolved at the Art Institute of Chicago and beyond is an interesting and engaging way to understand many of the “how” and the “why” of photo conservation today.

**12:40 – 2:00 LUNCH**

**AFTERNOON OFF-SITE TOURS**

**EVENING RECEPTION (6:30 – 9:00 PM)**

---

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**OFF-SITE WORKSHOPS**