



## CONFERENCE INFORMATION

- [Website & programme](#)
  - Location: Bruno Walter Auditorium, [New York Public Library for the Performing Arts](#) [Fig. 1]
  - [Speakers \(bios\)](#)
- Ca. 175 participants (photograph conservators, curators and researchers) mostly working in the US but also in Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of China, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

## PRESENTATIONS

### • **Art technical studies**

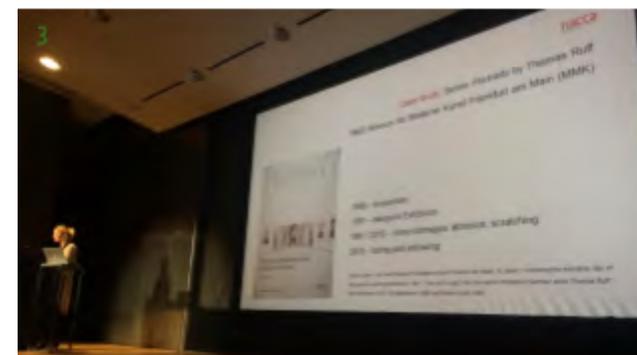
On this matter, both **Joan Walker** ([National Gallery of Art](#), Washington D.C.) and **Courtney Helion** ([Art Conservation Department at SUNY Buffalo State](#), Buffalo, NY) talked about Alfred Stieglitz and how his use of different techniques impacted the aesthetics in his images. **Hanako Murata** ([The Better Image](#), New York, NY) explained how it is essential to correctly identify Gevalure Velour prints as a way to be aware of their very pressure sensitive surfaces [Fig. 2].

**Elsa Thyss** ([The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), New York, NY) went on to study Bellocq's negatives with images of New Orleans prostitutes, to understand how and why the *scratches* on many of the sitters' faces had been made. We also heard from **Laura Panadero** ([Harvard Art Museums](#), Cambridge, MA) about Gardner's albums with images of the American Civil war and **Joseph LaBarca** ([Pixel Preservation International](#), Rochester, NY) talked about the evolution of Ektacolor papers.

### • **Issues in contemporary photography**

The use of digital photography continues to pose many questions, especially in the conservation of works in the fine-art world. Both the presentations of **Marta García Celma** ([Cologne University of Applied Sciences / NACCA](#), Cologne) and **Roberta Piantavigna** and **Erin O'Toole** ([San Francisco Museum of Modern Art](#), San Francisco, CA) focused on the issues surrounding the policy of reprinting photographs [Fig. 3]. The different parties involved in the decision making process may have very distinct opinions, which is why it is important to have discussions among artists, curators and conservators. In this regard, the SFMoMA is currently hosting [The Artist Initiative](#).

**Millard Schisler** ([Johns Hopkins University](#), Baltimore, MD) focused on the need for new professionals, with training specifically designed to care for this type of heritage. He also pointed out that in a world where there are an unparalleled number of images being produced every second, there are under-represented groups (such as indigenous communities in Brazil).



- **Research with practical application**

**Anna Laganà** and **Sarah Freeman** ([Getty Conservation Institute](#) and [J. Paul Getty Museum](#) respectively, Los Angeles, CA) showed how the developed [research](#) on the treatment of PMMA yielded results that can also be applied on face-mounted photographs [Fig. 4]. The most promising materials to treat surface level scratches on PMMA was [Regalrez 1094](#)® and deeper losses with [Hxtal](#)® NYL-1.

**Susana Hoyos** ([National Archives of Mexico](#), Mexico City) has studied the use of [Citricidal](#)® (grapefruit extract) and [Éviter](#)® (titanium dioxide nanoparticles in ethanol) as sprays to treat large photograph archives with fungal growth. Both these products are far less toxic than other used in the past for similar purposes and are also biodegradable. So far, [Éviter](#)® seems to be the most efficient of the two. More testing is needed to fully understand the potential of these products and their effects on the objects they are applied to.

Two presentations from conservators working at the [Opificio delle Pietre Dure](#) (Florence), showed the application of hydro and nanogels in the restoration of prints and albums. **Barbara Cattaneo** worked in the restoration of albums from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze and of [Villa I Tatti](#), one of which was damaged during the 1966 Florence floods.

**Giulia Fraticelli** ([Opificio delle Pietre Dure](#), Florence) worked with prints from the [Fratelli Allinari Collections](#). Both conservators underlined the fact that gels can be reused.

- **Focus on daguerreotypes**

In two related projects, **Magdalena Pilko** ([University of Amsterdam](#), Amsterdam) [Fig. 5] and **Martin Jürgens** ([Rijksmuseum Amsterdam](#), Amsterdam) [Fig. 6] described their experiences when recreating methods of etching daguerreotypes from the 1840s-1850s. Their goal was to better understand the few known objects from this era and determine characteristics that allow us identify more of them. Early photomechanical processes are still relatively unknown because of their rarity and difficulty to put into practice. From 2014-2016 Martin Jürgens, Ioannis Vasallos and I were both involved in the research related to Dr. Joseph Berres's *Phototyp*, which resulted in an article published on the [Rijksmuseum Bulletin](#).

**Elena Bulat** ([Harvard University](#), Cambridge, MA) talked about two unusually large daguerreotypes with portraits of Edwin Forrest, one of which had mould, water damage and glass corrosion [Fig. 7]. She talked about the treatment of these objects and clues that might lead to their more accurate attribution.

I was asked to mediate the session where **Rachel Wetzel** ([Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts](#), Philadelphia, PA), **Natasha Kung** and **Andrea E. Schlather** ([The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), New York, NY) talked about their work in within this topic. Rachel Wetzel has been studying ca. 60 daguerreotypes by [Robert Cornelius](#), made between 1839-1843, in partnership with many institutions around the US. These daguerreotypes were not gold toned, which makes their [restoration](#) especially complicated as they have extremely sensitive surfaces.

In the context of preparing for the Girault de Prangey [exhibition](#), Natasha Kung talked about the studying the materials used for a newly designed housing system for these daguerreotypes. Andrea E. Schlather explained her work on the detection of chloride crystalline residues before they become visible in the form of white haze. For that, she used [localized surface plasmons](#).



- **Conservation challenges**

**Mark Strange** (National Library of New Zealand, Wellington) talked about his experience with 22 nitrate negatives from the Antarctic Heritage Trust [Fig. 8]. They had until recently been in a darkroom in Ross Island (Antarctica) and were stuck to each other and severely damaged. Separating and treating these objects provided insight into Ernest Shackleton's expedition (1914-1917).

**Erin L. Murphy** (Harvard Library, Cambridge, MA) talked about the experience of disaster response to salvage ca. 64.000 glass plates from the Center for Astrophysics, Harvard College Observatory in 2016. The plates were frozen and more recently acclimatized, cleaned and digitised. She underlined the importance of building relationships with people that might be involved in first response far before disasters happen [Fig. 9].

In a smaller scale, but nonetheless worrisome, **Teresa Mesquit** (Moderna Museet, Stockholm) told us about an incident at the museum's off-site storage, where ca. 30 colour photographs were damaged by a leak in the building. Some were not protected by any type of glazing and different approaches had to be taken according to production technique, for which establishing a workflow was very helpful. This example reminded us all to make sure we protect unglazed photographs and pay closer attention to storage areas that are not often in use.

Other presentations talked about dealing with large quantities of objects (**Jessica Régimbald**, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Montréal, QC and **Krista Lough**, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY), as well as with large and unusual formats (**Belinda Gourley**, Museums Victoria, Melbourne, VIC).

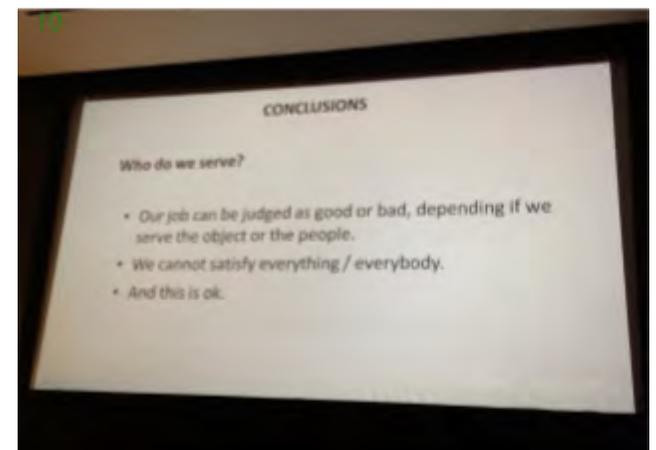
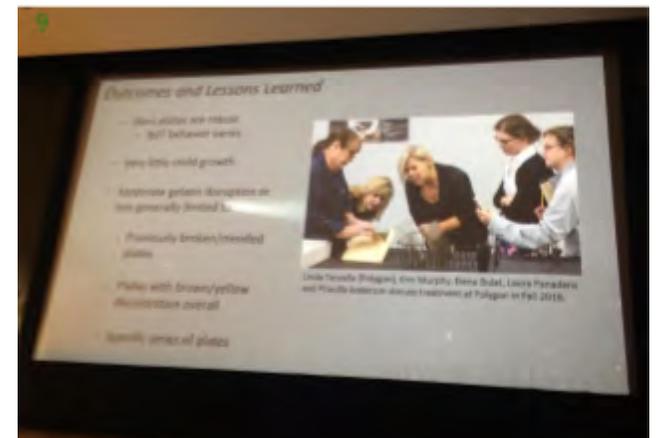
- **Terminology and ethical issues**

**Jan Burandt** (The Menil Collection, Houston, TX) and **Jennifer McGlinchey Sexton** (McGlinchey Sexton Conservation LLC, Colorado Springs, CO) developed a concise system to describe photographs, in a way that really brings out their material qualities in ways that, for example, a digital image will not be able to convey.

**Bertrand Lavédrine** (Centre de Recherche sur la Conservation des Collections, Musée national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris) made us reflect on the negative and the use of this terminology.

**Catarina Pereira** (Catholic University, Porto) talked about the common practice of digitizing negatives and how their presentation as positive images in databases may lead to the misinterpretation of the originals. Negatives are not only worth for the image information they possess, but also for their so called archaeological value – the study of how they were made from both a technical and material perspective are also ways for us to better understand the period when they were originally made. Ignoring this is a disservice to the objects we are trying to preserve.

The presentation by **Rosina Herrera Garrido** (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Amsterdam) made us all reflect on what it means to be a photograph conservator. She used the example of three photographic albums by Eduard Asser and the changes they had been submitted to along the years for exhibition purposes. In its core, the presentation it showed how we should all have more empathy towards of our colleagues, to be less judgemental about the decisions that were made – as we all do the best we can [Fig. 10]. We should not forget to think about why we do what we do, and for whom we do it.



- **Advocacy, funding and the early history of photograph conservation**

In most cases, obtaining funding for conservation is highly dependent on collaborations with the surrounding community. **Janka Križanová** talked about the conservation and restoration program at the [Academy of Fine Arts and Design](#), Bratislava, and the steps taken to make it more impactful. Unfortunately, the presentation by Maha Ahmed ([Cairo University](#), Giza) did not take place.

The presentation I gave with my colleague **Katrin Pietsch** ([Nederlands Fotomuseum](#), Rotterdam) focused on the process of finding a treatment method to safely remove mould from reversal film for the conservation of Ed van der Elsken's colour slide collection [Fig. 11]. The project was completed in 2018 and its success is connected to the close collaboration of the museum's different departments, the generosity of private, governmental and corporate sponsors and the fine-tuning of the cleaning method workflow. We have started giving workshops in this subject and plan to continue to share the gained knowledge in the future. Our participation in this event was generously funded by [ICOM-Nederland's travel subsidies](#).

The survey done by **Ioannis Vasallos** at the [National Library of Scotland](#) laid the groundwork to know more about the photographs spread throughout the collection, as well as to establish conservation priorities and setting up projects where work with students and volunteers is possible [Fig. 12].

**Sarah Allen** ([ABCD Conservation Studio](#), Somerset and Lincoln) took a similar approach in the conservation of ca. 10.000 rediscovered glass negatives, now part of the [Sutton Archives](#). The "Past on Glass" project was made possible by [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#).

**Natalia Ulloa** ([Centro de la Imagen](#), Lima) talked about **Rikio Sugano's** ca. 140 nitrate negatives with images of Japanese immigrants in Peru (1922-1923). The negatives were also affected by fungal deterioration, for which they were treated in collaboration with students and volunteers. It was only possible to place them in [cold storage](#) (the first for photographs in all of Peru) through the revenue from the image rights, as, at a government level photographic materials are still not considered part of the country's cultural heritage.

**Zach Long** ([George Eastman Museum](#), Rochester, NY) and **Amanda Maloney** ([Northeast Documentation Conservation Center](#), Andover, MA) gave a presentation celebrating the 40 years of the AIC Photographic Materials Group. Although relatively new, the group already has quite a bit of history.

**Marie-Lou Beauchamp** ([The Art Institute of Chicago](#), Chicago, IL) went into the history of the photograph conservation laboratory of her institution, the first ever established in the US. This talk was part of the [FAIC Oral History Project](#). In 2019 the museum organized the "Conserving Photographs" exhibition, where it is possible to see how storing colour photographs in cold depots has made a massive impact in their preservation [Fig. 13].

**Debra Hess Norris** ([University of Delaware](#), Newark, DE) encouraged us all to try our hand at advocating for photograph conservation, and announced a [website](#) where we all can find more tools and information about it.



## WORKSHOPS

- **“Inkjet prints in collections – Dealing with the delicate”**  
**New York Public Library Barbara Goldsmith Conservation Lab**  
**19.02.2019**

For about 20 workshop participants, **Martin Jürgens** (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Amsterdam) talked about how a slightly different approach is needed to preserve such objects [Fig. 14]. There was an evolution in terms of material permanence within digital printing technology and it has now even more applications. In art collections, inkjet prints are typically on paper, resin-coated or baryta paper. Prints with swellable and porous ink receiving layers behave differently, as well as dye and pigment based inks. One method of describing these objects was developed at the **Image Permanence Institute (IPI)** (see also [dp3project.org](http://dp3project.org)). It's important to register as much information as possible when acquiring these objects, with the **Photographic Information Record**. Reducing handling and contact with other materials is paramount, as very often these prints will scratch easily. Although dry to the touch, drying is necessary before mounting or framing. The latest storage recommendations from IPI (2014) recommend that inkjet are kept in a colder environment.

After the workshop, participants were given the chance to take a tour around the NYPL's Conservation Lab [Fig. 15].

- **“Fundamentals of Color Monitoring”**  
**Sherman Fairchild Center for Works on Paper and Photograph Conservation**  
**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**  
**23.02.2019**

**Katherine Sanderson** (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY) has been using spectrophotometers to monitor the condition of about 500 photographs for the past 10 years [Fig. 16]. She shared her knowledge on this topic with ca. 15 participants.

We first focused on the principles of colour and colour monitoring then learned more about the different types of spectrophotometers and how they work. It's important to keep in mind that these are not tools developed for conservation purposes, so they have their limitations. Also, no device is exactly the same (see [article Sanderson 2017](#)). Even so, they help up understand, in a relative but quantitative way, how objects change depending on how much light they are exposed to. For its practical use, it is important to closely follow a protocol but also to take into consideration the sources of error. Data analysis is also a very important point, as it is only valuable if interpreted correctly. It seems to be valuable to compare data obtained with spectrophotometers with that from micro-faders and gloss meters (see, e.g. [article Freeman et al \(2014\)](#)).



## GUIDED TOURS

- **Erna and Victor Hasselblad Photography Study Center and Cold Storage**  
**The Robert B. Menschel Department of Photography**  
**The Museum of Modern Art**  
**22.02.2019**

**Lee Ann Daffner** and **Sara Meister** (The Museum of Modern Art) talked to about 20 participants about the evolution of the Department of Photography at the museum, both in terms of the policies practiced by different curators and how the collection has been preserved. For that, we were able to see some examples of photographs from the collection, among which were albumen prints by **Eugène Atget**, photograms by Man Ray and a few different versions of “**Migrant Mother**” (1936) by Dorothea Lange [Fig. 17]. It is important that, as a collection that is often exhibited, the database includes the exhibition history for each object, also calculating how long it should stay in storage before being displayed again. More and more, materiality is discussed when considering new acquisitions.

We also visited the museum’s cool and cold depot for photographs [Fig. 18]. There, **Krista Lough**, who gave a talk during the conference, showed us how where “My Birth” photographs are kept. With the growing collection and the current trend towards production of large-scale photographs there is a need for more storage space.



## BUSINESS MEETINGS

- **AIC PMG, 20.02.2019**
- **ICOM-CC PMWG, 21.02.2019**

As a member of both groups, I was able to attend both meetings, where I was informed about the latest initiatives on each group, as well as to vote on the proposed motions.

## RECEPTION

- **Duke House, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU**  
**22.02.2019**

