



BULLETIN

Department of Photograph Conservation

Sherman Fairchild Center for Works on Paper
and Photograph Conservation

No. 15, September 2019

Support the Department of Photograph Conservation

Photograph Conservation is thriving, and we are immensely grateful for your investment in our success! Contributing to the ongoing acquisition, exhibition and loan activities of the photograph and time-based media artworks across all Museum collections, our department serves as a crucial resource for the long-term care of works of art, and is a vibrant center for research and education. We are proud of our stature in the field and the expansion of our lab into the time-based media arena.

To continue your support or to give for the first time, please contact the Office of Development at 212-650-2352 or by email at Marilyn.Hernandez@metmuseum.org. You may also contribute online at: www.metmuseum.org/donate. Be sure to click on 'Tell us About Your Donation' and note 'For Department of Photograph Conservation'.

TBM at The Met!

Interviews are underway to identify and hire the first-ever time-based media conservator in Met Museum history. With Keighley Foundation funding, the incumbent will be in place for one year, as the quest for future funding continues. Simultaneously, a new time-based media conservation lab space is in the design phase, and should be completed and fully equipped this fall. With this new position and the TBM conservation lab, The Met is well positioned to care for, exhibit, and study its rapidly growing collection of time-based media artworks.

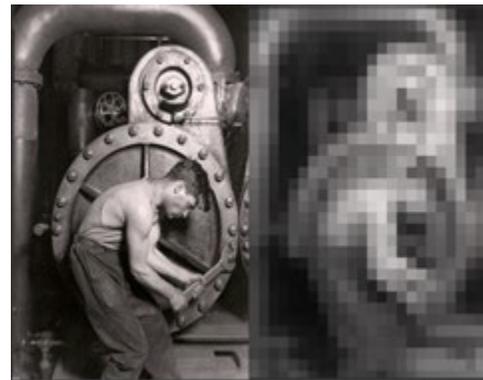


Death Is Elsewhere, a seven-channel video installation by acclaimed Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson. Alex Nichols, the Met's first fellow in time-based media conservation, played an integral role in the exhibition preparation, mounting and conservation documentation for the visually stunning world premiere of this TBM artwork.

Why Print a Photograph in 2019?

There is still time to register for the forthcoming symposium and seminars entitled *Material Immaterial: Photographs in the 21st Century, 23-25 September 2019*, which integrates the worlds of conservation, art, and scientific research. Organized by [Paul Messier](#) and [Monica Bravo](#), and hosted by the [IPCH](#) at Yale University, as part of the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation's Collaborative Workshops in Photograph Conservation series. Programming includes research into W. H. F. Talbot's *Pencil of Nature*, lightfastness and microfading testing, and the artistry of cameraless photographs. The workshop series is supported by the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#), a grant from the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) (NEH), and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation's (FAIC) Endowment for Professional Development. Join fellow lovers of photographs for this engaging event.

Register for the symposium and optional seminars [here](#).



Lewis Hine, 1920
Power house mechanic working on steam pump



Lisa Barro Begins a New Chapter

Photograph Conservation colleague **Lisa Barro** has left the Metropolitan Museum to embark on the next stage of her career. A graduate of the New York University conservation graduate program, Lisa had her first paid association with The Met while still a student when she was hired to carry out XRF analysis on some of Edward Steichen's photographs. She started her part-time employment with the Museum in 2007 when she replaced departing conservator Nancy Reinhold. In addition to managing all photograph loans and contributing to many exhibitions, Lisa has been deeply committed to collection-based scientific and scholarly research. She has made profound contributions to the technical literature including *The Deterioration of Paul Strand's Satista Prints*, *An Initial Investigation into Japine: William Willis's Proprietary Paper*, *Gustave Le Gray's Salted Paper Prints* and most recently *Investigation of the Possible Origins of Sulfur in 19th Century Salted Paper Photographs by X-Ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy*. Join us in wishing Lisa the very best in the next chapter of her career!

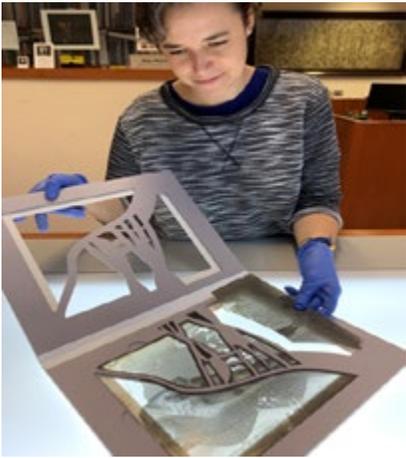
Welcome Bryanna Knotts, Research Scholar

We are delighted to welcome former intern and New York University Institute of Fine Arts Conservation Center graduate **Bryanna Knotts** back to The Met as our incoming Research Scholar in Photograph Conservation. Bryanna's two-year fellowship will focus on developing a practical methodology to track the deterioration phenomenon called "silver mirroring". The long-term application of these methods will help to determine whether it is exhibition or the storage environment that primarily contributes to this form of alteration on black-and-white photographs. Together with her research, she will be integrated fully into the busy lab and will participate in numerous museum fellowship activities organized by the Education Department. She returns to The Met, having completed her fourth year of study as a graduate conservation student in training at the Art Institute of Chicago. At The Met previously in various capacities, she was a pre-program intern in Photograph Conservation and was Assistant Coordinator of Online Publications in the Digital Department from 2012-2014 working with the MMA website initiatives *One Met. Many Worlds*, *MetPublications*, and the *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*.



Congratulations to our Departing Fellows, Elsa Thyss and Alex Nichols!

It is with a mix of pride and sadness that we bid farewell to our two most recent fellows. Elsa Thyss and Alex Nichols, each of whom has contributed greatly to the scholarship of the Met's collections, to the field of conservation, and to ongoing activities here in the lab. We are grateful for our time together and so proud of them both.



Elsa, with a completed custom enclosure for a broken E. J. Bellocq glass plate negative

Elsa worked in our midst as Research Scholar for three years, making significant inroads into the technical investigation of our collection of E. J. Bellocq glass plate negatives. She expanded our understanding of and appreciation for the material structure, technical history, and condition of the Bellocq negatives, performed complex stabilization treatments, and devised an ingenious and elegant method in which to rehouse each one. She leaves us with a fully documented, treated, and rehoused Bellocq collection, which, for the first time, is now stabilized and safe for consultation by Museum staff and outside scholars. Elsa moves on to a two-year fellowship at the Art Institute of Chicago where she will work with Sylvie Pénichon, NYU's first graduate in photograph conservation.

Alex Nichols worked with us for two years and made Met history as the very first Sherman Fairchild Fellow in time-based media (TBM) conservation. Alex worked seamlessly with colleagues throughout the Museum, particularly in Digital, Photographs, Modern & Contemporary, and the Counsel's Office to improve our TBM conservation practices. She researched digital storage solutions for time-based media artworks, and assisted in the installation and documentation of TBM artworks for exhibition. Together with numerous colleagues and contractors, Alex contributed to the Museum-wide TBM artwork survey and assessment carried out in the spring of 2018, the results of which helped build an understanding of how to move forward with TBM conservation for the Museum. We wish Alex all the best as she heads to the Tate Modern, to begin a TBM conservator position.



Alex, with the VCD Players, Power Cords, and Hook from *Every Shot, Every Episode*, 2001, by Jennifer and Kevin McCoy, (2002.274).



Man Ray (American, Philadelphia 1890-1976 Paris). "The World (*Le Monde*)", in *Électricité*, 1931. Photogravure. Gift of Joyce F. Menschel. (2013.1098.13.9).

Currently on View

Catch these exhibitions before they close:

[*Apollo's Muse: The Moon in the Age of Photography*](#)

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue until September 22, 2019

[*Phenomenal Nature: Mrinalini Mukherjee*](#)

On view at The Met Breuer until September 29, 2019

[*Home is a Foreign Place: Recent Acquisitions in Context*](#)

On view at The Met Breuer until June 21, 2020

[*The Facade Commission: Wangechi Mutu, The New Ones, will free Us*](#)

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue until January 20, 2020



Coming soon...

[Vija Celmins: To Fix the Image in Memory](#)

Opens at The Met Breuer on September 24, 2019

[Rayyane Tabet: Alien Property](#)

Opens at The Met Fifth Avenue on October 30, 2019

At left: Vija Celmins. *Untitled (Big Sea #1) (detail)*, 1969. Graphite on acrylic ground on paper. Private collection. © Vija Celmins, courtesy the artist and Matthew Marks Gallery. Photo © McKee Gallery, NY.

To read more about the Department, visit our [website](#).

Follow us on Instagram [@metphotoconservation](#).

Ragnar Kjartansson: Death Is Elsewhere is made possible by Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee. Additional support is provided by the Director's Fund and The Modern Circle.

Apollo's Muse: The Moon in the Age of Photography is made possible by OMEGA. Additional support is provided by the Enterprise Holdings Endowment and The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

Phenomenal Nature: Mrinalini Mukherjee is made possible by Nita and Mukesh Ambani and the Reliance Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Estate of Brooke Astor, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and The Coby Foundation, Ltd.

The Facade Commission: Wangechi Mutu, *The New Ones, will free Us* is made possible by Cathrin M. Stickney and Mark P. Gorenberg. Additional support is provided by the Ford Foundation, Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon B. Polsky, and the Director's Fund.

Vija Celmins: To Fix The Image in Memory is made possible in part by the Aaron I. Fleischman and Lin Loughheed Fund. It is co-organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

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