

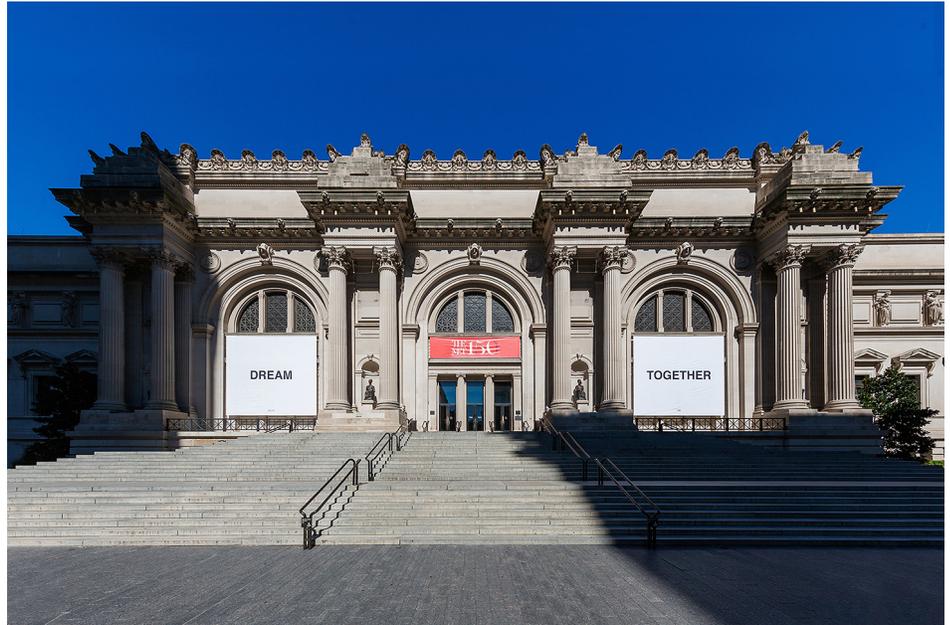
Department of Photograph Conservation  
Sherman Fairchild Center for Works on Paper  
and Photograph Conservation

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**1 ♦ Reflections, 2020** — As we near the end of this eventful 2020 year, we take a moment to reflect on the achievements of the Department of Photograph Conservation at The Met. Despite the profoundly unexpected developments the world over, and the changes in work practices here at the Museum, we celebrate some highlights from our year, not least that 2020 marks **the fifth anniversary of Photograph Conservation as an independent department at The Met.** Led by Nora Kennedy, Sherman Fairchild Conservator in Charge, the Department continues to grow in stature, with a newly established position for a time-based media (TBM) conservator, a TBM conservation lab space, and new analytical equipment. Now with a full-time administrator, three photograph conservators, a book conservator, and a TBM conservator, the Department looks forward to the challenges of 2021 with the bandwidth necessary to dive into the many responsibilities of our profession, including our ongoing research, education, and advocacy activities in addition to our daily workload supporting the Museum's robust exhibition and loan program.

**2 ♦ In Appreciation** — As 2020 comes to a close, we raise a toast to all our Museum colleagues past and present. You all are the primary reason that working at The Met is such an honor and a privilege. We appreciate your friendship, your collaboration, your professionalism, and your spirit. As we learn, struggle, grow, and celebrate together, our everyday lives are enriched both professionally and personally.

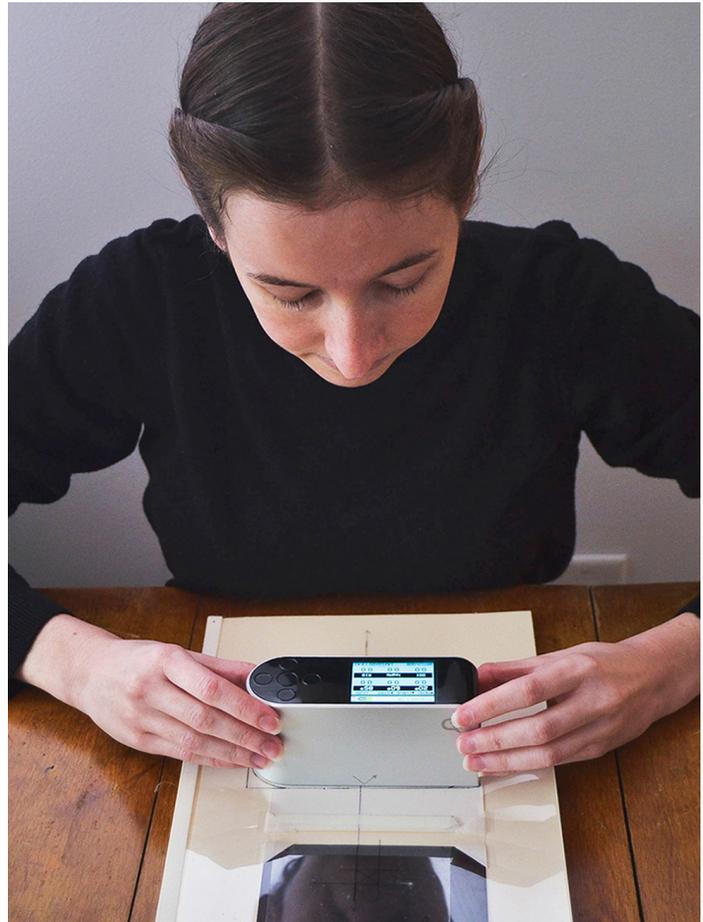
In all aspects of our Museum duties and responsibilities, the collaborative energy you bring offers greater joy and satisfaction to our mutual goals. With appreciation of you all, we extend our heartfelt best wishes for a rejuvenating holiday season and a propitious New Year ahead.

**3 ♦ Our Fifth Anniversary** — Although we would have loved to celebrate our fifth anniversary of becoming an independent department in person with all of you, we are thrilled to have arrived at this milestone and look forward to future gatherings on-site in the Museum. Photograph Conservation was established as an independent Museum Department in 2015, recognizing the importance of this distinct area of expertise and the photograph conservators' international reputation for excellence. We are marking our anniversary this year by simply appreciating the many facets of our collaborative work within our Museum community, whether that entails the less public-facing but essential effort that goes into exhibition and loan preparation, or the discoveries made during research that bring to light new understandings of the artworks in our care. Here's to the New Year, with the hope that everyone will remain well and safe until we see one another in person again.



**4 ♦ Staff & Fellows, Highlights** — Following almost two decades of advocacy, research, and fundraising by Nora Kennedy and the [Time-Based Media Working Group](#), a dedicated team comprised of stakeholders from over 18 departments, the Museum hired its first time-based media conservator at the end of 2019. This position is critical for the long-term health of the growing collection of TBM artworks at The Met. Associate Conservator [Jonathan Farbowitz](#) is already deeply involved in acquisitions, exhibitions, conservation treatments, and an audit of all digital artworks in the collection, as well as in setting up the dedicated lab custom-built to accommodate the specific tasks of TBM conservation. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the Keighley Foundation for supporting Jonathan's first year and funding the establishment of the TBM lab, and to Jade Lau for funding Jonathan's coming year.

Research Scholar in Photograph Conservation, Bryanna Knotts, and Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Media Conservation, Caroline Gil, have been an integral part of our busy team this past year, each conducting fascinating research and taking part in numerous professional colloquia and workshops, as well as participating in the day-to-day workings of our busy conservation lab. Caroline will end her fellowship with us in January. We all feel blessed to have had this chance to work together and thank her for her many contributions to the Museum's work.



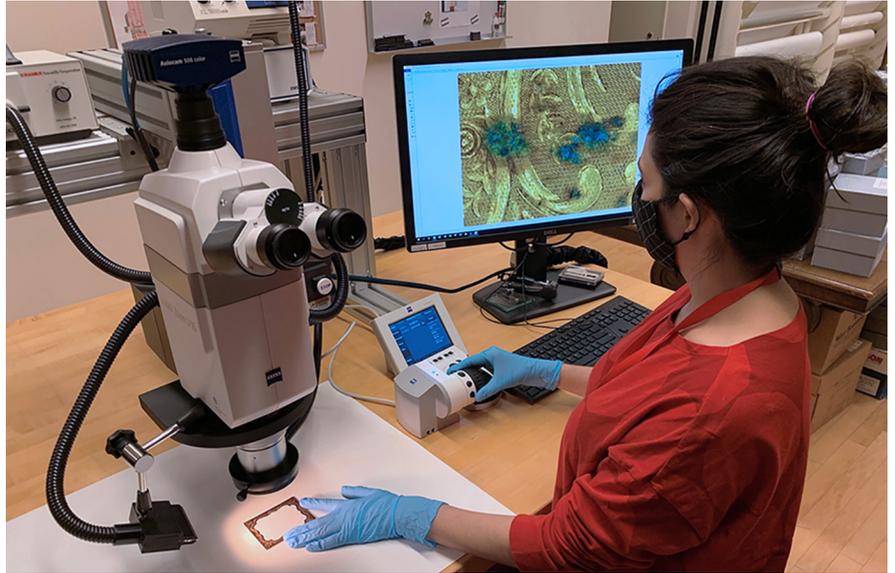
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**Images:** ♦ Department of Photograph Conservation weekly staff meeting, screenshot. Image credit: Nora Kennedy  
♦ Research Scholar Bryanna Knotts working remotely with our gloss meter. Image credit: Dane Denby

**5 ♦ Essential Instrumentation** — One of the most important tools we use for close examination is a high-quality microscope. We were thrilled to be able to update our aging imaging microscope this year, welcoming to the lab the advanced analytical capabilities of the [Carl Zeiss Axio Zoom V16](#). This tool extends our vision into the micro reaches of the artworks and allows us to document minute details that are invisible to the naked eye. Its impressive optics, broad magnification range, and software interface add value to our day-to-day treatment and research work and to our various outreach and education activities. We thank our many supporters for providing us with this state-of-the-art instrument.



**6 ♦ Preventive Care** — The sesquicentennial anniversary of The Metropolitan Museum of Art brought the opportunity to share with the public some of the most iconic artworks in the collection through the exhibition *Making The Met, 1870-2020*, on view through January 3, 2021. To feature these masterpieces at The Met's Fifth Avenue building, The Tisch Galleries were redesigned, revealing a window overlooking the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court that had been covered for decades. As photographs are exhibited almost exclusively in galleries with no natural light to allow for the greatest control over their exposure, Photograph Conservation ensured the environmental conditions in the gallery spaces were safe for the artworks selected for the 2020 exhibition. By installing small measuring devices to record light level readings at regular time intervals and adding UV blocking material to the windowpanes well in advance of the mounting of the artworks, photograph conservators and scientists were able to gather quantitative data reflecting the actual gallery conditions. The data gathered



allowed conservators to be confident that the photographs in the show, including Edward Steichen's three Flatiron images, ([The Flatiron](#), 1904; [The Flatiron](#), 1904, printed 1909; and [The Flatiron](#), 1904, printed 1905) could be safely mounted in the specific locations chosen for them in the galleries. Read on for more about our work on other 2020 exhibitions.

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**Images:** ♦ Diana Díaz-Cañás at work examining a brass mat under the new Zeiss microscope. Image credit: Nora Kennedy, Tess Hamilton ♦ Installation view of the three Steichen "Flatirons" in *Making The Met, 1870-2020*. Image credit: Nora Kennedy

**7 ♦ Exhibition Highlights** — Over the course of the year, our conservators have prepared over 300 photographs, bound volumes, and time-based media artworks for exhibition and loan. In addition to Steichen's Flatirons mentioned above, several stunning works acquired throughout the history of the Museum's collection are part of [Making The Met, 1870-2020](#). This illustrious group includes, among others, *abc* by Ann Hamilton, a seminal time-based media artwork, and a gelatin silver portrait of Marilyn Monroe by Richard Avedon.

Photographs are frequently displayed by various curatorial departments in galleries outside of those typically dedicated to photographs. We were pleased to contribute to the exhibition [Rayyane Tabet/Alien Property](#), for example, in the Ancient Near East Galleries. Included in preparations for the exhibition [Home Is a Foreign Place: Recent Acquisitions in Context](#) was a grid-like installation of gelatin silver photographs by Simryn Gill, which was on view at The Met Breuer until the March 2020 closure. Also exhibited were video artworks [Coexistence](#) by Donna Conlon and [Slow Angle Walk \(Beckett Walk\)](#) by Bruce Nauman.

Of course, exhibitions devoted exclusively to photography receive close attention from our conservators, who examined, documented, and conserved artworks for the following exhibitions: [Photography's Last Century: The Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee Collection](#); [2020 Vision: Photographs, 1840s-1860s](#); and [Pictures, Revisited](#). Regular rotations in the Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Gallery were installed over the course of the year, though one remained safely in the dark for a number of months through the spring and summer, awaiting the safe reopening of our beloved Museum and the return of visitors.

**8 ♦ Expanding Collections** — The Met received several gifts of artworks this past year, expanding the collection of photographs and time-based media pieces held across various departments. Welcoming artworks into the collection includes examination by conservators. This lends a critical eye to the condition of each object and the opportunity to bring to light previously unseen details, as well as revealing future technical research potential. Read more about the remarkable objects in the transformational [William Schaeffer Collection](#) gift from Met Trustee Philip Maritz and his wife Jennifer Maritz, including about Josiah Johnson Hawes' [Winter on the Common, Boston](#).



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**Images:** ♦ Installation view of a work by Simryn Gill in the exhibition *Home Is a Foreign Place: Recent Acquisitions in Context* at The Met Breuer. Image credit: Imaging Department ♦ Installation view of *Photography's Last Century: The Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee Collection*. Image credit: Georgia Southworth

**9 ♦ Conservation Treatment** — Exhibitions often provide an opportunity to carry out conservation treatment. We share here one highlight each from *2020 Vision: Photographs, 1840s–1860s* and *Pictures, Revisited*, which together exemplify the breadth of materials cared for by Department staff.

*2020 Vision: Photographs, 1840s–1860s*: Preparing Edouard Baldus' stunning salted paper print [*Amphitheater, Nîmes*], ca. 1853, for exhibition, involved treatment steps that are generally invisible to Museum visitors but extend the lifetime of the photograph. Some small historic tears in the paper had been mended before The Met acquired the artwork. These older mends were removed to allow for a more favorable alignment of the tear edges. Thorough written and photographic documentation of all conservation treatments provides essential preservation records that inform how an artwork is understood and accessed moving forward.

*Pictures, Revisited*: Jonathan Farbowitz, together with Sasha Arden, the Jonathan Wilf/Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Time-Based Media Conservation at NYU's Institute of Fine Arts, treated *Every Shot, Every Episode*, the 2001 artwork by Jennifer and Kevin McCoy, on view until May 9, 2021, in *Pictures, Revisited* in the Joyce and Robert Menschel Hall for Modern Photography. Using specialized software, the conservators ensured that all the data on each of the work's 277 VCDs was transferred to the Museum's digital repository (the equivalent of an artwork vault for data). As with any artwork, care into the future will be necessary. In this case, redundant copies of the



digital files will be created and regularly monitored for any corruption. As technology advances and the artist-provided equipment ages, conservators will work with the artists to ensure the work's longevity. This may include migrating away from obsolete equipment and technologies to newer platforms. All of the original VCD cases are [displayed](#) in *Pictures, Revisited* next to the artwork's playback system, custom-made by the artists. This consists of a portable VCD player, small LCD screen, amplifier, and speakers mounted inside an open briefcase that hangs on the gallery wall. For this exhibition, the video content is displayed via a hidden digital media player, which sends video to the artwork's original LCD screen and audio to its original speakers.

**10 ♦ Time-Based Media Lab** — Along with the addition of The Met's very first time-based media conservator, we are constructing a dedicated lab for the preservation and treatment of our time-based media artworks. Tucked into a space generously offered to Photograph Conservation by the Imaging Department, equipment specific to TBM conservation is now being sourced and set up, including a computer workstation for condition assessment of artworks attached to production-quality speakers and monitors, specialized equipment and software for safely examining and analyzing hard drives and audiovisual files, and electronics tools for conducting treatments. The addition of a dedicated time-based media conservation lab allows the Museum to provide the best possible care for the existing and future TBM artworks in our growing collection.



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**Images:** ♦ Sasha Arden, at work in our conservation lab on *Every Shot, Every Episode*. Image credit: Jonathan Farbowitz ♦ An optical disc drive and write blocker for examining artist-provided discs and hard drives. These two pieces of equipment were purchased for the new time-based media conservation lab. Image credit: Jonathan Farbowitz

**11 ♦ Loans** — All artworks loaned to other institutions undergo a thorough pre-loan process undertaken by the conservators. Contending with the complications of scheduling during the ongoing global pandemic, and of course, the necessary interaction with the artworks prior to loan, 11 daguerreotypes by the 19th-century French artist and master daguerreotypist Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey were prepared by a conservator and technician to travel to the Musée d'Orsay for display in the Fall 2020 exhibition *Girault de Prangey photographe (1804-1892)*. In addition to any necessary preparation for inclusion in an exhibition, The Met's conservators, collections managers, and registrars determine that a borrowing institution can meet and maintain specific environmental conditions, including not only temperature, relative humidity, and lighting, but also conduct a detailed review of materials used in the case design. For this loan of Girault de Prangey daguerreotypes, these steps were completed with almost no direct in-person communication, and these most delicate objects were successfully mounted in Paris. With courier involvement on hold for the moment, we were fortunate to engage the services of a Parisian photograph conservation colleague to oversee local transit, unpacking, documentation, and installation. Unfortunately, the exhibition was shuttered just a few days after installation, when the uptick in COVID-19 cases in France



caused Musée d'Orsay, and other cultural institutions, to once again close their doors temporarily. Like the exhibitions here at The Met through the spring and summer of 2020, the Girault de Prangey daguerreotypes now sit, secure and in the dark, awaiting the reopening of the museum, allowing visitors to view these magnificent daguerreotypes in Girault de Prangey's homeland.



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**Images:** ♦ Works by Girault de Prangey, carefully packed and ready for crating prior to shipping to Paris. Image credit: Georgia Southworth ♦ *Ruins and Foreground, Acropolis, Athens (55. Athènes. 1842. Acropole. ruines et 1ers plans (pour tableau))*, 1843 by Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey (French, 1804–1892), in the lab, awaiting transit packaging. Image credit: Georgia Southworth

**12 ♦ Public Outreach & International Engagement** — As research discoveries and innovative treatments continually propel the conservation field forward, we reach out in numerous ways to share our work with constituent communities, introducing the field of conservation to those yet unfamiliar, developing relationships with supporters to help fund future endeavors, and collaborating with colleagues in far reaches of the world. Although 2020 began with a series of on-site tours and visits, the onset of the coronavirus in March pivoted our public outreach programs to digital platforms. During the first quarter of the year, we welcomed to the lab students from Christie's Education and Hunter College, as well as the first-year conservation graduate class from the University of Delaware. We enjoyed visits with allied colleagues, allowing for mutually beneficial exchange, welcoming colleagues from as close as MoMA and as far as Uzbekistan. Nora Kennedy regularly engages in international teaching and preservation initiatives, including an in-person [Film Heritage Foundation](#) workshop just prior to the turn of the year in Hyderabad, India, before the global pandemic moved our international events online.

We regularly engage with and share the results of our studies and our expertise with conservation colleagues, allied professionals, and the public, both locally and around the world. Virtual programming may change the look and feel of our outreach endeavors, but the broad reach of online engagement works well for our Department, letting us continue to reach those nearby and farther afield.

Of the many events with departmental involvement, we mention a few here:

♦ Together with colleagues from across the Museum, Associate Conservator Katie Sanderson participated in the Education Department's "Career Insights" series, introducing museum careers to undergraduate and graduate college students.

♦ Associate Conservator Georgia Southworth presented a talk on the unique challenges posed by photograph albums and their preservation for the Conservation Insights conference hosted by [Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage](#).

♦ Assistant Conservator Diana Díaz-Cañas works with the non-profit organization [APOYOnline](#) to promote communication, exchange, and professional development in the field of heritage preservation in the Americas and in Portuguese and Spanish-speaking countries.



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**Images:** ♦ Nora Kennedy in Hyderabad with Film Heritage Foundation workshop participants Riya Khanna and Vitthal Vanjare. Image credit: Rajeev Choudhary and Priyanka Shetye ♦ University of Delaware students and professors, gathered around a treatment table in our lab last January to view bound volumes with Georgia Southworth. Image credit: Aleya Lehmann

◆ Caroline Gil, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Media Conservation, hosted a Spanish language TBM preservation [webinar with Cinemateca de Bogotá](#).

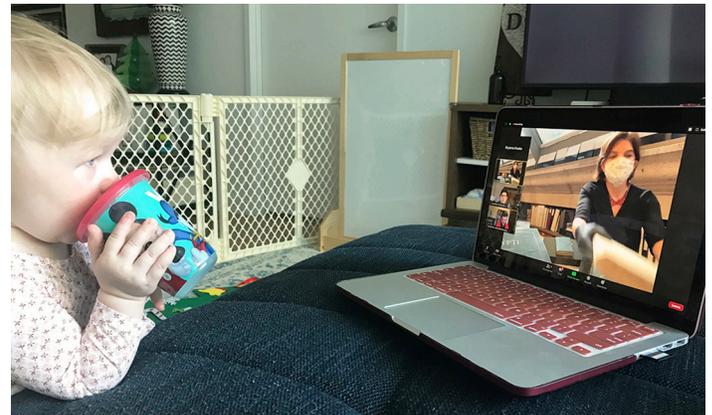
◆ Diana Díaz-Cañas hails from Bogotá herself and is regularly involved in Latin American outreach work. In December, she was interviewed for [UNICEF Colombia](#) hosted on Caracol TV, introducing the work of a conservator for a fundraiser to benefit young people living under vulnerable conditions in Colombia.

◆ In November, the Department hosted a widely attended [TBM event](#) on the conservation of Jennifer and Kevin McCoy's *Every Shot, Every Episode*.

◆ Nora Kennedy joined conservation colleagues from around the Museum to introduce the conservation field to ten stellar [Association of Research Institutes in Art History \(ARIAH\)](#) undergraduate interns.

◆ Caroline Gil recently presented a virtual session on time-based media conservation essential concepts and workflows for ten colleagues at the Taiwan Fine Arts Museum.

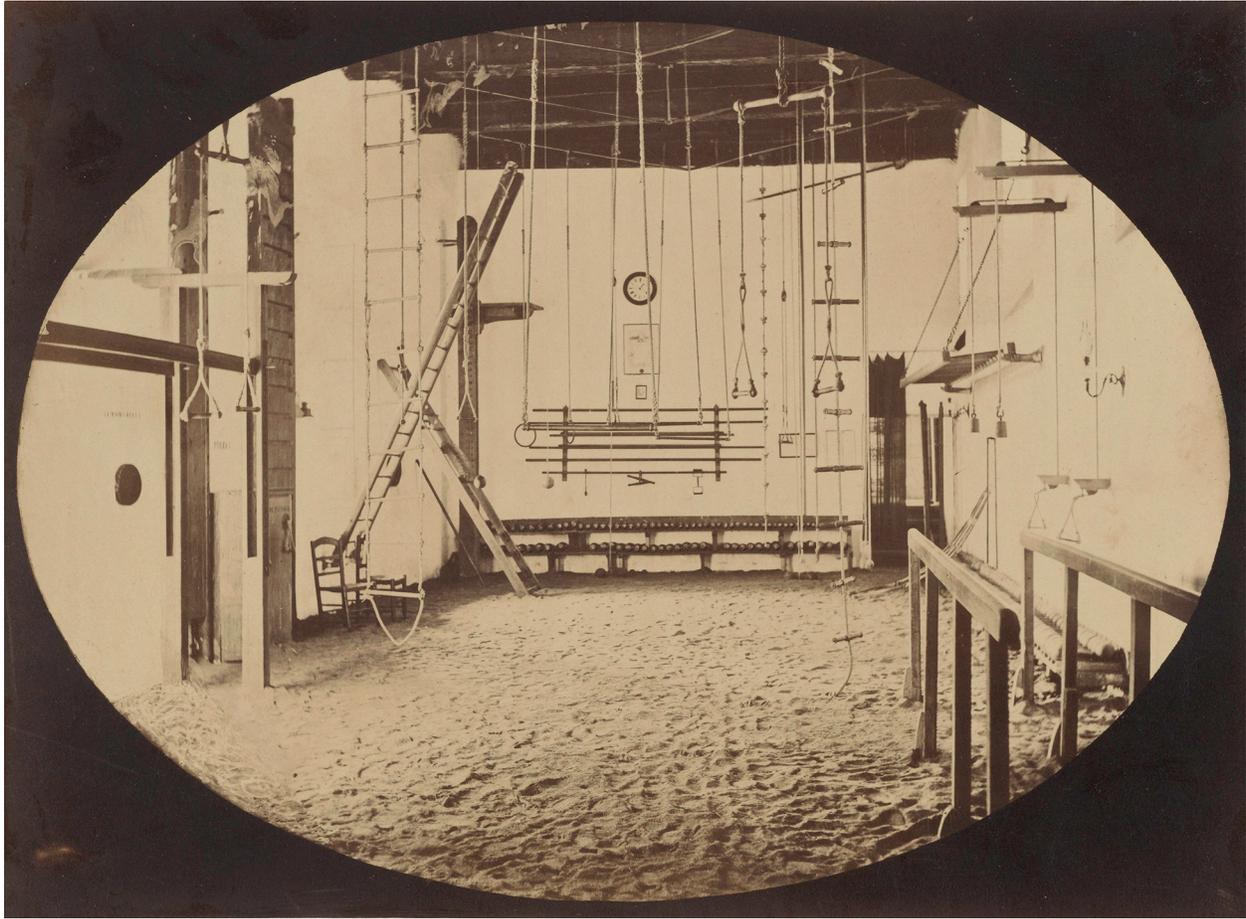
◆ Bringing our outreach efforts all the way back to the Museum, the incoming cohort of Research Fellows here at The Met was introduced virtually to the Photograph Conservation Department by Nora, Georgia, and Jonathan in early December. As we see in the adjacent illustration, these virtual events sometimes draw a younger audience! Though we look forward to opening the lab to in-person tours and classes again when that becomes safe, our virtual programming will certainly continue.



**13 ◆ Professional Involvements** — All members of the Department are involved in national and international professional conservation organizations. ◆ Nora Kennedy was elected to a second 3-year term on the [Board of Directors](#) of the International Institute for Conservation Committee or ICOM-CC, and during this Triennium serves as Vice-Chair of the Board. The Conservation Committee is ICOM's largest international committee with more than 3,300 members from 86 countries. Among the goals for this Triennium is the reworking of the international museum definition and the rescheduled [ICOM-CC triennial meeting in Beijing](#), now postponed to May 2021 and to be held 100% remotely. ◆ Diana Díaz-Cañas has been re-elected as Coordinator of the [ICOM-CC Photographic Materials Working Group](#) for the next Triennium 2020-2023, where she works with Assistant Coordinators from the UK, Mexico, The Netherlands, India, and the US. The team will be coordinating the Photographic Materials session at the ICOM-CC meeting in Beijing, as well as organizing the

next interim meeting for the working group and coordinating other projects for the Triennium. ◆ Katie Sanderson is in her second year as the Program Chair for the [Photographic Materials Specialty Group](#) of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC). Following AIC's first-ever virtual conference in the spring of 2020, she and her fellow officers are already in the midst of organizing AIC's second virtual conference to be held in May 2021. ◆ As Website Manager for [AIC's Electronic Media Group](#), Jonathan Farbowitz maintains and updates the group's public-facing site.

Advocacy, collaboration, and education through professional groups such as ICOM-CC, AIC, APOYOnline, and others are a part of our daily work. All of our staff are active members in many of these professional organizations, fostering engagement and exchange with the larger field and sharing our scholarship as widely as possible.



### Locations and Hours

#### The Met Fifth Avenue

Thursday–Monday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
 Closed Tuesday and Wednesday  
 Closed Thanksgiving Day, December 25, January 1 and the first Monday in May

#### The Met Cloisters

Thursday–Monday: 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
 Closed Tuesday and Wednesday  
 Closed Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1

### Current Exhibitions

#### Making The Met, 1870–2020

August 29, 2020 through January 3, 2021  
 The Met Fifth Avenue

#### Pictures, Revisited

October 19, 2020 through May 9, 2021  
 The Met Fifth Avenue

#### Rayyane Tabet/Alien Property

October 30, 2019 through TBD  
 The Met Fifth Avenue

### Upcoming Exhibitions

#### Alice Neel: People Come First

March 22 through August 1, 2021  
 The Met Fifth Avenue

#### The New Woman Behind the Camera

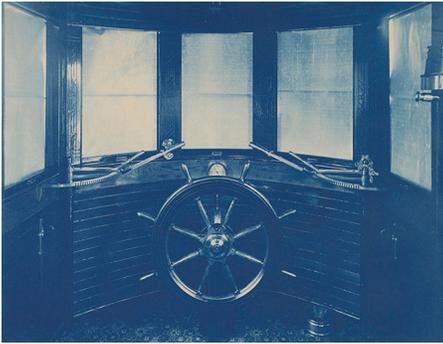
Summer through Fall, 2021  
 The Met Fifth Avenue

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**Image:** ♦ Unknown Maker. (Spanish). *Gimnasio López, de Sevilla*, 1875. Albumen silver print from glass negative. Gilman Collection, Museum Purchase, 2005 (2005.100.1305). This photograph shows one of the first modern gyms in Seville, built as a fad for physical fitness swept Europe. Reviving classical equations of mental and bodily health, theorists endorsed "hygienic" exercise and education. Unlike most photographs from the movement, this methodical view is absent of athletes. On view currently, in the Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Gallery, in a new rotation curated by Virginia McBride.



## Support the Department of Photograph Conservation

With steadfast commitment and support from our friends, The Met's Department of Photograph Conservation continues to thrive and be a crucial resource for the preservation of works of art, as well as a vibrant center for research.

### Support

To learn more about how you can become involved and support this critical area at The Met, please contact:

Stacy Newport  
**Office of Development**  
 212-650-2103 or by email at  
[stacy.newport@metmuseum.org](mailto:stacy.newport@metmuseum.org)

### Contribute Online

Donations can be made [online](#) and you may provide a note within "Tell Us About Your Donation" indicating that your donation is "For Department of Photograph Conservation."

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 Managing Editor: Aleya Lehmann

[Bulletin No. 19](#) August 2020  
[Bulletin No. 18](#) May 2020  
[Bulletin No. 17](#) March 2020  
[Bulletin No. 16](#) December 2019

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*Pictures, Revisited* looks back at—and provocatively revises—*The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984*, from 2009, which was made possible by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and The Andy Warhol Foundation. Additional support was provided by The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc. ♦ *The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984* catalogue was made possible by the Mary C. and James W. Fosburgh Publications Fund and the Antoinette Kraushaar Fund.

*Rayyane Tabet/Alien Property* is made possible by the Friends of Ancient Near Eastern Art. ♦ A *Met Bulletin* accompanies the exhibition, and is supported in part by the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, established by the cofounder of *Reader's Digest*.

*Photography's Last Century: The Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee Collection* was made possible by Joyce Frank Menschel and the Alfred Stieglitz Society. ♦ The catalogue was made possible in part by the Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, Inc.

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*The New Woman Behind the Camera* is made possible by the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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**Image:** ♦ Unknown Maker, (American). [*Boat Interior*], ca. 1890s. Cyanotype. William L. Schaeffer Collection, Promised Gift of Jennifer and Philip Maritz (L.2019.57.566). Requiring no darkroom or developing chemicals, the cyanotype process used here was prized by early industrial photographers for yielding crisply legible prints. No detail is spared in this careful study of a boat's helm, which may have been produced by the vessel's manufacturer. The photographer dutifully records its gleaming metal surfaces, burnished wood, and patterned floor. Pristine fittings and papered-over windows suggest that this is a brand-new boat, being readied for its maiden voyage. On view currently, in the Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Gallery, in a new rotation curated by Virginia McBride.