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**Department News** 1-7

- 1 ♦ **Introducing Kayla Henry-Griffin**
- 2 ♦ **Preparing for The New Woman**
- 3 ♦ **PMMA Mini Workshop**
- 4 ♦ **Silver Mirroring Research**
- 5 ♦ **Hacking for Preservation**
- 6 ♦ **ICOM-CC's 19th Triennial, Beijing**

- Exhibitions** 8
  - Support & Acknowledgements** 9
- .....



**1 ♦ Introducing Kayla Henry-Griffin** — Kayla Henry-Griffin has joined the department as an Adrienne Arsht Museum Seminar ([MuSe](#)) Summer Intern. Kayla is a current graduate student in New York University's Moving Image Archiving and Preservation (MIAP) program. After finishing the first year of the program, Kayla has found their interests leaning towards the preservation of artificial intelligence (AI) based artworks and video games. MIAP is an intensive two-year graduate program that trains students in all aspects of audio-visual and digital preservation—it was one of the first educational programs of its kind in the United States to offer coursework in this area of preventive conservation. The program requires three internships, and Kayla's time at The Met will fulfill their summer internship requirement. Graduates work in a variety of settings, including academic libraries and archives, non-profit organizations, film and media companies, and art museums. Associate Conservator of Time-Based Media Jonathan Farbowitz graduated from the program in 2016.

Kayla received their undergraduate degree in Photography and Optics at Carleton College. Their senior thesis researched the concept of family connection and the preservation of family history. Before attending the MIAP program, Kayla had the opportunity to work as an intern at the Gerald Ford Conservation Center in Omaha, Nebraska, where they spent time

in both the objects and the works on paper conservation labs. Projects and daily duties included working with frames, archaeological artifacts, blueprints, and parchment. Kayla also produced condition reports, conducted Oddy tests, and consolidated and treated objects and works on paper.

While at The Met, Kayla will observe and participate in many aspects of time-based media conservation, including the opportunity to meet all of the many departments that are stakeholders in the presentation of time-based media art. They will be introduced to the full breadth of activities in the Photograph Conservation Department and meet with other conservation and curatorial staff throughout the building. Kayla will conduct research on recent acquisitions of time-based media and artworks that will go on view in order to augment and enrich documentation through what are called Iteration and Identity Reports. Many upcoming exhibitions will include time-based media works, so they will also see the condition checking and incoming loan processes in action.

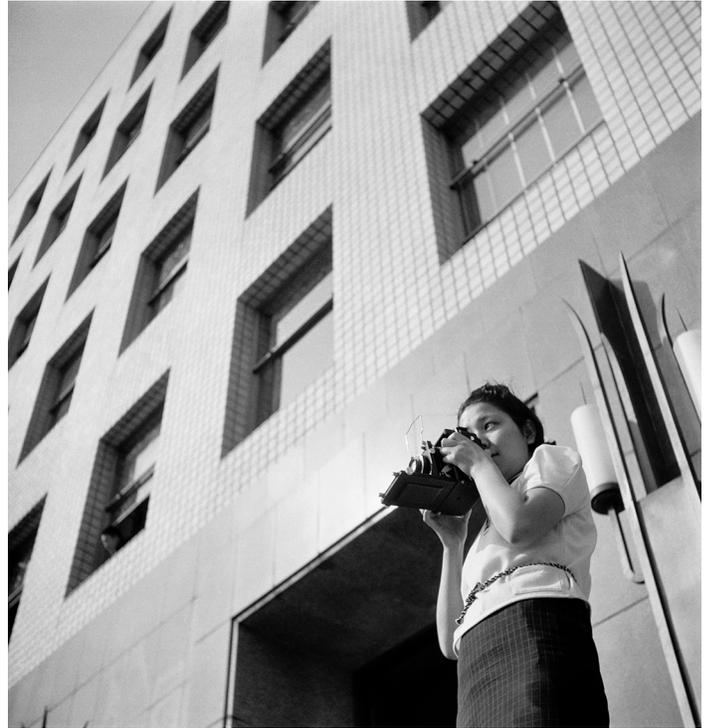
As part of the MuSe internship program, Kayla will participate in a rich array of seminars with the rest of this summer's internship cohort and will prepare a presentation on an artwork in the collection to be shared with the public remotely.

**2 ♦ Preparing for The New Woman** — As described by Curator Mia Fineman for The Met’s website, “The New Woman of the 1920s was a powerful expression of modernity, a global phenomenon that embodied an ideal of female empowerment based on real women making revolutionary changes in life and art. Featuring more than 120 photographers from over 20 countries, this groundbreaking exhibition explores the work of the diverse ‘new’ women who embraced photography as a mode of professional and artistic expression from the 1920s through the 1950s. During this tumultuous period shaped by two world wars, women stood at the forefront of experimentation with the camera and produced invaluable visual testimony that reflects both their personal experiences and the extraordinary social and political transformations of the era.”

Developing and mounting an exhibition the size and scope of *The New Woman Behind the Camera*, masterfully curated by Andrea Nelson of the Department of Photographs at the National Gallery of Art, requires years of preparation and coordination. Disrupted by COVID-19, these already complex arrangements were further complicated by months of pandemic closures as Museum staff worked off-site, exhibitions were canceled or postponed, and travel arrangements for artworks and couriers required renegotiation.

The successful opening of *New Woman* is a testament to a rapid pivot to, and the implementation of, new practices developed to accommodate the situation faced by all cultural heritage organizations. Planning meetings convened by exhibition managers and attended by curators, conservators, and colleagues from Design, Editorial, Education, and Digital Departments were taken online. Collection Managers and Registrars working to finalize loan paperwork and to schedule the arrival of artworks accommodated both working-from-home schedules and the limitations presented by essential social distancing guidelines for on-site work.

For all exhibitions, conservators work in concert with technicians, designers, and curators toward the aesthetic mounting and display of The Met’s artworks, and ensure that each individual object is thoroughly documented and exhibited safely, mitigating potential risks from handling, light, and the exhibition environment. This preparatory work includes examining, documenting, and in some cases treating an object to ready it for display. During the exhibition installation, host conservators are responsible for the care of not only The Met’s artworks

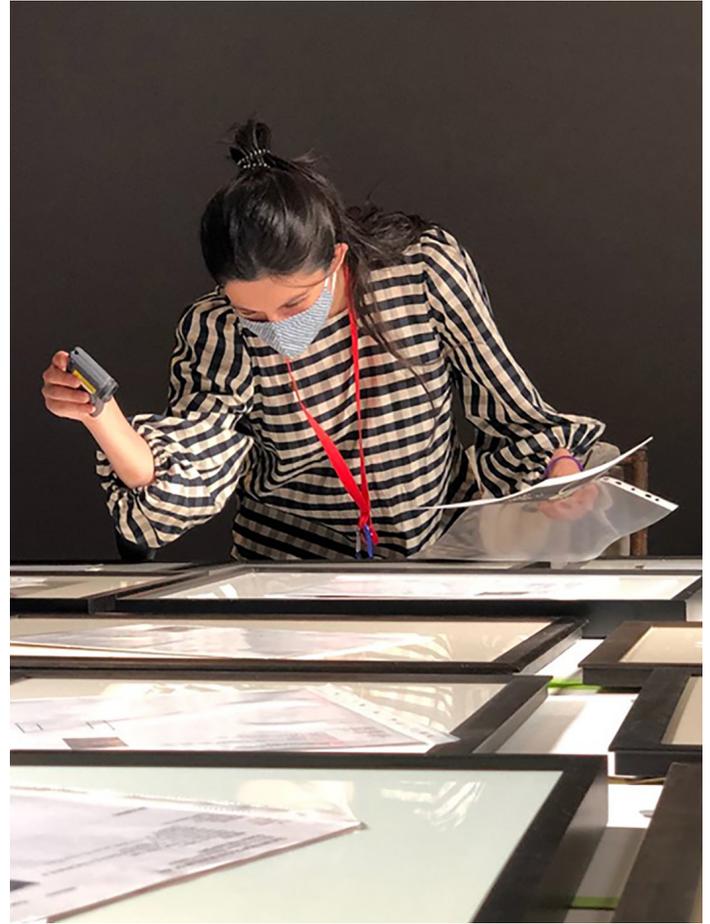


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**Image:** ♦ Top, Photographer unknown, *Tsuneo Sasamoto, Tokyo, 1940*, printed 2020. Inkjet print, 7 3/16 × 7 3/16 in. Courtesy Tsuneo Sasamoto/Japan Professional Photographers Society. ♦ Above, Ilse Bing (German, 1899–1998), *Self-Portrait with Leica, 1931*. Gelatin silver print, 10 1/2 × 12 in. Collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg. © Estate of Ilse Bing ♦ On view in the upcoming exhibition *The New Woman Behind the Camera*, opening on July 2.



but of all the objects in an exhibition while on view at the Museum. Customarily, each borrowed artwork is closely examined upon arrival to be sure its condition hasn't changed in transit. These incoming condition checks are undertaken by the conservators, traditionally with a courier present representing the institution with whom the loan has been arranged. Travel restrictions brought on by COVID-19 resulted in loan agreements that stipulate that these examinations may be overseen by virtual couriers, who participate on a screen in the gallery rather than being there in person. As well, the colleagues who work together to bring an exhibition to its opening day, including the preparators, riggers, lighting designers, and Plexi team, have been working through the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Although we have developed the skills necessary to beautifully and safely mount exhibitions like *The New Woman Behind the Camera* during such challenging times, we do look forward to an exhibition process that more closely resembles that with which we were so familiar prior to the pandemic. And, as COVID-19 infection rates drop, vaccinations rise, and New York continues to open back up, we invite you to come and experience this remarkable exhibition in person.

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**Images:** ♦ At left, Associate Conservator Georgia Southworth works with Thomas Zimmerman from the Plexi Shop, measuring an artwork open to its display pages to construct a precise custom cradle for viewing. Credit: Nora Kennedy ♦ At right, Assistant Conservator Diana Díaz-Cañas performs a detailed examination of an artwork and compares her observations to notes and images provided by the lender of the work, ensuring it is exactly as expected and ready for exhibition. Credit: Katie Sanderson

**3 ♦ PMMA Mini Workshop** — In early March, Assistant Conservator Diana Díaz-Cañas attended the virtual mini-workshop “Treating PMMA: Filling Scratches and Chips”, organized by the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and led by Anna Laganà, Research Specialist in Modern and Contemporary Art at GCI. PMMA or Poly(methyl methacrylate), also known as acrylic or plexiglass, is used to “facemount” photographs. This commercial technique was originally designed for large billboards and displays, and was adopted by contemporary artists as a way of presenting large format color photographs in particular. Some artists favor this technique because the PMMA provides a rigid support and strong color saturation. Nonetheless, PMMA is a relatively soft material, and is susceptible to scratches, scrapes, and getting chipped, damages which can distract viewers and interrupt the aesthetic appreciation of the otherwise pristine presentation of an artwork.

In the museum setting, conservators use protective measures to avoid these damages from occurring in the first place. Face-mounted photographs are often identifiable by the public as those with stanchions in front of them to keep visitors at a safe distance. It is important, however, that conservators also be prepared in the event of an inadvertent damage-inducing incident. Scrapes, scratches, and other physical impacts may impart a certain degree of material loss. Therefore, the conservation methods and materials explored in Laganà’s research involve ‘filling’ such areas of loss with another material to compensate. This is not an easy challenge, given that to repair transparent PMMA, the adhesive should “bond PMMA without dissolving the material or inducing changes such as crazing and cracking. It should be strong enough to bond, yet weak enough to fail before damaging the PMMA. Furthermore, it should be easy to apply, invisible, chemically stable over time, and preferably removable to allow future retreatment.” (Laganà, et al. 2021; see below).

In her research, Laganà found some adhesives that meet those and other characteristics. In the workshop, participants used the top two resins that were identified as being capable of producing the best results for conservation purposes. Workshop participants tested two methods of resin application, the first using extremely fine brushes to fill scratches, followed by the use of sewing pins of different sizes to fill chips. Both methods and resins provided impressive results, providing exciting opportunities for the treatment and recovery of face-mounted photographs.



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**Images:** ♦ Top, Díaz-Cañas at work treating scratches on a mini PMMA sample, utilizing resins. ♦ Above, the sample after partial treatment, demonstrating the effectiveness of this technique. Credits: Diana Díaz-Cañas

Laganà, A., M. Doutre, M. David, M. Lukowski, E. Hendriks, and M. van Bommel. 2021. In search of a perfect bond: An evaluation of potential adhesives to repair transparent poly(methyl methacrylate) objects. In *Transcending Boundaries: Integrated Approaches to Conservation*. ICOM-CC 19th Triennial Conference Preprints, Beijing, 17–21 May 2021, ed. J. Bridgland. Paris: International Council of Museums.



**4 ♦ Silver Mirroring Research** — Silver mirroring is a degradation pattern that develops in silver-based photographic processes, such as gelatin silver prints. The characteristic sheen is composed of metallic silver that, under the right conditions, moves from the black-and-white image to the surface of the photograph. The build-up of silver particles creates the mirror-like quality associated with this type of deterioration. Mirroring develops preferentially in the darker areas of black-and-white prints because the concentration of silver is higher in those areas. It can take on a variety of colors and patterns as it forms, and in extreme cases can interrupt appreciation of the image. In general, conservators are eager to use preventive conservation means, such as control of the storage environment, to mitigate the occurrence of this deterioration so it does not progress to disruptive levels.

Though some research exists on this phenomenon, it is currently unclear precisely how silver mirroring progresses, and whether it is encouraged most by poor storage or exposure to light during an exhibition period. These details remain elusive in part because the phenomenon, given its subtly reflective

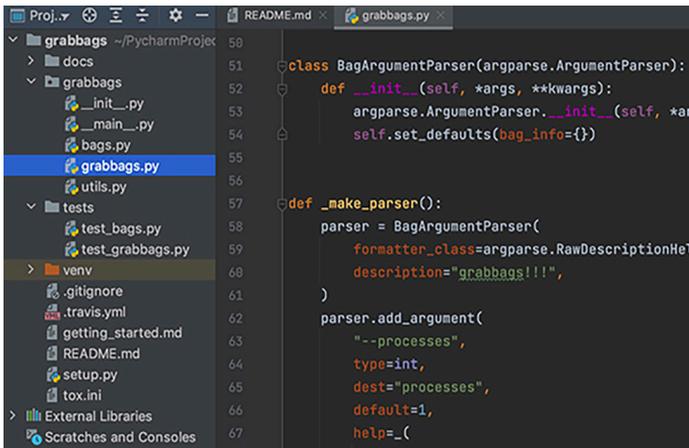
nature, is difficult to document accurately using traditional photography. Research Scholar Bryanna Knotts' current project explores different analytical techniques, such as employing a glossmeter and a spectrophotometer to gauge how these instruments could be used to document silver mirroring in gelatin silver prints over time, thereby tracking its progress, or lack thereof. One goal of this research is to produce a feasible documentation protocol for mirrored works that can be implemented not only in the Department of Photograph Conservation at The Met, but within other institutions as well. The impact of this research has the potential to extend beyond documentation to help inform storage and exhibition guidelines for mirrored photographs.

Knotts has had success using both a glossmeter and a spectrophotometer to track mirroring over time and plans to explore the use of other analytical and imaging techniques, such as reflectance transformation imaging and multi-spectral imaging, to evaluate their usefulness in tracking the development of mirroring over time. Stay tuned for further updates!

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**Images:** ♦ At left, Exposed samples of matte, semi-matte, and glossy Ilford-brand gelatin silver papers. ♦ At right, The same samples after silver mirroring has been induced over a period of six weeks. The changes caused by the accumulation of silver particles on the surface of the samples can be measured with a glossmeter and spectrophotometer. Credit: Bryanna Knotts



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50
51
52 class BagArgumentParser(argparse.ArgumentParser):
53     def __init__(self, *args, **kwargs):
54         argparse.ArgumentParser.__init__(self, *args,
55             self.set_defaults(bag_info={})
56
57
58 def _make_parser():
59     parser = BagArgumentParser(
60         formatter_class=argparse.RawDescriptionHelpFormatter,
61         description="grabbags!!!",
62     )
63     parser.add_argument(
64         "--processes",
65         type=int,
66         dest="processes",
67         default=1,
68         help=_(

```

the popular chat program Slack, as well as on Zoom. Previous Hack Day projects are often refined and improved upon over several years. At Hack Day 2019, Jonathan (along with Henry Borchers and Nick Krabbenhoef) helped develop the Python script “[grabbags](#)”. Grabbags allows for bulk creation and validation of archival packages known as Library of Congress bags. With grabbags, users can package an unlimited number of files and folders in bulk using one simple command. Run regularly, grabbags can also check the bags in storage for various issues. As the bag format is the standard packing format for The Met’s time-based media artworks, the script can make Jonathan’s everyday work easier. Since 2020, through the artwork server audit, staff have been progressively working to package artwork files into the bag format. For more information about the audit, see [Bulletin 21](#).

**5 ♦ Hacking for Preservation** — From March 18 to April 16, Associate Conservator of Time-Based Media Jonathan Farbowitz participated in the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) and the Digital Library Federation (DLF) annual Hack Day event. Named for the ingenuity of those who use software and technology in ways not previously intended, this event encourages experimentation and collaboration to improve the field of audiovisual or digital preservation. The event embraces the open-source and do-it-yourself ethos—the results of Hack Day projects are typically available for free online as [repositories of code](#) or documentation so that anyone can look at them, reuse them, or contribute to them.

Projects are proposed by participants at the beginning of the event. These projects may include computer programming or software testing; however, documentation and research projects that engage non-technical participants are encouraged. Projects can include specialized software for archivists and conservators that doesn’t yet exist. AMIA/DLF Hack Day has produced many excellent resources for time-based media conservators and audiovisual archivists, including [The Cable Bible](#) (a comprehensive guide to audiovisual cables), [vrecord](#) (software for digitization of analog tapes), [Linked Media Formats](#) (an introductory guide to linked open data that was developed at this year’s event), and general-purpose logging software [LogLog](#) (also developed this year).

The AMIA conference occurred virtually this year, as did Hack Day, and instead of a single week, teams were given three to complete their projects. Most collaborated through

Wishing to further develop grabbags in 2021, Jonathan formed Team Grabbags 0.0.2 with Milo Thiesen, Henry Borchers, and Bryn Knowles. Throughout the three-week project timeline, the team held several paired programming sessions. They also experimented with Code With Me (a plug-in for the popular Python programming software PyCharm), which allows several people to code simultaneously on the same set of files, chat over voice or video, and simultaneously run tests on the code. While Code With Me is still being developed and has its share of glitches, it offers amazing possibilities for real-time collaboration on a software project.

With the updated version of grabbags, bugs were fixed, the code was cleaned up to make it easier to maintain in the future, new features were added, and the team started the implementation of a Graphical User Interface (GUI) to make grabbags even easier to use for total beginners. At the conclusion of Hack Day, Team Grabbags received the “Best Solution to the Problem” award, and while they were honored to receive the award, the most important test will be how well the software functions for everyday conservation tasks as the team continues to refine grabbags based on real-world testing.

For more information about the event and the other projects in the 2021 edition of the event, visit the [AMIA/DLF Hack Day 2021](#) website.



**6 ♦ ICOM-CC's 19th Triennial, Beijing** — For one week in May, over 1500 conservators, scientists, and educators gathered remotely from 67 countries to share knowledge and information at the 19th International Council of Museums Committee for Conservation ([ICOM-CC](#)) Triennial Conference, co-organized with the Chinese Museum Association in Beijing, China. The Committee for Conservation is the largest of ICOM's International Committees with over 4000 members. As a recent Directory Board member and now current Vice-Chair of the ICOM-CC Board, Nora Kennedy was engaged in the shift from the original in-person meeting planned for September 2020 to the 100% remote iteration in May 2021. As Coordinator of the Photographic Materials Working Group for both the last and the current triennium, Met Museum conservator Diana Díaz-Cañas oversaw the talks, papers, and posters specific to photograph conservation.

Remote conferences have the advantage of greater accessibility, reduced expenses for delegates, and a lowered carbon footprint overall. For those here on the east coast of the United States not willing to rise at 3 AM to hear the presentations live on Beijing time, all talks were made available as recordings after the fact. With four concurrent sessions, this opened access

for delegates to take in talks on a wide range of topics from any of the [21 Working Groups](#), such as photograph conservation, theory and history of conservation, natural history collections, education and training, and scientific research to name a few—an option not possible for in-person conferences.

When in person, one can generally choose between one, or possibly two, tours of local collections or labs offered during the conference. In the on-screen setting, one could view all ten pre-recorded tours highlighting conservation activities within Beijing museums as well as institutions in Shanghai, Xi'an, and Dunhuang, among others.

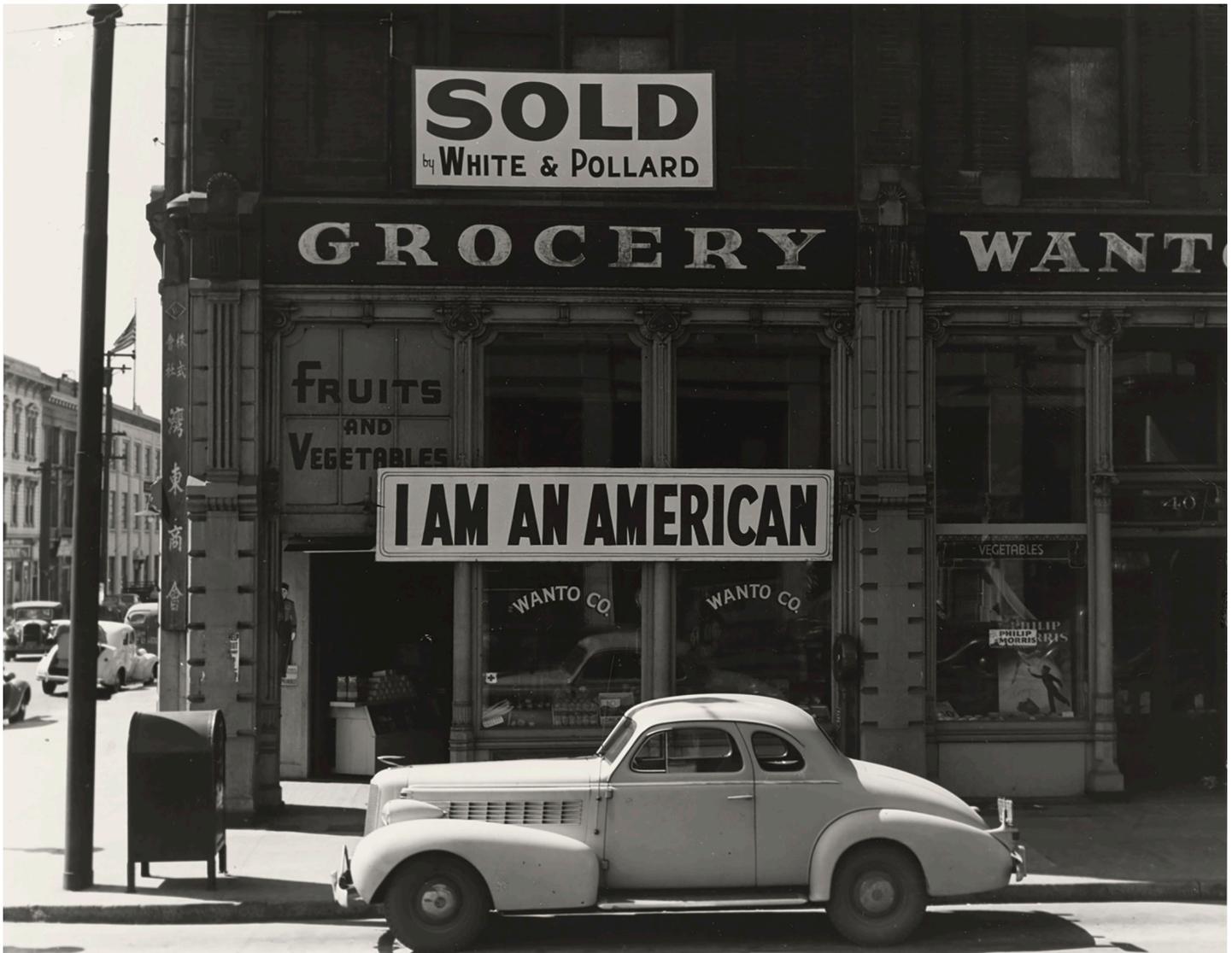
We did miss meeting with our colleagues from around the world in person and particularly with the more than 300 Chinese colleagues who attended. We hope to rekindle professional engagement in person at the upcoming triennial conference, scheduled for September 2023 in Valencia, Spain. Taking lessons from the remote experience, we are looking into opening certain aspects of the meeting for online access to broaden accessibility to colleagues around the world who might not otherwise be able to join.

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**Image:** ♦ Still from a [promotional video](#) for [ICOM-CC's 19th Triennial Conference](#), "Transcending Boundaries: Integrated Approaches to Conservation" held May 17-21, 2021, in Beijing, featuring an enthusiastic young museum visitor. [Read more](#) about the program. Image: ICOM-CC and the Chinese Museums Association



### Locations and Hours

#### The Met Fifth Avenue

Thursday–Monday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Closed Tuesday and Wednesday

#### The Met Cloisters

Thursday–Monday: 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
Closed Tuesday and Wednesday

*All of the current and upcoming exhibitions listed are on view at The Met Fifth Avenue.*

### Current Exhibitions

#### Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Gallery Rotation

November 19, 2020 through July 12, 2021

#### Alice Neel: People Come First

March 22 through August 1, 2021

### Upcoming Exhibitions

#### The New Woman Behind the Camera

July 2 through October 3, 2021

#### Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Gallery Rotation

July 15, 2021 through March 2022

#### Jules Tavernier and the Elem Pomo

August 16 through November 28, 2021

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**Image:** ♦ Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965), *Japanese-American owned grocery store, Oakland, California*, March 1942. Gelatin silver print, 7 1/2 × 9 5/8 in. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser. ♦ On view in the upcoming exhibition *The New Woman Behind the Camera*, opening on July 2.



## 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.

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Jason Herrick  
**Chief Philanthropy Officer**  
 212-650-2354  
[jason.herrick@metmuseum.org](mailto:jason.herrick@metmuseum.org)

### Contribute Online

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[metmuseum.org/about-the-met](http://metmuseum.org/about-the-met)

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[Bulletin No. 21](#) March 2021  
[Bulletin No. 20](#) December 2020  
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*Jules Tavernier and the Elem Pomo* is made possible by Jan and Warren Adelson and The Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz Foundation for the Arts. It is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. ♦ Accompanied by an issue of *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*. This *Bulletin* is made possible by the William Cullen Bryant Fellows. The Met's quarterly *Bulletin* program is supported in part by the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, established by the cofounder of *Reader's Digest*.

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**Image:** ♦ Homai Vyrawalla (Indian, 1913–2012), *The Victoria Terminus, Bombay*, early 1940s, printed later. Inkjet print, 11 9/16 × 11 13/16 in. HV Archive/The Alkazi Collection of Photography. ♦ On view in the upcoming exhibition *The New Woman Behind the Camera*, opening on July 2.