

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

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1 ♦ Ways of Giving: Jay and Ali Klein — Inspired by the technical—this is a theme that returns time and time again when speaking with our friends Ali and Jay Klein, long-time generous champions of the research and activities of the Department of Photograph Conservation. Supporters of The Met since the 1980s they were attracted specifically to Photograph Conservation through their passion for photographic techniques, curiosity about conservation practices, and expertise in technical imaging. Over the years, the Kleins' continuing and steadfast generosity has been invaluable to the newest independent department at The Met, supporting staff salaries, enabling the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment, and funding research and travel, such as the sharing of scholarship at the American Institute for Conservation Annual Meeting (see page 4).

Ali and Jay met at New York University when he was a senior, and she was



a junior. Already accepted into Georgetown University School of Medicine, Jay needed to pass a liberal arts course—not one of his strengths, he claims—in order to graduate. Ali was a music major and became his tutor, facilitating the acquisition of that all-important music credit. They have been together since.

Jay, now retired, was a Diagnostic Radiologist specializing in CT scans and MRIs in Westchester and then, in the later years of his career, at Yale New Haven Hospital. Seeing the wide need for medical imaging, he also became an innovator and entrepreneur in the field, building facilities to increase access to this life-saving

imaging equipment nationwide. Ali spent over a decade as a Human Resources executive at Bloomingdale's and then Alexander's Department Stores, where she was the head of training—an integral part of the iconic New York City retail world.

Lifelong New Yorkers—Ali grew up in Queens and Jay in the Bronx—both describe early connections and fascination with photography. Ali's father started photographing while serving during World War II—processing the negatives in his tent—and later installed a darkroom in the basement of their family home in Queens. “My father always carried a camera. Always.” Ali recalled. They have all his negatives from WWII, as well as his rich documentation of family life. It may have been in this very Queens darkroom that Jay made his first black-and-white prints.

While at Georgetown, Jay set up a darkroom in his closet to continue his photography, turning to art to alleviate stress from his medical school studies. This was during the Vietnam War, and inspired by this historic moment, Jay captured black-and-white images of demonstrations and riots across Washington, DC. Scenes of guardsmen lined up arm to arm, all wearing masks, are in stark contrast with the action and movement of the protesters, and encapsulate dramatic aspects of the 1960s in the United States. Darkroom work can greatly enhance one's appreciation of photography and the skill and artistry required to obtain a perfect print. Jay still personally prefers the aesthetics of black-and-white photographs, with their clear delineation of form and the wide range of subtle tonalities possible, as well as the technical expertise necessary to produce them.

Ali and Jay were introduced to the Museum's Alfred Stieglitz Society by Joe and Esther Siegel (see [Bulletin 24](#)), as both Joe and Jay have long enjoyed the practice of photography. Through the Museum, the Kleins discovered, in Photograph Conservation, a wonderful way to support their beloved Met, all while feeding their intellectual curiosity about photography, technical research, and the everyday activities of our busy Museum. While the Stieglitz Society is hosted by the curatorial Department of Photographs, Jay and Ali's distinct appreciation of the technical aspects of photography is a perfect match with the ongoing work in our department, and we all enjoy their engaging visits to the lab.

Jay explains that much of the imaging equipment he employed in the medical field is the same as that used by photograph conservators and conservation scientists to determine the material composition of historic photographs and to gain insights into the working practices of photographers from all eras. These tools help guide conservators in determining appropriate conservation treatment methods, [reveal hidden photographs](#), and inform strategies for safe display and proper storage. As we continue to advocate for the importance of preventive conservation among visitors and donors, the Kleins' innate understanding and insatiable curiosity about materials research, preservation, and conservation treatment allow us to share with them the complexity of our work.

In addition to their financial commitment, Ali and Jay advise and encourage us. With their unique perspective, they offer guidance about public events and help us tailor content that will resonate most and increase engagement with our growing group of friends and supporters. Indeed, they are critical members of our team.

To Ali and Jay Klein, we extend our profound thanks. We remain incredibly grateful for their support, wisdom, and most of all, for their enduring friendship.



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Image: ♦ Andreas Gursky (German, born Leipzig, 1955), *Schiphol*, 1994. Chromogenic print, 73 × 87 1/8 in (185.4 × 221.3 cm). Purchase, The Howard Gilman Foundation Gift, 1995 (1995.191) © Andreas Gursky ♦ Here, in a favorite of the Kleins from the Met's collection, Gursky frames the tall clouds, low horizon, and perfect geometries of a runway in the windows of Amsterdam's airport. Deftly laminating the luminous skies of Baroque Low Country painting, the Romantic theme of the windowed view, and the abstraction of De Stijl, Gursky gives us a landscape layered with nostalgia, structured by modernism, and sealed behind glass—an expansive yet neatly delimited vista for human transport.

2 ♦ Welcome Michaela Lott — We are delighted to welcome Michaela Lott to the Department of Photograph Conservation as an [Adrienne Arsht summer intern](#). Michaela is an emerging conservation professional, fulfilling the practical and academic requirements necessary to apply to conservation graduate programs. She was awarded this opportunity by The Met in conjunction with the [Andrew W. Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation](#) program hosted by the [UCLA/Getty Conservation Program](#). The workshop, held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, included two weeks of deeply informative and engaging content. In place of the usual in-person events, live Zoom sessions were led by active professionals, and hands-on sessions were achieved using conservation tools and sample materials provided by the program to each cohort member. This period was followed by an opportunity to apply for one of the eight ten-week internships that would provide pre-program experience for those interested in continuing to the next step of conservation graduate school.

Michaela came to conservation by chance in the last year of her undergraduate studies. Graduating at the beginning of a pandemic with a bachelor's degree in photojournalism and a minor in biology, she knew that she wanted to utilize her scientific knowledge while also nurturing her long-time love of art and captivation with museums. During her research, she came across the perfect pairing of these interests: art conservation. Wanting to learn more, Michaela reached out to professionals in conservation and adjacent fields, despite not being able to visit labs or even museums at the time. Since then, she has fostered a broad network that has earned her several fantastic pre-program experiences, including a visit to a portfolio day at [LACMA](#), attendance in the UCLA/Mellon Diversity program, a rewarding conservation treatment experience working on an LAX airport art installation titled [LAX by American multi-media artist Pae White](#), and now this opportunity in Photograph Conservation at The Met. Michaela has engaged with the conservation of photographs, works on paper, and paintings, and she continues to make connections and take classes toward her graduate school aspirations.

Her move to New York City has allowed her to continue her many interests outside of the conservation lab, which include playing tennis, taking photographs, reading, hanging out with friends, and—an enjoyment well-addressed by NYC—anything related to food!





3 ♦ American Institute for Conservation 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting — In May, five staff members, fellows, and interns from the Department of Photograph Conservation traveled to Los Angeles to participate in the [50th Annual Meeting of the American Institute for Conservation](#) (AIC), an important form of professional development. After more than two years of virtual meetings, it was refreshing to attend live talk sessions and to see so many familiar and new faces among the over 1,000 attendees.

The AIC Annual Meeting includes sessions and workshops dedicated to the broad scope of art conservation, as well as the many individual concentrations within this highly specialized field, including but not limited to the disciplines of Objects, Textiles, Books and Paper, Paintings, Archaeology, Collections Care, Electronic Media, and of course, Photographic Materials.

For our Andrew W. Mellon Conservation Fellow, Rachel Tabet, this was her first time attending an AIC meeting in person and her first invitation to moderate a panel. Rachel would like to acknowledge and thank the [Photographic Materials Group](#) (PMG) of AIC for supporting her travel and making it possible to enjoy such a rich experience. Her participation in the conference allowed her to share her own work informally, meet new colleagues, and learn about the latest research and techniques from numerous professionals from around the world.

Photograph Conservation hosts a diversity of expertise with specialists not only in photographs but also in books, time-based media, and preventive conservation. Therefore, we covered a lot of ground by attending different concurrent sessions and reporting back to one another on the highlights.

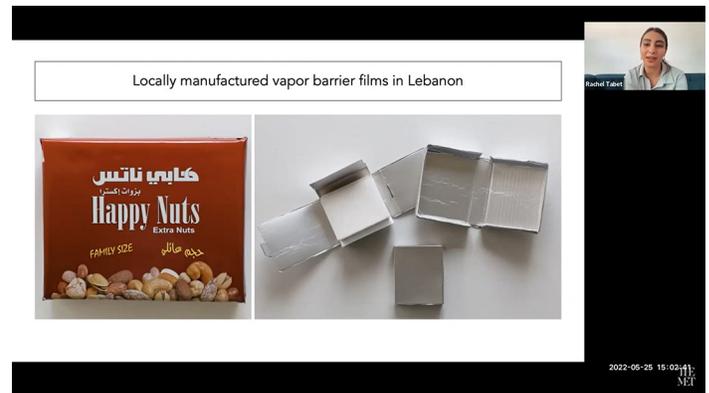
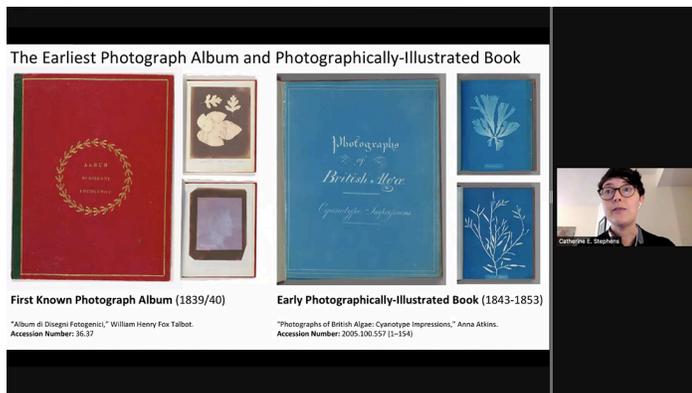
Of particular note was a luncheon held to discuss the creation of a new [AIC Wiki page](#) devoted to the history and conservation of photograph albums, attended by both PMG and [Book and Paper Group](#) members. This new open-source webpage will differentiate from the older “Scrapbooks and Albums” Wiki, allowing more focus on this specialized topic. Met Museum conservators and fellows contributed ideas to the discussion and offered their enthusiastic support for this new initiative, which will be launched in the near future.

The meeting was a powerful reminder that the conservation field is built around many diverse individuals sharing knowledge, discussing collection challenges, and devising solutions. Ultimately, these personal and professional connections are what enliven and advance the field, and this has never been more true than after our shared experience in weathering the pandemic these past two years.

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Images: ♦ Rachel Tabet moderating a PMG session at the AIC Annual Meeting. Credit: Georgia Southworth ♦
Conference attendees from the Department of Photograph Conservation, Felice Robles, Rachel Tabet, and Cat Stephens. Credit: Rachel Tabet



4 ♦ Fellows Colloquia — This spring, as part of The Met's annual *Research Out Loud: Met Fellows Present* colloquium, our two fellows presented, virtually, the progress of their research to Met staff and the broader public.

On May 20th, Annette de la Renta Fellow Cat Stephens discussed the progress of an ongoing preventive conservation survey of nearly 1,100 photograph-bearing books held in The Met's Department of Photographs. In her presentation, titled "Kinetic History: A Preservation Survey of One Thousand Photo Albums and Photographically-Illustrated Books," Cat briefly covered the historic intersections of photographs and books, as well as the unique difficulties that these bound volumes pose to conservators. Unlike static artworks, books and albums must perform complex kinetic functions to divulge their narratives, yet many photograph albums are very fragile today as the materials used in their construction are sometimes more prone to deterioration than the photographs themselves.

This year, Cat has been working with Georgia Southworth, Associate Conservator for Books, to implement an item-level preservation survey of this large collection of albums and bound volumes. The data collected during the survey, which is designed to capture details about each book's physical structure and current condition, will allow Georgia and Cat to make recommendations for improving the collection's overall state of preservation, as well as identifying those in most urgent need of conservation treatment. The survey is 20% complete, and Cat reported on some of the initial findings in her colloquia talk. Stay tuned for future developments!

On May 25th, Andrew W. Mellon Conservation Fellow Rachel Tabet presented her ongoing research into creating housings

for photographs by using materials commonly available from the food and shipping industries in her home country of Lebanon. As the country descended into an economic collapse in 2019, buying conservation materials from abroad became an even more cumbersome and prohibitively expensive task. In her presentation titled "Adapting Preventive Conservation Best Practices in the Context of a Multiple-Risk Zone," Rachel discussed her process for replicating common preservation enclosures and housings with commercial cardboards and sealing their surfaces with a vapor barrier film manufactured for food packaging. Her theory is that the vapor barrier film may sequester any harmful vapors that the poor-quality cardboard emits, thus protecting the photographs held within from any deleterious effects from the housing itself. She is working with The Met's [Department of Scientific Research](#) and the [Image Permanence Institute](#) to test the materials used to produce the prototype housings, with the hope that her theory proves accurate.

Such boxes could present an affordable option for institutions around the world, allowing the construction of housings made from locally sourced and less expensive cardboards and barrier films that fulfill the requirements for preservation enclosures. Proper boxes and other housings are critical in protecting any photograph-based collection from physical and chemical damage over time.

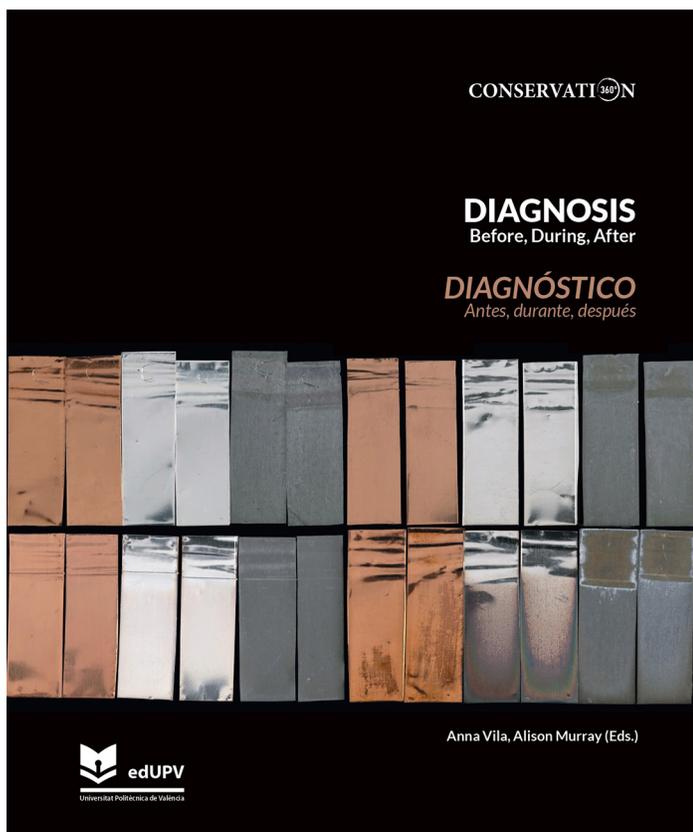
We are so proud of our fellows and grateful to the Education Department for the generous support they offer in providing the opportunity each year for the fellows to share their scholarship. Please contact aleya.lehmann@metmuseum.org if you would like to view the recordings of the presentations.

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Images: ♦ Cat Stephens, during her presentation, speaking about the earliest photograph album and photographically-illustrated book in the Department of Photographs Collection Book Survey. Credit: Georgia Southworth ♦ Rachel Tabet, during her presentation, speaking on locally-manufactured vapor barrier films available in Lebanon. Credit: Nora Kennedy



is intended for any interested reader, with a particular focus on students and new members of the conservation field.

Building effective communication between conservation disciplines has always been part of Associate Conservator Georgia Southworth's role in the Department of Photograph Conservation. Trained as a rare book conservator, she is responsible for photograph-based bound volumes held at The Met. The overlap of preservation concerns that affect these objects—the dynamic needs of books or albums, the sensitivity of the photographs they house, and the material considerations of both—present distinct challenges to the professionals who care for them. Georgia writes about ways to approach these challenges in two recently published articles that grew out of conference presentations. Following a November 2020 lecture series hosted by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage ([INTACH](#)), where she spoke about “The Preservation of Photograph Albums: Making Cross-Disciplinary Decisions to Maximize Care,” the proceedings were published in *Conservation Insights 2020*. Similarly, her talk titled “Cross-Disciplinary Care for the Preservation of Photograph Albums,” given at the 2021 annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation, was presented to a joint session of AIC's Book and Paper Group and has since been [published](#) in both AIC's *Book and Paper Group Annual* and *Topics in Photographic Preservation*.

5 ♦ Staff Publications — During the Museum's closure in 2020, many of us focused on writing projects while working from home. For Associate Conservator Katie Sanderson, this included collaboration with Met colleagues in the Department of Scientific Research, Silvia Centeno and Catherine H. Stephens, on a chapter for a recently published book titled *Diagnosis: Before, During, After*. The second volume in a series of books on conservation practice called “[Conservation 360°](#),” this publication focuses on various approaches to evaluating the condition, identifying the component materials, and assessing the stability of an art object. The chapter, titled “A Diagnostic Approach for Understanding and Preserving Silver-Based Photographs,” presents a series of case studies to illustrate a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach for understanding, displaying, and preserving photographs. Studies of three artworks from The Met collection are discussed along with an overview of analytical techniques and methods of materials testing. The book, available gratis online,

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Images: ♦ The newly published second volume of “[Conservation 360°](#),” titled *Diagnosis: Before, During, After*, with a chapter contribution by Katie Sanderson, Silvia Centeno, and Catherine H. Stephens. Credit: Department of Scientific Research ♦ An elegant mechanical binding structure allows a Metal Back Album from the Photograph Conservation Study Collection to continue working, and is a perfect example of the dynamic nature of photograph albums about which Georgia Southworth writes in her recently published articles on the collaborative efforts required to care for the bound volumes in the Museum's collection. Credit: Georgia Southworth



Locations and Hours

The Met Fifth Avenue

Sunday–Tuesday and Thursday: 10 am–5 pm
Friday and Saturday: 10 am–9 pm
Closed Wednesday

The Met Cloisters

Thursday–Tuesday: 10 am–5 pm
Closed Wednesday

Date Night at Met Fifth Avenue!

Fridays and Saturdays 'til 9 pm

Current Exhibitions

The Lightning Testimonies

February 28 through November 6, 2022

Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Gallery Rotation

July 7 through Fall 2022

Bernd & Hilla Becher

July 15 through November 6, 2022

Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room

Ongoing

Upcoming Exhibitions

Richard Avedon: Murals

January 19 through October 1, 2023

Berenice Abbott's New York Album, 1929

March 2 through September 4, 2023

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

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Image: ♦ Jeremiah Gurney (American, 1812–1895), *Two Girls in Identical Dresses*, ca. 1857. Daguerreotype, 4 7/16 × 3 1/4 in. (11.3 × 8.2 cm). Gilman Collection, Purchase, Marlene Nathan Meyerson Family Foundation Gift, 2005 (2005.100.325) ♦ On view in “Showing the Work,” Gallery 599, Ratti Textile Center, through August 2023, featuring various aspects of textile-based research with a focus on nineteenth-century European and American textile sample books. The installation highlights early photography’s connections to textile production, especially their mutual interest in applied chemistry.



Support the Department of Photograph Conservation

With steadfast commitment and support from our friends like Ali and Jay Klein (see pp. 1–2), The Met's Department of Photograph Conservation continues to thrive and be a crucial resource for the preservation of works of art and 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:

Hannah F. Howe
Deputy Chief Development Officer of Individual Giving
 212-731-1281
hannah.howe@metmuseum.org

Contribute Online

Donations can be made [online](#). Please indicate within the "Donation Note" box that your donation is "For Department of Photograph Conservation."

Department Contact

Aleya Lehmann
 212-570-3810
aleyalehmann@metmuseum.org

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 and Georgia Southworth
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Acknowledgements

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Bernd & Hilla Becher is made possible by Joyce Frank Menschel, the Barrie A. and Deedee Wigmore Foundation, the Edward John & Patricia Rosenwald Foundation, and Linda Macklowe. It is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in association with Studio Bernd & Hilla Becher and Die Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur. ♦ The catalogue is made possible by the Mary C. and James W. Fosburgh Publications Fund. Additional support is provided by the Mellon Foundation.

Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room is made possible by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation and the Director's Fund. Additional support is provided by Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne and the Terra Foundation for American Art. ♦ 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*.

Richard Avedon: Murals celebrates the centennial of the artist's birth on May 15, 1923 with the presentation of a selection of the photographer's most innovative group portraits and is organized around his monumental photomurals. ♦ The exhibition is made possible by Joyce Frank Menschel.

Berenice Abbott's New York Album, 1929 is made possible by The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc. ♦ Consisting of some 280 small black-and-white prints arranged on thirty-two pages, the album marks a crucial turning point in Abbott's career and offers a rare glimpse of a photographer's mind at work.

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Image: ♦ Bernd and Hilla Becher (German, 1931–2007; 1934–2015), *Water Tower, Verviers, Belgium*, 1983. Gelatin silver print, 23 7/8 × 19 13/16 in. (60.6 × 50.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 1992 (1992.5009) © Estate Bernd & Hilla Becher, represented by Max Becher ♦ On view in "Bernd & Hilla Becher" through November 6, 2022.