

Conservation Treatment:

*What Can and Cannot be Done,
What Should and Should Not Be Done*

Nora W. Kennedy
Sherman Fairchild Conservator of Photographs

What are the goals of the treatment?
How are those goals achieved?

*Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice
of the American Institute for Conservation
of Historic & Artistic Works*

[http://www.conservation-us.org/index.cfm?
fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageID=858&nodeID=1](http://www.conservation-us.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageID=858&nodeID=1)

Conservation:

The profession devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future.
Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventive care, supported by research and education.

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Treatment may consist of stabilization and/or restoration.

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Preventive Care:

(also referred to as preventive conservation)

The mitigation of deterioration and damage to cultural property through the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures for the following:

UCT Workshop Goal

Preventive Care:

(also referred to as preventive conservation)

The mitigation of deterioration and damage to cultural property through the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures for the following:

- appropriate environmental conditions;
- handling and maintenance procedures for storage, exhibition, packing, transport, and use;
- integrated pest management;
- emergency preparedness and response;
- and reformatting/duplication.

Preservation:

The protection of cultural property through activities that minimize chemical and physical deterioration and damage and that prevent loss of informational content.

The primary goal of preservation is to prolong the existence of cultural property.

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General Requirements for Conservator

- Theory and Philosophy
- History of Conservation
- General Art History
- General World History
- Ethics
- *Continuing curiosity, desire to learn ...*

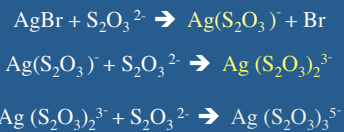
Requirements with Specific References to Photograph Conservation

- Preservation and Collection Management
- Research Skills and Goals
- Documentation and Technical Examination
- Analytical Techniques
- Introduction to Conventional and Digital Imaging

Requirements Specific to Photograph Conservators

- Photographic Chemistry
- History of Photography
- Re-creation of Imaging Systems
- Connoisseurship
- Photograph Conservation Treatment
- History of Photograph Conservation

Photographic Chemistry



such as the Chemistry of Fixation



History of
Photography

[Botanical Specimen]
William Henry Fox Talbot
ca. 1835

Louis-Auguste Bisson:
Portal of Saint-Ursin, Bourges, 1855
Albumen silver print from glass negative
43.4 x 35.2 cm (17 1/16 x 13 7/8 in.)



Re-creation of Imaging Systems

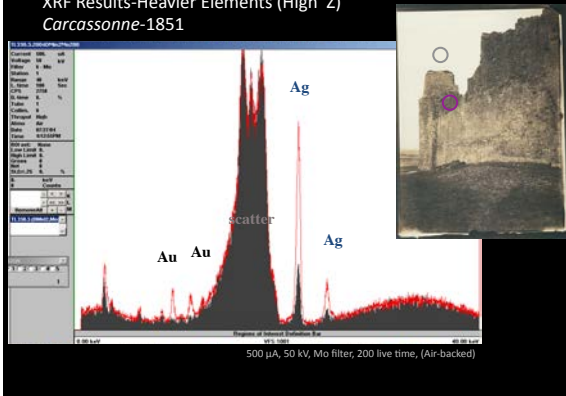


Pilar Hernandez
Mellon Collaborative Workshop

Gustave le Gray: *View from Photographer's Studio, 1851-54*



XRF Results-Heavier Elements (High Z)
Carcassonne-1851



Conservation Treatment of Photographs



Education & Training of Conservators



- 4 year B.A.
- 3-4 year Master's Degree

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AIC Guidelines for Practice

Guideline 21

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Materials and Methods: The conservation professional is responsible for choosing materials and methods appropriate to the objectives of each specific treatment and consistent with currently accepted practice. The advantages of the materials and methods chosen must be balanced against their potential adverse effects on future examination, scientific investigation, treatment, and function.

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AIC Code of Ethics

- Strive to attain highest possible standards
- Actions governed by informed respect
- Serve as an advocate for the preservation of cultural property
- Practice within the limits of personal competence
- Quality of work shall not be compromised
- Strive to select methods and materials that do not adversely affect cultural property
- and so on ...

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Chemical versus Physical Treatment



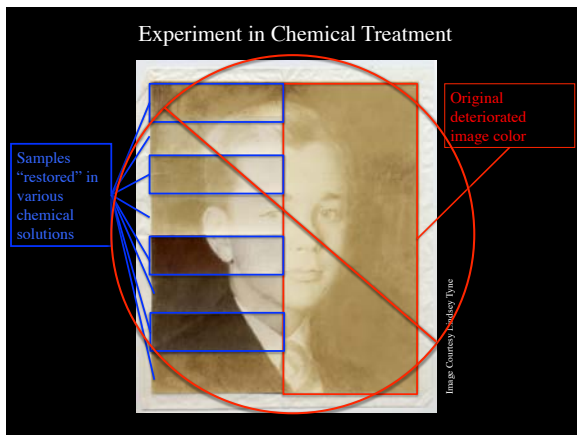
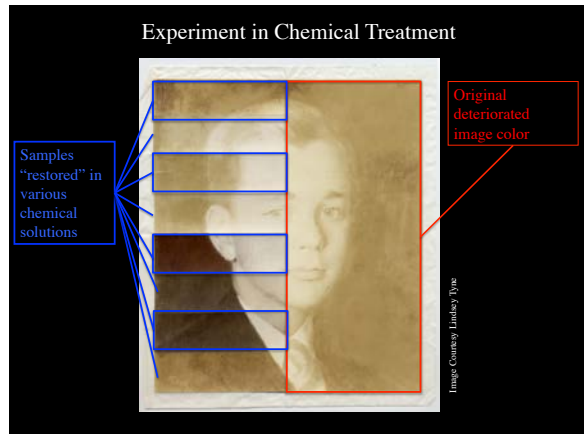
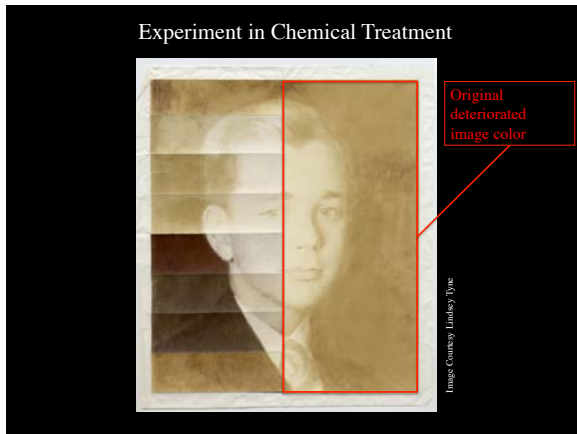
Chemical Treatment

- Image enhancement
- Use of Chemistry



Experiment in Chemical Treatment





Physical Treatment

- Surface cleaning
- Repair of tears (alignment, mending, reinforcing)
- Consolidation
- Crease reduction
- Removal of pressure sensitive tapes
- Removal of photographs stuck to glass
- Mold reduction
- Humidification and flattening
- Compensation for loss
- Treatments of cased images

Surface Cleaning



Tear Repair & Consolidation



Tear Repair & Consolidation



Compensation for Loss or Inserting



During Treatment

Compensation for Loss or Inserting



During Treatment

After Treatment

Stain reduction
Bathing



Melissa Cacciola

Flotation bathing on a screen



Drying between felts to
preserve paper texture

Consolidation



Before Treatment
(see also insect skins!)



After Treatment

Images Courtesy Rebecca Caplan

Photograph Conservation Treatment

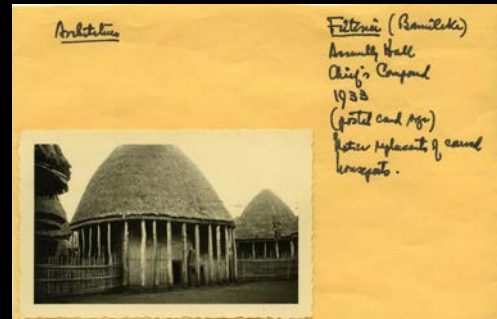


Nancy Reinhold

The Importance of Original Mounts



Before and After Treatment, Wilderstein Preservation Collection photograph
Treatment by Lisa Conte, CC, IFA, NYU 2009



Removal of Pressure Sensitive Tapes



Attributed to Alfred Rudolph Waud, American, born Great Britain, 1828–1891
[Woman in an Interior], ca. 1870
Tautype
13.8 x 10.6 cm (5 7/16 x 4 3/16 in.)
2005.100.616

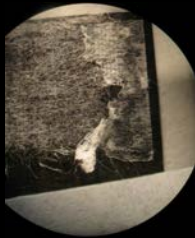
Removal of Pressure Sensitive Tapes



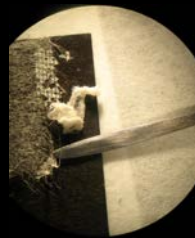
Before Treatment

Images Courtesy Hamako Murata

Removal of Pressure Sensitive Tapes



Before Treatment



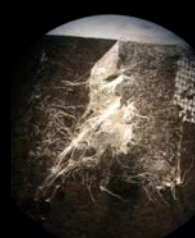
During Treatment

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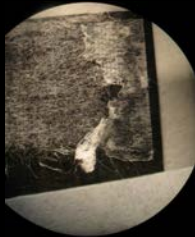
Before Treatment



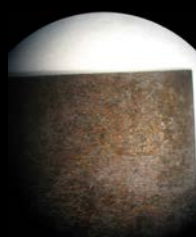
During Treatment

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Removal of Pressure Sensitive Tapes



Before Treatment



During Treatment

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Removal of Pressure Sensitive Tapes



BEFORE TREATMENT



BEFORE TREATMENT

Removal of Photographs Stuck to Glass or Each Other!



Treating Mold, Water- & Moisture-Damaged Images



Humidification and Flattening



Treatment of Cased Images



Treatment of Cased Images



Treatment of Cased Images



Treatment of Cased Images



Compensation for Loss

Terminology:

- Spotting
- Retouching
- Inpainting
- Compensation

Terminology:

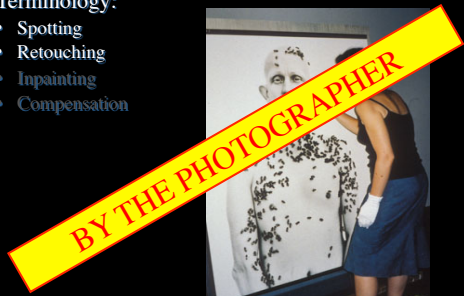
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Ann Giordano spotting
Richard Avedon photograph

Terminology:

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Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'Keeffe



Spotting on Stieglitz of O'Keeffe

Terminology:

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BY THE PHOTOGRAPHER



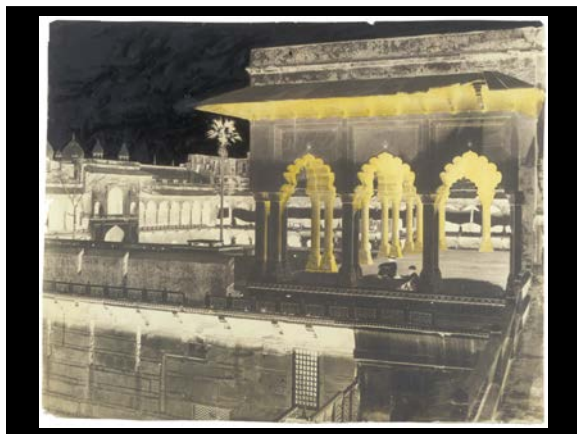
Spotting on Stieglitz of O'Keefe

Alteration of original retouching

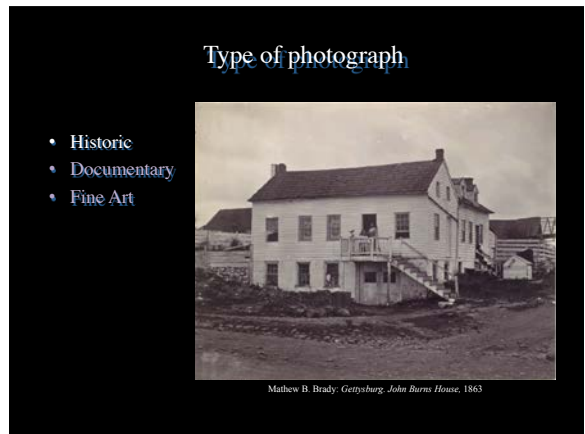
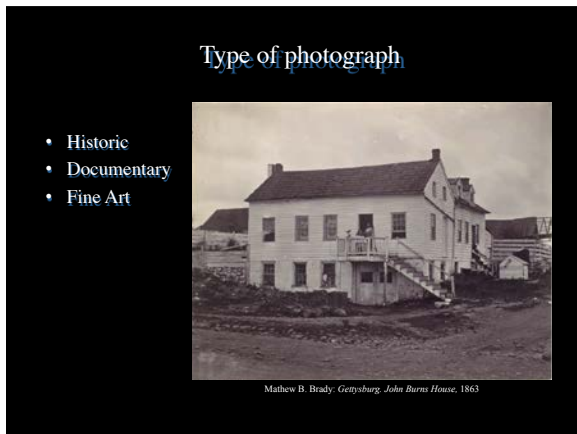
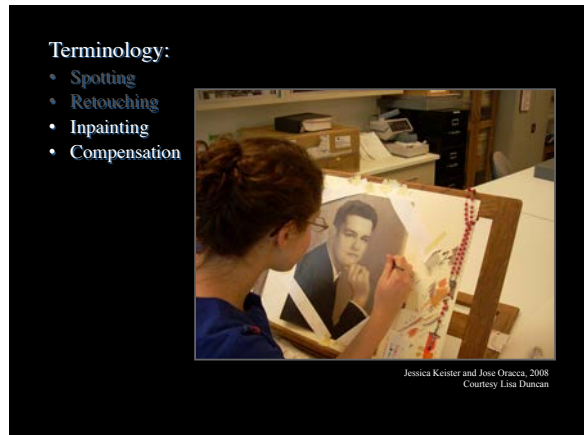
- change in photographic image
- change in retouching media



Nadar: *Nude*






George Platt Lynes: *Salvador Dali*, 1939
Gelatin silver print with applied pigment



Type of photograph

- Historic
- Documentary
- Fine Art





Courtesy
The Arab Image Foundation Collection



Ownership or Audience


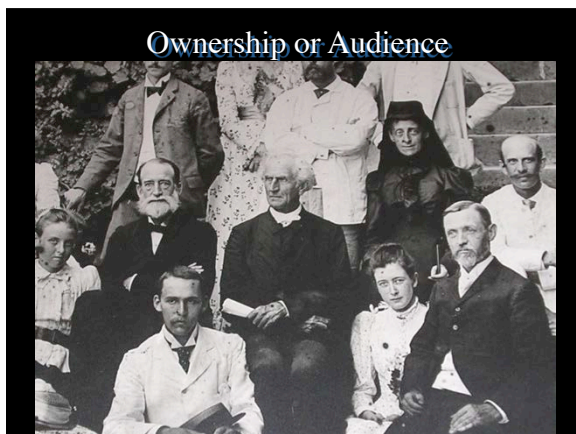
- Museum Curator
- Dealer
- Private Individual
- Archivist



Eugène Cuvelier: *Près de la Caverne, Terrain brûlé* early 1860's
Salted paper print from paper negative

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Choice of Materials

- consistent with “currently accepted practice”
- most chemically and physically stable of those appropriate
- chemically and physically compatible with the object
- distinguishable
- removable with least damage
- should not preclude re-treatment or future analysis
- provide no false modification of known aesthetic, conceptual and physical characteristics

Currently Accepted Practice is based on:

- replicable research
- objective review of past treatments
- professional consultation and open discussion at professional meetings
- industrial information
- publication in peer-reviewed literature

Compensation for ...

... Deterioration
... Damage



Damage

abrasion
tears
scratches
punctures
skinning
losses
gouges
stains

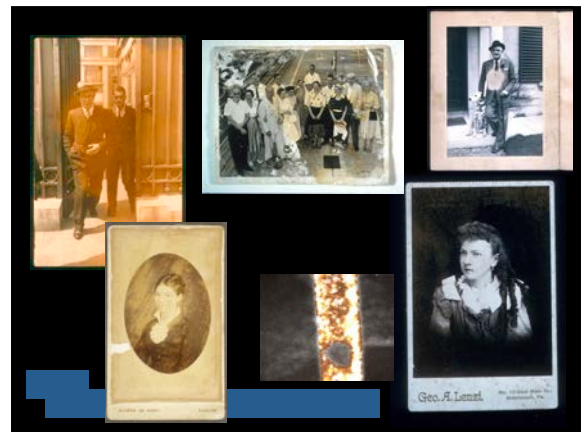
BEFORE TREATMENT



Courtesy The Better Image®

Deterioration

- discoloration of the image (local or overall)
- fading of the image (local or overall)
- silver mirroring
- discoloration of the primary support
- alteration of original retouching
- alteration of original coating





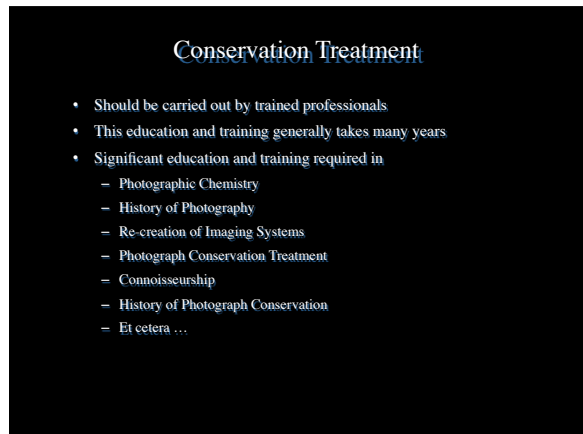
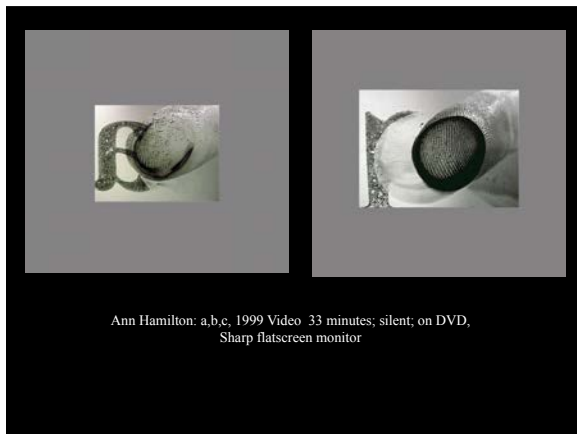
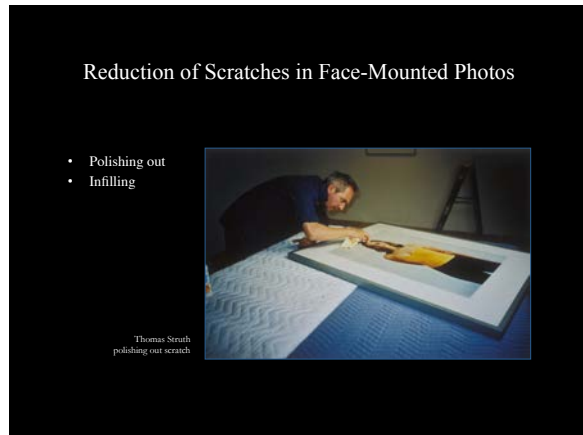
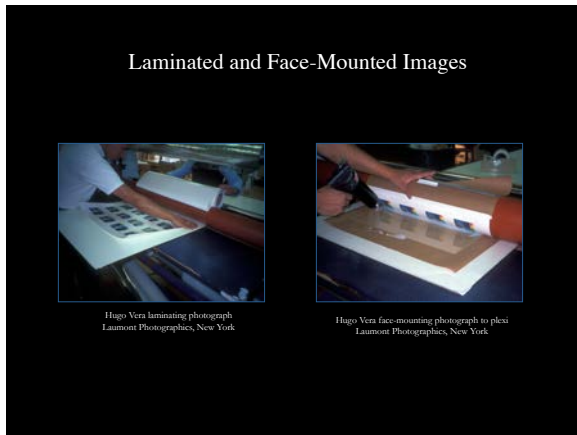
Photographic Surfaces achieved through...

- preparation of the paper
- presence and preparation of baryta
- presence and preparation of plastic
- type of binder
- presence of coating, laminate, plexi face-mount
- after treatment (burnishing, ferrotyping, et cetera)

Alteration of Applied Coatings

- Discoloration
- Disruption
 - cracking, crazing, blanching, flaking
 - abrasion, scratches
 - fingerprints
 - loss





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PRESERVATION
is the most important means of saving
photograph collections!

