

American Institute for Conservation Annual Meeting

Each year close to 1,000 conservators from the US and around the world gather for the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) annual meeting. Photograph Conservation was well represented this year, providing tours of the lab, presenting scholarly papers, and participating in an inaugural panel for CAN!, a new focus group on contemporary art conservation. More broadly, the offerings of philosophical debates and fundraising luncheons elevated both our critical thinking and our practical skills.

Lisa Barro delivered a talk detailing her research with Met scientist Silvia Centeno titled “Blue Pigment Inclusions in Salted Paper Prints”, which examines the use of smalt and synthetic ultramarine pigments as whitening agents in early photographic papers.



Lisa Barro presenting research on blue pigments in salted paper prints at the American Institute for Conservation annual meeting



Elsa Thyss shares research on glass plate negatives with visiting AIC colleagues

Nora Kennedy added a leading voice to the panel discussion titled “The Changing Role of the Conservator”. She and Glenn Wharton, a consulting conservator at The Met, fielded questions about the expanding footprint of time-based media (TBM) art at The Met and the needs of this growing and critical conservation discipline in cultural heritage preservation.

Sherman Fairchild Foundation Fellow Alex Nichols delivered a pre-panel talk for the same session describing the results of the recent TBM collections assessment and its recommendations as The Met works to develop a TBM conservation program here at the Museum.

Leading up to the three days of talks, a number of major museums across the Northeast hosted tours of their laboratories for conservation colleagues. We were pleased to welcome visitors for two tours highlighting our individual areas of research; the first in English and the second, offered by Georgia in Spanish, for visiting colleagues from Central and South America.

Nora Kennedy awarded Honorary Doctorate

Nora Kennedy traveled to Bratislava, Slovakia in June to be awarded a *doctor honoris causa* from the [Academy of Fine Arts and Design](#) (AFAD). The AFAD Arts Council made the award in recognition of Kennedy's ongoing contributions to develop and establish photograph conservation within their Department of Restoration. Kennedy shared the stage with Rolls Royce Head of Design, [Jozef Kabaň](#). Conservators travel in the right circles! Kennedy and Kabaň are the only individuals to be awarded honorary doctorate degrees in the last five years by the Arts Council, and university delegates from Slovakia and other countries attended in full regalia for the formal ceremony.

Nora was joined for the celebration by her partner Peter Mustardo, her brother Michael and sister-in-law Analía.



Dr. Kabaň and Dr. Kennedy with Academy of Fine Arts and Design Provost Bohunka Koklesová, PhD

Fare ye well, Mollie!



Mollie Anderson

In April we bid a sad farewell to Mollie Anderson, our intrepid administrator, as she left for a new life on the West Coast. An integral member of Photograph Conservation, Mollie is missed for her work spearheading this Bulletin, our Instagram account, and innumerable other administrative responsibilities she carried out with great skill and apparent ease. We struggle in her absence to fill her shoes, but have the temporary assistance of Shameyka McCalman, a delightful substitute. We wish Mollie all the very best in her new role as Executive Assistant at the [Getty Conservation Institute](#) and look forward to future contact, both professionally and personally.

Our Fabulous Fellows

Elsa Thyss, Research Scholar in Photograph Conservation and Alex Nichols, Sherman Fairchild Foundation Fellow focusing on time-based media (TBM) conservation, have had a very busy spring. Elsa is wrapping up three years of research on the history, preservation, and conservation of the glass plate negatives of New Orleans photographer Ernest Bellocq. She has made discoveries about the retouching media found on the Bellocq plates and is researching treatments to secure areas of lifting gelatin emulsion back into place on the glass supports, stabilizing the plates so they can be handled safely. Elsa presented aspects of her research in Belfast at the [ICON International Triennial Conference](#) meeting in June.



Alex Nichols, Nora Kennedy and Elsa Thyss at Spring Fellows Colloquia

Alex has contributed her expertise to *Home is a Foreign Place* and *Apollo's Muse: The Moon in the Age of Photography*, two current exhibitions with TBM art content. Importantly she co-taught two training sessions for Museum staff to improve our TBM practices. The first covered acquisition policies for TBM art, taught with colleagues from our Counsel's Office. The second focused on cataloguing TBM collections and was co-taught with Collections Specialists and Collections Managers from the Modern & Contemporary and Photographs Departments.

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-Funded India Exchange Prospers

We have been delighted to work with the most recent Indian colleagues taking part in the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded Indian Conservation Fellowship Program (ICFP). Current Fellows, Dr. Sarvesh Singh, Chemist and Conservator at the [Reserve Bank of India](#) in Maharashtra, and Vasundhara Pradip Madhumita, Conservator at the [City Palace Museum](#) in Udaipur, both work with diverse collections, so their focus has been in Objects Conservation, with brief stints in Photograph Conservation. Of interest to both are skills in the identification of photographic processes, learning about glass plate negatives, and making protective enclosures for bound volumes and non-traditional photo-based artworks. A third Indian Fellow in the 2019 cohort, Syed Tariq Azhar, was hosted by the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, and is pictured here with Vasundhara and Sarvesh. Past Indian Fellows in Photograph Conservation have included Nikhil Ramesh of the [CSMVS](#), Mumbai, and Vikram Rathore of [Mehrangarh Fort](#), Jodhpur. The ICFP actively builds networks between Indian and American colleagues, fostering future communication, exchange and mutually beneficial collaboration.



2019 ICFP Fellows Syed Tariq Azhar, Vasundhara Pradip Madhumita, and Dr. Sarvesh Singh

Summer Extern, Sasha



Sasha Arden

Sasha Arden, a Graduate Fellow in Time-Based Media Conservation and Art History at the [Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University](#), joins us part-time this summer on an externship guided by Alex to assist in the documentation and cataloguing of time-based media artworks in The Met's collection. With generous support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, NYU is the first conservation graduate program to offer [this specialization](#) in the United States. Sasha's externship is also supported by the Foundation. This summer, they are prototyping treatment options for Lynn Hershman's web-based artwork, *Agent Ruby* (2001), part of SFMOMA's collection, through the Polonsky Foundation-NYU Digital Humanities Internship Program.

Celebrating Us!

In celebration of our fourth year as an independent Met department, Photograph Conservation hosted an evening event for our close friends to share little-known behind-the-scenes activities that shape our exquisite exhibitions and keep the art safe during loans to sister institutions. Nora, Katie and Lisa presented the inaugural talk in our new departmental "Keyhole" series, "Photograph Conservation Through the Keyhole: Making Exhibitions Happen". The well-received evening detailed many of the aspects of conservation work not commonly shared with the public that lead to the understanding, description, and presentation of The Met's outstanding collections. We'll have more to share next April during another "Keyhole" evening.



Behind-the-scenes during the installation of *Irving Penn: Centennial in Brazil* in 2018

Currently on View

Be sure to catch these exhibitions before they close:

Robert Wood Johnson Gallery Rotation 77

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue until August 8, 2019

[Ragnar Kjartansson, *Death Is Elsewhere*](#)

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue until September 2, 2019

[Home is a Foreign Place](#)

On view at The Met Breuer until June 21, 2020

[Camp: Notes on Fashion](#)

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue until September 8, 2019



Peter Hujar (American, 1934 – 1987). *Susan Sontag*. Gelatin silver print. Purchase, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, 2006



W. & F. Langenheim (American active 1843 – 1874). *Eclipse of the Sun* (one of seven daguerreotypes). Daguerreotype. Gilman Collection, Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005 (2005.100.614a-g).

Coming Soon...

Apollo's Muse: The Moon in the Age of Photography

Opens at The Met Fifth Avenue on July 3, 2019

Robert Wood Johnson Gallery Rotation 78

Opens at The Met Fifth Avenue on August 23, 2019

Support the Department of Photograph Conservation

With steadfast commitment and support from our friends, The Met's evolving Department of Photograph Conservation can continue to thrive and be a crucial resource for the preservation of works of art, as well as a vibrant center for research. Many thanks to you all for making our important work possible.

To learn more about how you can become involved and support this critical area at The Met, please contact the Office of Development at 212-650-2352 or by email at Marilyn.Hernandez@metmuseum.org

You also may contribute online at: secure.metmuseum.org/secure/donation/donate

Click on 'Tell us About Your Donation' and note 'For Department of Photograph Conservation'.

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

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Camp: Notes on Fashion is made possible by Gucci.

Additional support is provided by Condé Nast.

Ragnar Kjartansson, Death Is Elsewhere is made possible by Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee.

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