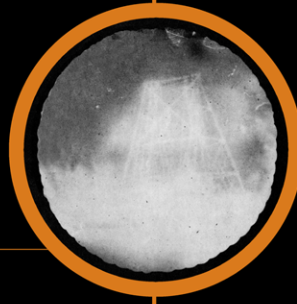


The History and Conservation of Glass Supported Photographs

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The 40 foot telescope at Slough, 1839
Sir John Frederick William Herschel
National Media Museum, Bradford, England

Glass Manufacture

The manufacture of glass as it relates to photography is being explored, by way of collating a collection of articles covering the use of glass in photography, documenting issues of concern, and researching and visiting areas of glass production in England, Belgium and the US to explore trends in glass manufacture. The intention is to examine the ingredients, fabrication, and treatment of glass.



Glass Cutters in Charleroi, Belgium
from *Pays de Charleroi: memoire photographique*



[Young Man], circa 1860
GEH study collection

Treatment Options

Issues are being addressed involving the conservation of glass supported photographs and their solutions. Current philosophies of the treatment of photographs on glass, how treatment requirements are determined and when to make an intervention are being questioned.

Historic and modern philosophies and methods of glass repair are being documented and compared while addressing the importance of each object's original aesthetics.



Application of adhesive to vertically assembled, non-planar window glass
photograph by Ralph Wiegandt



[Unidentified group on Prospect Point, Niagara Falls], July 4, 1856
Attributed to Platt Babbitt, GEH 1969.0204.0025

ABSTRACT

This research project is intended to provide for students of photograph conservation the basic information on the history, manufacture, deterioration and conservation of glass supported photographs. It will result in the production of a teaching text for the photograph conservation community. A synopsis of glass supported photographs will be created that will include an identification tree; an illustrated timeline of glass supported photographs; and discussion of the conservation issues involving glass supported photographs, illustrated with case studies and a sample set of repair and stabilization methods for the GEH lab. This project will aid the education of conservators, raise interest in research in the area, and promote preservation.

Process History

The process history of glass supported photographs is being examined, while illustrating the varieties of glass supported photographs, and will be accompanied by an identification tree.

The relationship between glass and photography is being illustrated through the creation of three parallel timelines: the history of glass technology; the introduction of photographic processes on glass; and a general history of photography.

Deterioration

Deterioration mechanisms can lead to different issues for the image layer, whether it be of gelatin, collodion or albumen. The deterioration characteristics related to each variety of glass and binder are being illustrated, and possible solutions will be suggested.

Case Studies

Case studies of the conservation of glass supported photographs are being performed and documented. Various types of adhesives used to repair glass are being examined, while assessing their long and short term effects, reversibility and refractive indices. A sample set of various repair methods will also be created and the pros and cons of each technique will be investigated.

Thank you to the staff and fellows of the 4th cycle of the ARP. With special thanks to Ralph Wiegandt, my advisors: Mark Osterman and J. J. Chen, and most of all, my husband, Dan Trommater.