

Time-Based Media at The Met

2018 has been a significant year in the development of a time-based media (TBM) conservation program at The Met. Our ongoing lecture series is now entering its third year, and has featured a broad range of professionals including artists, conservators, curators, and colleagues from institutions such as MoMA, the Guggenheim, New York University, and Pace Gallery, among others. Each of these lectures has shed a nuanced light on how the art world has had to grapple with not only the rapid emergence of new media, but also the continual obsolescence of older technologies that artists incorporate in their work. We look forward to carrying this series forward into 2019 with fresh dialogues surrounding this exciting new field. Stay tuned to our [website](#) for details on upcoming events, and send us an [email](#) to be added to our mailing list.



From left: Catherine Burns, Lorena Ramírez-López, and Lia Kramer examine archival films in the Museum's cold storage vault for this year's time-based media assessment. Photo: Alex Nichols



Megan Randall, Assistant Projects Conservator, Museum of Modern Art, gives a talk at The Met on November 27 as part of the TBM lecture series. Photo: Alex Nichols

In addition to our lecture series, this year saw the completion of an extensive survey of The Met's time-based media holdings and practices. This assessment, which comprised interviews with 45 staff members, has resulted in a comprehensive account of the current state of our collection and policies, along with recommendations for the future care of not only The Met's TBM artworks, but all of its invaluable digital assets from departments across the institution. Carried out by Glenn Wharton, Clinical Professor of Museum Studies at New York University, along with two research assistants, the innovative methodology for the survey will be presented in a panel on contemporary art at the [American Institute for Conservation's 47th Annual Meeting](#) in spring 2019. The assessment will serve as an excellent resource for the future planning and implementation of a TBM conservation program at the Museum. This project was made possible by the Henry Nias Foundation, Inc. and Anne Cox Chambers.

Collection Insights: *Collaboration with Department of Arms and Armor*



Glass-plate negative (left) and gelatin silver print (right) of a model in Japanese armor. The positive image (right) is found in [thirteen photograph albums from Bashford Dean](#). Photos of negative and album page by Georgia Southworth.

Georgia Southworth recently published a post on The Met's [Collection Insights](#) blog highlighting her work on two projects to stabilize and preserve the archives of Bashford Dean, the founding curator of The Met's renowned [Arms and Armor](#) collection. This important archive includes glass plate and nitrate negatives as well as positive prints housed in their original albums. Taken by Dean during his extensive travels in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, the photographs help to place many of the Department's objects in context and even show Dean himself modeling some of the armor. The blog post explores the various practical steps of treating and rehousing the negatives and albums, and has provided improved access to the archive's contents, opening up new avenues for research and affording an even deeper understanding of this important collection. Read the full post [here](#).

Modern Technology Meets Nineteenth-Century Practice



Introduced to the world in 1839, the daguerreotype stands out among the earliest photographic processes as it is made on metal. Like other silver objects, the daguerreotype's silver-mercury image material is susceptible to tarnishing from airborne contaminants, so when Research Assistant Natasha Kung and conservator Nora Kennedy sought to improve protective housings for daguerreotypes for the upcoming exhibition [Monumental Journey: The Daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey](#), they turned to Met scientist Eric Breitung to collaborate on a new housing technique using 3-D printing. Daguerreotypes are typically housed in packages between two sheets of glass, however a spacer is needed to prevent the glass from making direct contact with the image surface. After months of 3-D printing and testing various plastics and metals as potential spacer material, Nora, Natasha, and Eric devised a solution with a metal spacer that is suitable for use with all 21 plates in the exhibition (see detail at left). This technique will be unveiled at an international conference in New York this February, just after *Monumental Journey* opens to the public on January 30.

Nora Kennedy in India and China

This fall Nora Kennedy traveled far and wide on behalf of the Museum. In October, she visited India to participate in the Annual Seminar for the Indian Conservation Fellowship Program (ICFP) at the National Museum in Delhi, where our 2018 Fellow Nikhil Ramesh gave a presentation about his experiences working in the Photograph Conservation Department. In addition to the Seminar, Nora visited several conservation labs in Mumbai and Delhi, including the National Gallery of Modern Art and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. The ICFP is made possible by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Over the Thanksgiving week, Nora traveled to Fuzhou, China, for a meeting of the International Council of Museums Conservation Committee ([ICOM-CC](#)) Directory Board. In addition to planning for ICOM-CC's 2020 Triennial Conference in Beijing, Nora and the Directory Board members hosted a workshop which attracted 27 conservation colleagues from throughout China. Photograph and time-based media conservation are not yet established as areas of specialization in China, so the participants were eager to hear about The Met's practices in these areas.



Left image, from left: 2018 Objects Conservation Fellow Dilip Mestry, Met objects conservator Marlene Yandrisevits, Nora Kennedy, and 2018 Photograph Conservation Fellow Nikhil Ramesh. Right image: ICOM-CC Directory Board members with workshop participants.

Currently on View

Be sure to catch these exhibitions before they close:

[Everything is Connected: Art and Conspiracy](#)

On view at The Met Breuer until January 6, 2019

[Jewelry: The Body Transformed](#)

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue until February 24, 2019

[Artistic Encounters with Indigenous America](#)

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue until May 13, 2019

Right: Thomas Martin Easterly (American, 1809-1882). *Bum-bemsue*, 1847. Daguerreotype with applied color. Purchase, W. Bruce and Delaney J. Lundberg and Nancy Dunn Revocable Trust Gifts, 2018. (2018.753)





Coming Soon...

Monumental Journey: The Daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey

Opens at The Met Fifth Avenue on January 30, 2019

Robert Wood Johnson Gallery Rotation

Opens at The Met Fifth Avenue on February 22, 2019

Home is a Foreign Place

Opens at The Met Breuer on April 9, 2019

Left: Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey (French, 1804-1892). *Aleppo, taken from the Antioch Gate* (detail), 1842-44. Daguerreotype. Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Moran Gift, in memory of Louise Chisholm Moran, Joyce F. Menschel Gift, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 2016 Benefit Fund, and Gift of Dr. Mortimer D. Sackler, Theresa Sackler and Family, 2016 (2016.612).

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: <https://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](#).
Follow us on Instagram [@metphotoconservation](#).

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Everything is Connected: Art and Conspiracy *is made possible by Andrea Krantz and Harvey Sawikin.*
Additional support is provided by James and Vivian Zelter.

Jewelry: The Body Transformed *is made possible by Albion Art Co., Ltd.*
Additional support is provided by Ming Chu Hsu, Lulu and Anthony Wang, the Diane W. and James E. Burke Fund, Diane Carol Brandt, the Druckenmiller Foundation, Galerie Magazine, and Barbara A. Wolfe.

Artistic Encounters with Indigenous America *is made possible by the Warner Foundation Fund.*

Monumental Journey: The Daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey *is made possible by the Arête Foundation/Betsy and Ed Cohen.*
It is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in collaboration with the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

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