**Article:** Pigment-Based Photographic Processes: A Technical Study of Pictorialist Works in the Metropolitan Museum’s Collection (Abstract)

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*Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume 15.*

**Pages:** 207-208

**Compiler:** Jessica Keister


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Pigment-Based Photographic Processes: A Technical Study of Pictorialist Works in the Metropolitan Museum’s Collection

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Presented at the 2013 AIC & ICOM-CC Photographs Conservation Joint Meeting in Wellington, New Zealand.

By the late 1800s, photography had become highly manufactured, standardized, and accessible to the public. Pictorialist photographers countered this popularization of the medium by turning to meticulously hand-crafted processes that allowed them full control and flexibility to express their creativity [1-3]. These artists printed one-of-a-kind works by using a variety of specialized techniques. They hand-coated papers, locally manipulated images, used multiple negatives, and often layered one process on top of another. Among the processes most commonly used during this period were gelatin silver, platinum, palladium, cyanotype and numerous pigment-based techniques, such as gum dichromate, direct carbon, carbon-transfer, bromoil, bromoil transfer, and ozotype.

The definitive identification of gum prints has proven to be a challenge due to the many variations and intermingling of processes used by photographers during this period. This research began with an investigation of the historic sources, followed by the creation of test samples strictly based on historic recipes, and the chemical analysis of these tests [4]. In the past, the presence of pigments and the identification of chromium have been directly associated with a gum dichromate or other dichromated colloid processes. Results of this research revealed that the presence of chromium and pigment has more complex sources, requiring a more discriminating approach and a modified protocol for the definitive identification of gum dichromate photographs. This protocol combines XRF, FTIR, in transmission and/or ATR, and Raman analysis and has shed light into the photographic techniques used in a number of Pictorialist works in the Metropolitan Museum’s collection [5].

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Papers presented in *Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume Fifteen* have not undergone a formal process of peer review.