



Edward Steichen (American, born Luxembourg, 1879–1973)

Portrait of George Frederick Watts

1901, printed 1903

Gum bichromate print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection

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AIC accession number: 1949.824

Stieglitz Estate number: N/A

Inscriptions: Inscribed recto, on image, along upper edge, in graphite: "GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS"; recto, on image, lower left, in graphite: "STEICHEN/ MDCCCCIII"; inscribed verso, on third hinged mat, upper left, in graphite: "R [?/illegible/covered by tape]"; verso, on third hinged mat, lower right, in graphite: "56" [encircled]

Dimensions: 20.3 x 16.2 cm (image); 22.1 x 16.7 cm (paper); 47.2 x 33 cm (last support)

Print thickness: N/A

Mount: Original

X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry:
See below

CONTEXT

Frederic Watts—his first name was misspelled by Edward Steichen in his inscription—was a renowned English portrait painter, and this is likely the first of a series of portraits that the young Steichen made during his first trip to Europe. He shot mostly artists, and he seems to have undertaken the series in no small part to meet people he had heroized while growing up. Other subjects include the sculptor Auguste Rodin and Maurice Maeterlinck, a Symbolist writer who was an inspiration to Pictorialist photographers such as Gertrude Käsebier.

X-RAY FLUORESCENCE (XRF) SPECTROMETRY

XRF spectral readings were taken from the recto of the work and from the mount when available. The elements listed below have been positively identified in the work; elements in bold have been attributed to the processing of the print.

Print: **Cr**, Sr

Mount: Ca, Cr, Mn, Fe, Cu, Zn, Pb

The graph below shows XRF spectra for three distinct measurement areas on the print: the darkest, maximum-density image area (Dmax, purple); the lightest, minimum-density image area (Dmin, green); and the mount, when available (orange). The background spectrum (gray) represents the characteristic contribution of the instrument itself as measured on a Teflon reference and is included in order to discount irrelevant elements from the print's signature. Elements were identified based on the presence of their characteristic peaks. Analysis was performed with a Bruker ARTAX air-path portable micro-XRF system equipped with a laser pointer, an integrated camera system, a Mo 12.5µm filter, and a Mo tube. Measurements were taken for 250 LT at 50 kV and 800 µA. The spectrum below illustrates the significant peaks for this print in the energy range from 3 to 15 keV.

Figure 1. (right)
Locations of XRF measurements



Figure 2. (below)
XRF spectra from the Dmax, Dmin, mount, and background signal produced by the analyzer.

