

OBJECT RESEARCH



Clarence H. White (American, 1871–1925)

Sunlight

1899, printed 1901

Platinum print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection

AIC accession number: 1949.855

Stieglitz Estate number:

Inscriptions: Signed recto, on first mount, lower right, below image, in graphite: "Clarence H White / '01."; inscribed verso, upper center, in blue pencil: "156" [underlined] / "1134" [underlined]; verso, center, in graphite: "'Sunlight'" / "7 50" [underlined] / "Clarence H White" [double underlined] / "[left pointing arrow] [illegible] à 70 mm [right pointing arrow]"; verso, center right, in graphite: "3170 / [illegible] / PC"; verso, lower left, in graphite: "Property / AS"; verso, lower right, in graphite: "Alfred Stieglitz / [illegible] / [illegible] / 11 1/8 x 14 3/8"

Dimensions: 20.8 x 15.4 cm (image); 20.8 x 15.9 (paper); 27.9 x 20.2 (first mount); 36.2 x 27.6 cm (second mount)

Print thickness: 0.271 mm

Surface sheen: Low gloss (1.4 GU @ 85°)

Paper tone: L*74.84, a*6.83, b*22.59

Mount: Original

Mount tone: L*85.83, a*2.88, b*16.54

Ultraviolet-induced (UV) visible fluorescence (recto): None

X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry:
See below

Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometry:
N/A

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This photograph is a platinum print on a sheet of cream paper that has been unevenly trimmed. The tone of the print is pale gray, the result of light development. The print is adhered at the top corners to a thin tissue along the top edge, and subsequently to a thicker sheet of western paper. The adhesive used to adhere the mounts is severely discolored and shows through the tissue. The moisture contained in the adhesive at the time of its application resulted in cockles forming in the mount papers upon drying. Adhesive residue is visible at the edges of the western paper mount and wraps around the edges to the back of the mount; it is unclear why adhesive would have been used in these areas. Two graphite inscriptions appear on the front of the work: Clarence White's signature on the tissue below the image, and, on the western paper mount, a registration number from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, presumably added when the print was included in the 1944 exhibition *History of an American: Alfred Stieglitz: "291" and After*. There are numerous inscriptions on the verso of the mount. The original graphite and blue pencil inscriptions detail the title and artist, as well as the provenance ("Property A. S."). There are residues from adhesive and old paper at all four corners of the back of the mount from a previous mounting, possibly for exhibition. Two brown rectangles appear on the back of the mount, suggesting the presence of an acidic material or that paper was in contact with the mount for a period of time, creating a halo of highly degraded cellulose. When the surface of the print is viewed under high magnification, the fibers from the paper are visible and the image sits directly on the fibers, with no intermediary binder. This print is extremely matte and does not fluoresce when exposed to long-wave UV radiation. Platinum, iron, and mercury were detected using XRF spectrometry. Common to platinotypes, the residual presence of light-sensitive iron ions could be due to improper washing of the print after processing. The presence of mercury could be the result of the artist's use of mercuric chloride during processing, to create the print's warm tones.

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: **Fe, Pt**, Hg

Mount: Ca, Ti, Fe, 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/Keymaster Tracer III-V+ energy-dispersive handheld XRF analyzer, equipped with changeable Ti and Al filters and a Rh transmission target. Measurements were taken for 120 or 180 LT at 40 kV and 10 μ A. The spectrum below illustrates the significant peaks for this print in the energy range from 3 to 13 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.

