

OBJECT RESEARCH



Clarence H. White (American, 1871–1925)

Girl with Muff

1906

Platinum print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection

AIC accession number: 1949.856

Stieglitz Estate number:

Inscriptions: Inscribed recto, on mount, lower right, below image, in graphite: "Clarence H White 06"; recto, on mount, lower right, in graphite: "7-1944-373"; inscribed and signed verso, upper center, in graphite: "'Girl with Muff' / Clarence H White"; inscribed verso, center, in graphite: "Not for Sale"

Dimensions: 24 x 19 cm (image); 26.4 x 19 cm (paper); 27.5 x 20 cm (first mount); 27.6 x 20.1 cm (second mount); 29.8 x 27.8 cm (third mount); 45 x 31.7 cm (fourth mount)

Print thickness: 0.221 mm

Surface sheen: Low gloss (2.7 GU @ 85°)

Paper tone: L*86.95, a*2.65, b*15.08

Mount: Original

Mount tone: L*78.7, a*6.78, b*21.6

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 evenly trimmed. The artist was able to achieve a distinct dual tone in this print, with both very dark and very bright densities. An additional strip of developed platinum paper is adhered to the bottom edge of the print, to extend its length. The work is adhered at all corners to a slightly larger off-white paper and is subsequently adhered along the top edge to four separate mounts: three papers and one board, of increasing size. The adhesive used to adhere the print to the tissue had a high moisture content, resulting in cockles forming in the mount papers upon drying. Adhesive residue is visible at spotted intervals along the bottom edge of the final mount. Two graphite inscriptions are on the front of the mount: Clarence White's signature in graphite on the tissue below the image, and 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*. On the extended bottom edge of the print are further inscriptions in red ink recording the print date in roman numerals and the name of the sitter. The verso of the mount also has a title and signature by the artist in graphite, as well as the inscription "Not for Sale." 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, lead, 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 lead could have two sources: while lead could have been used during fabrication of the photographic paper itself, it was also commonly used during the processing of platinum prints, to increase uniform development. 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. XRF analysis confirmed that the red inscription on the bottom of the print contains mercury—signifying that it is a form of red vermilion pigment.

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, Pb

Mount: Ca, Ti, Mn, **Fe**, Cu, Zn, Sr, 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 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.

