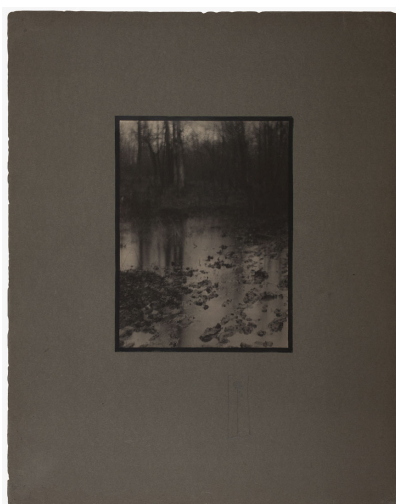


OBJECT RESEARCH



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

## The Pool

1899

Platinum print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection

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**AIC accession number:** 1949.873

**Stieglitz Estate number:**

**Inscriptions:** Inscribed recto, on mount, lower center, in graphite: "[graphic signature with flower and S]"; verso, on mount, upper left: "[MOMA loan label]"; inscribed verso, on mount, center, in graphite: "Steichen's first 'Masterpiece' (1900) / AS / May 23 / 1929 [not entirely legible/crossed out]"; verso, center, in graphite: "The Pool [underlined] / The Original Print (Platinum) / bought from Steichen 1900 for / \$5 00 [underlined] (New York) / Alfred Stieglitz"; verso, lower right, in graphite: "Bought in 1901 [double underlined]"; verso, lower right, diagonally, in graphite: "Steichen"; verso, lower right, in graphite: "54" [encircled]; verso, lower right, in graphite: "21/59"; verso, lower right, in graphite: "AIC C/E 61.171.6 / 61.279"; verso, upper left, in

graphite: "23" [encircled]; verso, upper left, in graphite: "26" [crossed out]; verso, upper left, in graphite: "no glass[?]" [underlined]; verso, upper left, in graphite: "Stieglitz"; verso, upper right, in graphite: "Cut from [illegible] to R 13 7/8 x 17 1/2 [crossed out]"; verso, upper right, in graphite: "[?] 1/4 107-29[?] / R 13 7/8 x 17[?] / [illegible]"

**Dimensions:** 21.3 x 16.1 cm (image) 43.2 x 34 cm (mount)

**Print thickness:** N/A

**Surface sheen:** Low gloss (2.1 GU @ 85°)

**Paper tone:** N/A

**Mount:** Original

**Mount tone:** L\*41.68, a\*0.9, b\*5.97

OBJECT RESEARCH

**Ultraviolet-induced (UV) visible fluorescence**

**(recto):** Fingerprint at the top right corner  
fluoresces light blue

**X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry:**

See below

**Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometry:**

N/A

## TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This photograph is a platinum print. The photographic paper is fully adhered to a large board faced with dark gray paper. The artist signed the mount in graphite below the image using his monogram of a boxed long-stemmed rose. The print itself has a hand-applied black ink border, and several diffuse liquid stains are present in the image area. These stains are located in a busy area of the print and so unnoticeable at a quick glance. It is likely that they are the result of ink dripping on the print during the blackening of the borders. The evidence of these stains clearly establishes that the print from the Art Institute of Chicago was reproduced in *Camera Notes* and *American Pictorial Photography*. The verso of the mount has many graphite inscriptions in Stieglitz's hand that describe the work as "Steichen's first Masterpiece," as well as the fact that Stieglitz paid only five dollars to acquire the print from the artist. 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. When subjected to long-wave UV radiation, a smear along the top edge of the mount above the print fluoresces, which appears to be the adhesive used to mount the print onto the board. A fingerprint at the top right of the print fluoresces similarly, leading to the conclusion that some adhesive got on the artist's finger during the mounting process. Platinum, iron, lead, and trace amounts of 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.

**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, Mn, Fe, Cu, Zn

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 µA. 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.

