



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

Kitty and Alfred Stieglitz

1905

Platinum print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection

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AIC accession number: 1949.874

Stieglitz Estate number:

Inscriptions: Inscribed recto, on mount, lower right, below image, in graphite: "STEICHEN"; recto, lower right, below image, on mount, in graphite: "7-1944-342 [?] [repeated below]"

Dimensions: 24.2 x 23.4 cm (image); 26.5 x 25.6 cm (paper); 43.4 x 32.5 cm (mount)

Print thickness: 0.278 mm

Surface sheen: Low gloss (6.6 GU @ 85°)

Paper tone: N/A

Mount: Original

Mount tone: L*48.19, a*4.22, b*13.19

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 thin textured paper. The print is adhered at the top corners to a slightly larger sheet of trimmed brown paper, and then to a larger brown paper tertiary mount. The artist signed the work in graphite block letters on the tertiary mount below the image. Also on the recto is 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 is adhesive and paper residue at all four corners of the back of the mount from previous mountings. Inscribed in graphite on the verso of the mount are the work's title, date, and medium, as well as the artist's signature. 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, Cr, 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 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.

