James Craig Annan (Scottish, 1864–1946)

Bolney Backwater

c. 1908
Photogravure
Alfred Stieglitz Collection

AIC accession number: 1949.669

Stieglitz Estate number: N/A

Inscriptions: Signed recto, on paper, lower right, below image, in graphite: "J Craig Annan"; Inscribed recto, on paper, lower left, below image, in graphite: "Bolney Backwater"

Dimensions: 21.6 x 28.8 cm (image); 26.8 x 40.6 cm (paper)

Print thickness: 0.1 mm

Surface sheen: Low gloss (1.6 GU @ 85°)

Paper tone: L*85.93, a*4.06, b*21.74

Mount: Unmounted

Mount tone: N/A

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

X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry: N/A

Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometry: N/A

CONTEXT

J. Craig Annan was known for creating Pictorialist photogravures—combining the photographic detail captured by the lens with the painterly smears and smudges of the ink used in the printing process. Though Alfred Stieglitz would soon move away from supporting the Pictorial aesthetic Annan's work embodied, Stieglitz liked *Bolney Backwater* well enough to not only reproduce it in *Camera Work* in October of 1910, but also include it in the *International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography* in Buffalo, New York just a month later.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This print is a photogravure on an unevenly trimmed sheet of thin Japanese paper. Photogravure is an intaglio method of printing photographic images in ink. A plate mark, an embossed contour of the plate that occurs during printing, can be seen around the image area and further emphasizes the actual printing process. Annan signed and titled the work in graphite just below the image. The print is hinged to its original cream mount; adhesive residue along the top edge of the mount suggests the presence of the original window mat, now lost. On the verso of the mount is an Art Institute of Chicago collection label. The print is extremely matte and does not fluoresce when exposed to long-wave UV radiation. When the surface of the print is viewed under high magnification, the fibers from the paper are visible, and the printing ink sits directly on the surface, with no intermediary binder. The printing ink is most likely carbon or an oil-based material and cannot be detected by XRF spectrometry.