



Developing skills in photograph conservation

Emma Dacey

George Alexander Foundation Fellowship, 2025

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Table of contents

01	Acknowledgements	1
02	Executive Summary	4
03	Fellowship Background	5
04	Fellowship findings	9
05	Personal, professional, and sectoral impact	20
06	Recommendations and considerations	22
07	Dissemination and stakeholder engagement	25
08	Conclusion	27
09	Bibliography	28
10	Appendices	30

01

Acknowledgements

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02

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of research into skills acquisition in photograph conservation. Photographic materials are unique, complex, and require specialised conservation knowledge; at present in Australia, it is difficult for student and early career conservators to develop experience and access professional development in photograph conservation. It is important that this gap is addressed as Australian collections of photographic materials include highly significant documentary and artistic works with national and international value.

Driven by a long-term interest in the creation and care of photographic materials, the Fellow is pursuing skills development in photograph conservation as a recent conservation graduate from the University of Melbourne. The George Alexander Foundation fellowship presented an opportunity to answer the Fellow's questions about how photograph conservation is enacted, how it is unique, and how these essential skills can be learned. The United States photograph conservation field was chosen as an area for investigation due to their high-level of practice and strong community in photograph conservation. Research and travel in the US was planned to encompass large public institutions, private practices, and teaching centres.

Key findings from the research include:

- There are many different pathways to professional status as a photograph conservator; experience and skills can be gained from different sources and pieced together to form a broad practice or focused specialisation.
- Continued access to professional development is essential in the photograph conservation field to create a strong community of practice and adaptability with rapidly changing technologies.
- Hands-on practise tests and solidifies theoretical knowledge. As a multidisciplinary practice, photograph conservation is informed and strengthened by scientific materials research alongside artistic, technical, and historical knowledge; these combine to inform conservation actions.
- Strength in conservation practice lies in a community, not in one expert individual or all-encompassing workshop. A strong photograph conservation community advocates for the importance of photographic materials and their preservation and creates opportunities for development of skills in the field.

Recommendations based on findings aim to provide concrete and actionable next steps that will build the Australian photograph conservation community and create opportunities for skills development.

03

Fellowship Background

Fellowship Context

Since 1839 and the near-concurrent announcement of two methods of recording and fixing light—by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre and William Henry Fox Talbot—photographic processes and their application have captured universal attention due to their capacity for detail, posterity, and aesthetics. Photographic materials represent a large portion of cultural material collections and they are vulnerable yet see a high demand for access for research and display. Photographic collections often consist of a broad span of formats, material types, enclosures, and storage conditions; all photographic materials are susceptible to degradation that can be catalysed by a range of chemical, mechanical, and biological interactions. In Australia, the prevalence of valued but vulnerable photographic items in public and private collections is not matched by the current availability of photograph conservation training and skills. This fellowship research considers the understanding of, training in, and research into, conservation of photographic materials in the United States, and how this may apply to the Australian photograph conservation field.

In 2005, Detlev Lueth and Angeletta Leggio presented research examining the gap in photograph conservation skills training in Australia. In looking back to research by Colin Pearson from 1980, they identified that a long-standing ‘lack of specialist training’ was still an issue. Now 20 years later, the state of specialisation in photographic materials is due for re-examination. The two university-based

conservation training courses available in Australia do not offer regular comprehensive opportunities to focus on photographic conservation. This is incongruous with the potential for applying skills in the field—photographs represent a large portion of cultural heritage collections. Photographic materials are represented in the collections of Australian museums, archives, libraries and galleries, as well as in private, personal, and community collections. A survey conducted by Elizabeth Carter et al. (2020) estimated 7.3 million photographic items comprising malignant polymers across 28 institutions in Australia, which shows the extent of the challenges facing those in charge of collection care.

Strong communities of photograph conservation professionals and key research institutions exist internationally, where conservators regularly undergo tertiary and work-placement training to specialise in photographic materials. In the United States, as noted by Nora Kennedy (1996), the first specialist photograph conservation training course was established in 1976, and key advocates and educators continue to make a strong case for the distinct requirements of photograph conservation; a relatively young profession.

In contrast, in Australia, training in photograph conservation is primarily available from within the paper conservation field, with a brief exposure to photograph conservation scheduled into tertiary coursework. While there are a number of professionals working to preserve Australia’s photographic collections, with a deep interest

in photograph conservation and their own rich experience in doing so, there is not a notable strength in growth and development of the field. In tertiary-based conservation education, photograph conservation electives may be listed as potential units in course planning but have not actually been offered in years. Process identification workshops are accessible online, but offerings of in-person, Australia-centric versions are increasingly sporadic. Beyond this, skills development is gained by self-directed learning, mentorship, peer support, and seeking international professional development opportunities. The extent to which this requires unpaid time, reliance on personal connections, and/or making sacrifices in other aspects of a professional's life or finances, is undocumented.

During the 2014 ICOM-CC conference held in Melbourne, Australia, Debbie Hess Norris, Nora Kennedy and Bertrand Lavédrine presented the findings of a survey designed to refine the understanding of what photograph conservation comprises and which skills are needed to care for these valuable collections and to further the field globally. The recommendations they made are not currently actioned to the full capacity of the conservation community in Australia—there is, optimistically, room for improvement.

As a recipient of funding for skills development from the George Alexander Foundation and International Specialised Skills Institute, the Fellow was inspired by a prior visit to the United States and engagement with the strong photograph conservation community there—the fellowship research was designed to build more formally on this experience. During her research, the Fellow engaged with international conservation networks and photograph specialists to highlight excellence in practice and training. Interactions aimed to enable the Fellow to develop experience and knowledge via observation and discourse with experienced practitioners in specialist photograph conservation.

Insights gained during international travel were supplemented by interviewing local practitioners and gathering a broader understanding of the current state of photograph conservation in

Australia. By building her network the Fellow shaped a platform for continued skills development and collaboration. Furthermore, the recommendations and opportunities highlighted in the research findings aim to support development of photograph conservation skills not just for the Fellow, but for the Australian conservation community.

Fellowship Methodology

The fellowship aimed to develop knowledge and build networks in the field of photograph conservation. This included engagement with specialists, gathering information via interviews and immersion in workplaces, and hands-on learning via workshops and collections access. The fellowship methodology encompasses a multi-faceted knowledge acquisition process, reflecting the multitude of avenues available in developing as a conservator of photographs: —

- Connection with a wide range of specialists and institutions in the United States aimed to provide experience in the application of theoretical knowledge and gain insights to techniques and innovations in photograph conservation.
- Interviews and discussion with specialists were designed to focus on the various pathways taken to develop skills and experience in photograph conservation.
- Tours and immersion in conservation laboratories were used to highlight current research and photograph conservation projects.
- Hands-on examination of collections and their storage helped to build the Fellow's familiarity with different photographic processes, their unique preservation needs and storage solutions.
- A workshop in creating wet-plate collodion photographic processes provided a method of gaining deeper understanding of the technique and its material characteristics, and thus its vulnerabilities in relation to preservation.

The fellowship methodology also considered how the Fellow's experience could most benefit the field of photograph conservation in Australia and therefore included interviews with Australian-based photograph conservators and caretakers of significant photograph collections to aid in forming

an understanding of the current position and needs of the sector.

For the international travel component of the fellowship, the Fellow met and spoke with individuals from 12 different organisations in the United States. The institutions and individuals were selected according to a variety of factors relating to photograph conservation, including their role in providing training—teaching in graduate schools, mentorship, fellowships/internships—activity in research, or via recommendation from someone in the Fellow’s pre-existing network. The fellowship travel itinerary was arranged according to geography, practicality, and availability, with additional email communications and video calls arranged ad-hoc. The main travel component of the fellowship research occurred in November 2024, with additional online interviews and email correspondence carried out throughout 2024 and early 2025.

The Fellow would like to acknowledge the limitations and short-comings of the research, noting in particular that there are many specialists that were either not able to be contacted for the purposes of this research or unavailable during the timeframe. For those that were able to participate, their responses are anonymised and generalised for the purposes of this report as identification or inclusion of specifics would require support of a more rigorous methodology and ethical considerations. In addition, the focus is limited to Australia and the United States, which is in contradiction to the fact that there is impressive and innovative work occurring globally in the photograph conservation field. There is great potential for a research project that undertakes a wider scope. The Fellow is committed to continuing the research as described here and gathering information with a similar purpose and method, where the opportunities arise.

About the Fellow

Emma Dacey is a skilled collections care professional and early career conservator specialising in photographs and works on paper. Emma holds a Masters in Cultural Materials Conservation from the University of Melbourne, a Postgraduate Certificate in Museum Studies from Massey University Aotearoa/New Zealand, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Photography) from the National Art School, Sydney.

Emma has worked with collections in a variety of roles, developing a comprehensive understanding of caring for collections and the communities who access them. Emma’s previous collections and preservation experience includes positions at: Grimwade Conservation Services; Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne; Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne Archives; Alexander Turnbull Library/ National Library of New Zealand; Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision, Wellington. Most recently, Emma has been awarded a two-year fellowship in photograph conservation at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, funded by a grant from the Bank of America.

Emma is passionate about research and communicating about conservation, as demonstrated by her commitment to her role as AICCM Bulletin editorial team member, and as co-founder of the student-led conservation journal, Scroll. Emma aims to shape a career where she can continually develop knowledge and skills and make a contribution to the conservation community.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms

AIC

American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

AICCM

Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials

Conservation ethics

Conservators are bound by codes of ethics and practice as outlined by organisations such as the AIC or AICCM.

Conservation treatment

Interventive treatment usually involves enacting a change in the object with the aim of stabilising it or improving its appearance.

Historical photographic processes

For the purposes of this report, this term refers to pre-digital light-sensitive image capture and printing processes, though not exclusively lens-based.

PAT

Photographic Activity Test (tests storage and display materials to determine effect on silver image materials)

Photographic process ID

Refers to the technique of identifying different photographic print processes, essential to informing preservation needs and pathways.

PHOTON

Special Interest Group of the AICCM, focused on photographic materials conservation

PMG

Photographic Materials Group, Special Interest Group of the AIC

Preventive conservation

A fundamental principle of conservation, describes techniques used to mitigate deterioration and prevent damage; i.e. protective storage, housing and enclosures as mentioned in this report.

SIG

Special Interest Group

04

Fellowship findings

As a whole, the Fellow found each visit or interaction to be valuable and the professionals that gave their time were overwhelmingly generous. To distil the learning gained during the fellowship, this report highlights the key findings and discusses the broad themes that emerged.

I. Key finding — Different pathways to specialisation

Across the span of individuals spoken with, the Fellow observed that the professional journeys varied wildly and did not follow a prescribed or linear pattern. For example, the training locations (by country) of the participants included university courses in: the United States, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, Colombia, Mexico, and Australia. Some completed undergraduate degrees in conservation, though the majority gained their conservation qualification with a master's degree. There were also individuals working in photograph conservation who did not undertake tertiary training in conservation, instead arriving at their role via other relevant studies and workplace-based training.

One of the key differences between conservators working in the US, compared to those working in Australia, was whether their experience during tertiary training saw photograph conservation taught separately from paper conservation. The overlap between these two disciplines was regularly acknowledged and it is not believed that paper conservation skills are irrelevant to photograph conservation, however, it is worth noting that a large portion of photographs comprise no paper at all.



Figure 1. The photograph conservation lab at the Buffalo State University of New York, November 2024.

Two-thirds of US-based photograph conservators surveyed described their tertiary photograph conservation training as in-depth, while the other third gained a broader overview from paper specialisation—all of the participants surveyed in Australia fit into the second category.

Individuals who participated in courses where photograph conservation was accessed from the perspective of paper conservation described how they used their own interests to steer their learning experience during tertiary studies. In fact, all participants surveyed mentioned some form of extra-curricular learning or taking proactive steps to access photograph conservation training. Across the board, accessing photograph conservation training has taken place outside of the tertiary coursework, including via volunteer roles, internships, post-graduate fellowships. Many participants mentioned

the use of their own private study collection, or a collection of reference materials accessible in their workplace; it was widely recommended that study objects are essential for learning.

Nearly half of the participants credited mentor figures as key to their progression in the field. Descriptions of these professional relationships included finding encouragement or motivation, connection to opportunities, or being in the right place at the right time with an experienced practitioner who was interested in sharing their knowledge. It is evidently pivotal for experienced photograph conservators to see the value and importance of sharing their knowledge and consider mentorship and intergenerational skills transfer as a responsibility to the profession and the future of the collections we care for.

The Fellow spoke with conservators across generations, including those who were instrumental in establishing training or strengthening the field. In reviewing how this select group of professionals have accessed skills development in photograph conservation, it is heartening to learn that there are a variety of pathways available. While some common themes were noted, there is not a set of specific steps to becoming a photograph conservator—perhaps this is the best way to be if the field aims to be diverse.

Many of the participants interviewed expressed a sense of luck at opportunities falling into place to shape their career. The Fellow understands this tendency to underplay the effort an individual makes when growing their skills and career, but argues that this lens on success undermines the importance and positive effect of maintaining openness and curiosity. If there is a pattern of behaviour that future photograph conservators should mimic, it is the genuine and stated interest in photographic materials and curiosity about the challenges they offer.

II. Key finding — Continued access to learning opportunities

The need for continual professional development and training opportunities is widely acknowledged in the US and Australia. Notably, participants in the mid and late stages of their career frequently pointed out that learning in conservation is life-long. Early career conservators showed an awareness of the breadth and depth of the field and the complexity of the materials they would encounter.

One of the pathways available to early career photograph conservators in the US are post-graduate fellowships specifically in photograph conservation. These paid roles are hosted by institutions or companies that have vested interest in nurturing photograph conservation skills due to the significant collections they work with. It was noted that initially the fellowship programs started out as one-year in length, however the field has come to understand that a longer-term (two- or three-year) fellowship reduces disruption to the Fellow's life and enables



Figure 2. Old and new photographic technologies: the Fellow uses a smartphone to capture her reflection in a 19th century daguerreotype at the George Eastman Museum, November 2024.

full immersion into a workplace. Fellowships often include a research component, which is believed to give the fellows a steady footing in an area of specialisation.

In contrast, early career opportunities in Australia are irregular; there are very few roles for recent graduates and not currently any known to focus on photograph conservation. Declaring interest in photograph conservation in Australia can feel like a moot point without local opportunities to pursue. Comparison between the fields in US and Australia highlights the difference in the general job availability in the photograph specialisation and the scope of relevant roles, including how they are described and titled. In Australia, roles typically encompass both paper and photographs and sit within the paper conservation department and the photograph aspect of a role is not always explicitly stated. In contrast, in the US there has been a recent influx of new roles specifically in photograph conservation and these roles are usually situated in a photograph conservation department.

Continued access to professional development is highly valued in the conservation field; photograph conservation is no exception. Philanthropic investment in the field has worked to support and grow photograph conservation in the United States, thanks to key individuals who have been able to advocate for the value of photograph conservation. The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) Photographic Materials Group (PMG) Collaborative Workshops in Photograph Conservation were established in the 1990s by Nora Kennedy and Debbie Hess Norris, two key players in the development of photograph conservation skills due to their advocacy and teaching roles at New York University and the University of Delaware, respectively. Now an ongoing series managed by an advisory committee, the funding that enables the PMG Collaborative Workshops is provided by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation and conservators from all over the world can benefit from these activities organised with the specific intent of nurturing skills growth in photograph conservation. The AIC PMG orchestrates a 'Winter Meeting', which is a biennial opportunity for focused discussion and presentations

on photograph conservation. These meetings often also include hands-on workshops in making photographic prints or tours of specialist collections. This repeated and regular opportunity allows the photograph conservation community to re-centre and reaffirm, strengthening the field as a whole and welcoming new members. The AIC's Foundation for Advancement in Conservation offers professional development scholarships to individuals partaking in these activities.

In comparison, in the early 2000s a series of four, week-long workshops were planned to bring international expertise in photograph conservation to Australia—these were funded by a Getty Institute grant program. Though it was hoped that this might jump-start ongoing availability of a qualification in photograph conservation or repeated workshops, lack of continuous funding saw this ideal fizzle out. However, the participants in these Australian workshops were required to disseminate the knowledge they gained and the impact of the workshops was measured by the organisers to demonstrate the overall benefit, which was shown to be significant and described as the 'knock-on effect'. This workshop series brought a focused and comprehensive increase in base photograph conservation skills to Australian conservators.

Aside from the Getty workshop series, Australian conservators wanting to develop photograph conservation skills have travelled internationally for workshops and conferences, or longer-term participation in fellowships or training programs such as the (discontinued) Advanced Residency Program at the George Eastman Museum. In Australia, private philanthropy in the arts is less common as a funding source, however, conservation in Australia benefits from the strong fundraising and advocacy support provided by the Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM). AICCM supports special interest groups (SIG) workshops and professional development events with some funding available by application. However, AICCM the photograph conservation SIG, 'Photon', has been active only intermittently in recent years, with difficulty retaining SIG convenors. Mentorship programs have previously been offered by the

Emerging Conservators SIG of the AICCM, however one of the noted issues of this program is the loose structure and accountability, resulting in drop-off of participants.



Figure 3. George Eastman Museum, November 2024.

The Fellow found that aside from workshops there are other, interdisciplinary pathways that can inform and strengthen a conservator's understanding of the materials they care for. Across both countries, students and professionals use similar informal methods to develop their understanding of photographic materials. Most frequently mentioned by the participants were: building a research collection of reference materials, and workshops in making photographs with historical processes. Sometimes these aspects are incorporated into formal training, if not—they can be sought out independently. Study collections allow a practising conservator to test ideas, treatment techniques, and learn from mistakes. Producing photographs with historical processes provides a tactile understanding of the materials and their creation, useful in a reverse-engineering approach to understanding. Individuals also spoke of the value of repeated exposure to similar topics; once-off workshops are not always enough to solidify knowledge, or a repeat experience after working through real-life applications can gain a new perspective. A familiarity with photographic history is also a useful tool in attaining a holistic understanding of photographic materials, providing context for how and why things were made.



Figure 4. The Fellow examining 19th century daguerreotypes at George Eastman Museum, November 2024.

It is so valuable for an eager and motivated early career conservator to hear from experienced practitioners that learning to be a photograph conservator is continual and spans an entire career. This reminds the Fellow that the necessary knowledge is worked for and earned over time—in some circumstances opportunities are more easily obtained, but it is important for all to remember that there's still so much to learn and to have a healthy sense of what it is they don't know, yet.

III. Key finding — Application of theory and material understanding

The Fellow was able to experience how conservation theory can be applied in real-life scenarios and provide a basis for developing further, nuanced understanding. At its peak, conservation is a multidisciplinary field that benefits from skills developed in other practical and theoretical

fields. Observations made during the fellowship demonstrate how conservation training and other complementary training develops a well-rounded approach to conservation practice. Divided into three key observations, the sections below demonstrate the Fellow's learnings in application of theory and material understanding.

Application of theory—observation 1:

One of the recurring observations from research participants was that learning how to make photographic prints with different historical processes is a useful tool; conservators can learn about photographs via reconstruction, which can illuminate the way materials and chemistry form a photographic object and which characteristics are artefacts or flaws from production, as opposed to signs of degradation. In addition, this practice can aid in understanding the full suite of variables that may be included in a particular photographic printing technique.

By way of example; there are a number of slightly different methods used to create a tintype, a historical photographic process in popular use from 1856 to



Figure 5. Examining historical samples of tintypes and other photographic processes



Figure 6. Set up for coating a plate with collodion and sensitising it with silver salts



Figure 7. Shooting a wet plate in a large format camera. Image courtesy Penumbra Foundation and Alexander Quiles



Figure 8. Developing station



Figure 9. Plate in final wash after developing

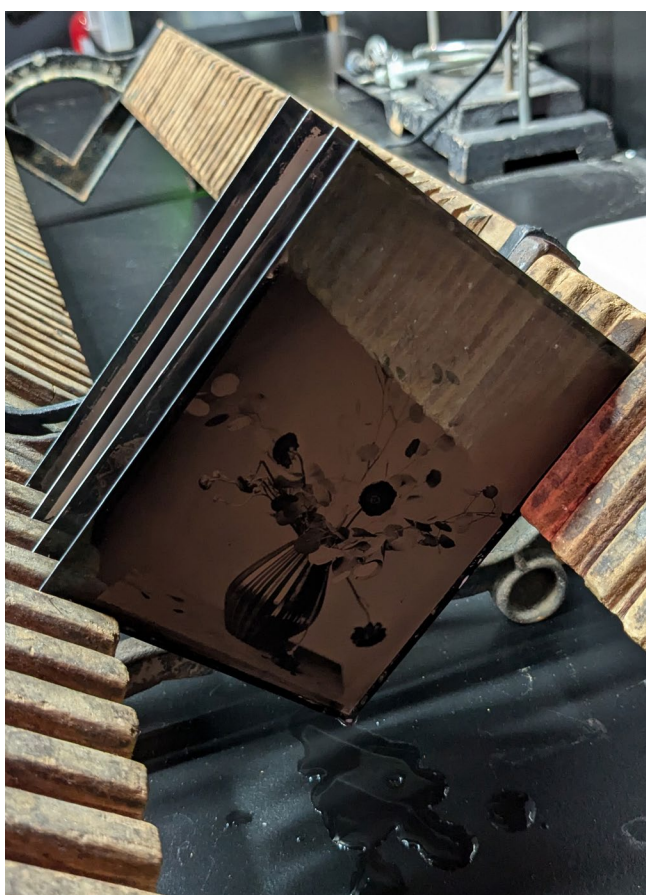


Figure 10. Drying plate after development



Figure 11. Varnishing set up

the 1920s. Fundamentally, a tintype is a photograph where silver image particles are suspended in a collodion binder that coats a dark lacquered sheet of iron. Tintypes were usually varnished to protect the image layer. The tintype name is a misnomer, as no tin is involved; ferrotype is an alternative name that refers to the same process. The Fellow undertook a three-day wet collodion workshop at the Penumbra Foundation in Manhattan, led by Sam Dole. This workshop enabled hands-on experience in the process of creating tintypes, including coating the plate, sensitising the silver, exposing the image in camera, developing and fixing the latent image, and varnishing the finished product.

During the workshop, participants learnt about historical photographers and the processes that led to the introduction of the tintype process. Tintypes are related to ambrotypes in that they are both wet-collodion processes—ambrotypes are made on a glass plate rather than a metal support. Both

processes are technically a negative image that appears positive due to deliberate underexposure and the way the negative appears against a dark background. One of the key themes of historical photographic processes is that new and different methods of making images were constantly being tried; there are often overlaps between different process types and the popularity of different variations of photography fluctuated. Speed and affordability of processes influenced trends as much as the aesthetic or artistic potential. Referring to historical photographer's manuals can be a useful tool for conservators wanting to understand the objects they care for.

The workshop attended by the Fellow applied historical methods and material types where possible, with a few modern adaptations. One key difference was that the workshop used anodised aluminium plates with a black enamel coating, instead of a lacquered iron plate. Despite this difference, the haptic learning and experiencing the workflow of making a tintype helped the Fellow to solidify her understanding of tintypes. This included witnessing first-hand the flaws that appear during the making process, such as unevenness in the emulsion layer, particulates or other inclusions that sit on the surface of the tintype and cause a blight in the image, variations in duration of the sensitising or developing stage, or issues with heat and dust during the varnishing stage and drying.

Identification of these flaws as effects of the production process helps to inform the condition assessment of historical examples and knowing how to differentiate between flaws in production and active deterioration. Flaws in production may also affect the stability of photographs. In addition, there are process clues that help to identify materials and their historical context, such as pouring lines—results of the mechanical action of applying the collodion and varnish layers—which leave clues as to the practices of historical photographers. By making her own samples, the Fellow can better understand and explain the visual assessment that shapes condition assessment and treatment of historical collections.

Recreation of historical processes also aids in research methodologies, whereby a conservator can make mock-ups or examples to conduct testing on, including trying out conservation treatment methods, using standardised samples for accelerated ageing, and as reference samples for scientific analysis. Conservation ethics generally discourage destructive or unnecessarily interventive methods of testing or analysis of cultural heritage, therefore having standardised and equivalent samples is useful for developing and testing new treatment and preservation techniques. For example, the Fellow is now equipped to use modern tintype samples to test for response to light exposure or different environmental parameters in display and storage. Tintypes were often subject to added colour, for example where the photographer's studio added pink to their sitter's cheeks or blue to their dress to bring the otherwise monochrome image to life; the Fellow hopes to continue her practical skills development by mimicking historical methods of adding colour to tintypes. Recreation of historical housing, casing, and mounting materials is also a useful practice, as these are often considered an important part of a photographic object and play a role in the stability of the photographic images while also needing to be conserved, therefore equally pertinent to the skills of a photograph conservator. The Fellow plans to continue this avenue of inquiry.

Application of theory—observation 2:

The Fellow had previously undertaken various photographic process identification workshops, both online and in-person, and had been practising implementing these skills with her study collection. However, during the research, the Fellow was able to witness the application of a high level of connoisseurship in evaluating photographic materials, where specialists take into account a multitude of clues and context to inform their understanding of the object in front of them. This level of visual analysis comes from experience in looking and observing very many examples.

Art historical knowledge and research applies here, providing the essential contextual knowledge that informs identification and assessment of the significance of a particular photograph or collection. The Fellow observed that using magnification of images and comparison to reference samples is a limited approach as there are so many variations within the processes, technical aspects, and the different pathways of degradation that a formulaic approach to identification will likely fall short. During observation, the Fellow was able to witness the assessment processes of photograph conservation specialists as they talked through their observations and pointed out characteristics that informed their conclusions or theories. This demonstrated a holistic approach that considers the image as well as the secondary materials that are often associated with early photographic prints, such as support cards on carte de visites and cabinet cards, the materials included in a cased image, and the style of decoration or materials chosen. All of these clues can aid in dating an image or locating it geographically due to its style or the different fashions across decades and regions.

In addition to broad-spectrum understanding of the image-making processes and their historical context, repeated looking and critical assessment of photographs is important in developing the connoisseurship needed to assess photographic collections; building familiarity and testing assumptions is essential to making well-informed assessments of prints that were sometimes

deliberately made to be misleading as to their production method.

Photographic process identification is an essential part of photograph conservation because it informs the conservator of the vulnerabilities and treatment or preservation needs of different photographs. For example, if a collodion silver print is incorrectly identified as a gelatin silver print and an ethanol cleaning solution is applied, the collodion and image can solubilise and be at risk of irreversible loss. Similarly, some processes are known to have inherent vulnerability to different environments, for example; the tendency of an iron support to develop rust, or the glass of a negative to deteriorate if exposed to high humidity. Additionally, understanding the age and the physical signs of the history of an object informs a conservator of the likelihood of further



Figure 12. Process-identification sample sets, Gawain Weaver Conservation, November 2024.



Figure 13. Picturing Niagara Falls, with an ambrotype, tintype, and silver gelatin print, George Eastman Museum, November 2024.



Figure 14. Cased photographs, International Centre of Photography, November 2024.



Figure 15. Tintype with brass mat and support card, plus inscriptions. Penumbra Foundation, November 2024.

deterioration, for example; dyes may fade rapidly when first exposed to light but then reach a point of stasis and be less susceptible to further fading.

This experience has helped the Fellow to situate her training in a wider framework of knowledge, helping her to move away from tentative process

identification relying on reference resources or samples and towards a more holistic approach. This is a valuable example of how bridging the gap between theory and practice is necessary for knowledge growth and building confidence. Working alongside experienced practitioners is one way to achieve this, or self-driven learning can be done by testing, correcting or confirming conclusions or understanding. The rudimentary tools available are a useful starting point but it is essential to expand beyond these tools.

Application of theory—observation 3:

Principles of preventive conservation are well-understood and established as an important aspect of caring for collections. Photographic collections often require isolation of materials with specific preservation needs, either due to their degradation products—for example: off-gassing catalytic compounds as part of their degradation process—or their high sensitivity to degradation mechanisms, such as high temperature and relative humidity. Cold or cool storage is regularly employed as best practice in caring for certain photographic collections such as dye-based colour images, and film or negatives with cellulose acetate or cellulose nitrate bases. Thanks to collection tours the Fellow observed how different priorities and resources across institutions have been implemented to achieve preservation targets. One of the challenges of cold or cool storage is the resource-heavy requirements, including space, facilities, and funding. To adapt to limitations, each institution demonstrated their methods of housing and protocols to achieve the desired outcomes from storage methods. This included specialist materials used in packaging for storage and problem-solving with custom-made storage enclosures.

Due to the characteristics of many types of photographic prints, methods used in paper conservation are not always applicable. Photographic materials are sensitive to different materials, for example; in paper conservation buffered paper is regularly used when creating storage enclosures but these are not typically considered safe for photographs—the Photographic Activity Test (PAT) was designed to identify materials safe for housing

of photographic materials. Access to collections is necessary to consider when designing housing solutions, this includes creating moisture-proof packages for items moving in and out of cold storage and timed transition periods to prevent condensation and introduction of moisture to an object. Access is also considered when designing enclosures that allow a researcher to view the whole object without removal from its enclosure or excessive handling. Due to the three-dimensional nature of many photographic objects—such as cased images, glass plate negatives, or jewellery with photographic elements—techniques for housing are borrowed from other disciplines of conservation; sunken enclosures with Tyvek and Ethafoam as used in objects conservation, or phaseboxes as used in book conservation.

Institutions that the Fellow visited were also generous in describing where they were making changes to pre-existing housing solutions. When recent research has provided new information on best-practice or the effects of different materials, conservation needs to adapt to accommodate. For example, this included swapping out mount board, a hygroscopic material, for laser-cut acrylic when housing bare-plate daguerreotypes; this reduces the amount of hygroscopic material in a daguerreotype package and updates the best-practice protocols for housing these items. Other solutions or materials were shown to fail the test of time or mechanical strains, such as glass covers failing under strain of too-rigid custom casings.

Other factors to note are the different environmental concerns depending on location of the collection, for example; collections on the West Coast of the United States displayed additional consideration of earthquake risk. Globally, variations in climatic conditions present unique challenges; for example, high-humid climate requires different solutions to an arid or dry environment. Fortunate to travel across a variety of different states, the Fellow witnessed a number of geographic and climate-specific solutions applied to photographic collections.

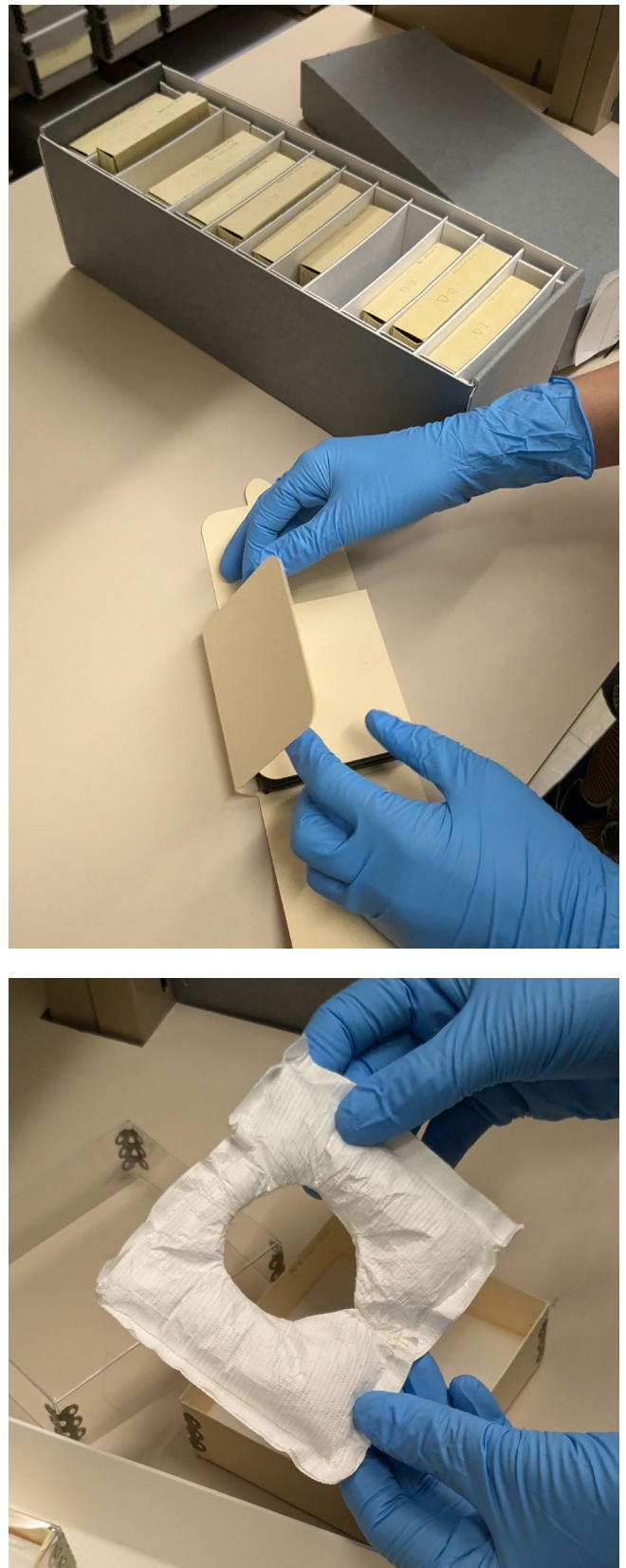


Figure 16. Looking at housing and storage solutions at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, November 2024

In any given collection management challenge, there are a multitude of ways to apply conservation theories according to the needs of the collection and the resources and facilities available. Learning from how others have responded to these challenges and applied the theory of preventive conservation to particular photograph collections helps to build a sort of glossary of solutions for the Fellow to draw upon in the future.

IV. Key finding — Community and advocacy

During the Fellow's research, many of the specialists that she spoke with across both the US and Australia emphasised that photographic collections need to be advocated for and their value demonstrated, in order for public demand for photograph preservation to continue or grow. Training provided by the University of Melbourne conservation degree places essential emphasis on developing conservators who understand why they are making conservation actions; this is mirrored by statements from Debra Hess Norris, of the University of Delaware, who insists on the importance of communicating the value of photographs and works to instil the ability to communicate this in her students. Advocacy for preservation of photographic collections can be directed to the public or within collecting organisations. Individuals that the Fellow spoke with often pointed out that they valued the fact that photographs appear across many different collections within an institution, so their skills hold relevance at many different levels.

Photography as an art discipline has historically struggled for recognition as an art form, and thus market value. It is thought that a key difference between photograph conservation in the US and Australia is the strong market for photographs in the US, as economics and value inevitably come into play in the viability of a specialist field, particularly in private practice. However, many recognise that value lies in other kinds of significance; value is easily pointed to with examples such as those personal, family collections that are first to be lamented when lost in catastrophic events, or first to be saved when given a chance to decide. Photographic collections in

archives may hold no value if one item is isolated from the group, but as a whole tell stories of humankind. Though increasingly commonplace thanks to digital technology, we still demonstrate the strong cultural resonance of images by our preference to consume visual media and share photos. In recognition of this, heritage institutions and conservation initiatives are increasingly working to educate the public about steps to prevent loss of these valuable items or how to respond when the worst has happened. If one of the challenges of preservation for photographic collections is the sheer volume, this is also one of the strengths. Simple, well-considered actions may have a large impact.

During the research the Fellow had the opportunity to practise her skills in communicating about the importance of Australian photograph collections. This is a skill that can be further honed and adapted for different audiences, buoyed by others who hold these collections in high importance. She also gained insight to other collections, the perceptions of their value and was able to witness how work is prioritised accordingly. The broad scope of the Fellow's research enabled a vast expansion of her network; the Fellow now feels that there are expert individuals, in both Australia and the United States, whom she can contact in the future if she has specific or general questions, needs advice on a particular photograph conservation issue, or consideration for an opportunity. This is an exceptional outcome that paves the way for the crucial continued skills development and collaboration that the Fellow needs to continue pursuing photograph conservation as a specialisation.

05

Personal, professional, and sectoral impact

The George Alexander Foundation research and travel grant provided a valuable opportunity for the Fellow to meet with experts in the photographic conservation field and effectively increase her professional network as well as personal understanding of the history and current status of the field. The Fellow felt warmly welcomed and was grateful for the generosity of the hosts and interview participants, as she bore witness to the supportive community that is the photograph conservation field. This research situates the Fellow's practice and future career in a strong base understanding of how and where photograph conservation can be impactful and meaningful.

Exposure to different photograph conservation labs, treatment methods, and collection storage and display techniques has aided the Fellow by developing a visual reference resource that she can refer to in ongoing work. The Fellow's increased knowledge and confidence in working in photograph conservation, supported by comprehension of a diverse field and conservation techniques, will support her continued work in photograph conservation and further skills development. The experience gained by the Fellow was a natural progression from tertiary studies and it has solidified the Fellow's resolution that pursuing photograph conservation and strengthening the field in Australia is achievable as a community action. This opportunity to learn about the journeys of other conservators has reconfirmed the Fellow's resolve to create opportunities and demonstrate the need

for photograph conservation skills. As the research methodology included engagement with local specialists, the Fellow has also built a network of invested individuals interested in the outcomes of her research.

Continued professional benefits of the fellowship are already evident in the Fellow's offer and acceptance of an opportunity within the Smithsonian Institution as a post-graduate fellow in photograph conservation. Starting this two-year role in the US with a pre-existing network of conservators thanks to the George Alexander Foundation Fellowship means that the Fellow has hit the ground running with a clear sense of her place in the field and what she hopes to get out of the opportunity.

In writing this report and undertaking dissemination activities the Fellow hopes that the outcomes of this research will invigorate new consideration of the status of photograph conservation in Australia. Reflections on the current status of the photograph conservation field in Australia have helped the Fellow to situate and compare the insights gained during this research. Inspired and encouraged by specialists in the US and the recounting of their professional journeys, the Fellow hopes to demonstrate that there are many valid pathways to building skills in photograph conservation and a variety of skills that inform expertise.

In the immediate future the Fellow can apply her knowledge gained while working to conserve photographic collections, putting theory to practise, and testing ideas or conducting research. As the observations and findings show that there are some key aspects and recurring themes in developing photograph conservation skills, it is hoped that these findings will be noted and inspire change at a structural level in conservation training and institutions that care for photographic collections. Recommendations and plans for dissemination of the findings through workshops, presentations, and establishment of a supportive and constructive mentorship program, will enable the fellowship to have a longer-term impact on the sector.

06

Recommendations and considerations

As identified in the research findings, different pathways to photograph conservation professionalism are available locally and internationally; it is important to acknowledge that there is validity in all forms including formal academic training, multidisciplinary skills, on-the-job skills development, and ad-hoc learning opportunities. Practise in applying theory is essential to test and troubleshoot, adapt to different needs of materials, and build on existing practices. Problem-solving leads to innovation, and novel solutions or adaptations can then be shared with the community for further skills development and testing of theory. Creating space for research and analysis within photograph conservation can provide the data needed to demonstrate the needs of photograph collections and pathways for enacting preservation. Sharing knowledge within the community is equally important and achievable with such a small field; openness and advocacy have been demonstrated as key to strengthening the field. These key themes identified in the findings inform the following recommendations and considerations, which aim to reframe, evaluate and advocate for skills development in photograph conservation in Australia and, in turn, inform the Fellow's planned research dissemination activities.

Consider Australia's unique position—recommendation 1:

The photograph conservation field in Australia has its own strengths and limitations, these are considerations in the next steps available to the Fellow and the wider field:

- The size of the community may make it easier to collaborate directly with those interested in photographs and their preservation. Success of the efforts relies on openness and availability of individuals and the support of their workplaces; the Fellow witnessed an initial willingness and support from others in discussing the state of photograph conservation in Australia and looking towards improvements.
- Disaster response and planning is hugely important in the field of photograph conservation as photographic materials are uniquely susceptible. Adaptations of environmental guidelines to suit sustainability goals and the challenging climates in Australia are a broad avenue of opportunity for research, innovation and hands-on skills development in photograph conservation. Australia's conservation response in this arena has great potential for international impact as well as reciprocal learning from other regions with similar climates and innovative preservation solutions.

- Photograph conservation can be, and should be, as varied as the contexts in which it is applied. There has been some debate about what 'photograph conservation' is or is not (see Romer 2005); in Australia, it may be most pertinent for the definition to be flexible, depending on the collection, the creators of the objects, needs of the stakeholders, and the individual conservator.
- Social and cultural contexts in Australia are unique and inform the conservation field's approach to ethical decision-making. Conservation ethics are central to professional practice and as such, photograph conservation may be enacted differently in Australia to reflect relevant influences and considerations.
- In the United States, a photograph conservator may be encouraged or choose to specialise in a particular process, format, or period of photography. In Australia, it is more likely for a photograph conservator to develop generalist skills, adapting them to suit each situation as needed or developing deeper experience with specific formats due to projects. This means that there is plenty of room for further specialisation and focus within Australian photographic history, but also means that photograph conservators in Australia are highly employable in a range of different roles due to their adaptability.
 - Action and implementation:
 - The Fellow will consider her own understanding of the definition of photograph conservation and work to communicate what photograph conservation is in the context of Australia. This will occur via continued self-driven research and consulting literature and historical texts, as well as by continued conversations in the photograph conservation field and with communities that hold photographic collections.

Create opportunities for students and early career conservators— recommendation 2:

- Fellowships for early career conservators are a crucial difference between the fields in Australia and the United States. While this is an issue across conservation specialties in Australia, addressing this in the field of photograph conservation is an opportunity to transfer key knowledge, disperse skills and support development specific to the needs of Australian collections. Lessons learned in the US about the benefits of two- or three-year roles should be applied. Fellowships in photograph conservation can also have the effect of demonstrating the need for photograph-specific conservation roles and create demand for these roles.
- Establishment of a mentorship program for conservation students and recent graduates would aid in transitioning participants from study to workplaces. A clear rubric for desirable outcomes and goals for participants is needed to ensure positive and constructive experiences. A limitation of this option is the pre-existing workload of those who would act as mentors—impetus from employers and demonstration of the benefits for both parties is needed.
- Photograph conservation workshops or specialist subject units available during tertiary conservation training need to be increased to provide a base-level knowledge and sustain interest in the specialty. Students should be encouraged to take workshops in historical photographic processes to build their understanding of how and why the processes were made—some printing techniques are achievable with minimal extra set-up in a lab space. Study collections should be accessible to students for reference and process identification practice. Without access to these learning experiences, new graduates are less likely to pursue photograph conservation.

- Action and implementation:
- Working with the local and international networks developed during this fellowship, the Fellow's next steps are to mobilise individuals who are in a position to share their skills and institutions that are situated to support skills development activities. This includes the planned research dissemination activities as outlined below. Further research into this field, such as a broader and more structured survey of Australian photograph conservators and the needs of the collections would be pivotal in creating the data needed to advocate for further funding and creation of opportunities. The Fellow is well placed to instigate this continued research and will create opportunities where feasible to continue to pursue this line of inquiry.

Validate and facilitate broad-access training and research— recommendation 3:

- Lack of funding for skills development is a key barrier to pursuing photograph conservation as a specialisation. In the US, the AIC/FAIC administers scholarship funding specifically for workshops and professional development in photograph conservation, bringing recognition to an individual's efforts to develop skills in the area. A similar program within the AICCM would raise awareness for the need for these skills to be developed and encourage participants to pursue opportunities.
- One of the limitations stated by participants in the Australian field is a limited amount of time for focused research; any experimentation and review of research literature is usually driven by conservation projects as dictated by exhibition schedules. One of the strengths of this is that the research usually has direct application to the preservation method. However, because of the ad-hoc way that this research takes place, there is not necessarily an impetus to share the findings via conferences, journal articles, or workshops. Development of specific research roles would create a space for deliberate and sustained

research that may address specific issues or overviews of collection care processes. These roles can be embedded with a requirement for publication and dissemination, thereby creating a culture of knowledge sharing.

- As was demonstrated with the Getty Grant funded programs run in Australia in the 2000s, the impact of training can have a long-lasting and carryover effect. While establishing a large program may be requisite of funding, smaller, proof of concept events and workshops can still have a great impact. Developing relationships with funding bodies with interest in this area should be a priority.

- Action and implementation:
- Using the skills developed in communicating about the importance of photographs and their preservation, the Fellow will seek sources of funding to support skills development in photograph conservation. First steps are to strengthen skills in this area by undertaking training in applying for grants and seeking out assistance from senior industry practitioners with experience in garnering funding from cultural philanthropists and government initiatives.

07

Dissemination and stakeholder engagement

In pursuing dissemination of results the Fellow will aim to reach key audiences and enact the above recommendations, applying the findings to energise and inspire others to pursue similar skills

development in photograph conservation, and providing data that may be useful in advocating for establishing or strengthening pathways to do so.

Action/Activity/Event	Details
Presentation or poster at the AICCM National Conference 2025: More than Materials: Collaborative Approaches in Cultural Heritage Conservation	<p>Date: November 2025</p> <p>Stakeholders: AICCM membership and conference attendees</p> <p>Key contacts: AICCM National Conference committee</p> <p>Future actions: Proposal submitted.</p>
Establish mentorship program with Photon and Emerging Conservators special interest groups of the AICCM, and the PMG special interest group of the AIC. This will aim to replicate the Fellow's experience and benefit gained by connecting with international photograph conservation specialists and strengthen Australia's international networks.	<p>Date: Throughout 2025 and ongoing</p> <p>Stakeholders: Emerging conservators,</p> <p>Key contacts: Photon SIG, Emerging Conservators SIG, PMG SIG</p> <p>Future actions: Design program to enhance outcomes and establish a sustainable tool for community-building. Request expressions of interest and connect participants.</p>

Action/Activity/Event	Details
Hands-on workshops with conservation students at the University of Melbourne and University of Canberra. Provide access to opportunities to practise photographic process ID, create photographic prints with historical processes, construct preservation housing for photographic materials.	<p>Date: TBD/recurring</p> <p>Stakeholders: University of Melbourne, University of Canberra, other cultural heritage students, photograph conservation specialists within Australia</p> <p>Key contacts: Directors of conservation and heritage study programs, funding bodies</p> <p>Future actions: Consult with university staff on need and protocols for establishing workshops. Design workshops at a range of levels and durations.</p>
Publication in student-led conservation journal, Scroll. With direct reach to a key audience, the article will distill the challenges of developing photograph conservation skills and advocate for more conservation students to focus on these types of materials.	<p>Date: December 2025</p> <p>Stakeholders: Readership</p> <p>Key contacts: Scroll editorial team</p> <p>Future actions: Submit draft by June 2025.</p>
Instigate a formal and wide-ranging survey of needs in photograph conservation in Australia to present quantitative and qualitative data applicable in advocacy for future funding and shape projects.	<p>Date: Throughout 2025 and ongoing</p> <p>Stakeholders: Emerging conservators,</p> <p>Key contacts: Photon SIG, AICCM</p> <p>Future actions: Design program to enhance outcomes and establish a sustainable tool for community-building. Request expressions of interest and connect participants.</p>
Seek options for funding or grants for developing workshops or supporting attendance at professional development opportunities.	<p>Date: TBD/recurring</p> <p>Stakeholders: AICCM, Photon SIG, funding bodies</p> <p>Key contacts: AICCM council, Photon convenors, funding bodies</p> <p>Future actions: TBD</p>

08

Conclusion

Supported by the George Alexander Foundation and the International Specialised Skills Institute, the Fellow's research and travel has introduced her to an invaluable network of photograph conservators and their expertise, across the United States and Australia. In exploring the current status of photograph conservation in both countries, the Fellow was able to witness and absorb the many different ways that photograph conservation is enacted. Thanks to the generosity of the participants of interviews and tours, the Fellow built a picture of how skills in photograph conservation are gained and where there are gaps in the Australian field. In addition, the Fellow resolved her understanding of the importance of photographs and the need to preserve the legacy of photographic history in Australia. The fellowship enabled the Fellow to practise and strengthen skills in communicating and advocating for photographs and the importance of their preservation.

In practical terms, the research helped the Fellow to build her repertoire of solutions for treatment and storage of photographic materials, which will continue to grow the Fellow's experience in her career as a conservator of photographs. Recommendations, next steps to disseminate findings, and plans for future research bring the fellowship benefits into the community. Moving forward, the Fellow will apply her knowledge to advocate for development of programs and funding that supports photograph conservation skills development. The research has already opened doors for further opportunities and professional development for the Fellow and she looks forward to sharing the results with the George Alexander

Foundation and International Specialised Skills Institute as these activities progress. Meanwhile, planned dissemination activities will contribute to the photograph conservation community in Australia and continue building and advocating for skills development in this important and specialised field.

09

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10

Appendices

Appendix A

List of resources for those interested in photograph conservation

Image Permanence Institute.

- <https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/>
Leading development of practical preservation resources and tools, focused on research and collaboration in conducting research initiatives.
- <http://www.graphicsatlas.org/>
For the identification and characterization of prints and photographs.
- <https://www.filmcare.org/>
Decision-making tool and a comprehensive learning resource for all types and formats of film.
- <http://www.dp3project.org/>
Information, skills, and tools you need to care for your digitally printed materials.

George Eastman Museum.

- <https://www.eastman.org/>
- Historic Processes Demonstrations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13l2-V3Lwwg&list=PLH_FfjHEuvR6xYD1f7kFHTuSCWG4mzl2s

Paul Messier/Yale.

- <https://www.paulmessier.com/>
Art conservator specializing in the preservation and analysis of photographic materials, connection with Yale Lens Media Lab: <https://lml.yale.edu/>

Getty Conservation Institute.

- <https://www.getty.edu/publications/>
See: collection of publications titled 'Analytical signatures of photographic processes'.
- AIC Photographic Materials Group.
- https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Photographic_Materials
Interactive and collaborative resource for conservators and conservation students to learn and share about topics in photograph conservation.

Includes a listing of photograph conservation training available globally: https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/PMG_PhotoGraph_Conservation_Training
- Topics in Photographic Preservation: <https://resources.culturalheritage.org/pmg-topics/>
- Photographic Chemistry online modules: <https://learning.culturalheritage.org/photo-chemistry>

Museum of Modern Art.

- <https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/#home>
Thomas Walther Collection project, an examination of photographs and their materials and techniques.

Art Institute of Chicago.

- <https://archive.artic.edu/stieglitz/>
Alfred Stieglitz Collection — online resource with detailed material information and observations.

Metropolitan Museum of Art.

- Photograph conservation department bibliography:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/conservation-and-scientific-research/photograph-conservation/bibliography>
- Exhibition with photograph conservation focus:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2001/photography-processes-preservation-conservation>

Library and Archives Canada.

- Lingua Franca: A Common Language for Conservators of Photographic Materials
<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/engage-learn/publications/ebooks/Pages/lingua-franca-intro.aspx>

British Photographic History blog.

- <https://britishphotohistory.ning.com/>
Forum for news and events happening within the community.

Daguerrian Society

- <https://www.daguerreiansociety.org/>
Annual symposiums and quarterly publications, focus on 19th century.

Northeast Document Conservation Centre.

- <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/fundamentals-of-photograph-preservation>
NEDCC provides an online course in the fundamentals of photograph preservation.

INCCA

- <https://incca.org/>
Forum for developing, sharing and preserving knowledge needed for the conservation of modern and contemporary art.

Aardenburg Imaging and Archives.

- <https://www.aardenburg-imaging.com/light-fade-test-results/>
Lightfade test results, can be filtered by paper, printing type, coatings, etc.

Wilhelm Imaging Research.

- <http://www.wilhelm-research.com/>
Free download of 'The Permanence and Care of Analog and Digital Color Photographs'.

Gawain Weaver Art Conservation.

- <https://gawainweaver.com/>
Process ID charts and online courses in photographic process identification.

Photographic Activity Test.

- IPI: <https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/tests/pat.html>
- NAA: <https://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/storing-and-preserving-information/preserving-information/preserving-photographs/about-photographic-activity-test>

Photogravure.

- <https://photogravure.com/identification-guide/>
Collated information about photogravures and their identification.

Gold Street Studios.

- <https://www.goldstreetstudios.com.au/workshops/>
Based in Trentham, Victoria, Ellie Young and guest lecturers are an invaluable source of expertise in alternative and historical printing techniques.

Penumbra Foundation.

- <https://www.penumbrafoundation.org/>
Based in Manhattan, New York. Penumbra offers a wide range of historical and contemporary photographic and printing processes.

Scully and Osterman Studio.

- <https://www.collodion.org/>
Based in Rochester, New York. France and Mark used to run historical printing process workshops at the George Eastman and now offer unique multi-day experiences in different scenic destinations.

Books

Conservation of photographs: significance, use and care, D. Hess Norris, N. W. Kennedy, B. Lavédrine, 2025, Routledge.

<https://search.worldcat.org/en/title/1511109731>

Twentieth-century color photographs: identification and care, S. Pénichon, 2013, Getty Conservation Institute.

<https://search.worldcat.org/title/840937245>

The digital print: identification and preservation, Jürgens, M. C. 2009, Getty Conservation Institute.

<https://search.worldcat.org/en/title/261177291>

A guide to preventive conservation of photograph collections, Lavédrine, B., J. P. Gandolfo, and S. Monod, 2003, Getty Conservation Institute.

<https://search.worldcat.org/en/title/51764287>

Photographs of the past: process and preservation, Lavédrine, B., J. P. Gandolfo, J. McElhone, and S. Monod, 2009, Getty Conservation Institute.

<https://search.worldcat.org/en/title/261176925>

Coatings on photographs: materials, techniques, and conservation, McCabe, C. 2005, American Institute for Conservation.

<https://search.worldcat.org/en/title/69999235>

The care and identification of 19th century photographs, Reilly, J., 1986. Eastman Kodak Company.

<https://search.worldcat.org/en/title/657037738>

Issues in the conservation of photographs, Norris, D. H. and J. J. Gutierrez, 2010. Getty Conservation Institute.

<https://search.worldcat.org/en/title/436221158>

Appendix B

Survey questionnaire shared with interview participants or used as prompts during discussions:

- Where were your photograph conservation skills developed?

(i.e. tertiary programs, internship/fellowship, on-the-job training, research, mentorship, etc.)

- Describe the types of photographs you work with regularly.

(i.e. historical photographs, contemporary photographs, negatives, digital prints, digital files, etc.)

- Describe any strengths or challenges faced in preserving these collections.

(i.e. storage environments, skills shortfall, workload, prioritisation, funding)

- Provide a rough estimate of the percentage of your time spent working on photographic collections, in an average day/week/month.

- Is the photograph collection (whole or part thereof) in demand for access by stakeholders, researchers and community?

- If part of a larger institution and collections care team, describe how photograph conservation sits in the workplace structure.

(i.e. as part of a paper lab, alongside other photograph conservators, alongside a digitisation team?)

- Does your workload/workplace encourage research and skills development in the field of photograph conservation?

- Does your workplace provide opportunities to share skills and advocate for photograph conservation?

(i.e. hosting internships/fellowships, teaching, publication, workshops, community outreach, etc.)

- Describe any strengths or weaknesses you perceive in the current state of photograph conservation practice.



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