

SURFACE MATTERS: THE TREATMENT CHALLENGES TO RETAIN THE SURFACE CHARACTERISTICS FOR GELATIN SILVER DEVELOPING-OUT PHOTOGRAPHS

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In large part, the aesthetic presentation of gelatin emulsion papers is governed by surface characteristics such as texture and gloss. Perceptible changes of these attributes, through damage or through conservation treatment, can undermine the historical and artistic value of a print. Retaining the intrinsic properties of a surface through the course of conservation treatment presents some significant challenges for a wide array of common procedures such as surface cleaning, humidification, flattening, filling losses and recovering texture and gloss attributes altered through contact with moisture. Photographic documentation of surface characteristics provides an essential baseline to judge the effectiveness of any treatment. Such documentation requires specialized techniques and standards.

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