31st Annual Daguerreian Society Photography Symposium and Trade Show

October 3–6, 2019
at the Kansas City Marriott Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, MO

As host, I want to welcome you to Kansas City and to the 31st Annual Daguerreian Society Symposium and Show. This promises to be one of the most memorable three-day events in our history. The following is your quick guide to all events. Please join me in thanking the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and their outstanding staff. Their warm welcome, support, and hospitality are beyond expectation and greatly appreciated.

—Mike Medhurst, President

Hospitality Room Available Tuesday Through Saturday (Brookside Room)
6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Wednesday, October 2
Symposium Registration Desk (Union Hill Room)
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Nelson-Atkins Tour (previous reservations required)
2:00 PM

Thursday, October 3
Symposium Registration Desk (Union Hill Room)
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Board Meeting (Union Hill Room)
9:00 AM
Nelson-Atkins Tour (previous reservations required)
11:30 AM

Opening Reception (Nelson-Atkins Museum)
5:00 – 7:00 PM

Book Signing: Jane Aspinwall (Nelson-Atkins Museum)
6:00-6:30 PM

Room-Hop (Thursday through Friday in Members’ Rooms)
9:30 PM – midnight

Friday, October 4

Symposium Registration Desk (Union Hill Room)
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Speaker Presentations to be held at the Nelson-Atkins Museum, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Introduction to the Symposium
Ariadna Romer: Girault de Prangey: The Puzzle of the Plates
Carlos Vertanessian: Juan Manuel de Rosas: The Impossible Portrait
Elliot Adrian Conte and Abigail Conte: A Survey of Early Photographic Headstones in Maine
Jane Aspinwall: Golden Prospects: Daguerreotypes of the California Gold Rush
Mike Robinson: Sterling McIntyre’s Five-Plate Panorama of San Francisco: Its History and Conservation
Michael Lehr: 9th-Plates: Big Images in Little Packages

Group Photo
Noon (Front steps of the Nelson-Atkins Museum)

Mike Medhurst & Nick Vaccaro: Collection Exhibition
6:00 – 9:00 PM (Union Hill Room)

The Annual Business Meeting will immediately follow the Speaker Presentations so we ask for your attendance.

Room-Hop (Thursday through Friday in Members’ Rooms)
9:30 PM – midnight
Saturday, October 5

Exhibitor Set-up
8:00 – 9:30 AM

Daguerreian Society Trade Fair (Grand Ballroom)
9:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Early Bird Entrance to Show (includes Symposium Attendees with badges)
9:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Regular Show Hours
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Reception and Silent Auction (Grand Ballroom)
6:00 – 7:00 PM

Live Auction Preview (Grand Ballroom)
6:00 – 8:00 PM

Banquet and Auction (Grand Ballroom)
7:00 – 11:00 PM (Live Auction begins at 8:30 PM)

Sunday, October 6

Our 31st Annual Symposium has officially concluded. A heartfelt thank you to the Nelson-Atkins Museum and their staff for their generosity and support. May you all have a safe journey home. Please mark your calendars for our 32nd Annual Symposium on October 8–11, 2020 at the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel.

Lot 10: HOUSE WITH WHITE PICKET FENCE & TREES

Quarter-plate daguerreotype. A wonderful study in architecture and composition. There are windows where the shutters are open and others where the louvered shutters are closed. The chimneys balance each other. There's a long white picket fence that parallels the road. Up above the bare trees are free form. One can see trees with leaves in the distance. Split full case.

Estimate: $2,000–$4,000

Available in The Daguerreian Society Benefit Auction.
Girault de Prangey: The Puzzle of the Plates

Presenter: Ariadna Romer

The daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey present many aspects which have puzzled scholars from the time of their emergence into wider view. Their odd sizes, formats, multiple images on single plates, and the wide-ranging technical quality of the daguerreotypes have been attributed to their early date of production, before the process was refined and standardized. Research was conducted by Ariadna and Grant Romer into the potential working methods of Girault de Prangey in support of the exhibition Monumental Journey: The Daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey. Based upon analysis of physical characteristics of the plates and optical manifestations found in the imagery they undertook practical experiments in order to determine whether one or more cameras were employed, whether the daguerreotypes were made solely with iodine sensitizing, how and why multiple exposures were made on a single plate, and other practical aspects of his field work relating to exposure, processing, transport, and storage.

Ariadna Romer will present her conclusions and explain how these daguerreotypes were made and why they have unusual characteristics, all illustrative of Girault de Prangey’s extraordinary grasp, application, and mastery of the new medium of photography.

A graduate of the National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography in Mexico City, Ariadna Romer has participated in many projects cataloguing cultural objects and recovering Mesoamerican materials. She holds a Master’s degree in Land Management and Regional Planning and was awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in the European Archaeometry Centre granted by the Belgium government. For many years she served as a professor at the Conservation School in Mexico City and was in charge of the conservation of the photographic collection of the National Archaeology Department, doing general diagnostic and database creation of one of the most important collections for historical documentation of Mexican archaeology from the twentieth century.

With a long-term interest in the history of the application of photography to archaeology, the daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey prompted Ms. Romer to start a research project in 2007 that was presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the exhibition Monumental Journey: The Daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey. Currently, Ms. Romer is working to disseminate practical experience with the imaging technology of the late 18th and early 19th centuries as a scholar and consultant for international projects in Latin America and Europe. She currently serves as President of The Photographic Historical Society in Rochester, NY, and as a Fine Art Appraiser.

Juan Manuel de Rosas: The Impossible Portrait

Presenter: Carlos Vertanessian

Juan Manuel de Rosas was a central figure in the formation of modern Argentina. He became Governor of the province of Buenos Aires in 1838, seeking the endorsements of both the rich and the poor in an attempt to achieve social cohesion, internal order, and stability in the country. Between 1838 and 1852 he became Argentina’s principal caudillo, unifying the 14 provinces of the Argentinean Confederation.

Rosas had an intuitive understanding of the relationship between “image” and “power,” and used his likeness as effective propaganda for his personal authority and the power of the state. He carefully controlled his public representations, promoting those he favored while censoring those he disliked. His image was reproduced in many iterations and media — painting, lithograph, and ceramics — and applied to countless official and quotidian objects. While there are over 120 surviving portraits of him, he sat for an artist only once, and he never consented to be photographed throughout his life.

In this talk, Vertanessian shares the research that led to his celebrated book, Juan Manuel de Rosas: El Retrato Imposible, and addresses Rosas’s remarkable invention of the cult to his persona and image. Rosas’s rejection of the truth of the photographic portrait relates not only to his preference for the grandiloquent likenesses artists could achieve, but also to unexpected and very personal reasons. Vertanessian’s research weaves the global history of photography with the national history in Argentina, and examines the relationship between the standardization of political iconography in European countries and the interpretation and appropriation of these images in Latin America. His multidisciplinary approach breaks new ground for iconographic studies.

Born in Argentina, Carlos G. Vertanessian earned an agro-nomical engineering degree at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and has been a member of The Daguerreian Society since the early 1990s. His lifetime passion for photography and imagery led him to develop a career in marketing.
A Survey of Early Photographic Headstones in Maine

Presenter: Elliot Adrian Conte and Abigail Conte

A chance roadside encounter led to an entire fall spent scouring over three hundred 19th-century cemeteries across Maine in search of early photographic headstones. My wife and I made it our quest to track down every surviving example of this rare practice, and amongst hollow niches, empty ceramic frames, and shattered glass we found some amazing things. Daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, even tintypes and paper photos were discovered, but even the unfortunate destroyed and missing photographs left their telltale signs and told an interesting story about a relatively unexplored part of daguerrean history. Our talk will include photos and videos of our finds as well as period advertisements, patents, and other primary sources relating to the practice of placing photographs on headstones prior to 1900.

Elliot Conte is one of the youngest and most ardent lovers of daguerreotypes in the Society. He started collecting about 10 years ago in his early 20s with a keen eye for esthetic beauty. Over those 10 years he has built a collection of some of the strongest images available. A few years ago he moved to Maine and started investigating grave sites, looking for stones that still held daguerreotypes. This will be the basis of his talk.

Golden Prospects: Daguerreotypes of the California Gold Rush

Presenter: Jane Aspinwall

Nelson-Atkins curator Jane L. Aspinwall discusses how the culmination of years of research on California gold rush daguerreotypes resulted in a new approach to the subject, providing the basis for the current exhibition and book. After creating a large image database of the most significant gold rush collections (both public and private), previously unrecognized patterns in this overall production were revealed. A careful analysis of these images provides fresh insight into the evolution of mining technology, geographic locations, and matters of stylistic attribution, as well as a deeper understanding of this pivotal episode in American history and of the daguerreotypists who ventured west.

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Sterling McIntyre’s Five-Plate Panorama of San Francisco: Its History and Conservation

Presenter: Mike Robinson

Mike Robinson’s talk tells the story of Sterling C. McIntyre’s five-plate daguerreotype panorama of the City of San Francisco, currently on view in the Nelson-Atkins’s exhibition Golden Prospects: Daguerreotypes of the California Gold Rush. Robinson first examines the context of the panorama’s authorship, date, and provenance by referencing historic texts and extant daguerreotypes. He then describes in detail his recent restoration of the work, a complicated procedure incorporating a hybrid of traditional electro-chemical treatment and digital restoration.

Dr. Mike Robinson is an artist-practitioner, teacher, conservator, and historian of the daguerreotype. In June 2017 he earned his PhD in Photographic History with his dissertation entitled The Techniques and Material Aesthetics of the Daguerreotype. He has researched and written on the studio practice of Southworth & Hawes for the Young America exhibition catalogue and for The Daguerreian Annual. Mike taught graduate and undergraduate courses in 19th-Century Photographic Processes at Ryerson University in Toronto, and has lectured and taught daguerreotype workshops in Toronto; Rochester; New York City; Chicago; Lacock Abbey, United Kingdom; Bry-sur-Marne, France; Amsterdam, Netherlands; and Kolomna, Russia.


The Robert Cornelius Project: A Two-Year NEH Funded Connoisseurship Study of the Daguerreotypes of Robert Cornelius and His Contributions to the Early Photography Scene in Philadelphia

Presenter: Rachel Wetzel

Robert Cornelius worked in the early experimental era of the daguerreotype in America, both contributing and employing all of the major improvements to Daguerre’s original formula. His plates were singly and multiply sensitized and they were both gilded and ungilded. Though he worked only for a few years, his body of work was prolific and represents a well-documented collection of daguerreotypes that can be studied today to understand how early, experimental plates age, both naturally and with interventions such as historic cleaning agents. From 2017–2019, a team of specialists including photograph conservators, curators, scientists, and a modern day daguerreotypist set out to design a database that would be used to collect all of the various attributes of Cornelius’s plates in order to better understand how these experimental daguerreotypes have changed since the time they were produced. This project was generously funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and was led by the author, Rachel K. Wetzel, who has traveled for the last two years examining and photographing all of the known Cornelius daguerreotypes. This talk will cover the findings and results of this research project that include the physical attributes that define a Cornelius daguerreotype and an examination of the long-term effects of cleaning agents on daguerreotype plates.

Rachel Wetzel is a conservator of photographic materials with an emphasis on 19th-century materials. She received a Masters of Arts with a Certificate of Conservation from (SUNY) Buffalo State College in 2003 and a post-graduate certificate for the completion of the Advanced Residency Program at the George Eastman Museum in 2007. Her current and former places of employment include the Library of Congress; the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts; the George Eastman Museum; and the private conservation studios of Heugh-Edmondson, LLC; and Paul Messier, LLC.

9th-Plates: Big Images in Little Packages

Presenter: Michael Lehr

Michael Lehr is an avid collector and dealer of 19th-century cases images. He has spent his entire life surrounded by some of the greatest images from the 19th and 20th centuries.
Annual Benefit Auction

The Daguerreian Society Annual Benefit Auction will take place from 8:30–11:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 5, in the Grand Ballroom of the Kansas City Marriott Country Club Plaza.

There will be approximately 75 lots this year. There are more than half a dozen OUTDOOR SCENE daguerreotypes and ambrotypes being offered, including several half-plate size. There will be some advanced CIVIL WAR images including a daguerreotype of a soldier who died of his wounds in Kentucky and a postmortem tintype of a Union soldier. SINGULAR DAGUERREOTYPES include an artful quarter plate of a boy with a kite, a daguerreotype from the dawn of photography with a painted backdrop, a riveting half plate father and deceased daughter by a New York City daguerreotypist, and a couple of Mascher cased stereoscopic daguerreotypes. There will be BOX LOTS OF DAGUERREOTYPES with various themes (Philadelphia makers, with flowers, children, etc.), RARE BOOKS pertaining to the history of photography will include a scarce second-edition book by Levi Hill published by Myron Shew in 1854, and *Studios of Europe* containing 46 pages of ads from American studios and suppliers. We will feature a daguerreian broadside. There will be a lot of 19th-CENTURY LENSES, as well as a REPRODUCTION OF A DAGUERREIAN CAMERA by famed woodworker Alan Kaniarz.

2019 Daguerreian Society Trade Fair

Symposium attendees’ badges will also get them into The Daguerreian Society Trade Fair early, at 9:30 a.m., on Saturday. The Show will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Kansas City Marriott Country Club Plaza. This one-day event will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Partial List of Exhibitors

Jesse David Andrewartha: British Columbia, Canada
Randy Beck: St. Charles, MO
Doran Cart: Kansas City, MO
Greg French: Jamaica Plains, MA
Bryan Ginns: San Diego, CA
Steven Hane: Thornville, OH
David Hanlon: Kirkwood, MO
John Hurlock: Hickory Hills, IL
Van Jurin: Perkasie, PA
Mark Koenigsberg: Weehawken, NJ
Jeffrey Kraus: New Paltz, NY
Kevin Kunz: Morgantown, WV
Michael Lehr: Manhattan, NY
Carl Mautz: Nevada City, CA
Mike Medhurst: North Liberty, IA
Cindy Motzenbecker: Royal Oak, MI
Phil Nathanson: Los Angeles, CA
Alex Novak: Chalfont, PA
Michael Peterson: Willow Creek, CA
Curt Robbins: El Lago, TX
Dr. Mike Robinson: Toronto, Canada
Jeremy Rowe: Mesa, AZ
Doug Scougale, Lafayette, CA
Nick Vacarro: Republic, WA
Len Walle: Novi, MI
George Whiteley: Atlanta, GA
Jason Wright: United Kingdom
GOLDEN PROSPECTS
CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH DAGUERREOTYPES

SEPT. 6, 2019 – JAN. 26, 2020

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