

*La Dirigente  
Maria Antonella Fusco  
è lieta di invitarLa  
all'incontro*

## Quando la fotografia era una lastra d'argento

Una giornata dedicata al progetto europeo  
**DAGUERREOBASE**

martedì 22 ottobre 2013

ore 9,30 - 18,00

**Istituto nazionale per la grafica**

Roma - Palazzo Poli

Sala Dante - via Poli, 54



**Daguerreobase**

Collective cataloging tool for daguerreotypes  
and daguerreotype literature





L'incontro è a cura di

**SMP**hoto  
conservation

con il patrocinio di



## DAGUERREOBASE

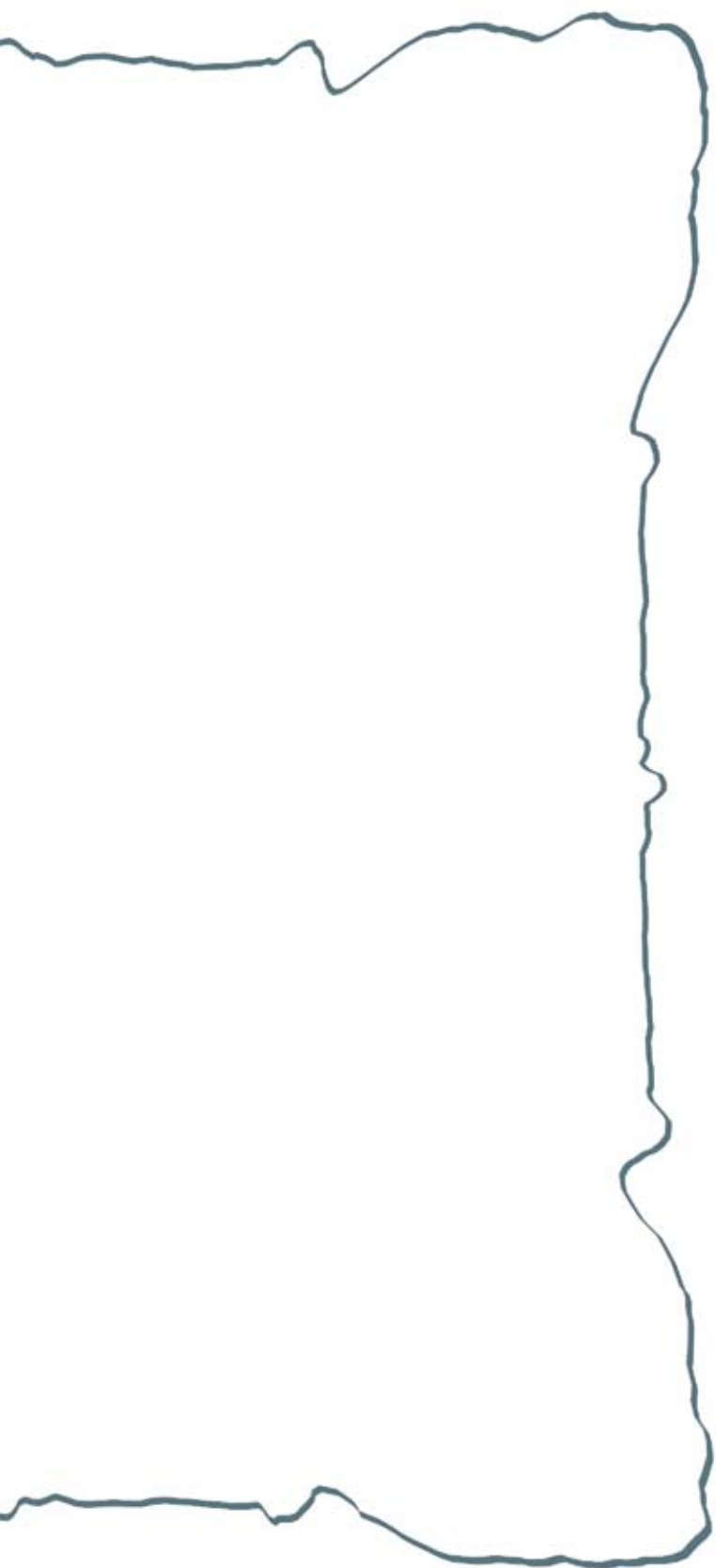
### *Sharing Europe's Earliest Photographs*

DAGUERREOBASE è un progetto europeo  
per la condivisione del patrimonio dei dagherrotipi  
Un nuovo contributo al portale Europeana  
[www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org)

informazioni e iscrizione obbligatoria  
[dag.italiaconvegno@gmail.com](mailto:dag.italiaconvegno@gmail.com)



Il progetto è parzialmente sovvenzionato dal programma  
specifico ICT PSP a sostegno della politica in materia di ICT  
(Tecnologie dell'Informazione e della Comunicazione)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/ict\\_psp](http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp)



**DAGUERREOBASE**  
*Sharing Europe's Earliest  
Photographs*

# DAGUERREOBASE



## Quando la fotografia era una lastra d'argento

Una giornata dedicata al progetto europeo  
**DAGUERREOBASE**  
[www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org)

martedì 22 ottobre 2013  
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Il progetto è parzialmente sovvenzionato dal programma specifico ICT PSP a sostegno della politica in materia di ICT (Tecnologie dell'Informazione e della Comunicazione) [http://ec.europa.eu/ict\\_psp](http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp)

L'incontro è a cura di con il patrocinio di

**SMPhoto  
conservation**



## Quando la fotografia era una lastra d'argento

**Giornata dedicata a DAGUERREOBASE**  
il progetto europeo per la condivisione  
del patrimonio dei dagherrotipi

**Roma, Istituto nazionale per la grafica**  
Palazzo Poli, Sala Dante, Via Poli 54

martedì 22 ottobre 2013  
ore 9,30 - 18,00

Il 22 ottobre 2013 a Roma, a Palazzo Poli, sede dell'**Istituto nazionale per la grafica**, si terrà *Quando la fotografia era una lastra d'argento*. Un incontro, a livello internazionale, dedicato alla presentazione del progetto europeo DAGUERREOBASE, nato per la condivisione del patrimonio dei dagherrotipi europei.

Sarà la prima giornata di sensibilizzazione e di presentazione del progetto e vi parteciperanno relatori italiani e stranieri. L'incontro avrà inizio alle 9.30 nella Sala Dante di Palazzo Poli con la registrazione dei partecipanti, l'introduzione e i saluti della dottoressa Maria Antonella Fusco, Dirigente Istituto nazionale per la grafica, della dottoressa Rosa Caffo, Direttore Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche, e del professor Luigi Tomassini, Presidente SISF - Società italiana per lo studio della fotografia.

**Il progetto.** L'obiettivo principale di DAGUERREOBASE è quello di raccogliere in un'unica banca dati il patrimonio fotografico dei dagherrotipi conservati nelle collezioni europee. Nel database saranno inseriti **25.000 dagherrotipi** corredati dalle schede descrittive delle lastre e dell'attrezzatura, oltre che dalle relative informazioni storiche e da tutta la letteratura specialistica.

Il progetto darà un **importante contributo a Europeana** e sarà visibile sul sito stesso di [www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu), il portale e la biblioteca digitale dedicate al patrimonio culturale dell'Unione Europea.

DAGUERREOBASE è **parzialmente sovvenzionato dall'ICT Policy Support Programme** (ICT PSP, Information Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme) in quanto parte del CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme), il programma quadro dell'Unione Europea che mira a favorire la competitività delle imprese europee.

Operando nell'ambito del Best Practice Program, DAGUERREOBASE si prefigge di fornire descrizioni di qualità, con la traduzione dei termini tecnici nelle principali lingue dell'Unione, del corredo informativo relativo alle lastre dagherrotipiche e agli oggetti ad esse correlate. Si garantisce il controllo qualitativo delle copie digitali pubblicate in un ambiente digitale protetto, sulla base del **DEA** (Europeana





Data Exchange Agreement), che regola la pubblicazione dei metadati e dei file digitali, tenendo in considerazione il quadro normativo italiano, europeo e internazionale, in tema di diritto d'autore e di tutela dei beni culturali.

Per raggiungere questi obiettivi è stato costituito un **consorzio internazionale di 18 partner europei provenienti da 13 paesi diversi**. I componenti di questo gruppo sono curatori e restauratori pubblici e privati, specializzati in fotografia, che hanno il compito di raccogliere e inserire nel database le descrizioni relative a questi preziosi oggetti.

Il nuovo sito web [www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org), presto online, sarà di facile consultazione - aperto anche a un pubblico non specializzato - e vi si potranno consultare le schede dei dagherrotipi digitalizzati e catalogati, con la possibilità di effettuare ricerche incrociate in base a una vasta gamma di dati e specifiche (collocazione, marchi di fabbricazione, dimensioni della lastra, montaggi, ecc.).

In questi mesi verrà realizzato anche il giornale quadrimestrale sul quale verranno pubblicati articoli e approfondimenti sui dagherrotipi e sulle istituzioni appartenenti al consorzio DAGUERREOBASE.

**I dagherrotipi.** Inventato da Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851), il processo dagherrotipico è stato pubblicamente dimostrato a Parigi nel 1839, divenendo da quell'importante avvenimento storico il **primo processo fotografico** ad essere universalmente impiegato. Anche se l'era del dagherrotipo durò solamente un ventennio (1839-1860), si stima che, prima di cadere in disuso, gradualmente soppiantato da altre tecniche, in tutto il mondo siano state prodotte oltre 30 milioni di lastre. Oggi, solo una piccola frazione di questi dagherrotipi sono sopravvissuti e ci forniscono una rara testimonianza della vita storica, culturale e scientifica del XIX secolo. Le **"fotografie d'argento"** che si affermarono tra il 1839 e il 1860 come il primo processo fotografico di successo, sono conservate in diverse collezioni di tutto il mondo. Sono opere estremamente fragili in quanto il sottile strato immagine, costituito da particelle molto fini, può essere facilmente distrutto. Il processo produce un unicum e pertanto l'immagine, una volta persa, lo è per sempre. I dagherrotipi prodotti in Europa sono, inoltre, più rari per la particolare tipologia del loro montaggio, del tutto diverso da quello di tipo americano. Per questo motivo, è fondamentale che tutti i dagherrotipi ancora esistenti, siano **opportunitamente schedati e studiati**, in modo da generare nuove conoscenze scientifiche e storiche e ottimizzare di conseguenza la conservazione a lungo termine delle opere, rendendole accessibili per ogni futura ricerca storica e artistica.

Il progetto DAGUERREOBASE è partito il 1 novembre 2012 e si estenderà per trenta mesi, terminando entro **marzo 2015 con una mostra virtuale**, sul portale Europea, dedicata ai dagherrotipi più significativi.



Il progetto è parzialmente sovvenzionato dal programma specifico ICT PSP a sostegno della politica in materia di ICT (Tecnologie dell'Informazione e della Comunicazione)

Incontro a cura di

[http://ec.europa.eu/ict\\_psp](http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp)

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[www.smp-photoconservation.com](http://www.smp-photoconservation.com)  
per Daguerreobase  
[www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org)



SOCIETÀ ITALIANA  
PER LO STUDIO  
DELLA FOTOGRAFIA  
[www.sisf.eu](http://www.sisf.eu)



## Contact Daguerreobase

If you are interested in cooperating with Daguerreobase or want further information, please contact us:

e-mail: [info@daguerreobase.org](mailto:info@daguerreobase.org)

[www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org)

# Daguerreobase

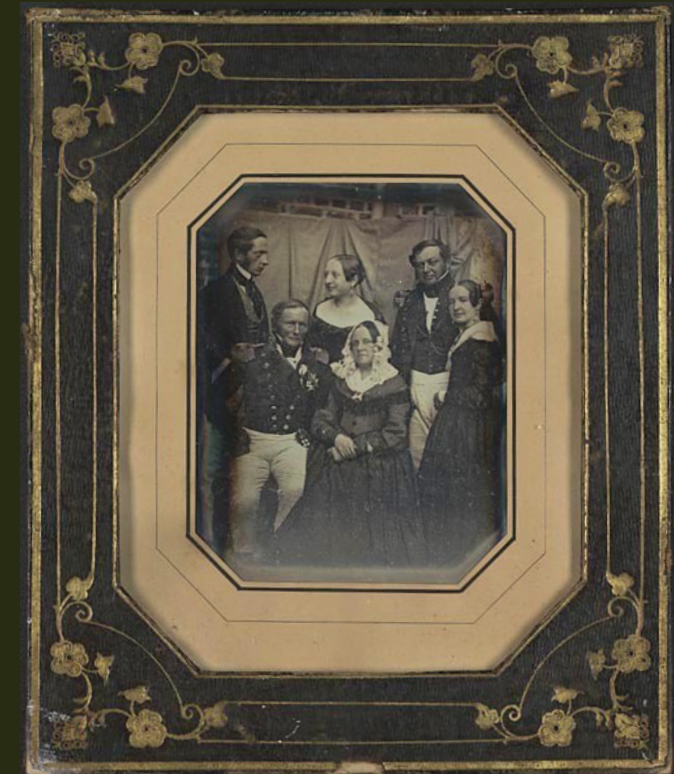
Sharing Europe's Earliest Photographs



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The project is partially funded under the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme by the European Community ([http://ec.europa.eu/ict\\_psp](http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp)).



## What is a daguerreotype?

The daguerreotype was the first commercially successful photographic process (1839–1860s) in the history of photography. Named after the inventor, Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, each daguerreotype is a unique image on a silvered copper plate. In contrast to photographic paper, a daguerreotype is not flexible and is rather heavy.

The daguerreotype is accurate, detailed and sharp. It has a mirror-like surface and is very fragile. Since the metal plate is extremely vulnerable, most daguerreotypes are presented in a special housing. Different types of housings existed: a package, a folding case, jewelry ...

Numerous portrait studios opened their doors from the 1840s onward. Daguerreotypes were very expensive, so only the wealthy could afford to have their portrait taken. Even though the portrait was the most popular subject, the daguerreotype was used to record many other images such as topographic and documentary subjects, antiquities, still lifes, natural phenomena and remarkable events.

European daguerreotypes are scarce. They are scattered in institutional and private collections all over the world. Many aspects of the daguerreotype still need to be discovered. They can help us to understand the impact of photography on Europe's social and cultural history.

## Visit Daguerreobase

Daguerreobase is a public platform of archives, libraries, museums and private contributors from across Europe. We assemble and preserve information on daguerreotypes.

Daguerreobase aims to bring together digital images and descriptions of more than 25 000 European historical daguerreotypes and related literature.

Daguerreobase is a unique research tool for daguerreotypes, not only for scientists, but also for collectors, photographers and the general public.

On the new website [daguerreobase.org](http://daguerreobase.org):

- you will see amazing historical pictures made by the first photographers in Europe
- you find quality images of daguerreotypes in a common database
- you can browse through daguerreotypes of landscapes, portraits, still lifes, antiquities and remarkable events from the 19th century
- you may learn how to recognise these unique objects and how to share them with a general public

The content will also become available through Europeana.eu, the portal and digital library for European Cultural Heritage of the European Union. In 2014 Daguerreobase and Europeana will celebrate the 175th birthday of photography with a Virtual Exhibition of European daguerreotypes on their website.



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## Who are we?

Currently 18 partners from 13 different European countries are working together: institutions, private-collectors and photograph conservators.

### Coordinator:

BELGIUM – FotoMuseum Provincie Antwerpen, FoMu

### Partners:

AUSTRIA – Institut für Papierrestaurierung Schloß Schönbrunn, IPR

BELGIUM – eDAVID

CZECH REPUBLIC – Národní technické muzeum

DENMARK – The Royal Library, The National Library and Copenhagen University Library

FINLAND – The Finnish Museum of Photography, FMP

FRANCE – Atelier de Restauration et de Conservation des Photographies de la Ville de Paris, ARCP

GERMANY – Museum Ludwig / Stadt Köln

GERMANY – Technische Sammlungen Dresden, Dresden

ITALY – SMP Di Sandra Maria Petrillo

LUXEMBOURG – Ministère de la Culture

NORWAY – Nasjonalbiblioteket

NORWAY – Universitetet i Bergen

SPAIN – Universitat Politècnica de Valencia

THE NETHERLANDS – Stichting Nederlands Fotomuseum

THE NETHERLANDS – Picturae bv

THE NETHERLANDS – Ortelee Marinus Jan / Daguerreotypist, MOCED

UNITED KINGDOM – Museum Conservation Services Ltd

1 (cover) Carl Ferdinand Stelzner, Ladegården, Christiania, 1843–1846, owner: Nasjonalbiblioteket / National Library of Norway

2 André F.J. Dupont, Portrait Jozefina Nelsen, ca. 1853–1865 © Letterenhuis Antwerpen

3 Italian daguerreotypist, Frits, the indian elephant in the hunting villa of Stupinigi, Turin, 1850 © Archivio Storico della Città di Torino

4 Anonymous, Young girl with a cookie jar, c. 1855–1865 © Collection FoMu

5 Anonymous, European man in oriental garment (whole plate), c.1845 © Collection FoMu

## JOIN US!

Daguerreobase is still looking for undiscovered daguerreotypes. We invite you to share your treasures in a secure digital environment. Everyone can benefit from this cooperation:

- museums and private-collectors can show their daguerreotype collection to a wider public
- you can search with a multilingual tool through Europe's finest daguerreotypes
- the main body of still extant European daguerreotypes will be assembled in one user-friendly database
- you can exchange information and raise your level of knowledge

Daguerreobase is a knowledge base for everyone interested in Europe's diverse cultural heritage.



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## When Photography Was a Silver Plate

A day dedicated to the **DAGUERREOBASE**  
european project

**Rome, Istituto nazionale per la grafica**  
Palazzo Poli, Sala Dante, Via Poli 54

22 october 2013

### PROGRAMME

9,30 Registration

10,00 **Welcome**

Maria Antonella Fusco

Director of the Istituto nazionale per la grafica

Rosa Caffo

Director of the Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche

Luigi Tomassini

President of the Società italiana per lo studio della fotografia

10,30 **Daguerreobase. A European Project for Sharing Daguerreotype's Heritage**

Sandra Maria Petrillo

Photographic Conservator, Partner of the *Daguerreobase* international consortium  
*Silver, Mercury and Gold. Understanding and Preserving Daguerreotypes*

Sabine Cauberghe

Daguerreobase Project Leader

Tamara Berghmans

Curator of the Photographic Collection FotoMuseum Province, Antwerp  
*Daguerreobase. Sharing Europe's Earliest Photographs*

11,30 BREAK

12,00 **A European Invention, a Worldwide Diffusion. Faces and Places in  
Daguerreotypes from Southern Europe**

Maria Francesca Bonetti

Curator of the Department of Photography, Istituto nazionale per la grafica, Rome  
*Promenades daguerriennes. Italian Camera Views*

Giovanni Fiorentino

Professor at the University of Tuscia, Viterbo

*Italians in the Mirror. The Portrait of a Society between Tradition and Modernity*





13,00 LUNCH

14,30 **Greece, Croatia and Portugal talk about their “silver images”**

Dessy Griva

Photographic Conservator, Benaki Museum, Athens

Hrvoje Gržina

Senior Archivist, Croatian State Archives, Zagreb

Luis Pavão

Photographic Conservator, Luis Pavão Limitada, Lisbon

16,00 BREAK

16,30 **A Contemporary Approach.  
Daguerreotypes in the Twenty-First Century, between Technique and Creativity.**

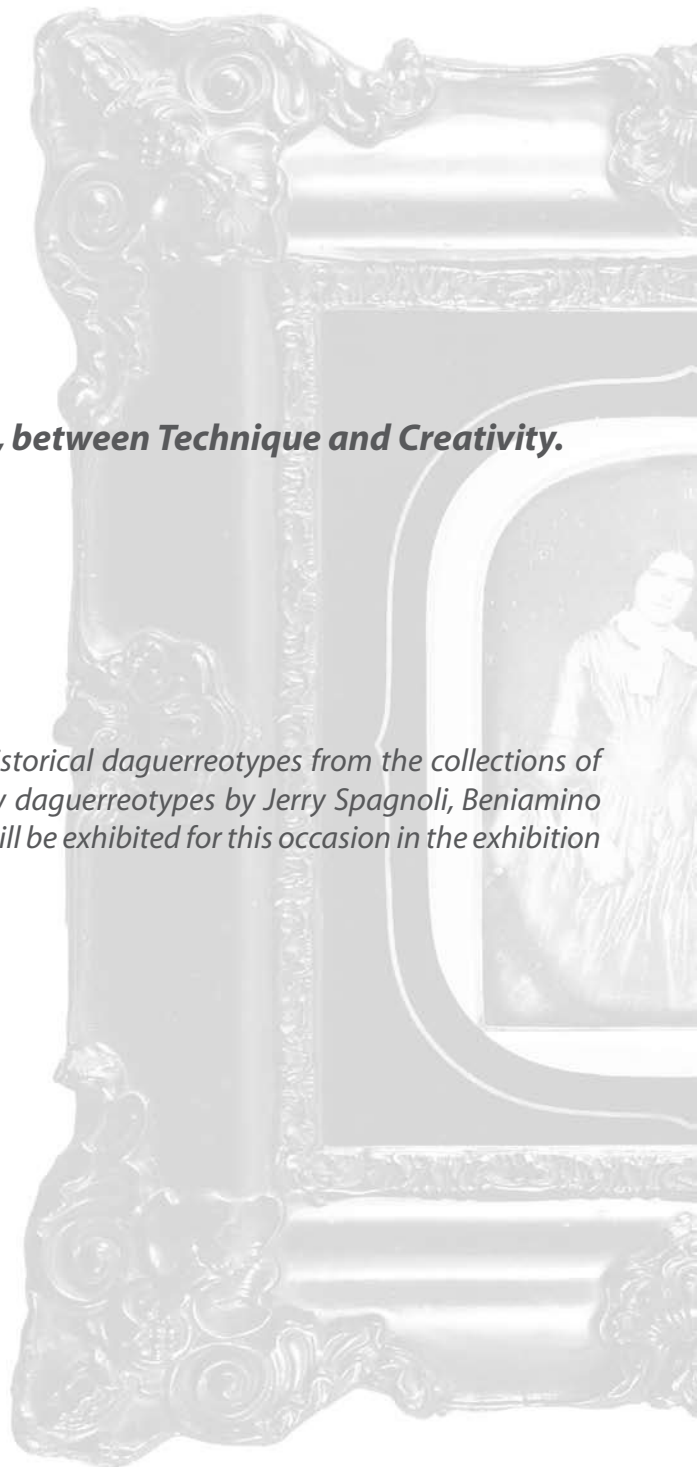
Jerry Spagnoli

Daguerreotypist, New York, USA

*Demonstration of the Daguerreotype Process*

17,30 **Conclusions**

*During the day until 6 pm it will be possible to view historical daguerreotypes from the collections of the Istituto nazionale per la grafica and contemporary daguerreotypes by Jerry Spagnoli, Beniamino Terraneo, Marinus Orteele and Charlotte Edam, which will be exhibited for this occasion in the exhibition hall on the first floor of Palazzo Poli.*



Curated by

**SMP**Photo  
conservation

[www.smp-photoconservation.com](http://www.smp-photoconservation.com)

for Daguerreobase

[www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org)



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[www.sisf.eu](http://www.sisf.eu)

DAGUERREOBASE  
Roma, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, Palazzo Poli  
22 ottobre 2014

### **Saluto di Maria Antonella Fusco, dirigente dell'Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica**

“quelle immagini d'altri tempi non erano arte, né in alcun modo pretendevano di esserlo. Il loro vanto era quello di essere fedeli riproduzioni della realtà.” (Karen Blixen, *Dagherrotipi*, conversazione tenuta alla radio danese il 1 gennaio 1951)

Perché un'istituzione pubblica come la nostra, che ha come missione di occuparsi delle forme d'arte riprodotta, dall'incisione alla multimedialità, dovrebbe, anzi deve, riconoscere, studiare, catalogare, conservare e diffondere i dagherrotipi? Essi non nascono certamente come forme d'arte, e non sono oggetti riprodotti, o tantomeno riproducibili.

Figli unici di un artigiano che non è ancora un artista, dovrebbero trovar luogo in ricerche d'altra tipologia di studiosi.

Eppure, l'opera di cui oggi in questo convegno si parla, svolge un ruolo fondamentale nella “connessione” della Storia d'Europa, nel dialogo tra differenti società che costituì l'asse portante delle grandi rivoluzioni borghesi degli anni Quaranta. Il ruolo del dagherrotipo nella storia europea in età romantica costituisce, come potremmo dire con un ossimoro, la storia del Romanticismo stesso, per la sua nuova visione del mondo, in cui la realtà dello sguardo riflesso costituisce l'asse portante delle grandi rivoluzioni borghesi.

E non è un caso che una scrittrice nata in età post-romantica, la cui arte è fortemente intessuta di stimoli romantici, abbia utilizzato suggestivamente proprio la metafora del dagherrotipo, in due successive trasmissioni radiofoniche del 1 e del 7 gennaio 1951, come frammenti di memoria, immagini condensate che contengono intere storie, “concepiti per tramandare oralmente ciò che a me è giunto oralmente”. (Ed è interessante per noi, che oggi ci accingiamo ad esaminare ogni aspetto della materialità del dagherrotipo, questa assimilazione al patrimonio immateriale di tradizione orale).

Se semanticamente l'utilizzo dei termini è equivalente, come spesso succedeva, a “fotografie antiche”, l'aggettivazione usata dalla Blixen è invece del tutto evocativa, e allude alla suggestione aggiunta dell'immagine come “specchio”, in cui, per la prima volta nella storia umana, l'immagine reale di persone e luoghi ritorna al nostro sguardo, insieme però al rispecchiamento dello stesso nostro sguardo. Quando c'è lo sguardo, non c'è l'immagine, e quando finalmente abbiamo acquistato l'angolazione giusta per guardare l'immagine, il nostro sguardo non vi si riflette più.

Vediamo dunque 'altro' da noi, congiuntamente all'interrogazione contenuta nel nostro stesso sguardo. E' una condizione di consapevolezza del rapporto tra l'uomo e la storia, legata esclusivamente al dagherrotipo. Non si ripresenterà con le successive tecniche fotografiche, a partire innanzitutto dal calotipo, in cui al supporto cartaceo del positivo diretto, e poco dopo del negativo, costituirà la contraddizione in termini dello specchio, per la natura – invece – assorbente della carta.

La prima esercitazione che chiedo di svolgere ai miei studenti - introducendo da ormai vent'anni il corso di Storia della fotografia all'Università Suor Orsola Benincasa di Napoli, con le fondamentali osservazioni svolte da Peter Galassi in “Prima della fotografia” - per comprendere appieno lo smarrimento e al tempo stesso la folle attrazione dell'avvento del dagherrotipo, è di sforzarsi di concepire un mondo in cui l'immagine dei nostri cari, una volta defunti, svaniva lentamente dopo essersi irrimediabilmente alterata. (risale a prima della fotografia, infatti, il termine 'scomparso'

per definire una persona morta) . A meno che non si avesse la fortuna di possederne un ritratto o almeno una miniatura in un medaglione. E la rivoluzione del dagherrotipo era duplice. Dalla dissolvenza che aveva avvolto il ricordo, l'immagine ritornava a prender forma lentamente, con una gradualità da cartina al tornasole, fino ad incidersi sullo specchio e nella nostra memoria.

Lo specchio, inoltre, restituiva all'osservatore anche l'intensità del proprio sguardo, fisso a scrutare il formarsi dell'immagine nella memoria.

Ecco, l'operazione che qui prende il via oggi, é innanzitutto un risarcimento verso una storia aurorale, il mutamento che ci ha portato, in epoca moderna, all'eterna compresenza in immagine di tutto il nostro passato.

L'Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica si è già occupato di dagherrotipo, in partenariato con: “Fratelli Alinari-Fondazione per la storia della fotografia”, giusto dieci anni fa, con la mostra “L'Italia d'Argento. 1839/1859 Storia del Dagherrotipo in Italia” a cura di Maria Francesca Bonetti e Monica Maffioli.

Ritornare ora sull'argomento, in partenariato con Sandra Petrillo, é per noi importante, perché ci permette di mettere a disposizione degli studiosi, da oggi e per i prossimi tre anni, tutti i saperi accumulati nel tempo dalle diverse prospettive.

Ringrazio Rossella Caffo, dirigente dell'ICCU, Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico e con lei le sue valide funzionarie Marzia Piccininno e Maria Teresa Natale, che coordinano il progetto Europeana. Rossella ci é tradizionalmente vicina in tante nostre iniziative, dal progetto Calcografica, diretto da Elisabetta Giffi, all'ingresso della nostra biblioteca, diretta da Rita Parma e coordinata da Silvana Leone, nel sistema SBN della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma, per il quale confidiamo nel suo appoggio e sostegno, anche in risorse umane.

Ringrazio il presidente della SISF, prof. Luigi Tomassini, e con lui il vicepresidente Giovanni Fiorentino.

La Sisf, Società italiana di Storia della Fotografia, riunisce storici e studiosi delle Università e delle istituzioni, con l'obiettivo di portare l'analisi di ogni aspetto della fotografia storica all'attenzione della società italiana. Da due anni, ho tenuto a iscrivere l'ING come socio istituzionale, e spero di poter sostenere questo impegno anche in futuro, ad onta delle sempre più ridotte risorse economiche del nostro Istituto. Ritengo infatti indispensabile, ogni volta che sia possibile, l'adesione del nostro Istituto e nostra personale, alle comunità scientifiche. É in questo spirito che l'ING aderisce ad ICOM, International Council of Museums - UNESCO, di cui qui si riunisce il comitato regionale del Lazio, che ho l'onore di coordinare; e all'International Advisory Committee of Keepers of Public Collections of Graphic Arts. Le collezioni storiche fotografiche sono state qui costituite dall'indiscussa fondatrice degli studi fotografici in Italia, Marina Miraglia, che continua ad assisterci con consigli e indirizzi metodologici.

E naturalmente ringrazio chi ha voluto questo incontro: Sandra Maria Petrillo, partner di Daguerreobase, e all'interno del mio Istituto, la coordinatrice delle Collezioni di fotografia, Maria Francesca Bonetti, con i validissimi collaboratori, Maria Antonietta Monarca e Luca Somma. E, per la divulgazione dell'evento, Angelina Travaglini con la collaborazione di Roberta Ricci.

Riconoscerete in questi giorni, dal loro cartellino, i nostri validi addetti all'accoglienza, coordinati con professionalità da Laura Campagna e Giovanni Pezzi; mentre dell'amplificazione e della multimedialità si occupano Giuseppe Renzitti, Gianfranco Zurzolo.

Sandra Maria Petrillo

## When Photography was a Silver Plate

### The Daguerrotype : an Object from the Beginning of Photography

On January 7th, 2013, we celebrated 174 years since the official birth of photography. The announcement of the daguerreotype process, invented by L.J.M. Daguerre (1787-1851) in collaboration with J.N. Nièpce (1765-1833), came about in the time of the industrial revolution and major changes in European political and social structure. The daguerreotype invention was destined to change the way in which reality was represented, with profound repercussions in the social sphere. It was the first photographic process to enjoy world-wide commercial adoption and by 1843 the technique had been perfected to such an extent that it remained dominant until 1855, particularly in the United States.

Long neglected due to ignorance or unfortunately damaged due to

incompetence, today only a small fraction of the about thirty million daguerreotypes produced in Europe and North America have survived. Belonging to the beginnings of photography, these artefacts are the result of a real technological miracle, and today are, recognised, more than ever, as being a “unique and irreplaceable” part of our cultural heritage.

Daguerreotypes are rare and precious art objects - part of our world's cultural heritage. They are part of many important collections around the world. They are also found in libraries, in historical archives and in many often unexpected places, e.g. patent offices and music conservatories. For many decades daguerreotypes have attracted interest from collectors of photographs, and important ones have achieved considerable value on the art's market. Some special private collections have been acquired by museums and archives for several millions of dollars. This was the case with the Matthew Isenburgh's collection, which was recently purchased by the Archives of Modern Conflict (AMC) in Toronto. In the future, this collection will become the subject of an historical and scientific research.

### Silver, Mercury and Gold

Unlike typical photographs, daguerreotypes are mainly composed of metals. Its substrate is a copper sheet, coated with a thin layer of highly polished silver. The image layer of the daguerreotype is made of submicron size silver-mercury amalgam particles, superimposed on a reflective



Anonymous : Portrait, Daguerreotype inserted in a locket. C. 1855, Rome : Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, n. inv. 6085.



Mullins, Photographic Portrait Establishment, Portrait of mother and daughter, 1853. Rome, The Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, n. inv. 6087. Photography by Luca Somma, Courtesy of the Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activities and Tourism.

surface. The size of the particles is responsible for the very high optical resolution of daguerreotype images that can be observed as negatives or positives. Resulting from the direct positive process, the daguerreotype image is a unique object, it cannot be reproduced without re-photographing it.

By its chemical nature, the surface of the daguerreotype is prone to tarnishing by air pollutants and is highly vulnerable to mechanical damage, especially if the plate is not gilded. In the absence of a protective mounting, tarnishing or corrosion of the silver layer can completely obscure the image.

To preserve the daguerreotype, Daguerre himself advised, in his famous manual, to seal the plate under glass, he also mentioned his experiments with different protective coatings, but none of which had

given good results.

The protective housing of daguerreotypes provided an essential element to ensure their long term preservation. Inspired by the traditional way in which miniature painting were presented, the mountings also had an aesthetic quality. According to their origins (Anglo-american or European), finished daguerreotypes, were inserted into simple or sophisticated cases or frames which later were available commercially in a wide variety of materials and styles.

### The Evolution of Conservation Treatments of Daguerreotypes

The history and evolution of the cleaning treatments of daguerreotypes reflects the difficulty in understanding the physical and chemical complexity of this photographic object. Early cleaning treatments of tarnished daguerreotypes used harsh chemicals or products commonly utilized for cleaning silverware, containing thiourea (*Silver Dip*). Modern approaches to daguerreotype conservation has totally rejected those practices after discovering that residues left on the surface would, in time, cause irreversible damage to daguerreotypes.

From the 1980s scientific based methods, relying on the use of modern technologies such as electrolysis, plasma spluttering or laser ablation, were tested. These methods are still considered experimental and therefore have not yet been fully accepted by the conservation community. For this reason, the current trend is for minimal intervention on the image its self, preferring preventive conservation through proper climate control, designing new archival housing and long term monitoring of the state of the daguerreotypes.



Anonymous : Portrait of a young man inserted in a case, typically American, c. 1850-1855, n. inv. 6083.

### Daguerreobase : The European Project for Safeguarding and Sharing the Daguerreotype Heritage

Along with the sophisticated scientific techniques that have recently been developed for characterisation of material composition of daguerreotypes, work has been conducted to collect information on as many existing daguerreotypes as possible, those housed in public and private archives throughout Europe, and to compile a single data base (virtual digital library). The main aim of this internationally significant initiative, called Daguerreobase, is to create new scientific and historical knowledge which could start a process of awareness raising about this particularly unique type of photographic heritage, which in Europe is estimated to contain over 25,000 daguerreotypes.

The daguerreobase project was founded by the European Commission and started in November 2012. It is coordinated by the Fotomuseum (FoMu) in Antwerp. The database will be accessible on the website [www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org), it will follow the Best Practice

Programme and will be also online on Europeana, [www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu), the portal of the European cultural heritage.

The involvement and encouragement of public and private institutions to share their collections of daguerreotypes is essential for the success of the Dagerreobase project. In this context, a conference is being held on October 22, 2013, entitled *When Photography was a Silver Plate. A Day dedicated to the Daguerreobase European Project*. The event is supported by the Società italiana per gli studi di fotografia, [www.sisf.eu](http://www.sisf.eu), at the headquarters of the Istituto nazionale per la grafica, at Palazzo Poli in Rome. Participants include international speakers and world-renowned contemporary Daguerreotypist, the Italian-American Jerry Spagnoli, who will make a practical demonstration of the daguerreotype process.

Column published in Italian in "Kermes. La rivista del restauro", n. 89, pp. 73-74.

## DAGUERREOBASE: Sharing Europe's Earliest Photographs

*Sabine Cauberghe*, Daguerreobase Project Leader

*Tamara Berghmans*, FotoMuseum Provincie, Antwerp

The DAGUERREOBASE project is a public platform and Best Practice Network of archives, libraries, museums and private contributors from across Europe, collecting and preserving information on daguerreotypes.

Generally speaking, daguerreotypes in museum collections are safely stored away. Cross connections and relationships between these collections therefore seldom come to light, though they are often precisely the missing piece of the puzzle for researchers. *Daguerreobase* is intended to stimulate and simplify research in the field of the daguerreotype, and similarly to offer a broad, free access to this unique facet of our global cultural heritage.

This is one of the aims of the current *Daguerreobase* project, to develop a common database, but also to spread best practice in the collection and dissemination of information on European daguerreotypes. *Daguerreobase* will be a knowledge base designed by and for all of those interested in Europe's diverse cultural heritage.

*Daguerreobase* creates standards for the description and digitization of daguerreotype objects to facilitate the uniform description of the many aspects of the daguerreotype objects. This will include a multilingual set of thesauri or entries lists for daguerreotypes, and an environment to create and evolve that terminology in permanent compliancy with *Europeana*.

The *Daguerreobase* project brought together 18 partners coming from 13 European countries; including private and public institutions, private-collectors and photograph conservators. The content will become available on the renewed website [www.daguerreobase.org](http://www.daguerreobase.org) and through [Europeana.eu](http://Europeana.eu), the portal and digital library for European Cultural Heritage of the European Union.

The project is partially funded under the Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme by the European Community ([http://ec.europa.eu/ict\\_psp](http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp)).

### FotoMuseum, Antwerp

FotoMuseum Provincie Antwerpen - FoMu ([www.fomu.be](http://www.fomu.be)) is Belgium's leading museum for historical and contemporary photography. It was founded in 1965 as part of the Provincial Museum of Decorative Arts in Antwerp. In 1986 the Photography Department gained autonomy and moved to the present day building. In 50 years the museum has assembled a collection of international importance.

The collection has been greatly broadened and diversified by acquisitions and donations such as the Michel Auer collection, the archive and library of the Association belge de Photographie, Agfa Gevaert, Agfa Historama (Cologne) and the Fritz L. Grüber collection. FoMu manages a significant photographic heritage collection consisting of approximately 32000 historical and contemporary publications, 750000 photographs (positives and negatives) and 23000 pieces of photographic equipment. The camera collection is almost unique in terms of its size and diversity and the extensive photography collection includes 183 daguerreotypes.

## Promenades Dagueriennes. Italian Camera Views

*Maria Francesca Bonetti*

Istituto nazionale per la grafica. Rome

Following the announcement of Daguerre's invention in January 1839, news concerning a new method of producing a new kind of image spread rapidly in Italy too. Daguerre's manual – which soon ran to several editions – was promptly translated into Italian, and a series of public experiments and demonstrations of his procedure were staged in the various academies and scientific institutes, in many Italian cities. These early developments produced the oldest daguerreotype taken in Italy that still exists: the *Veduta della Gran Madre di Dio*, an image of the Church of the Great Mother of God in Turin, taken by **Enrico Federico Jest** on 8 October 1839. An optician and mechanic, employed at the physics laboratory of the Royal University of Turin, Jest invented and manufactured a number of scientific instruments, and he is a typical example of the first Italian practitioner in the field of professional photography.

Other pioneers included **Achille Morelli** and **Lorenzo Suscipj** in Rome, who were among the first people to produce daguerreotypes in Italy. They created many images of monuments and views of the Eternal City. Their best known pictures were probably commissioned by the English mathematician and archaeologist **Alexander John Ellis**. Following the example of the first two series of aquatint engravings from daguerreotypes, to multiply the unique image on plate and distribute copies for sale (*Excursions daguerriennes*, edited by **Noël Marie Paymal Lerebours** and *Vues d'Italie d'après le Daguerreotype* by **Ferdinando Artaria** of Milan), Ellis also planned a series of daguerreotypic views devoted to Italy, that he never published. The set of 159 plates that he assembled, either specially commissioned or made personally during his tour in Italy in 1841, is the largest collection of daguerreotypes entirely dedicated to our country (National Media Museum at Bradford, UK). These images perfectly capture the romantic Victorian spirit of the time, typical of the educated and aristocratic travelers from northern Europe. Following the well-trodden itineraries of the Mediterranean Grand Tour, which was already established in the eighteenth century, they looked towards Italy with admiration and nostalgia for the beauty and grandeur of classical antiquity, which was also mixed with curiosity regarding the picturesque customs of a rather backward society that seemed to be forever blocked within the traditions of its past.

In contrast to the other more economically and industrially advanced European countries, it was the *veduta* and the documentation of monumental buildings and works of art that was most widely practiced in Italy during the early years of the daguerreotype, before the multitudes of itinerant daguerreotypists descended upon the Peninsula to spread the trend of the portrait. This was especially the case in the less developed regions and cities of Italy, such as Rome and the South, but also Genoa, Venice, Florence, Pisa, etc., that were, of course, the most appealing to artists, writers, scholars and travellers.

The early amateur daguerreotypists were mostly erudite and refined foreign scholars, motivated by their interests, their studies and their desire for knowledge. This was certainly the case for **John Ruskin**, **Joseph Philibert Girault de Prangey**, **Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gros** and **Jean-Gabriel Eynard** (these are but a few of the most famous names), all of whom gave us their precious testimony of the past, by means of daguerreotypic representations of Italian cities and views, often with close attention to the most significant decorative and architectural details.

An examination of these images and a careful comparison with their illustrious iconographic precedents from the tradition of painting and sketching landscapes, clearly reveals that some innovative figurative interests and different pictorial models were already emerging in their work. These trends would soon be affirmed and would give rise to new genres and a general revitalization of the whole field of visual communication and representation.

## Italians in the Mirror. The Portrait of a Society between Tradition and Modernity

*Giovanni Fiorentino*

Professor at the University of Tuscia, Viterbo

The daguerreotype represented a major turning point in the history of visual communication of the West and it unlocked the door to a whole new phase of change and development. In Italy the "*ritratto fotogenico*" also became widely popular and it was soon a common feature of the everyday lives of the bourgeois and aristocratic classes. The daguerreotypic portrait was much more than a painted portrait and it became central to the construction and representation of social and personal identity. Life-like and eternal, the silver mirror gave people instant immortality and it developed into a prominent commodity for consumption, ushering in a new supremacy of the image and initiating the destiny of photography as an object for the masses, a destiny that would soon lead to *carte de visite* and stereoscopy.

Italy's approach to the daguerreotype was rather different from that of powerful industrial countries, but it was also the prelude to modernity in our country in three respects: it was a consumer product, a means of communication and an image that could be mass-produced. The photographic portrait became well-established in the cities that were stops on the *Grand Tour*. Studios specialising in this form of portraiture sprang up in Milan, Genoa, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Naples and Palermo. Promoted and advertised in newspapers and guidebooks and at fairs and exhibitions, the daguerreotype appealed to a wide and well-informed audience and a throng of daguerreotypists, foreigners and Italians, working both in established ateliers and as itinerant vendors, offered these modern icons along the length and breadth of the peninsula.

Due to its specific technical features, on the one hand the daguerreotype represented repetition, serialisation and the construction of a model of social and cultural beauty, but on the other hand the daguerreotypic portrait was a unique and seductive image, small and portable, cloaked in an extraordinary modern, almost technological allure, and it embodied the particular potentialities of photographic creation, that is eternal, unrepeatable, different and multiple all at the same time.

The Italians who still stare out of these mirrors, despite the diversity and variety of their lives, gave rise to a situation that was quite distant from that which prevailed in the United States. It was less structured as regards industrial production, and perhaps less luminous and glistening, but it allowed for the diversity of the subjective gazes to emerge and for a different kind of individual daguerreotypic and pre-photographic research.



## The daguerreotype process in Greece

*Dessy Griva*

Benaki Museum, Athens

A landmark year for photography was 1839, which saw the newly-founded Greek state in political and social turmoil trying to regroup after the liberation struggle and after throwing off the Turkish yoke. It is therefore remarkable that daguerreotype made its appearance in the country just two months after its formal announcement.

The main reason was the birth of the new medium that coincided with the golden age of European travelling. During the Industrial Revolution, improvements in the means of transport facilitated travellers' movements and offered them a wide variety of destinations. The already widespread journeys - an established custom among aristocratic circles and lovers of archaeology since the 18<sup>th</sup> century - which combined education and leisure, to countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, known as the Grand Tour, gained more supporters. Due to its particular geographical position Greece was an important stop *en route* to the Holy Lands, although it was not included in the formal itinerary of the Grand Tour. Apart from being obsessed with the classical era, the limited technical capabilities of the photographic medium restricted their choice of subjects to that of ancient monuments.

In late 1839, the first to photograph the Parthenon, the Propylaea and the Temple of Olympian Zeus was the Canadian **Pierre Gustave Joly de Lotbinière** on behalf of **Noël Marie Lerebours**. The original daguerreotypes no longer exist and they come down to us as aquatints in the publication *Les Excursions Daguerriennes*, Paris 1842. The artist **Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey** followed in 1842, thus creating the main volume of surviving daguerreotypes of Greek interest. Their value and rarity was confirmed when one of them - the temple of Olympian Zeus - was auctioned by the Christie's in 2003 and remained for many years the most expensive photograph in the world.

Then in early 1847, the French photographer **Philibert Perraud** visited Greece and taught photography to the Greek painter and professor **Philippos Margaritis** who became the first Greek to experiment with the technique of daguerreotype. The result of their collaboration was 11 daguerreotypes which can be found in the collections of the J. P. Getty Museum.

A milestone in Greek history of photography was the donation of a daguerreotype machine to the School of Arts in 1849, as it defined the space and time where the new art began in Greece.

Finally, in 1850, the diplomat Baron **Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gros** produced daguerreotypes of excellent quality depicting the Athenian monuments and constituting the cause of archaeological discoveries while admitting that the era of the technique had already passed.

There are extremely rare daguerreotypes of Greek subjects scattered throughout the world in public and in private collections. This makes recording them very difficult. Some of them can be found at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, the Orsay Museum, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the George Eastman House Museum.

In Greece the Photographic Archive of the Benaki Museum has seven conserved daguerreotype portraits in its collections and it is highly likely that more can be found in private collections.

## The Photographic Archive Studio at the Benaki Museum, Athens

The Photographic Archive Studio at the Benaki Museum was established in 1973 to collect, preserve and document photographs of Early Christian, Byzantine and post-Byzantine art and architecture. Since then the Department's original scope has gradually been extended to cover images of Greece and its culture, as well as its history and contemporary society.

The Department now includes photographs depicting traditional trades, customs, and agricultural practices, the Occupation and post-war periods, social and cultural events, antiquities, Byzantine churches, neo-classical and traditional architecture and urban settlements.

The Photographic Archives Department holds 500,000 negatives and 50,000 original photographs dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. It is equipped with a storage area which has a controlled environment, a library, a reading room and a photo studio. There is also a conservation laboratory exclusively dedicated in the conservation and preservation of photographic materials.

Among its more recent activities, the Photographic Archives Department has been researching the history of photography in Greece as well as the work of early Greek photographers. It has also commissioned contemporary photographers to record subjects of Greek interest.

**Daguerreotype in Croatia**  
*Hrvoje Gržina*  
Croatian State Archives, Zagreb

Information about Daguerre's invention were first published in Croatia just three months after the public announcement of the process in Paris, on April 9, 1839. The newspapers "Danica Ilirska" in Zagreb published an article about the invention of the daguerreotype process entitled *Najznatnije otkritje našega vremena* ("The most important invention of our time"). Shortly after that article, and after training in Paris under Daguerre himself, Zagreb merchant Demeter Novaković, took several landscapes of the Croatian capital and its surroundings. Over the next fifteen years, twelve daguerreotypists (that we know of so far) passed through Croatia, making daguerreotypes in Zagreb, Rijeka, Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik. The first and most famous of them was Johann Bosch, a representative of the "Vienna school" in daguerreotype, who was active in Zagreb in 1841/1842. Two years later, in 1844, a Dubrovnik pharmacist Antun Drobac took daguerreotypes, thus being the first known Croatian photographer on the Adriatic coast. Last of the travelling daguerreotypists was seen in Zagreb in 1854, and after that year the first resident photographers took places in different Croatian cities.

Today, only around fifty daguerreotypes are known to exist in the collections held in the Croatian archives, museums, libraries and private owners, so curators and collectors regard them as especially valuable photographic objects. Most of their makers are still unknown, and some of those daguerreotypes were clearly not taken in Croatia.

This richly illustrated presentation, containing a number of images from different Croatian heritage institutions, will provide a well organized insight into the history of daguerreotype process in Croatia, and will point out several photographic collections containing these valuable objects.

**The Croatian State Archives, Zagreb**

The Croatian State Archives in Zagreb is the central archival institution in the Republic of Croatia. It performs archival services related to archived and current records created by state bodies, state and public institutions and enterprises, corporate bodies, and families and individuals whose activities covers the whole or a large part of Croatia, or are of national interest.

The CSA holds more than 23,500 linear meters of archival records, dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the present day and arranged into more than 1,850 archival fonds and collections, mostly created by central state administration bodies and educational, cultural, health-care and military institutions. The records created by Croatian emigrants and prominent individuals and families belonging to the Croatian cultural circle are particularly significant.

## Conservation and Preservation Issues in Daguerreotypes

*Luis Pavão*

Luis Pavão Limitada (LUPA), Lisbon

Beginning with a look at the daguerreotype's introduction in Portugal, we consider some early examples of this process and several Portuguese daguerreotypes held in private collections in Portugal. Then we take a tour through LUPA's daguerreotype collection, learning more about the fragility of the daguerreotypes, and the care, attention and conservation they require, as well as the main conservation problems. We explore recommendations for the preservation and storage conditions, how to watch for signs of deterioration in the daguerreotypes, along with possible causes and preservations, the process for sealing a daguerreotype, and we report on some of the treatments performed by LUPA on a number of Portuguese daguerreotypes.

## Some Thoughts on the Daguerreotype\*

*Jerry Spagnoli*

At this point it is appropriate to talk about daguerreotypes. In particular to discuss some of the qualities that make them unique among all photographic media, and then to digress into an discussion of how some of the material aspects of the medium inform the content of my work.

A daguerreotype is a photograph made on a polished silver plate. The technical details of the process are readily available, what is important here is that the image is recorded on the surface of a metallic mirror. All other photographic processes rely on a light absorbing substrate and the particles that make up the image are like a stain on that surface. They are really a highly articulated silhouettes presenting a two dimensional, graphic impression of the subject. In a daguerreotype the image particles rest on an optically pure sheet of silver and engage light as a matrix of refractive/reflective crystals. To view a daguerreotype the plate must be oriented so that the sheet of silver reflects a dark surface, thus creating the dark tones. Stray light rays that strike the sheet of silver will be reflected away from the viewers eye, preserving the integrity of the reflected dark field. Image particles on the plate will reflect light in all directions, and of particular importance, towards the eye of the viewer resulting in the true tones of the image. The daguerreotype is an optical device which shapes light and reconfigures it, delivering to the eye the information that was recorded when it was in the camera. It is at once profoundly scientific and a consummately artistic medium.

The distinction I have drawn may seem a bit vague and I would encourage those who are not familiar with daguerreotypes to get hold of one and examine it. It is obviously not possible to reproduce the effects I am discussing in a book. A printed image of a daguerreotype has none of the special optical qualities I've referred to above. A daguerreotype, when held in your hand, will present a more convincing demonstration of the effects I am describing than any number of words. Never the less I will persist.

One of the most consistent, spontaneous responses to an encounter with a daguerreotype is to remark on its immediacy. The image has a convincing solidity, a physical presence in space. Some people will call it holographic. In the nineteenth century Oliver Wendal Holmes declared that a daguerreotype was "the thing itself," referring to this convincing depiction of space and volume. I have been intrigued by this and have had many occasions to ask audiences at my presentations for input on the mechanics of this effect. Finally an optical engineer approached me after a talk and explained that the peculiar visual characteristics of a daguerreotype were the result of the combining of the image on the plate and the virtual image created by the mirrored surface. The silver crystals which record the information transmitted by the lens at the time of exposure form the image. The virtual image is a characteristic of the mirrored substrate. This mirrored surface reflects objects, and these objects appear to be behind the actual surface of the mirror (Things appear to be as far behind the surface of a mirror as the actual object is in front of it. That is the virtual image).

When you reflect a dark field onto the surface of a daguerreotype your eye picks up subtle cues and places the actual surface of the plate behind the image plane. The result is that the subject of a daguerreotype is suspended in a deep optical space, giving you the impression that you could see around the sides of it if you just moved your head to one side or the other.

This effect, of course, amounts to little more than a parlor trick unless advantage is taken of it in some deliberate way.

Now what exactly does that have to do with daguerreotypes? Not much actually, but for me, when I make a daguerreotype I feel as if I've engaged something outside of myself during the production of it. There are so many unanticipated and uncontrollable elements that come into play that when I have a successful image it feels like I found it rather than made it as an act of will. This distance provides me an avenue into another experience of the world. When I stand in front of a scene it looks a certain way, I then imagine how it will translate to a daguerreotype and make adjustments to get the best results but when I get back to the studio and process the plate I invariably have to adjust my expectations to suit.

Photography's relationship to the world is defined by the optical system of the camera and the historical valorization of sight as our most vital sense. So many of our ideas hinge on our ability to see, even commonplace expressions regularly restate it. "Seeing is believing," carries with it the weight of a secular religious sentiment. Scientific proof favors visual evidence whenever available. In this matrix of belief and evidence photography stands supreme, so much so that despite the common knowledge of photography's vulnerability to manipulation there was much hue and cry when digitized images started appearing which were revealed to be not "true,". "How can we ever believe a photograph again?" was the response of the media (who should know better) and that question has the slightly desperate tone of a loss of religious faith. All of this despite the innumerable demonstrations that there has never been one photograph that wasn't manipulated in one way or another. The simple act of selecting what will be contained by the frame of the image is a substantial manipulation of the situation that a photographer finds himself in.

The daguerreotype affords a rich potential to respond to this complex relationship between photography and the world. Without the slightest attempt to distort the presentation of what is before the camera the world is transformed. Long exposure times, the idiosyncratic nature of the chemical preparations of the plate, the constraints of working with a large camera all contribute to a distancing of the subject from the resulting image yet at the same time there is the impressive presence of the subject on the plate, which is conveyed by the optical system, and can momentarily convince you that you are engaged with "the thing itself."

All of this is not to suggest that I have a bone to pick with the power of visual information. I love looking at things. It does, however, allow me to take a position with regards to objectivity. Everyone believes that they are in a position to accurately judge most situations. This is a potentially dangerous conceit. Everyone's viewpoint is the result of everything they've ever done, every place they've ever been, everything they've ever been told, or read or heard, in short, the cumulative effect of everything they've experienced. All of that information in turn has been shaped by what they were prepared to experience by their training, character and temperament. We are constantly inundated by sensory information. We can only perceive maybe a tenth of it and of that we can only intelligently process a tenth of that. We shape the world we inhabit by the decisions that we make about what to pay attention to. Shouldn't we be dubious about the presumption of objectivity given the limitations that every individual's experiences entail? Each individual inhabits a private worlds of their own. These worlds have a considerable overlap regarding day to day facts but the spin we give those facts is at the very least personal, idiosyncratic, unconscious and occasionally pathological. It is the cumulative effect of all these worlds that make the larger World we inhabit and the struggle between individual viewpoints can have a profound effect on our day to day life. Shouldn't we all remember that everything we know

is contingent and circumstantial when judging other's actions and opinions? We agree for the most part to overlook our differences in the interest of practical social unity but to not appreciate the range of viewpoints we are surrounded by is to diminish the possibilities of human experience and to miss one of the most mysterious aspects of existence.

Now what exactly does that have to do with daguerreotypes? Not much actually, but for me, when I make a daguerreotype I feel as if I've engaged something outside of myself during the production of it. There are so many unanticipated and uncontrollable elements that come into play that when I have a successful image it feels like I found it rather than made it as an act of will. This distance provides me an avenue into another experience of the world. When I stand in front of a scene it looks a certain way, I then imagine how it will translate to a daguerreotype and make adjustments to get the best results but when I get back to the studio and process the plate I invariably have to adjust my expectations to suit the results. The medium has sovereign command over its interpretation of the world. In this way it's like having access to the perception of another individual, albeit a mechanical one. Through this I learned to be open to the possibilities which are beyond my immediate intentions. When I get a good image with daguerreotypes I am invariably impressed with how much better it is than if I had complete control over the final result. When I have an image in mind and I try to completely plan out the result the medium will invariably throw roadblocks in my way, making the accomplishment of my goal a chore and the results lifeless. I've mentioned this to people and the response tends to be incredulity. I have to control so many variables and make so many decisions to work with this medium that the claim of distance from the final result sounds like posturing but the success of a plate depends on so many innumerable small effects that any attempts to control them all would be exhausting, if not actually impossible. The pleasure of working with the daguerreotype depends on playing it like a game of chance.

As documents, daguerreotypes have a unique charge. The palpable presence of the subject combined with the intimate viewing space create a feeling of engagement with the viewer which transcends the simple viewing of an image, the experience can cross the line and the subject can take on a physical presence before the viewer. The distancing reflex we have when looking at a photograph can be overcome by the visceral integrity of the daguerreotype. This effect is even stronger as time passes. The sense of something happening in the living moment, which is the hallmark of a well made daguerreotype, is particularly powerful when a gulf of time separates the viewer from the moment the image was made. This is an observation based on my experience with nineteenth century portraits and views and I think it is fair to assume that in the future that effect will be felt when viewing daguerreotypes made today. Hence my choice of medium to execute "The Last Great Daguerreian Survey of the Twentieth Century". These images are intended to be seen by an audience in the future, people who might wonder what it was like to be living in the world at the turn of the millennium and I'm trying to create a body of work which will provide an experience for them which will be a unique document of our time. It will be a circumscribed point of view, constrained by the various practical limitations I encounter, idiosyncratic and not the least bit objective, shaped by the medium I've chosen to depict it, but vivid and immediate by the grace of that same medium, and perhaps because of all of these acknowledged limitations it will have a fair portion of truth.

\* "Afterword" of the book by Jerry Spagnoli, *The Daguerreotype*, Gottingen, Steidl, 2006

(Testo tratto da "Afterword", in Jerry Spagnoli, *The Daguerreotype*, Gottingen, Steidl, 2006)

## SPEAKERS

**Sandra Maria Petrillo** was awarded a MA in Art History from the University La Sapienza of Rome and a MA in Art Conservation, specialising in Photography, from IFROA-INP of Paris. Since 1996 she has worked as a free-lance conservator in France, for the ARCP of Paris, in Luxembourg and in the USA. In 2009 she established a private practice in Italy, SMP Photoconservation, specialised in conservation, surveys and digitizing of photographic collections. She has a number of publications to her name including: "Papier albuminé mat" in the *Vocabulaire technique de la photographie* (Paris, 2008) and the essay "Conservazione e restauro dei materiali fotografici" for the *Enciclopedia Italiana del XXI secolo* (Rome, 2010). For the journal for conservation *KERMES La rivista del restauro*, she curates the column "Materia Photographica" which presents information on present current scientific topics in the field of photographic conservation and preservation. SMP is the Italian partner for the European funded project, DAGUERREOBASE.

**Sabine Cauberghs** studied Communication Sciences at the University of Brussels. Afterwards she complemented these studies with a Post-graduate "Business Economics" and a "Master in Business Administration" at the University of Antwerp. From 1992 till 2002 she worked in the Belgian media sector (advertising, magazine publishing, and press agency). Between 2002 and 2006 she studied Conservation & Restoration (audiovisual media) at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Antwerp. She was guest lecturer at the very same Academy for two years, and worked on a photographic conservation project at the Silver Museum Sterckshof. Since November 2012 she has worked for the Photo Museum of Antwerp exclusively on the DAGUERREOBASE project.

**Tamara Berghmans** is art historian and has a Master in Photographic Studies from the University of Leiden. In 2008 she received her PhD on the mission and organization of the Belgian modernist art photography between 1950 and 1965. She is Curator of the Photographic Collection FotoMuseum Provincie, Antwerp and recently she was responsible for the conception, coordination and editing of the publication *The Eye of the Photographer – Highlights from the FoMu Collection*. She published *The Making of a Photobook, Sanne Sannes' Maquette for 'Dagboek van een erotomaan'* ("Rijksmuseum Studies in Photography", Amsterdam 2009) and articles about Ed van der Elsken, Picturalisem en subjektieve Fotografie in *Frame. Jahrbuch der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Photographie* (2009), in *The Weight of Photography* (2009), in *Jubilee - 30 years ESHPh. Congress of Photography in Vienna* (2008), *Henri Storck Memoreren* (2007) and in the *FotoMuseum Magazine*.

**Maria Francesca Bonetti** is art historian at the Ministry of Culture in Italy and since 1999 has been Curator of the Department of Photography at the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica in Rome. She has been working in this field since 1983, concentrating on problems concerning the protection and development of Italy's photographic heritage. She has contributed to the definition and diffusion of rules and methodologies for the management and cataloguing of photographs. She has curated contemporary and historical photography exhibitions and has edited numerous catalogues, such as: *L'Italia d'argento. 1839/1859 Storia del dagherrotipo in Italia* (Rome-Florence, 2003); *Roma 1840-1870. La fotografia, il collezionista e lo storico* (Rome-Modena, 2008); *Éloge du négatif. Les débuts de la photographie sur papier en Italie 1846-1862* (Paris-Florence, 2010); *Arte in Italia dopo la fotografia. 1850-2000* (Rome, 2011-2012).

**Giovanni Fiorentino** is Professor of Theory and Techniques of the Media at the University of Tuscia, Viterbo (Italy), where he teaches on the undergraduate course in Communication Sciences. He writes for the national newspapers "Il Messaggero" and "Il Mattino" and he studies the aspects of aesthetics and consumerism in photography in the context of the history and culture of the media. His essay "*L'Ottocento fatto immagine. Dalla fotografia al cinema*" (Sellerio, 2010), won the Domenico Rea award. His books include *L'occhio che uccide* (Meltemi, 2004) and *Il valore del silenzio* (Meltemi, 2003). He was curator of the photographic exhibition *'O vero! Napoli nel mirino* (2010-11) at the MADRE Museum of Naples.



**Dessy Griva** studied photography at the Technological Educational Institute of Athens (1996-2000). In 2001 she obtained her PgDip in Conservation and in 2002 her Masters degree in Conservation from the Camberwell College of Arts part of the London Institute. Since 2002, she has been working as a photograph conservator at the Photographic Archive of the Benaki Museum and in 2012 she took charge of the Photograph Conservation Laboratory. During this period she has been actively involved in conducting conservation treatments and in the preservation of the archive's collection as well as teaching and mentoring interns. At the same time she has participated in the setup of numerous photographic exhibitions and the organization of international seminars and conferences. In the field of research she has written articles relating to the identification of photographs and the methodology of surveying small archives. She has also participated in conferences in Greece and abroad.

**Hrvoje Gržina** is a Senior Archivist in the Department for Photograph Collections at the Croatian State Archives, in Zagreb. His responsibilities include the care and preservation of significant photograph collections held at the archives. He also researches Croatian photographic history, focusing in particular on 19<sup>th</sup> century photographers, and collects historical photographic processes.

**Luis Pavão Limitada (LUPA)**, Lisbon, is a Portuguese company devoted to the conservation of photographic collections. Its head quarters are in Lisbon, Portugal, and it works on both public and private collections of Portuguese photography. It was founded in April 1982 and over the past 30 years has grown. The company employs on average 11 people, the majority of whom have graduated from courses in the fields of conservation, digital image, digitization photographs and documents. Its main clients in Portugal are Gulbenkian Foundation, IHRU, Estradas de Portugal, Instituto da Vinha e do Vinho, Câmara Municipal da Golegã and several other Municipalities, local museums and libraries.

**Jerry Spagnoli** is a photographer since the mid-1970s, is best known for his work with the daguerreotype process. Initiating his exploration in San Francisco in 1994, Spagnoli experimented with nineteenth-century materials and studied the effects achieved by early practitioners to understand the technical aspects of the process, as well as its expressive and visual potential as a medium. He began work on an ongoing series, "*The Last Great Daguerreian Survey of the 20th Century*", in 1995, continuing the series upon returning to the east coast in 1998. The project features views of the metropolis as well as images of historically significant events including the destruction of the World Trade Center on 9/11, the vigil following the disappearance of John F. Kennedy, Jr., and Times Square at midnight on the eve of the new millennium. Considered the leading expert in the revitalization of the daguerreotype process (see, for example, Lyle Rexer, *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-Garde*, Abrams, 2002), Spagnoli is also noted for his collaboration with artist Chuck Close on daguerreotype portraits and nudes (*Chuck Close: Daguerreotypes*, 2002; *A Couple of Ways of Doing Something*, Aperture, New York, 2006).

Among his books: *Daguerreotypes* (Steidl, 2006) and *American Dreaming* (Steidl, 2010).

His works are in many American collections (such as MOMA and The Whitney Museum, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago; The National Portrait Gallery, Washington; The Cleveland Museum, Cleveland; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The High Museum, Atlanta, etc.) and in the Musée Carnavalet (Paris).

## Quando la fotografia era una lastra d'argento

Una giornata dedicata al progetto europeo  
**DAGUERREOBASE**

**Roma, Istituto nazionale per la grafica**

Palazzo Poli, Sala Dante, Via Poli 54

martedì 22 ottobre 2013

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**Maria Antonella Fusco**

*Collezioni fotografiche*

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