When they look at a photograph, most people look at the image to remember an event. In the case of researchers consulting photo archives, they are seeking information from the details of the pictures.

Since the beginning of photography in the early nineteenth century, over one hundred processes have been used to capture visual information and to distill it into portable images. The photochemical process of photography has required a capture device, chemicals, and a surface on which to display the image. Billions of images have recorded places and events, family and friends—what we want to remember.

But when we look at a photograph, what does it tell us about when it was made, or how it was created?

The Frick Art Reference Library’s Photoarchive has more than one million images of works of art, many taken on photography expeditions during the early twentieth century. In addition, The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives contain photographs dating from the latter part of the nineteenth century that document the history of photography and the various processes used to create the images. The Frick family displayed a keen interest in this new technology. In the late 1870s, using the same cyanotype technique as is used in the production of blueprints, Childs Frick documented friends, interiors and exteriors of houses, and landscapes in Pittsburgh. In 1900, Helen Clay Frick illustrated a catalog of her father’s collection of paintings using platinum prints. When she founded the Frick Art Reference Library in 1920, she began collecting photographs of paintings by professional photographers and mechanical reproductions found in printed publications such as auction catalogs.

From film-based photographs to today’s digital images, at least twelve different photographic processes have been documented in the Library’s collection. The intention of this exhibition is to help clarify what we often overlook in photographs—what they are made of and how they are different.

**FIRST FLOOR CASE**

**PHOTOGRAPHERS’ TOOLS**

Century Grande Camera (patented July 16, 1902) and tripod

Eastman Kodak heavy weight 8 x 10 printing frame with negative

Time-O-Lite Professional electric dark room interval timer and manual, 1930s

Century Grande Camera (patented July 16, 1902) and tripod

**PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO & DIGITAL LAB**

Photograph Studio, c. 1920

Ira W. Martin

Thornem Retas & Ira W. Martin, c. 1930

Ira W. Martin

**PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPEDITIONS**

First FARL Photographic Campaign, Richmond and Mt. Airy, Virginia, 1921

Helen Clay Frick (†)

**HELEN CLAY & CHILDS FRICK**

Catalog of Portraits (in the Collection of Henry Clay Frick), 1904

Helen Clay Frick

**FIRST FLOOR WALL**

1. **SILVER PRINT**

Helen Clay Frick comparing cameras with an unidentified boy during her WVF Red Cross service, 1918 (inner illustration)

Unknown photographer

2. **SALTED PAPER PRINT**

Henry Clay Frick, age 12, c. 1860–1864

A.N. Stuﬄer, Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania, photographer

3. **ALBUMEN PRINT**

Portrait of an unknown officer, c. 1870

Unknown photographer

4. **GELATIN PRINTING-OUT PAPER**

Portrait of Rankoe Childs, nephew of Adelaide H.C. Frick, c. 1892

B.L.H. Dabbs, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, photographer

5. **TINTYPE**

Portrait of Martha H. Childs, sister of Adelaide H.C. Frick, with friend or relative, c. 1870

Unknown photographer

6. **CYANOTYPE**

Five unidentified people, taken at the Coleman House, Edgewood, Pennsylvania, c. 1870

Childs Frick, photographer

7. **CARBON PRINT**

Portrait of Samuel Bayard Malcolm Sands by anonymous American artist

Ira W. Martin, photographer

8. **PLATINUM PRINT**

William Buckland by Charles William Peal

Ira W. Martin, photographer

9. **MATT COLLODION PRINTING-OUT PAPER**

Construction view of the Frick Building in downtown Pittsburgh, August 19, 1901

R.W. Johnston & Co., photographer

10. **PHOTO-QUALITY INK-JET PRINT**

Mistress and Maid by Johannes Vermeer

Michael Bodcomb, photographer

11. **PHOTOMECHANICAL REPRODUCTION**

Portret de Mlle. Marguerite de Canfons by Edouard Manet

Poucquet

12. **CHROMOGRAHAM PRINT**

Symington Family, left to right: Leslie Barkei, J. Fie Symington, III, and Arabella Dass, c. 1970

Unknown photographer

**EXHIBITION 2008**

FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY
10 East 71 Street
New York, NY 10021

**EVENY PICTURE TELLS A STORY**

New York, NY 10021
10 East 71 Street
2008
Helen Clay Frick (?)
Richmond and Mt. Airy, Virginia,
First FARL Photographic Campaign,
PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPEDITIONS
Spoiled negatives: broken glass plate, mirroring nitrate, and channeling acetate
Hammer Dry Plate Company, photographic dry plates box, 19th century
Eastman Kodak heavy weight 8 x 10 printing frame with negative
Time-O-Lite Professional electric dark room interval timer and manual, 1930s
Century Grande Camera (patented July 16, 1902) and tripod
PHOTOGRAPHERS’ TOOLS
FIRST FLOOR CASE
EXHIBITION

1. **SALTED PAPER PRINT**

Maria Friek Overbeek, c. 1880
Unknown photographer

2. **ALBUMEN PRINT**

Adelaide H.C. Frick, c. 1870
B.L.H. Dabbs, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, photographer

3. **TINTYPE**

Henry Clay Frick and Adelaide H.C. Frick, c. 1880
W.L. Towne, photographer

4. **CARBON PRINT**

Mrs. John Navarre Macombe
Thomas Biggs de Valdeman Photograph, Ira W. Martin

5. **CYANOTYPE**

Coleman House, Edgewood, Pennsylvania (1845)

6. **PLATINUM PRINT**

William Samuel Johnson by John Wesley Jarvis
Ira W. Martin, photographer

7. **GELATIN PRINTING-OUT PAPER**

Henry and Carl Borntraeger, c. 1880–90
William Lubos, Stendal, Germany, photographer

Helen Clay Frick and Childs Frick, c. 1898
Photographie Florian, Cannes/Aix-les-Bains

8. **SILVER PRINT**

Portrait of Raphael
by anonymous Umbrian School artist
National Gallery of London photographer

9. **PHOTOMECHANICAL REPRODUCTION**

Vents de courtois de l’Herm
by Jacques-Louis David
Christie’s auction catalog, May 24, 1816

10. **MATT COLLODION PRINTING-OUT PAPER**

Construction view of the Frick Building in downtown Pittsburgh, December 3, 1901
R.W. Johnston & Co., photographer

11. **CHROMOGRAHAM PRINT**

Peter P. Blanchard, III, flying a kite at Weirmeiderland Farm, c. 1895
Helen Clay Frick (?), photographer

12. **PHOTO-QUALITY INK-JET PRINT**

Satisfol Cathedral from the Bishop’s Garden by John Constable
Michael Bodcomb, photographer

Exhibition curated and designed by
Donald David, Luciano Johnson,
George Koelle, and Don Swanson.
Installed by the Conservation Department
[DS 11/28/2007]
CARBON PRINT 1860–1940
Carbon prints are made of carbon and pigment in a gelatin binder. They have a subtle relief quality because the binder is glossier in the highlights than the shadows. Carbon prints have excellent image stability and do not fade.

ALBUMEN PRINT 1850–1920
Albumen, the white of an egg, is the binder for the silver image coated on a thin paper. Prints have a shiny surface, warm hue, and frequently display yellowing of the albumen. These prints are generally adhered to heavy board. Common examples are the carte de visite and the larger cabinet card.

TINTYPE 1856–1920
Tintypes are silver images suspended in a collodion binder on thin, black enameled iron sheets. These images are characterized by dull grey shadows and creamy white highlights.

CARBON PRINT 1860–1940
Carbon prints have excellent image stability and do not fade. They also have a subtle relief quality because the binder is glossier in the highlights than the shadows.

CYANOTYPE 1880–1920
Cyanotypes have a blue image that is made from light-sensitive iron salts printed on matte paper supports. This process was also used for creating blueprints of technical and architectural drawings.

PLATINUM PRINT 1880–1930
Platinum prints combine iron salts and platinum to form an image on an uncoated paper. Also known as platinotypes, these prints have a matte surface with neutral tones and silvery grays. Platinum prints often outlast their paper supports and may transfer onto adjacent pages in storage.

GELATIN PRINTING-OUT PAPER 1885–1920
Prints made on gelatin printing-out paper are composed of silver images on a glossy gelatin binder. A baryta layer covers the paper support fibers, allowing highlights to appear lighter and shadows to appear darker. Images have a warm or purple-brown hue. This printing format was commonly used for studio portrait cabinet cards.

SILVER PRINT 1885–PRESENT
Silver prints, also known as gelatin developing-out-paper, are made of paper coated with a gelatin emulsion of light-sensitive silver halide. The surface of these images can be glossy or matte. Early nineteenth-century silver prints have a near-neutral image color, while those produced during the twentieth century have a wide range of image colors. These are the standard black and white prints still in use today.

PHOTOMECHANICAL PRINT 1885–PRESENT
Photomechanical prints are created on a printing press using ink through many different processes, but are not genuine photographic prints. The most important are letterpress halftone, photogravure, and collotype. These prints can have any image color, and are characterized by the presence of grain or dot patterns. Photomechanical prints may be matte or glossy and may have poor reproduction quality.

MATTE COLLODION PRINTING-OUT PAPER 1894–1920
Marte collodion printing-out papers consist of a silver image in a collodion binder on a paper support. These prints have a semi-matte surface with a neutral or green-black image color resulting from gold and platinum toning. Characteristic forms of deterioration are surface abrasion and image transfer.

CHROMOGENIC COLOR PRINT 1942–PRESENT
Chromogenic color prints consist of dye and silver halide within three gelatin layers. Each layer is sensitive to one of light’s primary colors: red, green, or blue. Supports may be fiber-based or resin-coated paper. These prints have rich color and a glossy surface, and are the most common type of color photograph.

PHOTO-QUALITY INKJET PRINT 1990–PRESENT
Photo-quality inkjet prints are made by spraying four color inks (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) onto almost any support in very fine water-based droplets invisible to the naked eye. These prints have a variety of color depth and image texture determined by the support and the hardware used.