Article: New Originals: Reprints in Fine Art Photography
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New Originals: Reprints in Fine Art Photography

Hanako Murata, J. Luca Ackerman, Tatiana Cole, and Peter Mustardo

Presented at the PMG session of the 2017 AIC Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

The “originality” of photographs as an object has been an issue in the field of fine art due to the inherent nature of the negative/positive process. Multiple original objects can exist simultaneously. However, in recent years, reprints have emerged much more frequently, in various forms, and with various conceptual, material, and economic implications. This paper will discuss some of the many issues and questions surrounding reprints in photography from a conservator’s perspective, as of 2017. Further discussion will center around the results of a survey on the topic of reprints; the reasons why reprints are made, who authorizes reprints, the need for identification and labeling, the value of reprints versus original prints, the possible impact of newly created reprints on understanding authenticity in artists’ work, and finally what constitutes an original print in photography.

Introduction

To professionals in the field of photography, the fact that there exist multiple prints of the same image is not new. However, in recent years, reprints have emerged much more frequently under various terms and with different functions. In addition to traditional final works, other categories of prints will be introduced and discussed in this paper such as: limited edition works, reserve prints, exhibition prints, posthumous prints, reprints for replacement of a damaged original print, and working proof prints. Some reprints are not printed on the same photographic material nor even with the same process as the original, while others are created for a limited time and are intended to be destroyed. The practice of creating reprints seems to be gathering momentum and is likely to continue into the future. We will certainly come across more of these reprints in the future as “new originals”, or just as “originals”. This complicates the status of the original, and challenges conservators, curators, historians, galleries, collectors, artist estates, and contemporary artists to define what is original in photography. As this practice is not codified, it creates both confusion and opportunity. It is worthwhile to understand past and current trends, to discuss the impact of newly created reprints, and to debate and determine what is an original print in the field of photography today. An online survey was carried out in order to gather and subsequently share current thoughts among professionals on multiples and reprints in the varied world of photography. The survey targeted those who create, present, sell, collect, exhibit, research, and conserve photographic works.

A Case Study to Contemplate: A Play of Selves, (1975) by Cindy Sherman

In March 2017, The Better Image®, a private practice dedicated to the conservation of photographs, completed a long-term project on an early work by Cindy Sherman entitled A Play of Selves, (1975). This unique work is composed of two hundred and forty-four figures that are gelatin silver developed-out prints (DOP) each cut out by the artist herself. The work is collaged onto seventy-two individual boards. In 2014, after having examined the work for condition issues,
seventy-one elements with chemical staining were identified. A collaborative decision was made to replace the degraded elements with newly printed and cut-out figures. Throughout this project, decisions were made with the involvement of: the artist and her studio - Cindy Sherman and Margaret Lee, the artist’s representing gallery - Metro Pictures, conservators at The Better Image®, and the artist’s printer - Griffin Editions who reprinted and cut out the new elements. The completed project was examined, approved, and re-signed by the artist Cindy Sherman. Over the course of this project, we were deeply involved with the question of “WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ORIGINAL?”

**Reprints and Multiples in Photography**

Since its inception, creating multiple prints of the same image with the negative/positive process has been a defining characteristic of photography. Due to the ability to create multiples from one source negative, the status of a photograph as an original object has been historically ill-defined within the fine art world. Photography does have unique objects and takes on unique forms, as with daguerreotypes, photogenic drawings, dye diffusion transfer prints, and collaged prints. However, in the field of photography, such “unique” objects are given special recognition and are sometimes attributed higher value relative to photographs with multiples.

It is also worth mentioning that recent projects, such as “Object:Photo” at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, “From Darkroom to Daylight” by Harvey Wang, “Analog Culture” at The Harvard Art Museums have fostered a renewed recognition of the materiality and individuality of multiple prints, especially gelatin silver prints. Every print is different, even when printed from the same negative, and is a unique object in its own right. They are created by the human hand through darkroom work. Different exposures, developing times, image sizes, cropping, final print size, and sometimes different photographic papers are all used. This means differences in silver and highlight tonalities, surface sheen, texture, size and thickness. In addition, each print may have a different print date, printer, ultimate purpose of its printing, provenance and history.

**Printed by Who?**

When discussing reprints and multiples, who printed the image is an important aspect to consider. There are multiple prints of the same image that are printed not only by the photographer, but also by other people (fig. 1). A print may be made by a professional printer or printing studio that is assigned by the artist during his/her lifetime, by the artist’s estate for posthumous prints, or by an exhibition organizer. For example, there are past cases where negatives have been sent to a gallery or museum’s printer for making prints only to be used for an exhibition. Another example is publishers printing images in-house from original negatives.

![Diagram of various printers](Image)

**FIG. 1.** Diagram of various printers.
for various reasons. And finally, some prints are created by people who are unauthorized to do so.

Survey

The forty-question online survey took place during March and early April of 2017, and was sent by email to a total of 213 people in twelve different professions in the U.S. and Canada; artists, artist’s estates, galleries that represent artists, photography curators and conservators (in institutions that are known to hold large collections of modern and contemporary photographs), photograph conservators in private practice, independent scholars, photograph dealers that are members of The Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD), auction houses, art advisers, certified appraisers specializing in photographic materials, and insurance companies.

Although sixty-six people responded from eleven different professions, including collection managers and registrars, some responses were largely incomplete. Therefore, the final data from this study reflects the results of forty-six participants that completed all or most of the survey (fig. 2). There is only a very small number of responses from some professions. Furthermore, there were no responses from any artist’s estates, art advisers, or insurance companies. As such, it must be noted that the survey results do not represent each profession equally and it is not possible to claim that they reflect each profession’s viewpoint as a whole. Nevertheless, even the small number of responses was indicative that this topic is worth openly discussing.

For this survey, the terms were defined in as general a way as possible in order to accommodate the wide spectrum of professions targeted. As a result, many participants felt it was hard to answer some questions and needed more specific explanations and definitions. Given limited space, only selected survey results will be discussed in this paper. However, the complete results can be made available upon request from the authors.

Types of Multiple Prints

What are the types of multiple prints in photography?

Final works that are non-editioned may have been created over long periods of time throughout an artist’s life. These multiples were printed for sale to collectors, art galleries, and museums, and/or for exhibiting, gifting, or exchanging by the artist. In the last half of the twentieth century, limited edition works have become especially common. There are editions with various sizes,
formats, and processes created by an artist in his/her lifetime and/or posthumously by the artist’s estate.

As photography has been established as an art in its own right within museums, galleries, and in the fine art market, various new practices and terms defining *multiple* prints have been created. Widely adapted terms for newer multiples include; *reserve prints, exhibition prints, posthumous prints* (editioned and not), and *reprints* that are created for the replacement of original prints. *Working prints* or *proof prints* are intended to exist for different uses and not as the final artwork. It is important to note that *working prints* have also been found in the art market, and collected by museums and collectors as original working prints. Unfortunately, unauthorized prints also arise as fine art photographs, and are sold on the market for increasing amounts of money.

During the survey, it became readily apparent that there is little consistency when defining terms related to *reprints* and *multiples*. Differences also depended on a participant’s profession, background, place of employment, country, and the time period being considered. Even among photograph conservators the understanding of these terms varied widely (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editioned Print/Copy</th>
<th>Series of prints from a single negative. A numbering in the series or lettering system to indicate X out of a certain number created or will be created (ex. ed.3/25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Edition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Edition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Limited Edition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Print/Copy</td>
<td>Prints acquired and kept by an institution to replace the original after deterioration by continuous display and no longer presentable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Print</td>
<td>Prints that were created for exhibition use only and not for sale purposes. Also a print that is designated as the master print or final print by the artist. Sometimes master prints can be prints that guide a printer or the artist in the making of additional prints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate Print</td>
<td>Prints made from an original negative by a professional printer or printing studio authorized by the artist before their death or by the artist’s estate posthumously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Approved Print</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprint Copy</td>
<td>Prints created to replace a physically damaged or chemically deteriorated original print. Also an artist made print, from a negative or file, after the first print was made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrogate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facsimile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof Prints / Working Prints</td>
<td>Prints made during production for quality control, personal use or other reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist’s Proof (AP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer Proof (PP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hors de Commerce</em> (HC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bon À Tirer</em> (BAT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial Print (TP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Various types of multiples and reprints. *Working definitions*

**Editioned Prints**

The practice of making limited editions is not new, as the photography world followed the practice of the printing world from its inception. One of the survey questions asked to list the earliest artist(s) to create editioned works. Various artists were listed by survey participants, including William H. F. Talbot, Maxime Du Camp, Mathew B. Brady, Alexander Gardner, Timothy H. O'Sullivan, Eadweard Muybridge, Alfred Stieglitz (Camera Work), Edward S. Curtis, Paul Strand,
Edward Weston, Ansel E. Adams, Joel Meyerowitz, Lee Friedlander, Cindy Sherman, Ray K. Metzker, and Sally Mann. For these artists, many participants listed known earliest editioned photographs by Talbot from 1844, followed by works from the 1930s, and prints by Edward Weston. Various contemporaries of the 1970s and 80s were then listed. However, from the second half of the twentieth century the practice of editioning prints has been increased dramatically as market values and demand has risen. In this paper, limited editioned works by contemporary artists will be the focus.

The survey results show that subsequent editions that were created after the initial editions were mostly made in larger print dimensions. No example was reported of subsequent editions made in smaller print sizes. The survey also showed that subsequent limited editions in different print sizes started to arise in the mid-1970s among contemporary artists. Today, some artists are creating editioned works with varying dimensions at the same time. In some cases, collectors can choose not only an image but also the size of the print that they desire.

There are also limited editions with different print dimensions that are also made using varying printing processes. The majority of artists listed in the survey used digital printing technologies for their subsequent editions. In many cases of earlier editioned chromogenic prints, the new edition was made using inkjet print technology. This trend seems to have started around 2000 and will likely continue into the future, as it is driven by the demise of the analogue photography industry, and the tapering availability of these materials.

The artist mentioned most in the survey for creating editions with varying processes and sizes was the photographer William Eggleston, with particular focus on his limited editioned works from 1970s to 1980s that were originally created using the dye-transfer process. These were later reprinted in the 2010s using digital printing technology, and this led to a 2012 complaint filed in federal court against the artist by a collector who argued that the new edition of larger dimension inkjet prints diluted the value of dye-transfer prints from the first limited edition. The images are of some of his best-known works and they sold for record prices at Christie's Auction House in New York (Lot. 24 of Sale 2642 on 12 March 2012). The U.S. District Judge Deborah A. Batts dismissed the collector's complaint saying: “Although both the Limited Edition works and the Subsequent Edition works were produced from the same images, they are markedly different.” This case Sobel v. Eggleston (12 Civ. 2551), officially set legal precedent for artists to create new limited editions from previously editioned images not only in different sizes, but using different processes as well.

Other aspects of editions were brought up during the survey that are worth mentioning. In the era of digital technology, editions are often not printed or completed in full during one printing session, or ever, for reasons of cost and storage. Because “printing on demand” is now possible, some prints within the same edition might not be printed using the same materials, equipment, or even process. Sometimes, previously used materials or techniques become obsolete over the period of time when the limited edition is being made. In some cases, collectors actually request a preferred number within the edition if it is available. As a result, existing edition numbers do not necessarily reflect the number of prints actually created, making edition numbers irrelevant in some instances. In other words, if a print is marked as the 4th out of an edition of 5, it does not necessarily mean that there are four prints made in that edition. It can be said that collectors will...
not know without further investigation how many prints of the same image have been created when making a purchase. Similarly, collectors have no way of knowing how many more prints with the same image will be created in the future despite there being a limited edition. Art historians and conservators also face the same challenge when researching an artist’s work.

With all of the complications of editioning in photography, the question was asked: “Should photographs created today be editioned?” Only one participant chose “No” and a total of 66% participants chose “Yes” or “Sometimes”. The practice of editioning is certainly accepted in the contemporary photography world and will most likely continue (fig. 3).

FIG. 3. Survey results for the question, “Should photographs created today be editioned and why?”

Some comments gathered from survey participants are listed below:
- “It is my understanding that editions are an invention of art dealers who wish to control the value of prints.” (Artist)
- “Editions are a completely market driven structure. If a photographer chooses to create editions it is an economic construct for their work and they have chosen this as a means to create scarcity of an inherently reproducible medium.” (Curator)
- “Editioning can create a somewhat misleading sense of value.” (Gallery that represents artists)
- “Photography is, by its very creation, a multiple medium. Therefore it is perfectly valid to make future prints from the original negative matrix. That said, once again all documentation must be thorough, accurate, complete and available to the public.” (Curator)

Also it is important to note that many respondents noted that editioning is an artist’s choice:
- “It should be up to the artist.” (various professions)
- “It depends on the goals of the photographer.” (Curator)
- “I say everything goes. If any artist wishes to make only a unique print and find a suitable value for it, they are entitled to going that way. Or, if they wish to make an un-editioned suite
of 100, 1000, etc. and find the right value point, they can. …. An artist should decide what they would like to have a print/image/photograph earn for them, based on the value they intuitively sense it has, that way the market is less predictable, and individual artists and works perform a riskier art act, becoming more or less valuable in the open market.” (Artist)

Reserve Prints

The term reserve print in this paper refers to a reprint that is kept aside until it is needed and used to replace the original print because of damage or deterioration. In general, museums started acquiring a set of reserve prints when contemporary chromogenic photographs were entering collections in the early 1980s. The main reason for this was to compensate pre-emptively for the aging of chromogenic dyes in the future. Having a reserve print can ensure a work’s long-term preservation; extending its life within a collection and ensuring the possibility of future exhibition of the reserve print.

Survey participants’ general impression was that this practice began in the 1990s or 2000. Survey results showed The Museum of Modern Art in New York was the earliest institution to acquire reserve prints in 1981. Next was the National Gallery of Canada in 1983, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and The George Eastman Museum in Rochester, NY, which reported a start date around the 1990s. The other institutions that participated in this survey have followed this practice since 2000. The act of acquiring reserve prints was reported by seven institutions. On the other hands, five institutions reported no reserve prints in their collection or do not collect reserve prints.

Some selected comments on this topic are listed below:
- “Whenever possible, we acquire reserve prints for fugitive color work (most often with purchases, not gifts).” (Curator)
- “This seems to be an important practice for those institutions that can provide proper storage conditions for the reserve prints.” (Curator)
- “For an institution without cold storage, I wonder if it makes a huge difference to keep two separate prints in storage under roughly the same circumstances.” (Curator)
- “My impression is that reserve prints are used mostly in the case of a traditional chromogenic print, which has a tendency to shift over time. As other [digital] processes replace this, I assume the practice of acquiring reserve prints might die out?” (Curator)
- “A desirable practice but difficult to administer and ultimately limited - What do you do when the reserve print deteriorates?” (Conservator in institution)
- “I assume the value would increase as the sister deteriorates.” (Appraiser)

Exhibition Prints

The term exhibition print in this paper refers to a print that is created for exhibition use only, and not for sale purposes although traditionally the phrase “exhibition quality print” refers to a print of utmost quality. The exhibition print is initially created to preserve the original collection print and to allow display under less strict exhibition conditions, such as longer exhibition times, higher light levels, or less than ideal environmental conditions. Making an exhibition print also allows the display of an image, which is chemically sensitive or physically vulnerable. In many cases, such exhibition prints are destroyed at the end of the exhibition period. Sometimes, modern
facsimiles have been used as *exhibition prints*; they can be described as surrogates for very sensitive historical processes. Also, exhibition prints allow for the display of an object with minimum protection (usually at the artist’s request), such as unframed prints affixed to a wall with push-pins or similar hardware, or of images printed for wall coverings etc.

In other cases, exhibition prints are created when and where there exists no original print but only an original negative, transparency, or digital file. In this case, most institutions generally state that these prints are made for the exhibition or clearly note the later printing date on its exhibition label.

Notably, only twelve respondents said they destroyed exhibition prints after an exhibition, when asked, “What happens to the exhibition print after the exhibition?” Exhibition prints are apparently often kept for future display, thus replacing the function of the original print, or are acquired as a new collection object (fig. 4).

![Graph showing responses to the question: “What happens to the exhibition print after the exhibition?”](image)

**Fig. 4.** Results to survey question, “What happens to the exhibition print after the exhibition?”

Related comments from survey participants are listed below:
- “When ‘exhibition prints’ are borrowed from artist, the definition of that entity is carefully worked out with our legal counsel and incorporated into the loan contract.” (Conservator in institution)
- “People have difficulty bringing themselves to destroy deteriorated exhibition prints after the exhibition, even if that's what they planned to do.” (Conservator in institution)
- “No matter original intent, exhibition prints are often sold.” (Appraiser)
- “Collectors tend to want ‘Exhibition’ prints as they consider those to be of the highest quality and also have a pedigree. …” (Appraiser)

It seems that the function and definition of an *exhibition print* has become broader and more
ambiguous. As such, it seems especially important to fully label and indicate when an *exhibition print* was created, because the future of an *exhibition print* might not be as originally planned.

**Posthumous Prints**

The term *posthumous print* in this paper refers to a print made from an original negative by a professional printer or printing studio authorized by the artist before their death or by the artist’s estate. Estates are challenged to keep an artist’s legacy alive and relevant into the future. Posthumous prints often have been created to generate income for the artist’s estate. Posthumous prints and editions that were the most prominent among survey participants include works by Diane Arbus, August Sander, and Edward Weston.

As another example, Muna Tseng, sister of Tseng Kwong Chi who died in 1990, administers Chi’s estate. She spoke about the practice of posthumous printing during an interview related to the conference “Keeping The Legacy Alive: A Conference on Artist Estates” that was hosted by The Institute for Artists’ Estates in Berlin in September 2016. Tseng emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards to build trust and a reputation with galleries, the art market, and collectors. She also stated that she personally approves, signs, and provides an estate stamp for every new print they create.

For labeling posthumous prints, survey participants expressed the need for an authorized estate signature, or stamp, along with a known printing date (fig. 5).

![Survey Results](image)

**Fig. 5.** A result of the survey question, “How should posthumous prints be labeled on the print?”

**Comments on labeling posthumous prints included:**

- “Probably should be noted in some consistent manner however, I am not aware of any market standard.” (Gallery that represents artists)
- “Clarity, honesty, transparency...please!” (Appraiser)
- “Certification statement from the estate that this is a valid reissue.” (Curator)

Reprints

The term reprint in this survey refers to a print created to replace a physically damaged or chemically degraded original print.

In the case of a work by Solomon "Sol" LeWitt titled *Incomplete Open Cube (7-12)*, (1974), the photograph component had severe silver image deterioration. In discussion with the artist’s estate, a reprint was authorized to replace the original print. In figure 6, the image on the left shows the original print with chemical deterioration, the center image shows an authorized reprint, and the images on the right show the reprint mounted back onto the original secondary support with its accompanying drawing to its right.

To understand how common or uncommon the practice of reprinting is, we asked about artists that are known to reprint. From survey participants and the database records of The Better Image®, fifty-four contemporary artists and six artist’s estates were identified as making reprints or having reprinted for certain cases.

Each individual case for reprinting is different, and decisions to reprint are made on a case-by-case basis. However, through the survey it became more clear that the practice of reprinting photographs is now relatively common. In the survey respondents were asked whether reprints signed by the artist have the same monetary value as original prints. Approximately 40% of participants said that the reprint will not have the same monetary value as the original print, even with the artist’s signature (fig. 7). This indicates that although reprints might have their own monetary value, they are not fully accepted as a true replacement. On the other hand, close to 21% of participants chose “yes” indicating that reprints signed by the artist do have the same monetary value as the original print. It is interesting that there are different opinions on this subject among not only, different professions, but also within the same profession (see the bar chart of fig. 7).
“Do you think signed reprints have the same monetary value as the original print?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Yes: 8 responses (21%)</th>
<th>No: 15 responses (39.5%)</th>
<th>N/A (15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Conservator in Institution
Curator
Artist
Appraiser
Gallery that represents artists
Auction House
Conservator in Private Practice
Other: Collection Manager, Team of Conservator, Curator and Registrar
Photograph Dealer
Independent Scholar

**Fig. 7.** A result of the survey question, “Do you think signed reprints have the same monetary value as the original print?”

Comments on reprints included:
- “The original is the first, authentic print.” (Artist)
- “Because it replaces the original print, so in terms of its insurance value, it should be equal. (note well) the market might not always agree with this assessment.” (Gallery that represents artists)
- “If a print is in a museum, it's monetary value is more-or-less irrelevant.” (Curator)

Some could argue that a reprint made using a different process from the original, would not be the same and conceptually, should not be considered a replacement equal to the original. Survey results revealed something different about this statement. 47% of respondents have come across reprints made with different processes (see fig. 8). This shows that in reality, reprints may be different from the original not only in size, but also in process.

To find out how accepted this practice is among professionals, the survey asked “If the process of the reprint is different from that of the original, does this affect the monetary value? Many chose, “Sometimes” (meaning on a case-by-case basis) or “N/A” (fig. 9). Only one respondent chose “No”.

**Fig. 8.** Survey answers to the question, “Have you ever come across a reprint that differs in size or process from the original?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Same print size, different image size 5%</th>
<th>Different process 17%</th>
<th>Both different process and different size 30%</th>
<th>N/A 33%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume Seventeen (2017)

217
Among the comments were:
- “It’s not only the monetary value that matters, but also the fidelity to the artist's original intent and the clarity of the information provided.” (Curator)
- “I think, the reprint should be done in the same process, but photographic processes change so quickly and become obsolete.” (Conservator in private practice)

As with exhibition prints, it was assumed that the damaged original would be destroyed when a reprint was made. In response to the question “In your experience, is it common practice to destroy a damaged original print when it is replaced by a reprint?,” professionals in institutions reported that they destroy damaged original prints but keep a piece of the destroyed print or kept the damaged original print for educational purposes. In the latter case it can be said that the print is not actually destroyed, and in both cases they are kept for study collection purposes. Other comments also revealed that not all damaged original prints are destroyed when a reprint is created.

Some comments for the answer category of “sometimes [destroy]” are:
- “[destroy] or place in study collection.” (Curator)
- “Sometimes a print will remain in a material archive for study.” (Other: Collection Manager, Team of Conservator, Curator and Registrar)
- “It depends - we have done that[destroy] on a number of occasions, but we've also kept some of the most important originals - it might be of value for use in a study collection or they simply receive a different accession number.” (Conservator in institution)
- “This should be the standard, but there are almost always exceptions made.” (Appraiser)
- “Should be, not always done.” (Appraiser)
Reprints in a Multi-Element Work

The term "multi-element work" refers to a work of art comprised of multiple prints or elements. A Play of Selves, 1975 by Cindy Sherman, introduced at the beginning of this paper, is an example of a multi-element work. To the question, “Is the authenticity of a multi-element work compromised if any damaged elements are replaced?”, sixteen respondents replied, “sometimes,” thus emphasizing that the answer will usually be determined on a case-by-case basis (fig. 10). It can be surmised that there is wide acceptance if and when other conditions of reprints are fulfilled.

Most respondents agreed when asked about labeling. For the question: “How transparent should the information be when describing a multi-element work with replaced elements?” 60% of survey participants selected “Fully transparent including which prints have been replaced, and their later printing date.” Answers to this question affirmed our observation that reprinting as replacement for damaged originals will become a more frequent practice, even if done in sizes and processes that differ from the original edition (fig.11).

Comments regarding multi-element works included:
- “Not authenticity but value is compromised.” (Appraiser)
- “We must take inherent vice into the equation, especially if trying to maintain artist's intent.” (Conservator in private practice)
- “It really depends on the nature of the work.” (Independent scholar)
- “If different materials are used and they don't "Match" I would say it is compromised.” (Curator)
- “The number of replacement components alone should not determine authenticity but be assessed in relation to the overall integrity of the artwork.” (Auction house)
- “Particularly complex when a series is broken up in its ownership between a variety of institutions and individuals who each store and display individual elements in different ways and to different extents; then the series is re-unified for a retrospective exhibition and the varying conditions of individual elements becomes distractingly evident.” (Conservator in institution)

FIG. 10. Survey answers to the question, “Is authenticity of a multi-element work compromised if any damaged elements are replaced?”

Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume Seventeen (2017) 219
“How transparent should the information be describing a multi-element work with replaced elements?”

**Fig. 11.** Survey answers to the question, “How transparent should the information be describing a multi-element work with replaced elements?”

### Importance of Clarity

In 1970 California was the first state to pass a law designed to protect the purchasers of multiples of fine art when sold for more than one hundred dollars each under California Statute - Civil Code § 1740-1745.5, (Farr Act), Sale of Fine Prints. This law requires full disclosure of information, such as a “certificate of authenticity” for fine art prints, photographs (positive and negative), sculpture casts, collages, or similar art produced in more than one copy. New York State followed this law with its own in 1981 for each multiple produced on or after January 1, 1982. The law states:

“... Under New York law, a ‘certificate of authenticity’ means a written statement by an art merchant confirming, approving or attesting to the authorship of a work of fine art or multiple, which is capable of being used to the advantage or disadvantage of some person. A certificate of authenticity may be used for both originals and multiples and is required for multiples…”

Other states, including Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, and South Carolina, have similar laws protecting consumers in the purchase of art multiples (statutes in those states are less rigorous and less inclusive than those in California and New York). New Mexico does not have statutes directly or indirectly requiring print-disclosure or certificates of authenticity. In New York each multiple requires detailed information as listed below. Many more details were required than was expected by the authors of this paper.
Conclusions

With the continued refinement of digital printing technologies, designating who approves or who authorizes a work’s authenticity is a vital and crucial factor when creating reprints. All of the types of multiple prints discussed in this paper are within a broader category of original prints, especially when the approval of an artist or authorized person is obtained. It seems clear that reprints will be created in increasing numbers, which will challenge many of us in different ways. The definition of terms will also change over time. With the increasing value of some photographs, there is pressure to identify where in the spectrum of “originality” the particular print resides – this is the realm of dating and connoisseurship. Clarification is important at every stage; collaboration and communication between professionals is necessary to build an environment where reprints and multiples are produced and clearly understood. It would be interesting to conduct a similar survey on this topic in five-years, to track how the practice and understanding of reprinting and creating multiples in photography might have changed.

The conservator’s role to preserve, conserve, examine, and study prints will expand to include past, present, and future reprints and multiples – the “New Originals” discussed in this paper. Openness, transparency and accountability in providing accurate and detailed information on reprints of all types are all necessary for historical study, aesthetic appreciation, and the establishment of fair market value for any object capable of being so closely duplicated. Involving all of the stakeholders, most importantly the artists, in this appeal for clarity will make for a richer understanding of any artist’s work, and for status of the field of photo history and conservation as a whole.

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