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Article: Problems with Image: A Conservator's Role in the Attribution of Photographs  
(Abstract)

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*Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume 17*

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Compiler: Jessica Keister and Marie-Lou Beauchamp

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*Topics in Photographic Preservation* is published biannually by the Photographic Materials Group (PMG) of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC). A membership benefit of the Photographic Materials Group, *Topics in Photographic Preservation* is primarily comprised of papers presented at PMG meetings and is intended to inform and educate conservation-related disciplines.

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## **Problems with Image: A Conservator's Role in the Attribution of Photographs**

**Adrienne Lundgren**

*Presented at the PMG session of the 2016 AIC Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada.*

In 2013, the author undertook a project to examine the photographic work of F. Holland Day in the collections of the Library of Congress. The F. Holland Day collection, received directly from his estate upon his death, is composed of over 700 prints and is the largest collection of his work in the world. The goal of the project was to create a model of a materials-based catalogue raisonné for a photographic artist. The primary motivation was to demonstrate the principle of consistent, methodical data collection in understanding a photographic artist's working methods. Through the collection of this data, including paper texture documentation, paper thickness, etc., the author was able to develop a more complete picture of Day's materials and techniques allowing for a more accurate attribution of unattributed or mis-attributed prints. However, what also emerged were prints with images by Day, but whose materials were uncharacteristic. This lecture will discuss the re-assigning of print attribution using materials-based attributes as a primary source of reasoning. Most interestingly, the author will discuss the problematic attribution of works to Day and other artists, all of whom were connected to photographer Frederick Evans. This case study brings to light the problem of attributing photographic prints based on image, and how the conservator is a key player in unraveling these mysteries.

**Adrienne Lundgren**

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