Alfred Stieglitz (American, 1864–1946)

A Street in Sterzing, The Tyrol

1890
Platinum print
Alfred Stieglitz Collection

AIC accession number: 1949.699

Stieglitz Estate number: 59A

Inscriptions: Unmarked recto; inscribed verso, on hinged mat, upper left, in graphite: "Sterzing 1887 ?"; verso, on hinged mat, lower left, in graphite: "59A"

Dimensions: 21.7 x 15.7 cm (image/paper); 22.3 x 16.2 (secondary support); 50.3 x 32.4 cm (original window mat)

Print thickness: 0.151 mm
Surface sheen: Low gloss (4.9 GU @ 85°)

Paper tone: L*77.22, a*6.96, b*21.97

Mount: Original; with original presentation window mat

Mount tone: L*85.23, a*0.04, b*11.36

Ultraviolet-induced (UV) visible fluorescence (recto): None

X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry:
See below

Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometry:
N/A

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This photograph is a platinum print on a thin cream paper. It is adhered at the corners to a slightly larger sheet of trimmed colored paper, then to the original cream mount. The original window mat is adhered to the mount at the top edge. The verso of the mount contains an inscription in graphite and the negative number, "59A," from Stieglitz. When the surface of the print is viewed under high magnification, the fibers from the photographic paper are visible, and the image sits directly on the fibers, with no intermediary binder. The print does not fluoresce when exposed to long-wave UV radiation. Platinum, iron, lead, and mercury were detected using XRF spectrometry. Common to platinotypes, the residual presence of light-sensitive iron ions could be due to improper washing of the print after processing. The presence of lead could have two sources: while lead could have been used during fabrication of the photographic paper itself, it was also commonly used during the processing of platinum prints, to increase uniform development. The presence of mercury could be the result of the artist's use of mercuric chloride during processing, to create the print's warm tones.

X-RAY FLUORESCENCE (XRF) SPECTROMETRY

XRF spectral readings were taken from the recto of the work and from the mount when available. The elements listed below have been positively identified in the work; elements in bold have been attributed to the processing of the print.

Print: **Fe**, **Pt**, Hg, Pb

Mount: Ca, Fe, Cu, Zn, Sr, Ba

The graph below shows XRF spectra for three distinct measurement areas on the print: the darkest, maximum-density image area (Dmax, purple); the lightest, minimum-density image area (Dmin, green); and the mount, when available (orange). The background spectrum (gray) represents the characteristic contribution of the instrument itself as measured on a Teflon reference and is included in order to discount irrelevant elements from the print's signature. Elements were identified based on the presence of their characteristic peaks. Analysis was performed with a Bruker ARTAX air-path portable micro-XRF system equipped with a laser pointer, an integrated camera system, a Mo 12.5µm filter, and a Mo tube. Measurements were taken for 250 LT at 50 kV and 800 µA. The spectrum below illustrates the significant peaks for this print in the energy range from 3 to 15 keV.

Figure 1. (right)
Locations of XRF measurements

Figure 2. (below)
XRF spectra from the Dmax, Dmin, mount, and background signal produced by the analyzer.