



Photo-paintings: a material, technical and historical investigation of their development in the UK between 1850 and 1880, with a case study of paintings by Georg Koberwein from the Royal Collection

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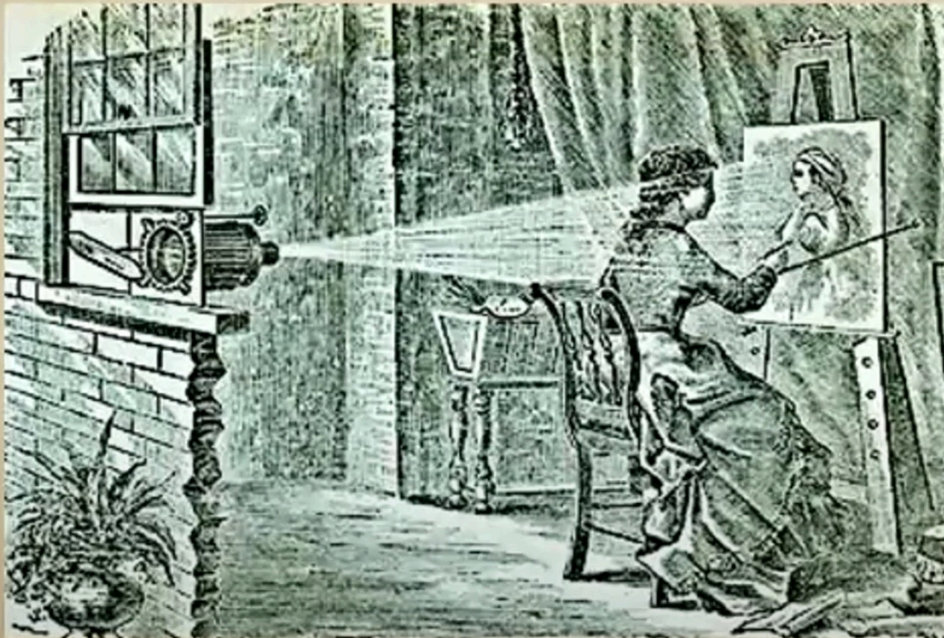
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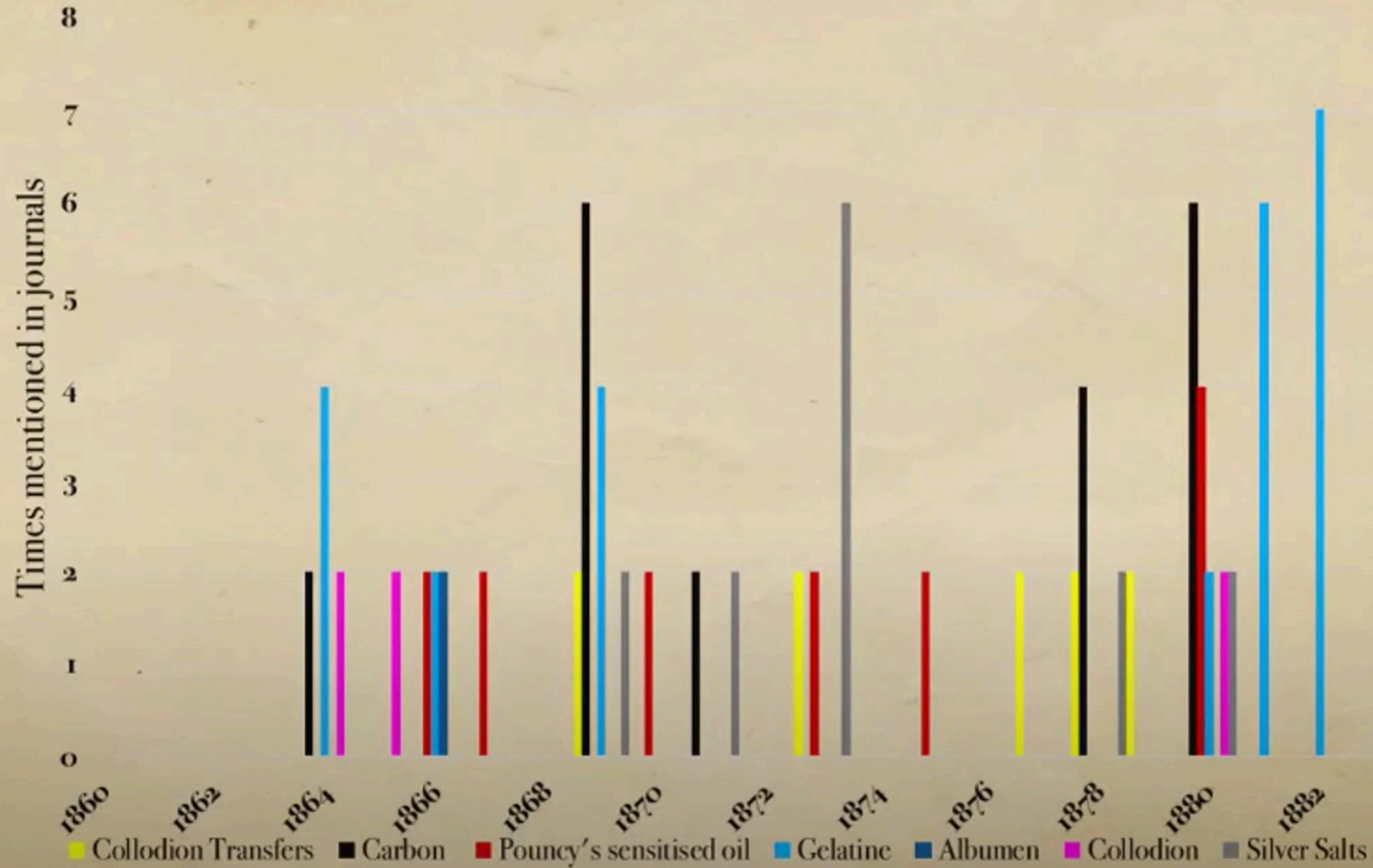
Painted enlarged photographs



Woodward enlarger, The origins of Photography: The Matthew R. Isenburg and Enhanced Isenburg Collections 1840-1880

‘Large photographic portraits, in general, are not very agreeable in effect, and, to please the public, they require colour. ... The principal object of taking photographic portraits as large as nature is to give to the artist ground to paint upon.’
Antoine Claudet, 1861

Specific methods for printing on canvas



Elemental analysis

- Silver and chrome from silver salts and carbon prints (potassium dichromate)
- Sample areas where the photographic print is likely to be present (e.g. dark areas)
- XRF: elements present in low concentrations and paint layers can interfere
- SEM-EDX: more accurate way for identification
- Chrome can be related to 19th century pigments



Raking light of a photo-painting kindly shared by John Gayer. The canvas distortions imply that only a photographic print of the face was done probably by contact printing or transfer.



Conclusion

- Historical research revealed the widespread and profitable practice of oil-painting photographs on canvas in the UK between 1850 and 1880
- Georg Koberwein had to adapt to contemporary trends in his field by combining photography and painting, probably by projecting and tracing with a solar camera
- Understanding the technical developments of this technique is crucial for identification: not always straightforward
- New questions in 19th century paintings





Acknowledgments



Dr Pia Gottschaller, The Courtauld
Kate Lewis, MoMA
Dr Alexandra Gent, National Portrait Gallery
Rosanna de Sancha, Royal Collection
Nicola Christie, Royal Collection
Adelaide Izat, Royal Collection
Dr Sophie Gordon, Royal Collection
Susan Walker, National Gallery of Canada
Anne MacKay, McCord Museum
John Gayer, Art Conservator, Finland

Art Kaplan, Getty Conservation Institute
Prof Aviva Burnstock, The Courtauld
Tom Gregory, UCL
Bill Luckhurst, King's Collage
Dr Ben Blackburn, King's Collage
Tom Bilson, Witt and Conway Libraries
Clare Richardson, The Courtauld
Silvia Amato, The Courtauld
Kendall, Alex, Alice and Anna