

What You See is Not What You Get: Deceptive Repairs and Alterations in Old Master Prints

ABSTRACT

This presentation grew out of research done by the author while working on a translation of Max Schweidler's book on restoration, which was published in 2006 by the Getty Conservation Institute under the title, *The Restoration of Engravings, Drawings, Books, and Other Works on Paper*. In this presentation, several remarkable examples of deceptive repairs and an instance of a fake watermark were described.

There are two editions of Schweidler's book, the first in 1938 and the second, which was revised and enlarged, in 1950, and it is the second of these editions that formed the basis of the author's translation. Schweidler's book is an important document in the history of paper conservation in that, to the author's knowledge, it is the only text ever published prior to 1950 that presents information about methods and techniques of treatment in great detail. Schweidler also gives specific details on techniques of what might be termed "structural repairs": repair of holes, tears, and losses. The primary method, which may be called "chamfered repairs," can produce results that are extremely difficult to detect. The concept of chamfering in order to repair an object is not new, having been used for centuries for repairs of sculpture, furniture, and other objects, but Schweidler became infamous for skill in effecting repairs using this technique—so well known that in the twentieth century it was not unusual for a print or drawing with highly deceptive repairs to be described as having been "Schweidlerized."

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