Micro-photograph

Place of origin: England (made)

Date: 1858-1861 (made)

Artist/Maker: Dancer, John Benjamin, born 1812 - died 1887 (maker)

Materials and Techniques: Micro-photograph/micrograph/photomicrograph, collodion positive, glass slide

Museum number: E.888-1997

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

John Benjamin Dancer (1812-1887) was a British optician and instrument maker who is credited with inventing microphotography, a process in which a photograph is taken through a microscope, in 1839.

Dancer’s microphotographs (also referred to as micrographs or photomicrographs) were capable of magnification up to 20 times before any clarity was lost, and were primarily used to take photographs of microscopic objects. However, by 1859 he was producing slides of much larger objects, including portraits and pages from books.

This collodion positive on a glass slide by Dancer is a microphotograph of a Franz Xaver Winterhalter portrait painting of Victoria, Princess Royal (the future Princess of Prussia.) It is thought to have been taken between 1858 and 1861.

Descriptive line

Micro-photograph by John Benjamin Dancer, depicting Her Royal Highness Victoria, Princess Royal, after a portrait by Franz Xavier Winterhalter, collodion positive on glass slide, 1858-1861

Physical description

Micro-photograph, collodion positive on glass slide, showing a portrait of Victoria, Princess Royal by Franz Xavier Winterhalter.

Dimensions

Height: 7.5 cm slide, Width: 2.5 cm slide

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URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O155083/micro-photograph-dancer-john-benjamin/