

Digital Surrogates: A New Technique for Loss Compensation of Graphic Works on Paper

ABSTRACT

Historically and presently, restorers and conservators engaging in loss compensation have used fine hand skills to recreate convincing design elements in addition to paper color and texture. These techniques have been documented and taught. In contrast, the focus of this paper is the use of digital surrogates as an alternative for loss compensation of graphic works using digital images and high quality printers. By employing this method, the lost design is reconstituted without compromising the artist's original intent.

The process of producing a digital surrogate will be explained using a case study of a recent treatment of Jacques Callot's *The Siege of La Rochelle*, a monumental print from sixteen plates. While producing a facsimile image might seem relatively simple, there are several details in production that can be adjusted to produce a high quality surrogate. Using digital images from a complete print for the reproduction, two methods of production were identified: printing the appropriate design on a paper similar in quality to the original and printing the illusion of paper texture, color and design on a high quality inkjet optimized paper. This paper will focus the techniques used for the final digital surrogate with a discussion on image capture, digital manipulation, paper selection, and surface coatings.

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