

Rachel Hapoienu

The VSC: a new tool for watermark research at The Courtauld Gallery, London

8th International Conference on Watermarks in Digital
Collections
19-21 June 2025



The Courtauld



John Constable, *Seascape*, 1830s,
The Courtauld, London, D.1952.RW.2211



J WHA[TMAN]
184[...]

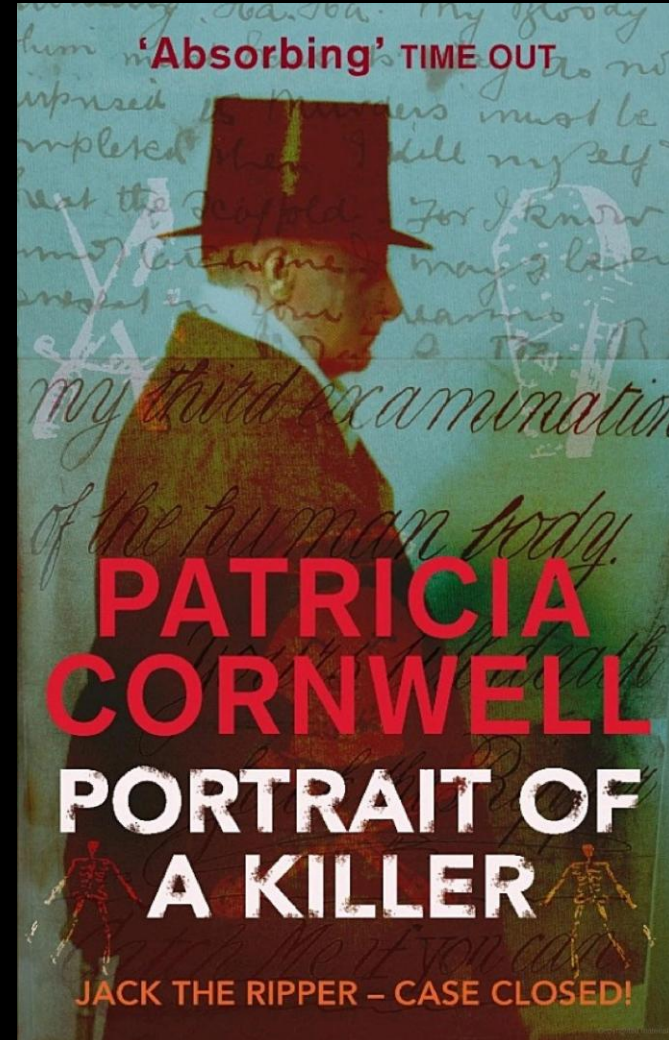
NOT John Constable, *Seascape*, 1840s or later,
The Courtauld, London, D.1952.RW.2211

Video Spectral Comparator (VSC 8000)





Edward Drummond Young, *Walter Sickert*,
print, 1922, NPG x13288 © National Portrait
Gallery, London



PROGRAMME BOOK

DRAWINGS BY REMBRANDT

CONNECTING ART HISTORY, SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION

6-7 FEBRUARY 2020
RIJKS MUSEUM

MUSEUM
HET REMBRANDTHUIS



Cultural Heritage Agency
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

LIST OF WORKSHOPS

W1 - Exploring Drawings with the Video Spectral Comparator Technical Imaging System

Frank Ligterink, *Heritage Scientist, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE)*

W2 - Macro XRF: Unravelling Rembrandt's Materials with X-Rays

Leila Sauvage, *Paper Conservator & Junior Scientist Rijksmuseum*

W3 - New Interactive Tools for the Study of Drawings

Robert Erdmann, *Senior Scientist Rijksmuseum*

W4 - The Art of Drawing for Scientists

Jeroen Stumpel, *Professor Emeritus Utrecht University*

W5 - Italian Drawings of the Rijksmuseum

Maud van Suylen, *Junior Curator Rijksmuseum*

Carolyn Mensing, *Academic Researcher Rijksmuseum*

W6 - Rembrandt's Paper: a Technological Moment in Time

Bas van Velzen, *Paper Conservator and Lecturer University of Amsterdam*

W7 - High Resolution Images of Master Drawings

Femke Coevert, *Paper Conservator Rijksmuseum*

Henni van Beek, *Staff Photographer Rijksmuseum*

W8 - Drawing Materials in the Age of Rembrandt

Idelette van Leeuwen, *Head of Paper and Photo Paper Conservation Rijksmuseum*

Birgit Reissland, *Heritage Scientist, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE)*

W9 - Visualising Watermarks in the Rijksmuseum Collection

Dionysia Christoforou, *Paper Conservator Rijksmuseum*

Erik Hinterding, *Curator of Prints Rijksmuseum*

W10 - A Walking Tour through the History of the Rijksprentenkabinet

Aafke Weller, *Paper Conservator Rijksmuseum*

W11 - Improved Micro-Fading for Risk Assessment of Colour Change

Gauthier Patin, *PhD Candidate Van Gogh Museum, University of Amsterdam*



Courtauld Prints & Drawings Study Room and visual examination space with VSC



Paper Conservator Kate Edmondson and PhD student assistant Marco Mansi using the VSC



Parmigianino, *Head of a young woman*, 1521-24,
The Courtauld, London, D.1932.RW.2387



Parmigianino, *Head of a young woman*, 1521-24,
The Courtauld, London, D.1932.RW.2387
Shown in infrared with transmitted spotlight



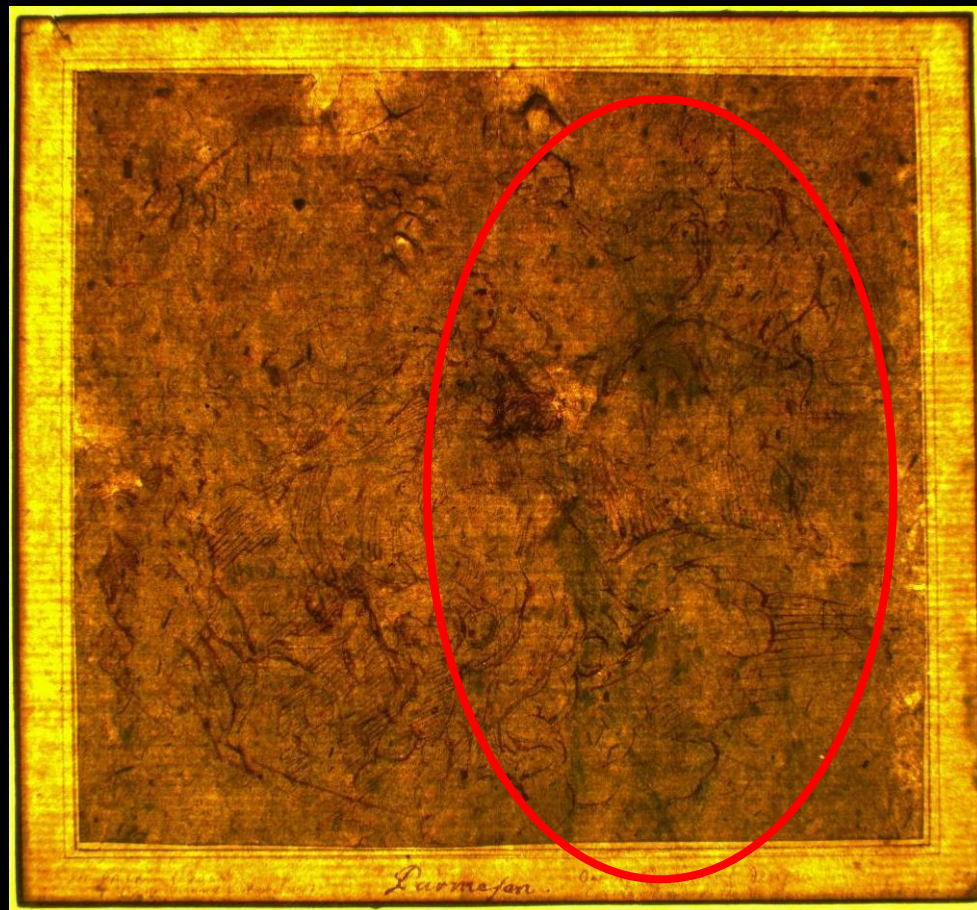
Parmigianino, *Head of a young woman*, 1521-24,
The Courtauld, London, D.1932.RW.2387
Shown in UV



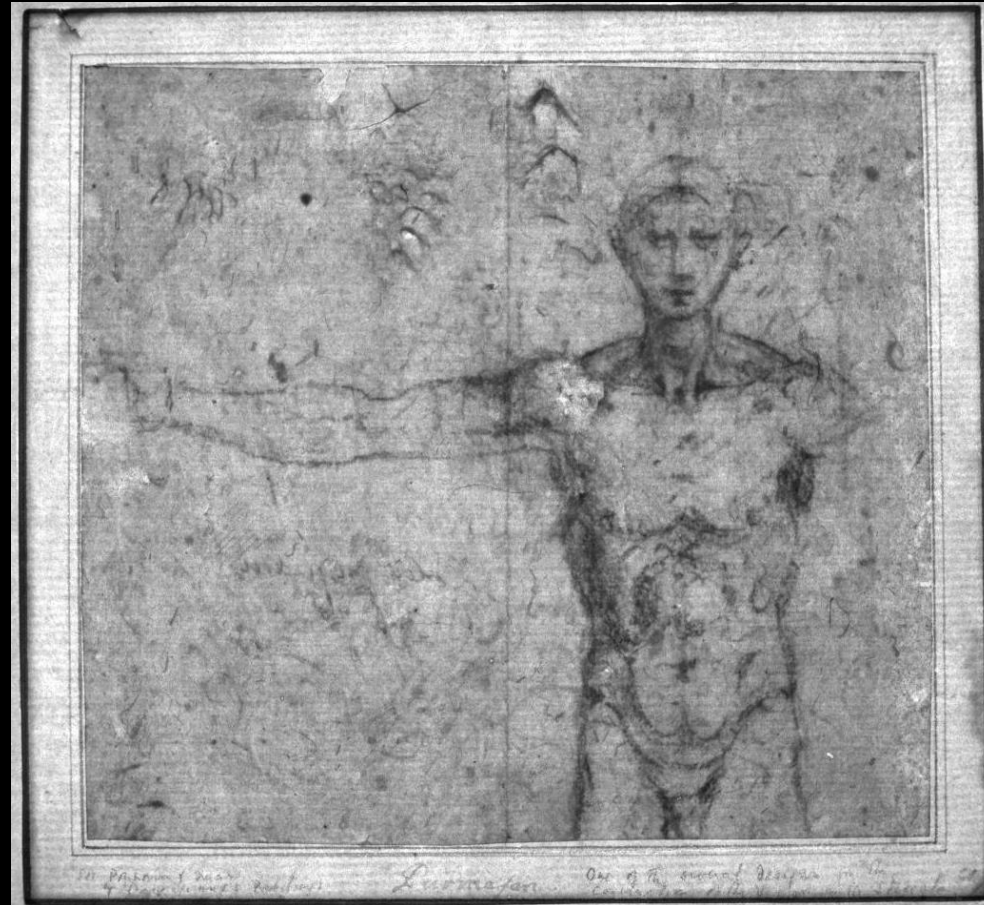
Parmigianino, *Head of a young woman*, 1521-24,
The Courtauld, London, D.1932.RW.2387
Shown in UV, rotated 90° and with overlain drawing to highlight hidden drawing



Parmigianino, *Study for the Coronation of the Virgin in Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma, 1535-39*, The Courtauld, London, D.1978.PG.367



Parmigianino, *Study for the Coronation of the Virgin in Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma*, 1535-39, The Courtauld, London, D.1978.PG.367
Shown in transmitted light



Parmigianino, *Study for the Coronation of the Virgin in Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma, 1535-39*, The Courtauld, London, D.1978.PG.367
Shown in transmitted and infrared light



© Richard Valencia Photography



Watermark taken with Hasselblad camera by professional photographer using transmitted light



Watermark taken with VSC using transmitted light



Watermark taken with VSC using transmitted light and infrared



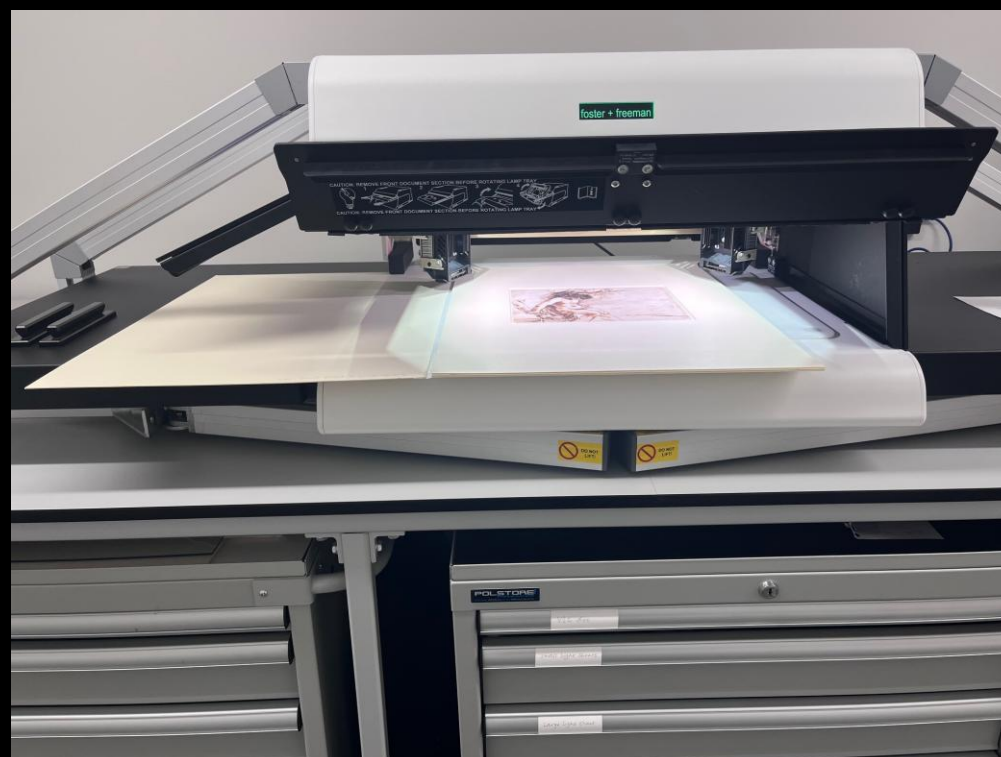
Watermark rendered in monochrome with annotated measurements



Former method of measuring and photographing watermarks



Guercino, *Bust of a man wearing a hat*, 17th century, The Courtauld, London, D.2015.XX.2
Transmitted light (left), transmitted and infrared light (right)

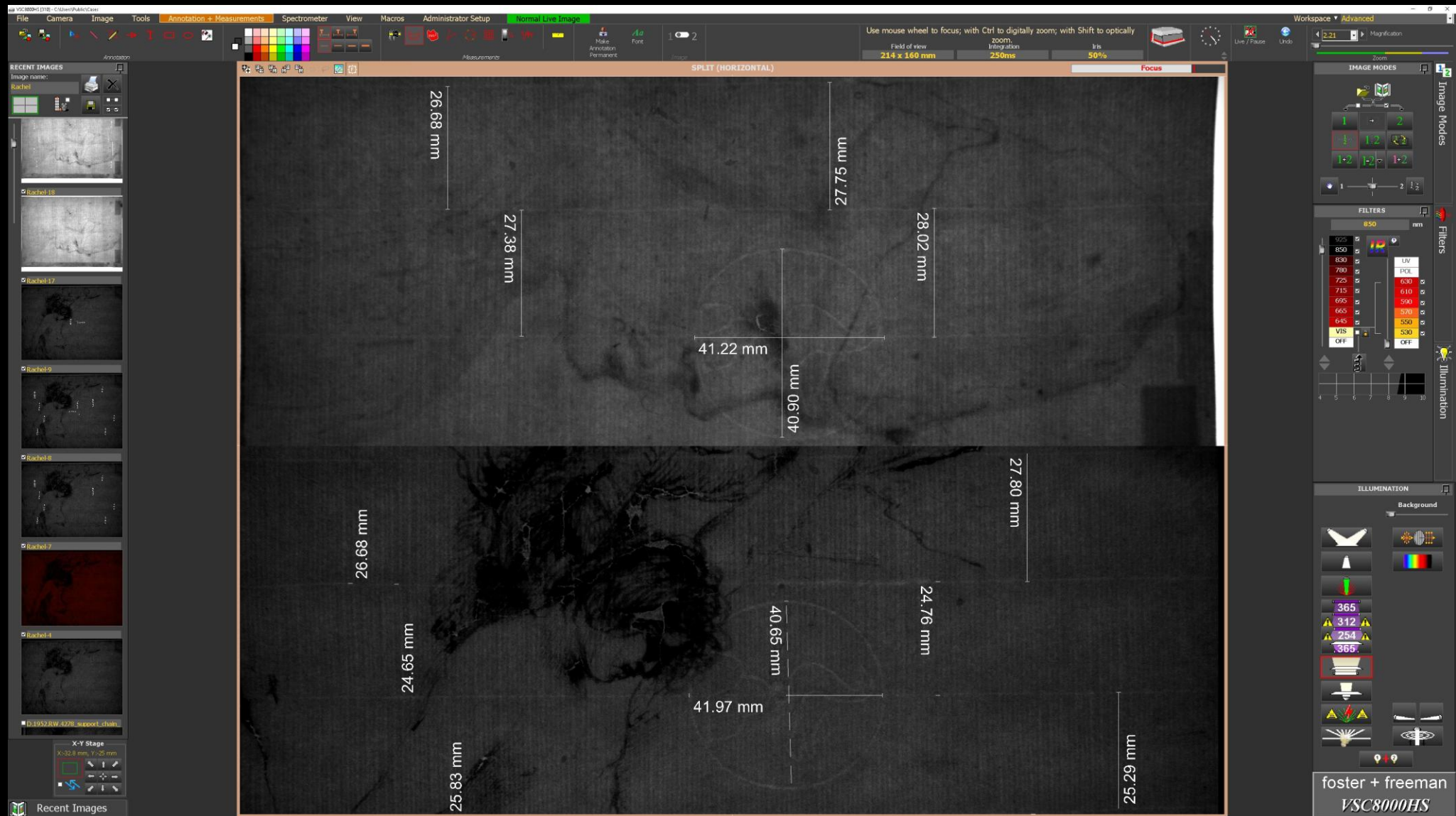


Transmitted and infrared light
able to penetrate thick mounts
without removing the drawing





Annotations can be manually added in any colour

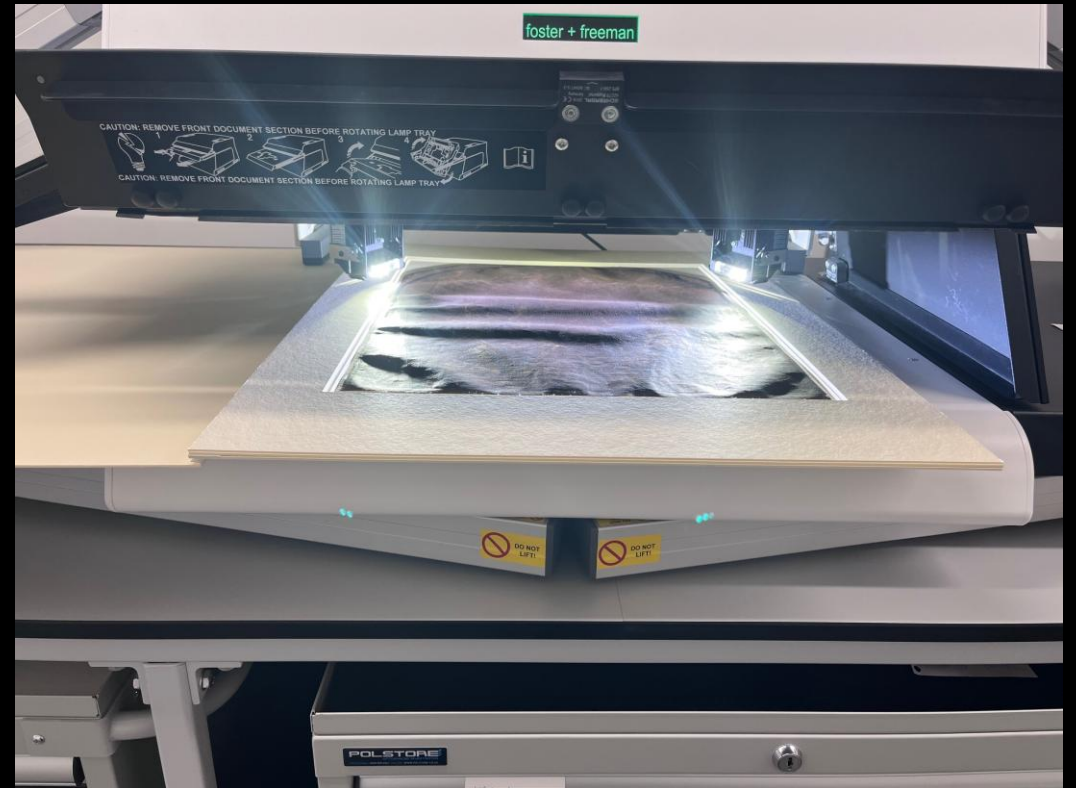


Slider comparison between two Guercino watermarks

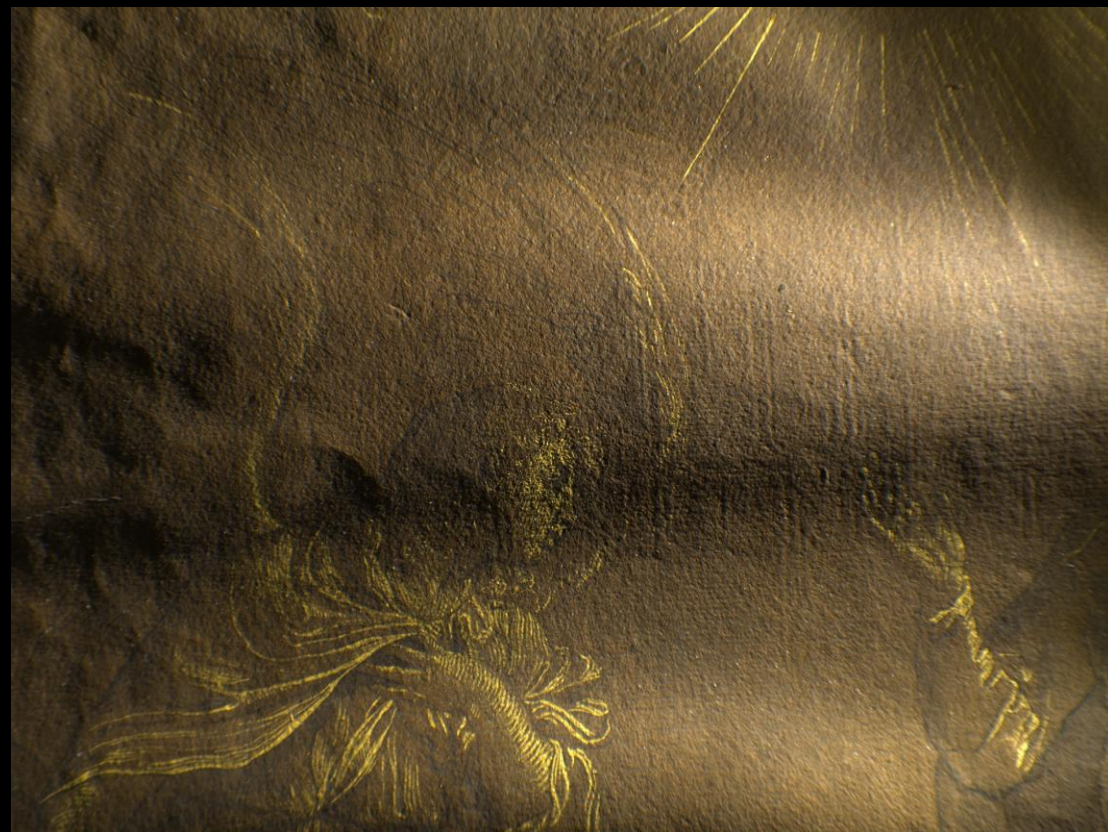


Jacopo Ligozzi, *Annunciation*, The Courtauld, London,
D.1952.RW.2853

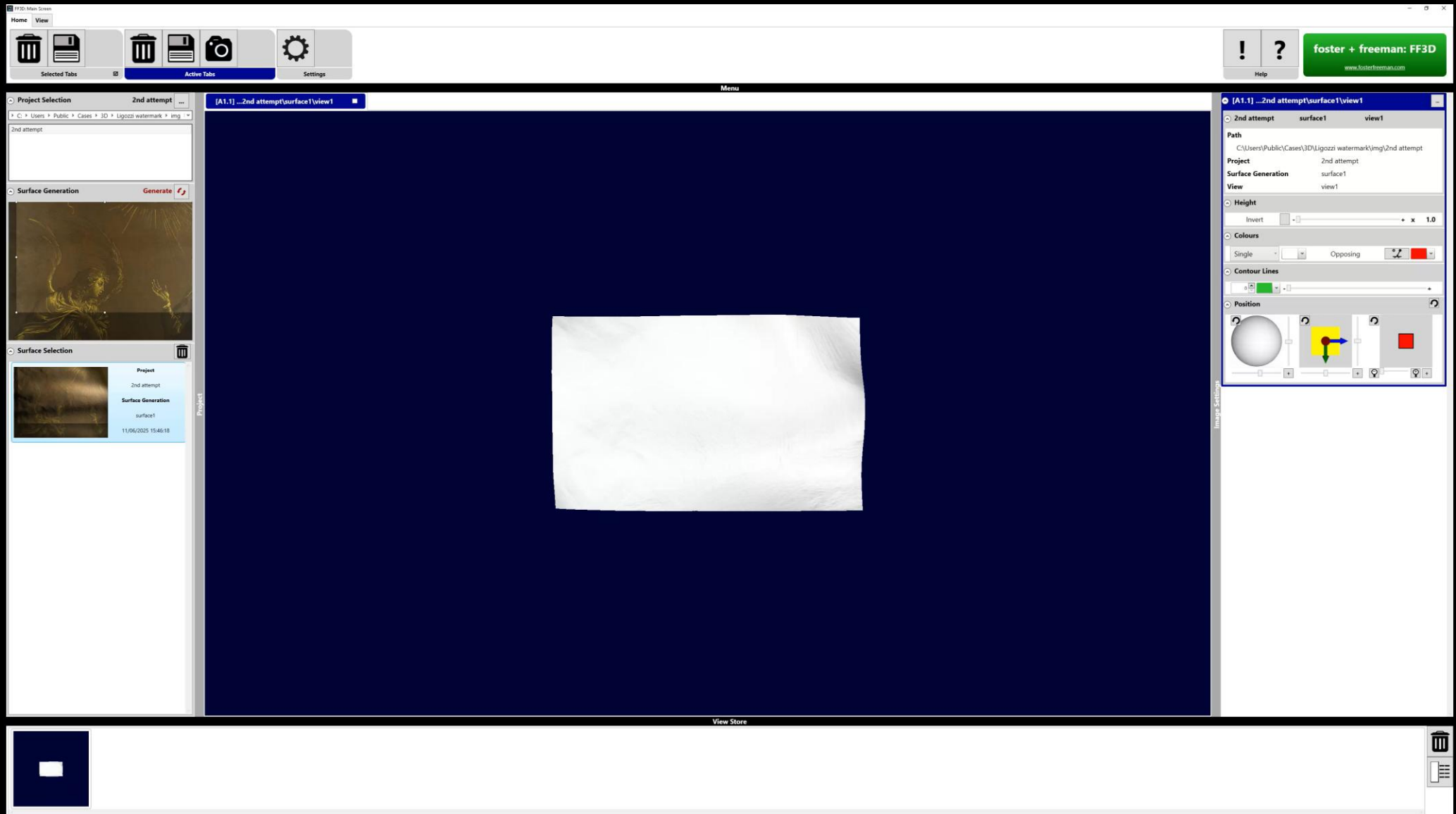




Raking light with a torch (left) and with the VSC (right)



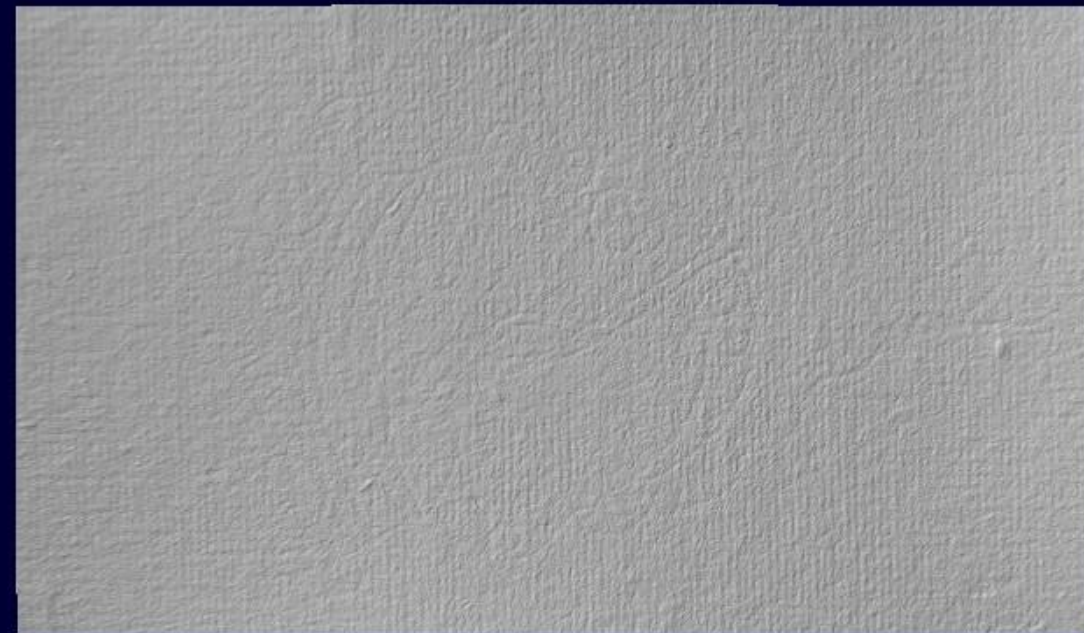
Raking light image produced with a torch (left) and with the VSC (right)



Video demonstrating 3D modelling of watermark area



Bonaventura Peeters I, *View of Scherpenheuvel*, 1630-52, The Courtauld, London, D.1952.RW.479



Watermark in raking light (left), produced via 3D model on VSC (right)

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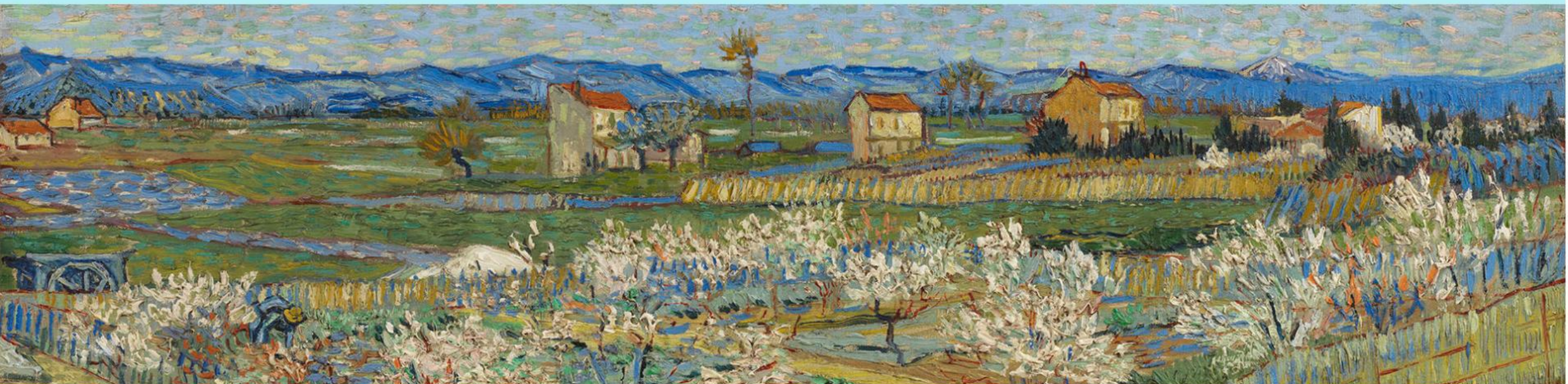
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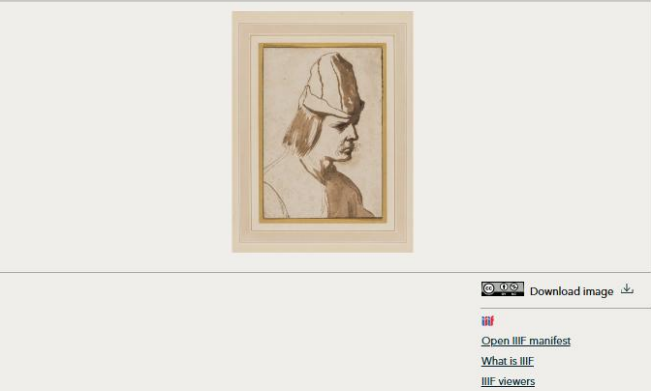
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Bust of a man wearing a hat seen in three-quarter view

Maker
([Giovanni Francesco Barbieri](#)) [Il Guercino](#) (artist)
1591-1666

Title
Bust of a man wearing a hat seen in three-quarter view

Location
Not currently on display

Keywords
[portraits](#)
[men](#)
[hats](#)
[studies \(visual works\)](#)
[moustache](#)

Provenance
Sir Thomas Lawrence, London (1769-1830), L.2445;
Tomás Harris, London (1908-1964); purchased from
him by Sir John Witt, London (1907-1982), L.646a, 7
June 1932 (£1); by descent to Christopher Witt;
acquired from him by Lowell Libson Ltd. (London),
2015; Gift from Lowell Libson in honour of Dr
Stephanie Buck, 2015

Inscriptions
Watermark: Recto: right centre: circle containing a bird
on triple mount (41 cm diameter, 27 cm between chain
lines. No exact match found in Piccard, Briquet or
Heawood. Similar, though not exact same mark, found
on Guercino drawing D.1952.RW.1377).

Inscription: Backing sheet: lower centre, graphite:
"184". Mount (historic), Recto: lower left, graphite,
circled: "462"; lower left, graphite: "329"; lower left
corner, graphite, erased: "Guercino"; lower left, purple
ink: "Guercino"; lower right corner, graphite, Lady
Witt's hand (mother of John Witt): "Giovanni Francesco
Guercino / 1591-1661 / Coll:Lawrence / Yes - O.M."
[possibly a reference to having consulted Oswald
Magniac for his opinion on the drawing]. Mount
(historic), Verso: upper left corner, graphite: "3-23".

Collector's mark: Recto: lower left corner,
blindstamped: Sir Thomas Lawrence (L.2445). Backing
sheet: lower left, stamped in black: John Clermont Witt
(L.646a).

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Study of two horsemen

Maker

[Albrecht Dürer](#) (artist)

1471-1528

Title

Location

Not currently on display

Keywords

[horseback riding](#)

[studies \(visual works\)](#)

[Horses](#)

M24381: **Saint Eustace**

Prints



Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College



Identification and Creation

Object Number

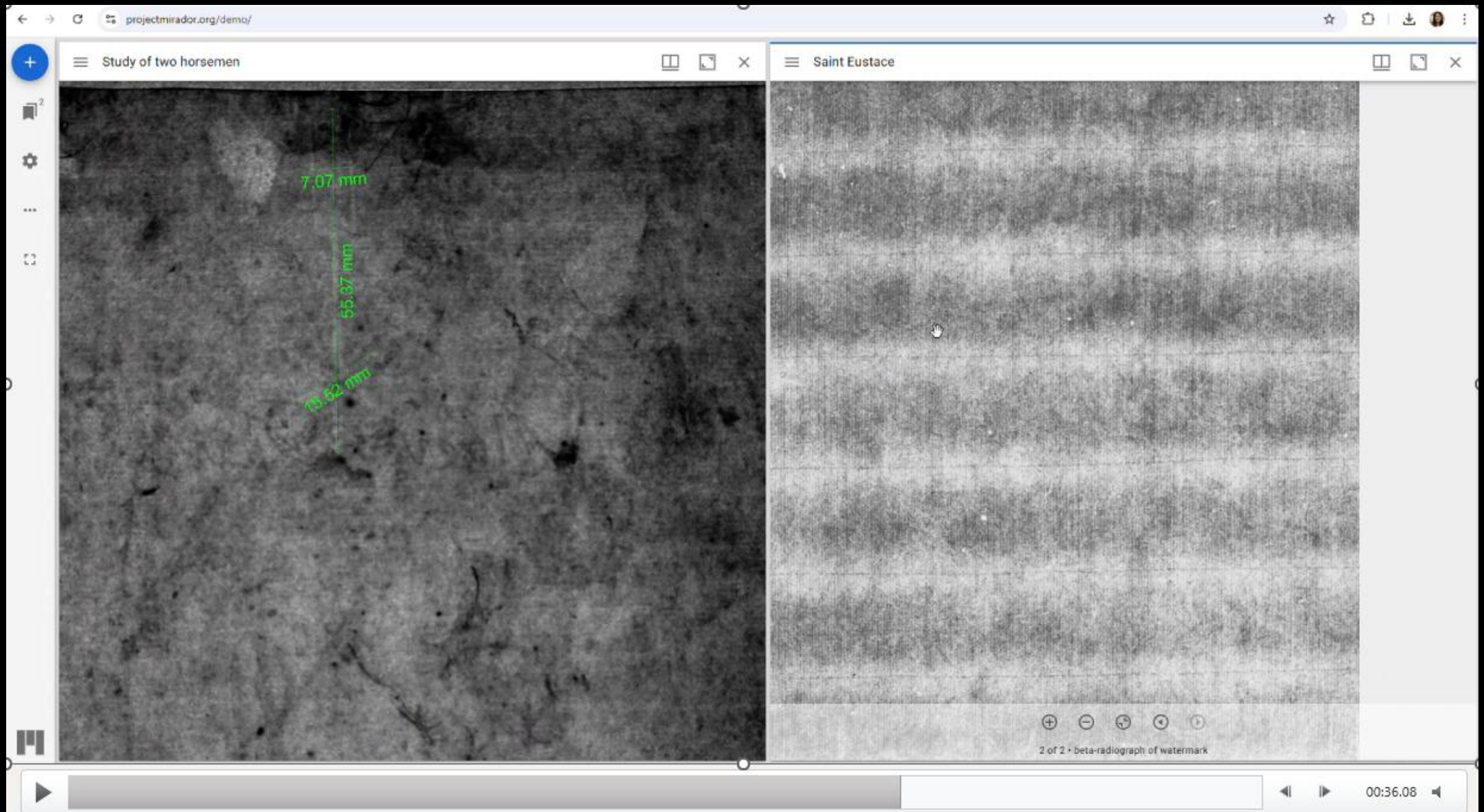
M24381

People

[Albrecht Dürer](#), German (Nuremberg 1471 - 1528 Nuremberg)

Title

Saint Eustace



Video demonstrating use of IIIF to compare watermark images of two works on paper by Durer in Mirador image viewer



Thank you!

Dr Rachel Hapoienu
Assistant Curator of Works on Paper
The Courtauld Gallery
rachel.hapoienu@courtauld.ac.uk

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