An in-depth visual examination of the project materials of five works in the archive provided the opportunity to unravel Heinecken’s working methods. This essay focuses on the materials and processes of Heinecken’s gelatin silver puzzles (1966), Are You Now (1964–68), Cream Str (1966), Tuxedo Striptease (1974), and Reffractive Hexagon (1965), as these five pieces are representative of significant bodies of work in Heinecken’s oeuvre that are related by method: gelatin silver puzzles, gelatin silver photo-linen works, gelatin silver photograms, offset photobiliography, dyes-diffusion transfer prints, and silver dye bleach photograms.

The individual works investigated here are well documented in the Archive by project materials and in Heinecken’s own words in lecture notes; they thus offer a reliable introduction to the variety of materials and techniques he used.

**GELATIN SILVER PUZZLES**

When Heinecken started working in photography in the early 1960s, the principal fine-art photographic process was negative-to-positive printing on black-and-white gelatin silver paper. Gelatin silver photographs are composed of silver image particles embedded in a transparent gelatin binder layer on a paper support. Among Heinecken’s earliest photographic works are his innovative photo-sculptures and puzzles, which involved adhering photographic image fragments to three-dimensional shapes, as he did with *Reffractive Hexagons*. What follows here (and in subsequent passages) is an outline of the steps the artist followed in the creation of a work; these analyses of his processes are based on the visual examination of project materials and final works in the Heinecken Archive.

### Reffractive Hexagon (plate 17)

**Working Practice**

1. printed a gelatin silver photograph from a negative of a female nude (an image made by Heinecken)
2. cut equilateral triangles out of the photograph (fig. 1)
3. photographed the triangular image fragments
4. printed a gelatin silver photograph of the triangular fragments from the negative produced in step 3 (fig. 2)
5. cut out the twenty-four triangular fragments from the photograph made in step 4
6. adhered the photographic triangles to equally sized Masonite triangles (5 1/4 inch thick)
7. varnished the photographic image surfaces
8. arranged the triangular “piece pieces” in the shape of a hexagon, in a custom-made wooden tray (a label attached to the underside of the tray Heinecken noted: “No particular arrangement is necessary”)

The basic procedure of Heinecken’s puzzle work is easy to follow. However, in the case of *Reffractive Hexagons*, the materials indicate an intermediate step that is not implied when looking at the final work—that is, step 3: rephotographing the triangle image fragments cut out of the initial photograph. Heinecken could just as easily...
have photographed the finished fragments after they were attached to Masonite, but the archival evidence suggests that was not the sequence here. By photographing the image fragments, Heinecken created a negative that could be used to print multiple images of the triangles, as often as he wanted and at any size. Thus allowed him to easily repeat the same image content in more than one puzzle. While Kaleidoscopic Hexagons consists of twenty-four unique triangle puzzle pieces, Kaleidoscopic Hexagons #1 (in the CCP collection) consists of six puzzle pieces; three pairs, each representing the same elements—a breast in profile, the back of a leg, and crossed arms. The three triangle image fragments that are repeated in Kaleidoscopic Hexagons #1 also appear in Retractive Hexagons, where each is included only once.

**GELATIN SILVER PHOTO-LINEN WORKS**

In addition to printing gelatin silver images on paper, from the late 1960s and into the 1970s Heinecken created gelatin silver images on textile supports. The textile he used was Argenta Photo-Linen, a material reported to have been first introduced at the 1963 Photokina—the biennial trade fair held in Cologne for the photo- and imaging industry. Contemporary accounts described this material as being processed and handled just as other gelatin silver enlarging papers, and available in standard paper sizes from 5 by 7 inches (12.7 by 17.8 cm) up to 20 by 24 inches (50.8 by 61.0 cm), and in 50-inch (127 cm) rolls from 33 to 330 feet (10 to 100 m) long.

Image sources for Heinecken’s works on photo-linen included negatives purchased from Hollywood mail-order companies, pages from pornographic magazines, and negatives borrowed from other artists. The figures in Heinecken’s gelatin silver photo-linen images are often life-size or slightly smaller. These works tend to include the addition of hand-coloring applied with chalk, graphite lines that define or enhance the outline of image content, and traces of white acrylic paint, as in *Cream Six:*

**Cream Six (plate 63)** *Working Process:*

1. contact printed a 35 mm roll of gelatin silver negatives depicting images from pages in pornography magazines
2. selected three images to use
3. printed positive gelatin silver images on transparent supports for each negative
4. printed multiple variations of gelatin silver photographs using the transparent negatives created in step 3 to make negative print images [fig. 3]
5. created a mock-up of the final work [fig. 4]
6. printed enlarged gelatin silver images on Argenta Photo-Linen (as total)
7. stapled the gelatin silver images on photo-linen to wooden stretchers
8. enhanced the image content with white acrylic paint, graphite lines, and green and red chalk

*Cream Six* consists of six image panels; in them, the same image content is repeated three times. Panels 1, 3, and 5 depict the left half of the primary image (see work prints in fig. 3), and panels 2, 4, and 6 depict the right half of that image. Though the primary image content is repeated, no two panels are printed exactly the same way. Many work prints for the primary image exist in the Heinecken Archive, including conventional prints, high-contrast prints, negative-image prints, Sabattier effect prints, and prints with ink and/or graphite lines added. Given the dimensions of this work—it is overall nearly seven and a half feet (226.9 cm) wide—and the labor required to print it, it is logical that Heinecken would make many work prints on paper to determine how he wanted the images to look before committing to exposing and processing six pieces of light-sensitive photo-linen approximately 20 by 45 inches (50.8 by 114.3 cm) in size. A sketch on the mock-up (fig. 4) indicates that Heinecken was experimenting with overlaying additional images on panels 2, 3, 4, and 5. In the end he printed more than one image on all six panels. However, the secondary images are difficult to discern, and it is impossible to know exactly how he printed them. Recognizable image content in 35 mm contact prints of the source images in the Heinecken Archive suggests at least three negatives were used. (These contact prints also reveal that the title word *Cream,* outlined in graphite at the top of panel 3, appears on a recorded albumb cover in the background of the primary image.) The hand-coloring on this work is subtle, but it is unclear whether that has always been the case or if it has faded over time. Heinecken’s frequent repetition of image content within individual pieces and in separate works is clearly evident in *Cream Six* as well as in *Retractive Hexagons* and Kaleidoscopic Hexagons #1.

**GELATIN SILVER PHOTOGRAPHS**

Between 1964 and 1968 Heinecken created one of his most celebrated and closely studied works, *Are You Rea,* using repurposed images and texts that had originally been printed in magazine pages. From the mid-1960s to the end of his career, the artist’s dominant image source was print media; indeed, several of the project—materials boxes in the Heinecken Archive contain carefully collected magazine images and texts that had originally been printed in magazine pages. Though for the most part the pages are unique, there are a few groupings that have identical image content on one side. While this repetition of image content indicates that the material may have been particularly compelling to Heinecken, perhaps more importantly, it shows that he collected multiple pages with the same image content on one side, but different image or text content on the reverse, because he was interested in the juxtaposition of image and text on both sides of a page. Heinecken is known to have examined magazine pages in transmitted light, using a light table, in order to better visualize superimposed image and text content. His lecture notes cite that he reviewed at least two thousand magazine pages before selecting only twenty-five to contact print for the *Are You Rea* portfolio (a redaction process that is common in the field of commercial graphic design).
Aré You Rea (plate 25)

Working Process:
1. collected and sorted magazine pages (over three to four years)
2. selected twenty-five pages for the portfolio
3. contact printed gelatin silver photographs of the magazine pages
4. produced portfolio of gelatin silver photograms
5. converted gelatin silver photogram images into offset photograph printing plates
6. produced portfolio of offset photolithographs

For Aré You Rea, Heinecken created visually complex photograms by contact printing double-sided magazine pages on gelatin silver paper. (All twenty-five pages used as the image sources, as well as work print photograms, and offset photolithographs, are held in the Heinecken Archive.) The gelatin silver paper recorded negative images of the positively printed information from both sides of a page, superimposed together. Figure 5 shows the original image source in transmitted light for the portfolio’s fourth image, a related gelatin silver photogram work print, and an offset photolithograph of the same image from the portfolio. Heinecken manually reduced unwanted text in the upper-right corner of the recto of the lithograph of the same image from the portfolio. Heinecken also worked with Polaroid’s Polarcolor process, a dye-diffusion transfer technique in which the negative and positive image-receiving layers are peeled apart after the image is processed.

In addition to the photogram portfolios, Heinecken had five hundred offset photolithograph portfolios of magazine image sources in the Heinecken Archive. (In transmitted light for the portfolio’s fourth image, a related gelatin silver photogram work print, and an offset photolithograph of the same image from the portfolio. Heinecken also worked with Polaroid’s Polarcolor process, a dye-diffusion transfer technique in which the negative and positive image-receiving layers are peeled apart after the image is processed. In 1979 the Heinecken Archive was invited by the Polaroid corporation to make images with one of their 20-by-24-inch cameras. Nearly a decade later, in 1988, he received a Polaroid grant to use a 40-by-80-inch camera at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Evidence of the work process for Tuxedo Striptease is in the Heinecken Archive; it provides much insight into the thought and preparation that went into creating his instant color works.

Tuxedo Striptease (plate 80)

Working Process:
1. collected magazine pages with images of female models, and a baby, wearing apparel referencing a tuxedo
2. sequenced magazine images to create a “strip tease”—that is, the women’s outfits are progressively scantier in each subsequent image
3. prepared magazine images for photography (fig. 7)
4. photographed magazine images using a large-format Polaroid camera and Polarcolor film

The Heinecken Archive contains all but one of the original source images for Tuxedo Striptease. Many of the magazine fragments used were taped to a backing board to keep them flat for photographic copy work, and several were enhanced with white or black paint to better define image content or margins. This type of image preparation was common in twentieth-century graphic reproduction.

The Heinecken Archive also includes ten draft Polaroid prints donated to the Center for Creative Photography in 1985, with the following note from the artist:

“These 20 x 24s (Polaroid) were done in a set of 101 images and are numbered from 1–101 in the order of doing the tuxedo outfit. SX-70s show numbers 8 and 9 which you don’t have [this refers to two SX-70 prints taped to the last Polaroid in the draft series that depict different images made for the final series]. They are dupes of extras or discards. The finished set was made so that all the color balanced and all the backgrounds were the same size, etc. I’ve not shown them as yet and may not—until I figure it out better.

Heinecken July ’85

Robert Heinecken: Object Matter

Jennifer Jo García: Floups, Photographs, Polaroids, and Printing Plates
SILVER DYE BLEACH PHOTOGRAms

Though Heinecken openly embraced new color photography technologies in the 1970s and 1980s, he continued use of found image sources and photographs copy work remained a consistent aspect of his working method. In the 1980s Heinecken adopted yet another color photographic process: silver dye bleach. The Cibachrome system—the first commercialized silver dye bleach print process—is a direct-positive process that was introduced in 1963. Direct-positive photographs are printed from a positive image source rather than a negative. The name of the process refers to how the image material is formed. Perforated yellow, magenta, and cyan azo dyes are incorporated in the final image support during manufacture, and the dyes are bleached out during the processing in relation to the presence of silver formed after light exposure and chemical development. For silver dye bleach printing, Heinecken turned to magazine and television image sources. The magazine image sources for the Recto/Verso portfolio, along with notes on how each page was printed, are preserved in the Heinecken Archive.

Recto/Verso [plate 85]

Working Process:
1. collected magazine pages showing images of female models
2. selected twelve magazine pages for the portfolio
3. contact printed silver dye bleach photographs of the magazine pages
4. commissioned text to be written by friends and colleagues to have printed on translucent paper accompanying each photograph as an overlay

Heinecken’s Recto/Verso portfolio might be described as a reengagement with his Are You Rea portfolio. The concept and basic working methods are the same. However, the shift in photographic technology from gelatin silver to silver dye bleach dramatically changed the visual appearance of his double-image photograms, resulting in positive full-color images instead of negative black-and-white images. A surprising find in the project materials of the Heinecken Archive were right silver dye bleach prints of magazine pages used for the Are You Rea portfolio. These images are work prints: there are no finished works in silver dye bleach using the Are You Rea magazine pages. However, they illustrate that after more than twenty years, Heinecken was still interested in the Are You Rea image content, and curious to see what it would look like printed in a different photographic process [fig. 85].

When asked in 1988 “What is your work process?,” Heinecken replied:

I'm very conscious of the necessity for me to be inventive and shifting. Other artists long on something that they know is right for them. That's the appropriate way for most people to approach art, and I sort of teach that way. But for me, it's a longing thing, through the generations that occur if you let the materials dictate what's next. There's something about the flat magazine page, then it's formed, then you photograph it, then it's flat again but it still reflects dimensions. So what's next? Do you want to reform it again? That's what I really like about what I do.

A multifaceted artist, Heinecken was clearly at ease working in a variety of mediums. His background and training in printmaking and graphic design, and his extensive knowledge of materials, provided a solid foundation for his complex, multi-step working processes. These skills, combined with a continued openness to the possibilities of new image-making techniques, were vital to Heinecken’s innovative and provocative art.

NOTES
4. Heinecken’s use of hand-coloring and graphite lines relates to his background and interest in traditional printmaking processes. For example, in 1979, in reference to his 1978/79 project, Silver Dye Bleach, he stated:

“The color and linear drawing are generally related to the genitalia of the figures and the line is stylized rather than expressive. . . . The sources for this idea were from my interest in Japanese erotic art of the Ukiyo-e and Shunga styles.” Heinecken, untitled lecture delivered at the 1979 photography symposium in Graz, Austria, published as Symposium über Fotografie [sic] [Symposion über Fotogra- fie/Symposion (sic) on Photography, Manfred Willmann and Christian Fingerbichl, eds., Graz, Austria: Forum Stadtpark, n.d. [1980]], pp. 15-26.
5. The Sabattier effect is created when a photography print is exposed, developed, washed, and then exposed a second time, bleached, and then exposed again prior to final fixing, giving the print both positive and negative qualities. It is often used combined with solarization, which is a reversal of image density from ètrograms. A simple way to determine whether a picture has been made by solarization or the Sabattier effect is to look for a “Moscow face,” a thin line of low-density area between adjacent highlight and shadow areas, produced by the Sabattier effect.