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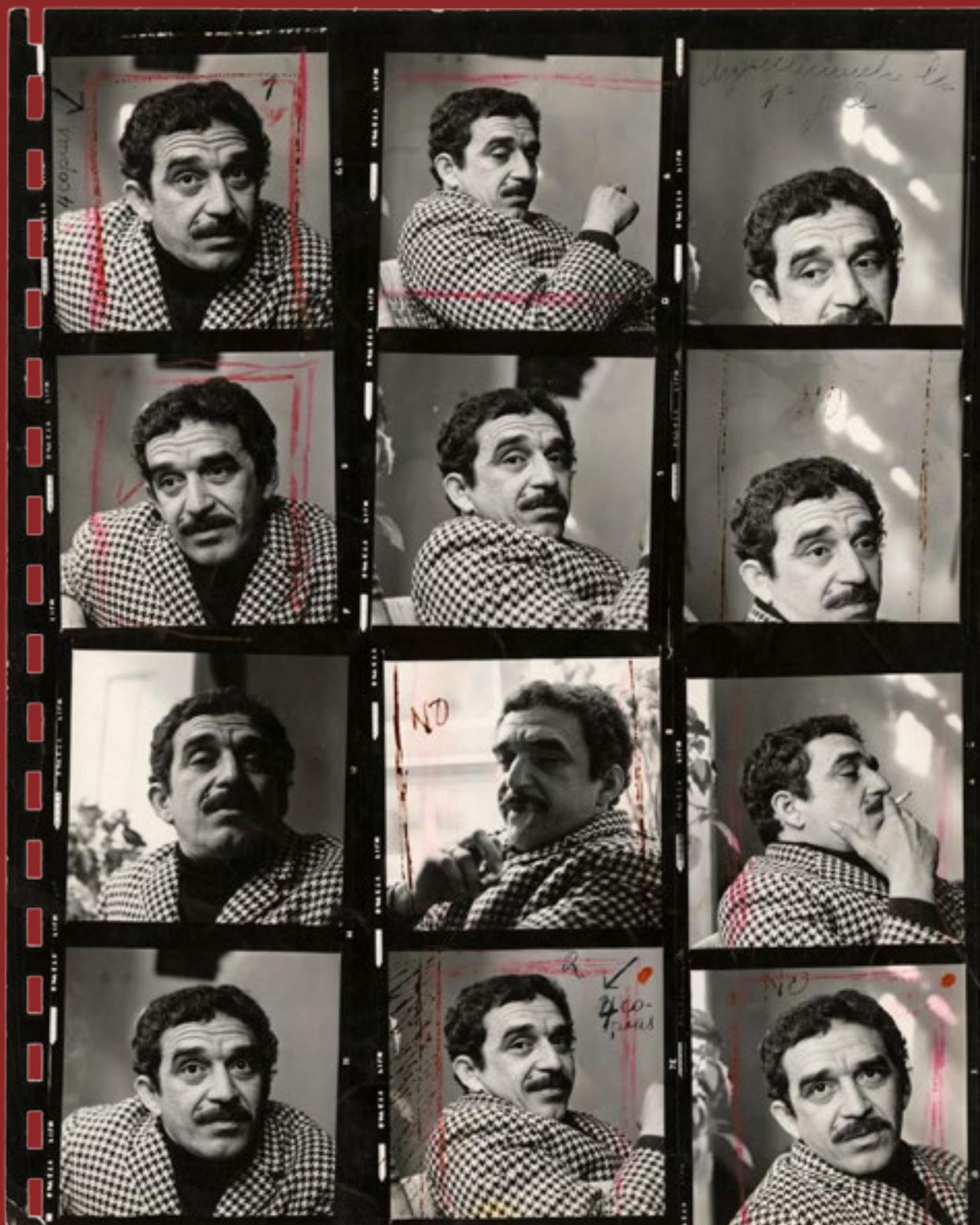
CLASSIC

SPRING 2026

A print and digital magazine about classic photography

AIPAD PREVIEW | BRITISH LANDSCAPES IN NEW YORK | FAN HO – The Master from Hong Kong
REDISCOVERING CARLO MOLLINO | WILLY FLECKHAUS – Germany's First Art Director
BEYOND THE FINE PRINT – Collecting Copper Photogravure Plates, Negatives, Contact Sheets & more

RODRIGO MOYA (1934-2025)



© Rodrigo Moya, *Gabriel García Márquez*, 1966, unique, vintage gelatin silver print, contact sheet

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16 MAY

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20 SEPT.

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14 NOV.



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Richard Prince, *Cindy Sherman* (left); Robert Mapplethorpe, *Untitled (horizontal seamless)* (right), lenticular prints, 1983. Offered as a rare group of 7 Nimslo 3-D Photographs. Estimate \$12,000 to \$18,000.

Fine Photographs

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Beyond the fine print

Collecting Copper Photogravure Plates,
Negatives, Contact Sheets & more

By Michael Diemar

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Cover: Fan Ho. Longing, Hong Kong, gelatin silver print, 1958 - 2014.

Courtesy of Blue Lotus Gallery and Fan Ho Trust.

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The Master from Hong Kong

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Willy Fleckhaus

Germany's First Art Director

By Michael Diemar



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From the editor

I'm not sure when I first heard of Willy Fleckhaus but it must have been an art director or graphic designer of the old guard in London who told me about him. Over the years I have heard numerous anecdotes about Fleckhaus and the extremes he went to in order to fulfil his vision for whatever project he was working on but those anecdotes were also told with a great deal of admiration: "Fleckhaus was a genius."

I have wanted to feature Fleckhaus in these pages for a long time and I'm glad it finally came to fruition, thanks to the Munich-based photo historian and freelance exhibition curator Hans-Michael Koetzle.

Another name I have long had on my list is Fan Ho. "Jumping up and down with excitement" are not words most would associate with visitors to a photography fair but that was exactly what I witnessed when Blue Lotus Gallery exhibited Fan Ho's work at Photo London in 2023.

In the last issue, we featured one of the most controversial cultural figures in Italy in the 20th century, Curzio Malaparte.

This time, Laura Leonelli turns her attention to another Italian figure, Carlo Mollino; designer, architect, photographer, author, racing driver and more. Unlike Malaparte, Mollino wasn't a scoundrel but he certainly wasn't politically correct.

I enjoyed compiling the final article in this issue, about collecting beyond the final print and I'm grateful to all the interviewees who contributed to it.

Finally, and as always, my thanks to Jasmine Durand and Mike Derez for their outstanding work.

Michael Diemar
Editor-in-chief

blue lotus gallery



© Fan Ho, 'Rowing On', Hong Kong, 1954
vintage silver gelatin print, signed and titled by Fan Ho in verso



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Portrait of André Jammes. Credit Nick Sherman

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By Michael Diemar

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MICHAEL HOPPEN



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With a special supplement
Through a Glass, Darkly

The articles in the 48-page supplement *Through a Glass, Darkly*, look back at the history of the photography market. Unlike the back issues of *The Classic*, the articles in the supplement won't be made available as free downloads and won't be published elsewhere.

À la recherche du temps perdu

Researching the birth of the modern photography market.
With Isabella Seniuta

The Road to the 21 December 1971 Auction at Sotheby's Belgravia

The auction that established photography in the auction world. And how it may not have happened if the timeline had been different. With Howard Ricketts

Something about Harry

Harry Lunn remembered, with Christophe Lunn, Robert Hershkowitz, Hank O'Neal, Manfred Heiting, Martin Mago, Philippe Garner and Robert Mann.

The Jammes Auctions

With Philippe Garner

The 2002 Jammes auction panorama revisited

With Dr Juliet Hacking, Christopher Mahoney, Lee Marks, Baudoin Lebon, Alex Novak, Adnan Sezer, Michael Hoppen, Daniella Dangoor, Simone Klein, Paul Hertzman, Sean Sexton, Jean-Jacques Naudet, Christophe Goeury and others.

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Gustave Le Gray. *Bateaux quittant le port du Havre*, albumen print from a glass negative, 1856.

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Roger Mayne, Edinburgh, 1958

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Eugène Atget Re-examined



Eugène Atget. *École des Beaux-Arts, Monument Henri Regnault*, albumen print, 1903. International Center of Photography, Gift of George Rohr, 2012.

The current exhibition at ICP delves into how Eugène Atget (1857-1927) came to be regarded as one of the forefathers of modern photography through the timely and tireless advocacy of Berenice Abbott. Though Atget didn't live to see it, Abbott became the ideal steward, proving that every photographer needs a champion.

Over the last three decades of his life, Atget undertook an intensive documentation of Paris and its surrounding districts, assembling a vast archive of a time and place under acute pressure from the forces of 20th century modernisation.

In 1923, Bernice Abbott, then a young sculptor, was introduced to the artist Man Ray and became his studio assistant. She soon took to photography and met Atget, whose studio was on the same street as Man Ray's, in 1926. The following year, she made three portraits of Atget, but he died shortly before she could show them to him.

Though a portion of Atget's prints were sold to the city archives of Paris, Abbott managed to acquire what remained and then, with little prospect of financial gain, immediately began promoting his work, convinced it was a major artistic achievement. Decades later, in 1968, her role as Atget's champion would come to its natural close, as the 1415 glass negatives and around 8000 vintage prints in her collection were acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, which took up the task of advocating for Atget and his work.

Curated by David Campany, Creative Director at ICP, the exhibition focuses on the years between the publication of Atget's images (uncredited) in the journal *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1926 and the appearance four years later of *ATGET: Photographe de Paris*, the first book of his work, overseen by Abbott. It presents three related expressions of Atget's work: the magazines that published it, the prints (drawn primarily from ICP's collection) and the images chosen for the book.

Runs until 4 May 2026

Eugène Atget
The Making of a Reputation
International Center of Photography (ICP)
84 Ludlow Street, New York

Cartacea – Covering the History of Photography

The 2025 Paris Photo - Aperture First PhotoBook award was won by Italian visual artist Eleonora Agostini for her book *A Study on Waitressing*, a timely, multilayered interrogation of the roles that women are asked to play in the labour market. Agostino is represented by Cartacea, a gallery that opened its doors in 2023 in Bergamo, located 60 km north-east of Milan. But the story behind the gallery started many years before Director Enrico Abrate explains.

– Fellow Director Marco Citron and I have known each other for around 30 years, sharing a passion for artistic photography. Initially, we focused on photobooks before moving onto prints. In 2017, we established ourselves as dealers in London, operating in the secondary market of vintage photography. We started exhibiting at tabletop fairs, first in Paris, then also in Amsterdam and Vienna. Having built a network over the years, we decided to open our own gallery in the historic centre of Bergamo. It's close to Milan, a major international hub, and we are now showing at the bigger art and photography fairs, developing a productive dialogue with leading Italian collectors, while continuing to foster dynamic, international relationships across the photographic community.

The gallery covers the whole of photographic history.

– We stock works by the early masters of the nineteenth century, the masters of the 20th century and right up to works by young



contemporary artists who use the photographic medium. Operating in Italy, we are particularly interested in the history of twentieth-century Italian photography, which we believe is undervalued and still very little known abroad, and we aim to contribute to its broader recognition and appreciation. That includes the work of Robert Salbitani, a leading photographer of the 1970s and 80s. And then he just disappeared. A few years ago, we went to see him and were just overwhelmed by what he showed us. Books began to appear and our gallery is preparing an exhibition to be shown later in the year.

Cartacea represents a very interesting group of artists, including Joan Fontcuberta.

– Our sole guiding criterion is the quality of the works and the integrity of the artists, as well as the clear historical relevance of the works within the history of photography. The selection of contemporary artists is likewise guided entirely by the conceptual strength and overall quality of their projects. We did a very interesting show in 2024, *Giulia Parlato – Francis Frith – Pathosformel, Archaeology of the Possible*, bringing together Giulia Parlato, a contemporary artist, with the 19th-century master Francis Frith.

Abrate notes that the market for photography is growing in Italy.

– It still lags behind countries with a long established collecting tradition such as France and the United States but significant private collectors and institutions such as Gallerie d'Italia, CAMERA, and MAST are playing a crucial role in fostering the growth and recognition of photography in Italy. At the same time, a younger generation of collectors is emerging, encouraged, in part by photography fairs and photo festivals across Europe, with interests spanning both the great masters of twentieth-century photography and contemporary research.

Top. **Roberto Salbitani.** *Il viaggiatore parallelo*, gelatin silver print (1974-1982).

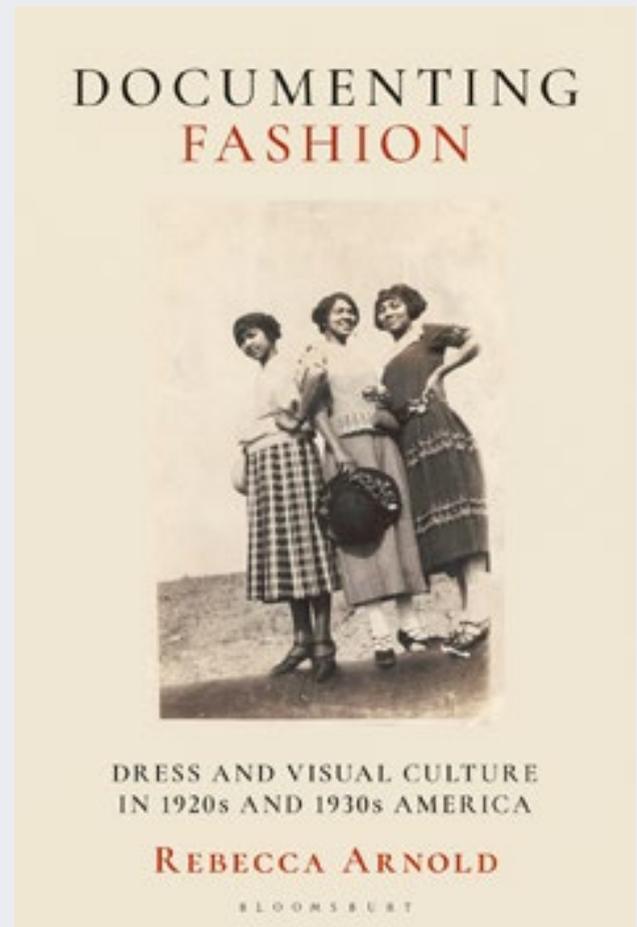
Left. **Eleonora Agostini.** *The Steps*, gelatin silver prints collage, 2020.



Clothes as Pictures



Clarence H. White. Untitled, illustration for *All Aboard!*, *Woman's Home Companion*, July 1925, Palladium print. Princeton University Art Museum.



If you keep tabs on Instagram, you will no doubt have come across Documenting Fashion, the account of historian Rebecca Arnold. It's also the title of her latest book, with the subtitle *Dress and Visual Culture in 1920s and 1930s America*.

It tells the story of clothes as pictures and of the importance and meanings of the way we picture clothes. Focusing on the rapid changes of the interwar period, fashion is explored as a sensory interplay of images. From illustrations to editorial spreads and amateur snapshots to Hollywood film, *Documenting Fashion* considers how American fashion was represented and created by visual culture. The chapters comprise thematic case studies of interconnected images that build to create a discussion of fashion as embodied experience, foregrounding the way that all viewers are also wearers, consuming magazines and other types of images, just as they purchase clothing and accessories.

Examining how media constructed and impacted the meaning of fashion during the 1920s and 1930s, the book tracks interconnections between technologies that developed in, for example, handheld cameras and Technicolor and Kodachrome color film. Aspects of photography itself are also considered such as hybrid and manipulated images, as well as light, shadow and color's impact on depictions of fashion and the body. Newspapers, fashion and women's magazines such as *Vogue* and *The Delineator* are analysed alongside examples from Black media, including *Abbott's Monthly Magazine* and *The Afro-American*.

Conceived as a revisionist history, diverse types of images of Black, white and Chinese Americans are analysed to argue for a more rounded examination of the ways dress, style and self-image were represented in still and moving images and how such imagery created a particularly American vision of vernacular modernity.

Documenting Fashion – Dress and Visual Culture in 1920s and 1930s America is published by Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

Well Hello Sailor!

They love the sea, they love their companions, they love their girlfriends, their wives, and for a few hours they love the lovers they meet in ports around the world. They are sailors, and one of them wrote on his portrait, in blue ink from a fountain pen: "Love you always."

For her new book, starting from this sailor's promise, Laura Leonelli, contributing editor to *The Classic*, collected over 120 photographs of European and American sailors from 1860 to 1960, all anonymous, and retraced the history of one of the most fascinating male figures. The only one from Ulysses to the present day who, through literature, cinema, and fashion, has conquered both men and women. The only one to have sailed not only every ocean, but also that unique ocean of images and imagery created by photography. No one more than the sailor has asked of photography what only photography could guarantee, namely that on that small and fragile paper raft, love, friendship, adventure, and the home to return to could withstand the eternal movement of the sea, its deadly depths, and its blinding light on the surface.

Love you always. Sentimental journey into the Ocean of Sailors and photography is a logbook that recounts our aquatic nature (71% of the earth is covered by water) and tells how photography also developed and multiplied in water. Is it a coincidence that the first colour to artificially flood photography is the blue of cyanotype? Perhaps, then, every photographer is a sailor in their own right, exposing themselves to the fury of the sea, but knowing that everything can be lost except memory, traces, and the sign that something of us, between the waves and the salty wind, has remained and will remain. This is what the sailors posing in front of the camera lens talk about, in an English studio in 1860, in another Italian studio in 1880, next to the statue of Giuseppe Garibaldi, and then on a Ukrainian ship in 1950, and again embracing in front of their home, on an American day in 1934, and on the quay of a French port in the 1920s. Two centuries ago, in 1826, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce took the first photograph, exposing a sheet of pewter covered with bitumen for eight hours. Today, we produce almost two trillion images a year. A storm of pixels that invites us to reflect on our destiny and that of our desires. Even the oldest ones: to leave, to remember, and to be remembered.



Love You Always. Sentimental Journey into the Ocean of Sailors and Photography is published by Postcart, www.postcart.com

Top. Anonymous photographer.
Italian sailors, circa 1930.

Bottom. Anonymous photographer.
Ukrainian sailor, circa 1960.

Ed van der Elsken at Rijksmuseum

He was the most influential Dutch photographer of the 20th century, a pioneer of street photography. This summer, Rijksmuseum is presenting a major exhibition of the work of Ed van der Elsken, offering a unique look at his multifaceted body of work, featuring both well-known and never-before-seen photographs, contact sheets, letters, notes, book designs, and film fragments.

In 2019, the Rijksmuseum and the Nederlands Fotomuseum acquired his complete work archive. This forty-year collection makes it possible to highlight all the key moments in his career, from his decision to become an independent photographer to documenting his own dying process. From the very beginning, he took his own life as a starting point, something quite unconventional at the time. His approach was intuitive and experimental, and his photography is characterised by direct, personal engagement with the people he portrayed.

19 June – 13 September

Ed van der Elsken
Rijksmuseum
Museumstraat 1
1071 XX Amsterdam

Ed van der Elsken. *Woman on a bicycle*,
gelatin silver print, 1983.



Lillian Bassman. *A Report to Skeptics*,
gelatin silver print, 1952.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Lizzie and Eric Himmel, 2025

Lillian Bassman at the Met

Can fashion photography be dangerous? Lillian Bassman was told as much when, in 1950, she started making photographs so abstract that you could barely see the clothes. Depicting mid-century style for the pages of magazines, she distilled gowns and girdles to their essential silhouettes; in her photographs, chance gestures and elegant lines convey the sensations of garments, as their details dissolve into atmospheric blur. What Bassman did not show she evoked in her expressive prints – products of darkroom distortion, achieved with tissues, brushes, and bleach.

In an earlier era, such an approach might have precluded commercial success. Bassman's timing, though, could not have been better; in 1941, at age 24, she took a design job at *Harper's Bazaar*, where a group of artists and editors were then reimagining how the magazine should look. With them, she helped introduce an avant-garde sensibility to the American newsstand, advancing new possibilities for photography in print.

Runs until 26 July

Lillian Bassman: *Bazaar and Beyond*
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave, New York, NY 10028

Robert Hershkowitz at Photo London

For its eleventh edition, Photo London is moving from Somerset House to the National Hall, Olympia. Among the exhibitors is Robert Hershkowitz, whose stand has always been one of the highlights of the fair. This year, his presentation at Photo London will include works by Julia Margaret Cameron, Aguado, Gustave Le Gray, Oscar Reylander and Vallou de Villeneuve.

“I started dealing in 1975 when I entered a partnership with Russ Anderson. Two years later, I struck out on my own. My wife Paula has always been an important part of the business, and a few years ago, my daughter joined us in it. There were collectors and curators who supported us along the way, including Sam Wagstaff, the pioneering photography collector, and Clifford Ackley and Maria Morris Hambourg, then curators at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and The Met respectively.”

In 1980, Hershkowitz showed his first exhibition, with an accompanying book, at the Camden Arts Centre, London; entitled *The British Photographer Abroad: The First Thirty Years*. In 2010, he published the book *Masterworks of European Photography*. “One of the things I’m most proud of was putting together a collection of Spanish photographs which gave rise to the development of the University Museum of Navarra and it was such an enjoyable experience.”

13–17 May

Photo London
The National Hall, Olympia
Hammersmith Road
London W14 8UX



Julia Margaret Cameron. *Baby Blossom*
(portrait of Alice Keown), albumen print,
circa 1866. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz Ltd.



Emil Herbruger. View of Niagara Falls,
albumen print, 1860s. Courtesy of Roland Belgrave.

New Tabletop Fair in London

On Saturday 16th May, the inaugural edition of The Other Photography Fair will take place at Hilton London Olympia Hotel, a three-minute walk from Photo London.

Austin Farahar, Head of Fine Photographs at Chiswick Auctions, is the promoter of the new fair.

– The aim is to champion vintage photography in all its forms, with an eclectic selection of works on offer from a network of international vintage photography dealers. Working in partnership with Vintage Photo Fairs Europe, and sponsored by Chiswick Auctions Fine Photographs Department, we strive to build on the strong foundations created in Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Senigallia and Bloomsbury to bring a new photo fair to West London, conveniently close to Photo London’s new venue. The inaugural edition will bring together collectors, curators, dealers, and enthusiasts from across the UK, Europe and the USA, with extraordinary works to be discovered at every price point.

To join the fair’s mailing list, book exhibitor tables or for more information, go to: www.otherphotographyfair.com

16 May

The Other Photography Fair
Hilton London Olympia Hotel
380 Kensington High Street
London W14 8NL

Women Photographers at the Bauhaus

Outstanding women photographers have been around since the invention of photography in the early 19th century. They experimented with photographic and artistic techniques and probed the boundaries of the new medium. So too did the women photographers of the Bauhaus. Many people today are familiar with the iconic images, but only few are aware of the women who recorded them. Featuring over 300 works from the collection of the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung in Berlin, a new exhibition celebrates women photographers at the Bauhaus.

17 April – 4 October

New Woman, New Vision.

Women Photographers of the Bauhaus“

Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung

Knesebeckstraße 1, 10623 Berlin

Gertrud Arndt. Selbstporträt im Atelier, Bauhaus Dessau, gelatin silver print, 1926.

Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2026



Guido Guidi. Venezia, gelatin silver print, 1980.

© Guido Guidi

Guido Guidi at LE BAL

The Italian photographer Guido Guidi is a seminal figure in European photography. Since the 1960s, his sustained reflection on the language of images has given rise to one of the most influential visual poetics of our time. The exhibition at LE BAL, Paris, entitled COL TEMPO (THE ALBUM OF TIME), images created from 1956 to 2024, showcases eighteen photographic sequences conceived by the artist in collaboration with the MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo in Rome. Born in Italy in 1941, Guido Guidi belongs to a generation of artists who profoundly transformed the relationship between photographic language and the perception of territory. His attention extends both to fragments of ordinary, seemingly unremarkable landscapes in Romagna, the region where he has always lived, and to iconic works by leading figures of modern architecture. By granting equal importance to the banal and the monumental, to overlooked details and established forms alike, Guidi gradually forged a radical position, earning recognition among his peers as a key reference in the history of the medium.

Runs until 24 May

Guido Guidi COLETEMPO, 1956–2024

6, Impasse de la Défense

75018 Paris

The National Museum Photography in the Netherlands

On February 7, Nederlands Fotomuseum, the National Museum of Photography in the Netherlands, reopened in its new location: the historic Santos warehouse, Rotterdam, providing a state-of-the-art home for the collection of more than 6.5 million objects. The new museum houses the Gallery of Honor of Dutch Photography, temporary exhibitions and educational spaces. It also has a library with the largest collection of photo books in Europe, a darkroom, open studio spaces, a café and a restaurant with a panoramic view of the Rotterdam skyline. In addition to the gallery of honor of Dutch photography, there are currently two temporary exhibitions. The first is an overview of photography of the city from 1843 to the present day, taken by both professional and amateur photographers. The second celebrates the timeless beauty of one of the oldest and most recognizable photographic techniques: Cyanotype. In addition to rare, early blueprints, the exhibition features work by 15 contemporary artists.

Runs until May 24, 2026

Rotterdam in Focus: The City in Photographs 1843 – Now

Runs until June 7, 2026

Awakening in Blue: An Ode to Cyanotype

Nederlands Fotomuseum
Brede Hilledijk 95
3072 KD Rotterdam



Suzette Bousema. *Future Relics*, cyanotype, 2025. © Suzette Bousema.

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Gower (Abel, 1836–1899?). A view of Dejima from Minamiyamate in the Nagasaki foreign settlement, June 1859, salted paper print from a glass negative, 15 x 20 cm

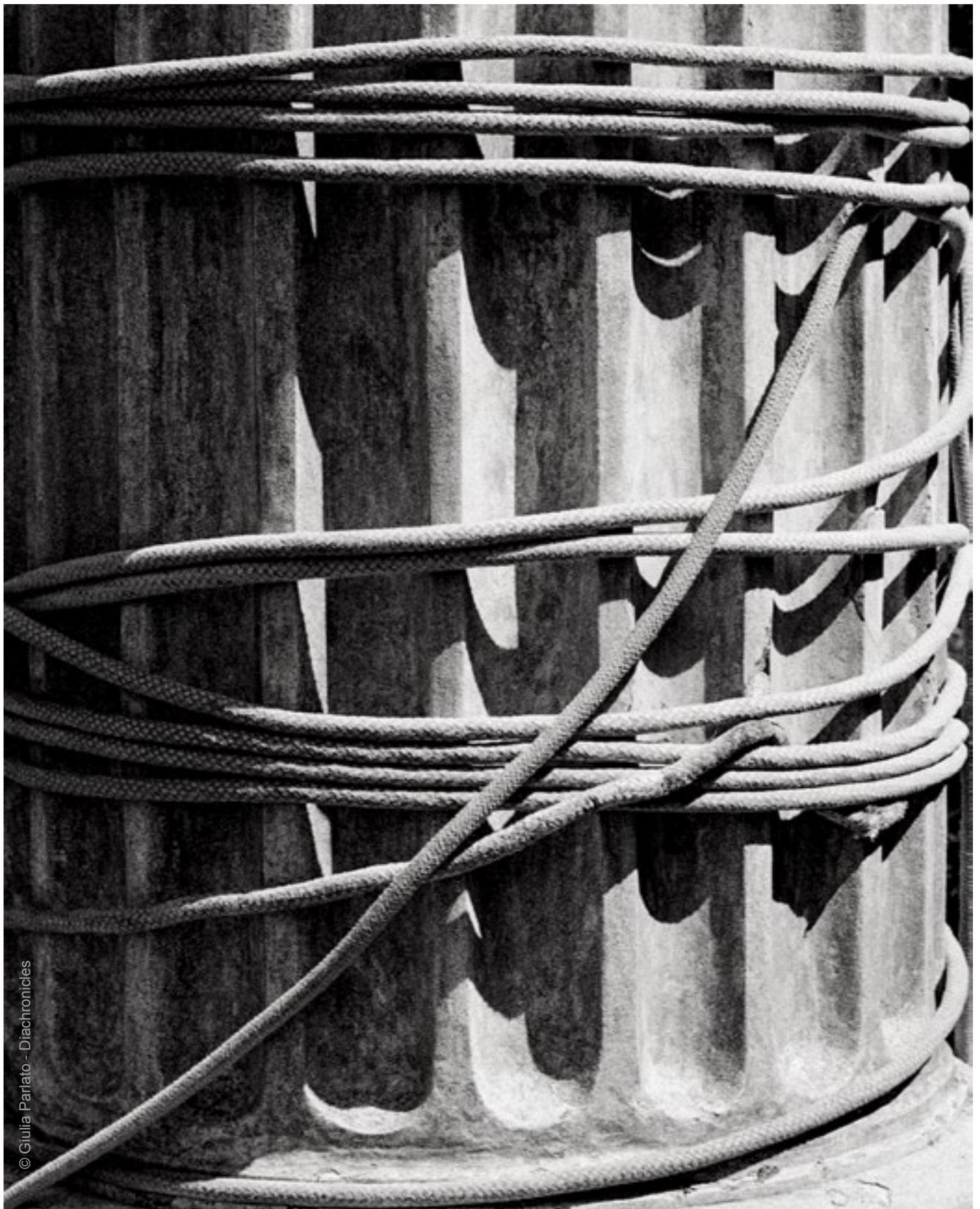
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THE PHOTO GRAPHY SHOW

PRESENTED BY AIPAD

RETURNS TO
THE PARK AVENUE ARMORY
NEW YORK CITY

APRIL 23–26, 2026
VIP PREVIEW APRIL 22, 2026

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The Photography Show – Presented by AIPAD, the world's longest-running photography fair, returns to the Park Avenue Armory, New York City, for its 45th edition.

The fair will take place 22-26 April, showcasing exceptional presentations by members of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD), along with guest exhibitors and galleries new to the fair. The 2026 iteration of the fair marks the solidification of AIPAD's status as the market leader in photography and the crystallisation of The Photography Show as a benchmark event for the exhibition of photography. After several years of refinement, The Photography Show has now reached its optimal size, one that allows it to most effectively shape, support, and advocate for the field of photography in all of its historical and contemporary permutations.

AIPAD is proud to welcome back Lead Cultural Partner **MUUS**, whose partnership will allow The Photography Show to feature an eclectic mix of illuminating and celebratory events. Four days of **AIPAD Talks**, hosted by thought leaders in the arts and culture space, will be accompanied by insightful walkthroughs and educational events.

AIPAD is excited to introduce **Focal Point**, a new solo presentation sector for The Photography Show 2026. Focal Point will highlight galleries and artists focused on lens-based photography and is designed to showcase how artists have historically expanded our collective understanding of what photography is and how contemporary artists continue to show us what it can become.

The celebration of the prestigious **AIPAD Award**, presented annually to a pioneer in the community, recognising them for changing the ways we perceive photography, as well as the **AIPAD Lifetime Achievement Award**, honouring the legacies of photographic icons, will take place during the new **Opening Night Party** on Wednesday, April 22.



Michael Hoppen

Michael Hoppen, London, is showing a selection of classic photographs, by Charles Matton, William Morynski, Tamiko Nishimura, Masatoshi Naito, Frederick Karoly and others. Contemporary works include Sohei Nishino's latest Diorama Map, of Venice.

Fredrick Karoly. *Photogram*, gelatin silver print, 1945. Courtesy of Michael Hoppen.

Rolf Art

Rolf Art, Buenos Aires, focuses on Sara Facio and Alicia D'Amico, pioneers who transformed Argentine and Latin American photography. The exhibition revisits three of their seminal photo essays produced in collaboration with La Azotea, the first editorial house in Latin America dedicated exclusively to photography. Facio and D'Amico's work forged a profoundly humanistic and politically engaged visual language, opening the path for future generations.

Alicia D'Amico. *Jorge Luis Borges, Buenos Aires*, gelatin silver print, 1963. Courtesy of Rolf Art.

Ibasha / IN-DEPENDANCE

Ibasha / IN-DEPENDANCE, Antwerp, is headed by AIPAD President Martijn van Pieterse and his wife Annemarie Zethof. Pieterse explains, "At his year's fair, we are looking to introduce our second gallery IN-DEPENDANCE, where materiality, tactility and concept take center stage. We are presenting six artists from the gallery, Anton Kusters, Patrick Waterhouse, Morvarid K., Steffen Diemer, Tjitske Oosterholt and FLORE. We are also including two Japanese artists from IBASHO, Sayuri Ichida and Yumiko Izu in the presentation.

Anton Kusters. *Inter, Remnants II*, 2024, pigment ink on Hahnemühle FineArt Baryta. Courtesy of IN-DEPENDANCE.

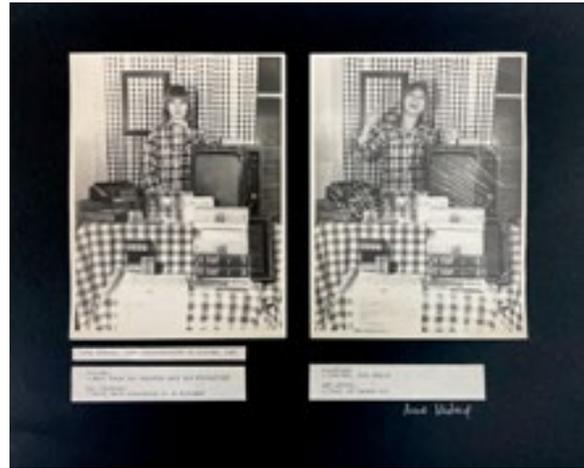


Deborah Bell Photographs

Deborah Bell Photographs, New York, is showing a selection of gallery artists, with a section devoted to American photographer Marvin P. Lazarus, including a portrait of Gino Severini, the Italian painter, and a leading member of the Futurist movement, who for much of his life divided his time between Rome and Paris.

Gino Severini (blurred hat), Paris, March 1959 vintage gelatin silver print on original mount.

Courtesy of Deborah Bell Photographs.



M77

M77, Milan, is showing early works by Italian photographer Nino Migliori. A leading name within the Neorealist movement, Migliori began taking photographs in 1948, as Italy reemerged from the fascist dictatorship and the Second World War. He joined the photographers' club in Bologna set out to discover new people and places. "We were able to enjoy the simple things that had been missing during the war years: walking along streets, making new friends, eating in their homes, going dancing." Migliori travelled throughout Italy, capturing everyday scenes, often in sequence, always with empathy and affection.

Nino Migliori. From *Gente dell'Emilia (Frati volanti)*, 1956, pigment print on 100% cotton paper. Copyright Fondazione Nino Migliori. Courtesy M77 and the artist.

Paul Hertzmann

Paul M. Hertzmann, Inc., San Francisco, is presenting a wide selection of works from different eras, including *It's in Squares* (self-portraits), a diptych by Polish artist Anna Kutera, made in 1980. It pokes fun at the demands and the limitations of consumerism. Kutera literally defaces the second image as she joyously deflates the arbitrary demands of consumerism and rigidity of the Polish authoritarian regime before the demise of the Soviet Union. The label underneath reads "The question: – Dear, must everything be in squares? The Answer: Dear, of course not!"

Anna Kutera. *It's in Squares* (self-portraits), diptych of two vintage silver prints, 1980.

Courtesy of Paul M. Hertzmann, Inc.



Large Glass

The presentation of Large Glass, London, includes works by Guido Guidi, Mario Cresci, John Gossage and Gerry Johansson, including a group of the latter's photographs of Chicago, taken in 1996.

Gerry Johansson. *Chicago, 1996*, gelatin silver print. Courtesy the artist and Large Glass, London © Gerry Johansson.

Monroe Gallery

Monroe Gallery of Photography, Santa Fé, is presenting a distinctly curated exhibit, with central focus on Diné (Navajo) photographer Eugene Tapahe's *Jingle Dress Project*. It brings global attention to Native American issues in these times of social differences through the healing power of the Ojibwe jingle dress dance. Tapahe has travelled over 25 000 miles, documenting family members dancing the healing jingle dress dance in cities, National Parks and monuments, honouring the places where their ancestors once lived. This project has received national and international recognition for its unifying effect on communities. Also on exhibit will be a selection of important contemporary photojournalism with a focus on American politics, climate issues, recent ICE actions and refugee migration.

Eugene Tapahe. *Protect The Sacred, Redwood Forest National Park in California, native land of the Yurok, Tolowa, Karok, Chilula, and Wiyot people, 2023*, archival pigment. Courtesy of Monroe Gallery of Photography.

Keith de Lellis Gallery

Keith de Lellis Gallery, New York, is focusing on portraits of great 20th century Americans, including a rare pairing of portraits of two great African American women who made history in the first decades of the 20th century by their achievements in two very different fields, Belle da Costa Greene, who rose to prominence in high society in 1905 when she was hired by J. P. Morgan as the librarian and curator of the financiers collection of books, manuscripts and art and Josephine Baker who became world famous when she took Paris by storm as a world class entertainer singing her way to fame and fortune at the Folies Bergère in Paris.

Baron Adolph de Meyer. *Belle da Costa Greene, 1912*, vintage platinum print. Courtesy of Keith de Lellis Gallery.



Stephen Daiter

Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago is reintroducing two projects by two significant artists. Lynne Cohen's oversized gelatin silver prints from the late 1980s to early 1990s. Her conceptual work from the 1970s onward was remarkably rigorous and prescient. While her practice aligns most naturally with the New Topographics movement, she diverged by turning inward, exploring the interior landscape to create a psychological study of human presence rather than the external, descriptive approach of many of her contemporaries. The second artist is Dawoud Bey. In 2005, marking the 30th anniversary of the inception of his *Harlem, USA* project, Bey published a suite of ten photographs from the series in an edition of fifteen. At the time, he placed several with museums and collectors, but soon moved on to new work but the gallery recently located several additional portfolios.

Dawoud Bey. *A Boy in front of the Loew's 125th Street Movie Theater*, 1976. 2005 Carbon pigment photograph from the porBolio *Dawoud Bey: Harlem U.S.A.*, published by Blackpoint, edition 2005. Courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery.

Charles Isaacs Gregory Leroy

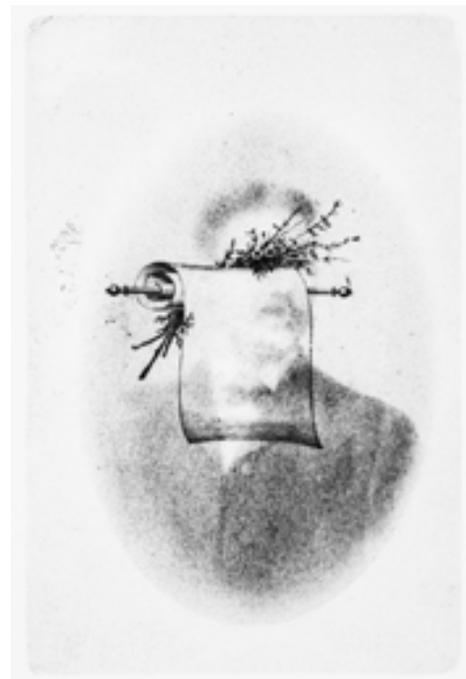
Charles Isaacs, New York, and Gregory Leroy, Madrid are joining forces to show works by Latin American photographers. Included is a large group of vintage dye transfer prints by Kati Horna from her series *Muros de Mexico*. In addition, the presentation includes groups of vintage works by Lazaro Blanco and Manuel Alvarez Bravo.

Kati Horna. Untitled, from the series *Muros de Mexico*, vintage dye transfer print, 1978. Courtesy of Charles Isaacs/Gregory Leroy.

Vasari

Vasari, Buenos Aires, is showing works by Annemarie Heinrich and Julio Le Parc. Heinrich, born in Germany in 1912, studied dance, music, and scenography, which would contribute to her distinctive photographic style and dramatic use of lighting. In 1930, she opened her first studio in Buenos Aires. She specialised in portraits and nude photographs. Heinrich is considered one of Argentina's most important photographers.

Annemarie Heinrich. *Moda Serie Sombreros*, vintage gelatin silver print, 1943. Courtesy of Vasari.



Galerie XII

Galerie XII, Paris and Santa Monica, is showing works by three artists; Marcel Bolomet, Sophie Zénon and Paolo Ventura. A Swiss-born photojournalist and humanist, Marcel Bolomet was the first official photographer for the League of Nations and the United Nations. His lens captured defining moments of the 20th century, including the liberation of Paris and Mussolini's death.

Marcel Bolomet. *Secours aux Enfants. Retour d'Enfants Français. Doll.*, 1942.
Courtesy of Galerie XII.

Stephen Bulger

Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, is presenting a solo booth of work by Joan Lyons. A pivotal figure in Rochester, New York since the 1960s, Lyons has worked across photography, printmaking, and artists' books, combining historical and contemporary processes with technical innovation. Through a feminist lens, her work draws from private life and everyday experience, challenging the conventions of traditional photography and moving far beyond the black-and-white canon. The presentation brings together work from several major projects with an expansive range of media, including antiquated photographic processes, photograms, offset lithography, pinhole photography, xerography, screen printing, and digital prints.

Joan Lyons. Untitled, offset lithograph from the portfolio *Presences*, 1980.

© Joan Lyons / courtesy Stephen Bulger Gallery.

The Hulett Collection

The Hulett Collection, Tulsa, is showing a solo exhibition with Andy Mattern's project *Ghosts*. Mattern writes, "Hiding on the backs of some long-forgotten photographs are "ghost" images, accidental traces of other pictures left pressed up against the surface. Often barely visible but on occasion startlingly clear, these apparitions are the result of a chemical reaction caused by platinum photographs. Under certain conditions, the right platinum print stacked with the right paper for decades, a mirror image will appear. As a conceptual gesture, I rephotograph and reanimate them as hand-coated platinum prints."

Andy Mattern. *Ghost No. 87*, Platinum Print, 2023.
Courtesy of the Hulett Collection.

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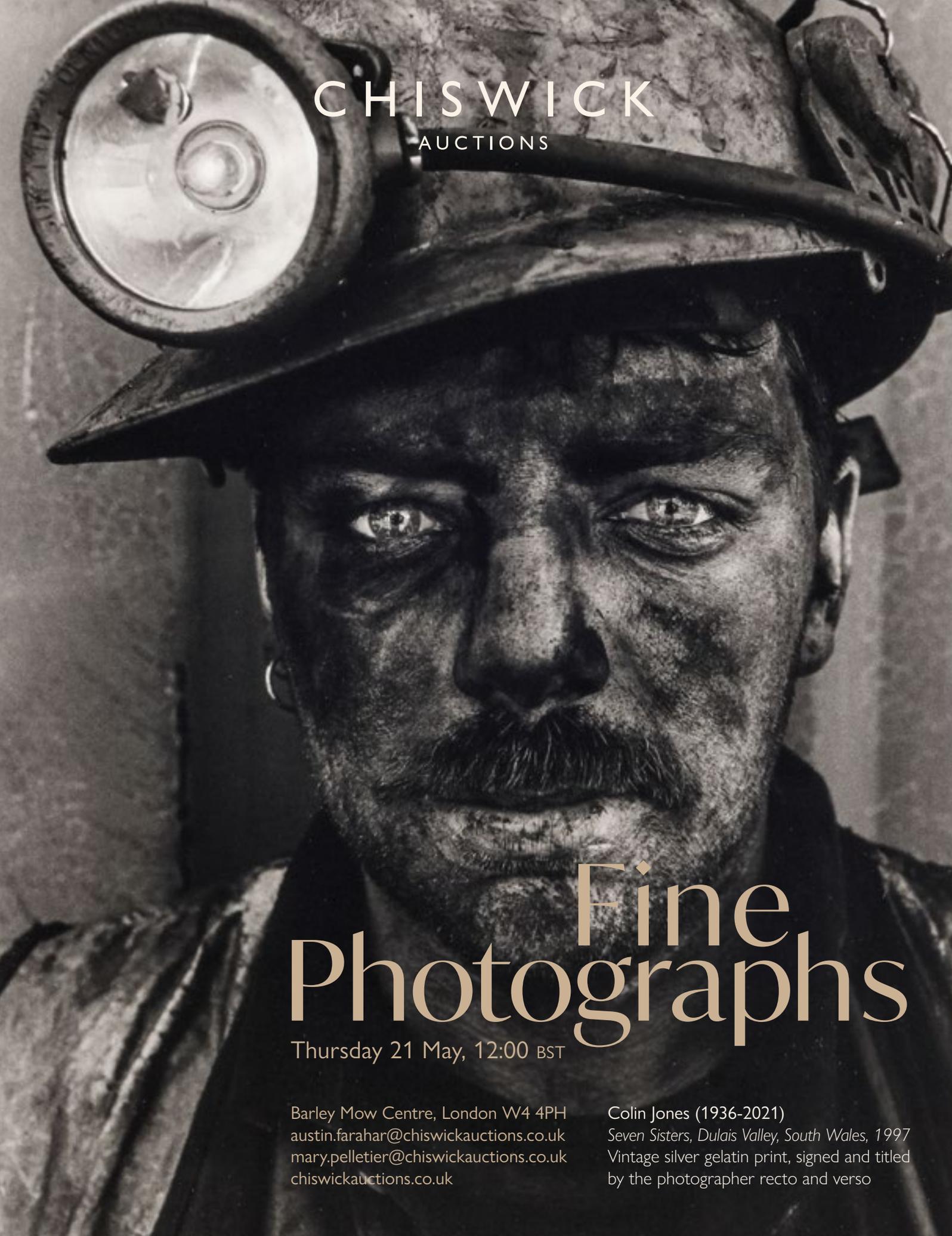
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Colin Jones (1936-2021)
Seven Sisters, Dulais Valley, South Wales, 1997
Vintage silver gelatin print, signed and titled
by the photographer recto and verso

BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

British LANDSCAPES... in NEW YORK

All images are courtesy of Hans P. Kraus Jr.





In the winter of 1842 or 1843, just a few years after presenting his photographic process to the world, William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) ventured out with his camera on the grounds of his home at Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire, South West England. It resulted in one of the earliest masterpieces of landscape photography, *Oak tree in winter, Lacock Abbey*, a salt print from a calotype negative of a leafless majestic oak, an image that emphasises the tree's size and structure in silhouette against the clear light of winter, offering a rich contrast to other trees along the horizon.

The salt print is included in the current exhibition at Hans P. Kraus Jr., New York; *British Landscapes*, a group show featuring, alongside Talbot, rare works by Roger Fenton, Sir John Herschel, Roger Fenton, Captain Horatio Ross, Payne Jennings, and others.

Oak tree in winter, Lacock Abbey signals just how far Talbot had advanced since his time in Italy, in 1833, when he struggled to achieve results with the camera lucida, the optical device patented as a drawing aid at the beginning of the 19th century. Frustrated by his inability to draw, Talbot conceived of the idea of photography and realised it in 1834 by coating

light-sensitive silver salts on paper at his Wiltshire home, Lacock Abbey. Finding that there was insufficient light to affect the salted paper in a camera, he succeeded with direct contact photograms. Where the object, such as a leaf or a piece of lace, in direct contact with a sheet of chemically sensitised paper, did not block the light, the paper darkened, thus producing a negative. He determined that, by using this negative in contact with another sheet of sensitised paper, he could reverse the tones to make positives. In 1835 Talbot achieved camera images; in January 1839, prompted by Daguerre's announcement of the daguerreotype and encouraged by his mother, who held an important influence over him, he revealed his process to the public under the term photogenic drawing.

In 1840 he discovered that chemical development brought out a latent image in his paper negative and patented this as the calotype. The concept of using a negative to make multiple prints on paper defined the central path of photography forward into the digital age. In the 1840s Talbot struggled to establish the unique identity of his calotype process and its value to the graphic arts. His visual legacy testifies to the diversity of his subject matter, which encompassed botanical studies, art reproductions, architecture, landscape and portraiture. Lacock Abbey served as an influential focal point for these endeavours and Talbot's family, friends and staff were his photographic models.

Left. **William Henry Fox Talbot.** *Oak tree in winter, Lacock Abbey*, salt print from a calotype negative, probably 1842-1843.

Top. **Sir John Frederick William Herschel.** *No 557 Worcester Cathedral*, camera lucida drawing, pencil on paper, 1829.



The camera lucida was used more successfully and to great purpose by Talbot's close friend and fellow scientist Sir John Herschel (1792-1872). He would use it throughout his life to record cities and landscapes in England and on the Continent. Herschel returned to Britain from South Africa just months before Talbot revealed his new art to the public in January 1839. When he visited Herschel a week later, Sir John had independently invented his own photographic process. He had no need for photography to make an image, preferring the analytical process of drawing. His main interest was in what the effect of light on materials revealed about their nature. He first applied hypo as a fixer and coined the words "photography", "negative and positive", and "snapshot" to precisely describe aspects of the emerging art. Although he never seriously took photographs himself, he inspired many others to do so, most notably Julia Margaret Cameron. Her portraits of Sir John late in his life remain as our image of this man. A skilled draughtsman, Herschel's artistic talents enabled him to create beautiful and precise camera lucida pencil drawings. Included in the exhibition is a delicate 1829 example, showing Worcester Cathedral in its landscape, a reminder of the direct relationship between drawing and photography. Situated on a bank overlooking the River Severn,

Worcester Cathedral was built between 1084 and 1504 and is noteworthy for the many styles of English architecture in which it was constructed. The overwhelming majority of Herschel's camera lucida drawings are now in public collections; only a few are known to remain in private collections.

John Dillwyn Llewelyn (1810-1882) is included with *Lower Lake, Penllergare, South Wales*, 1850s, a backlit lakeside view, showing crisp detail, an astonishing accomplishment, especially as it was made from a paper negative. Llewelyn was a wealthy landowner and magistrate, a distinguished botanist, a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Linnean Society and a founding member of the Royal Institution of South Wales. He married William Henry Fox Talbot's cousin Emma; their daughter was Mary Thereza; all family members were photographers. Many of his landscape views were made around his Welsh estate of Penllergare, near Swansea, and around the Welsh coast. Talbot's frequent visits and correspondence with his cousin Emma kept Llewelyn current with the latest advances in the medium. Although Llewelyn travelled extensively, England, Scotland and particularly his native Wales, provided the subjects for his photographs. The Llewelyn country home at Penllergare bustled with scientific



undertakings, reflecting a broad range of interests, including botany, zoology and astronomy. Photography became another interest shared amongst the family, with Emma often making prints from her husband John's negatives and Mary Thereza herself taking up photography in the 1840s. Later in life, Mary Thereza recalled the enthusiasm her family and its circle had for photography, noting that "no one living at Penllergare could help being interested in what was of absorbing interest to my Father & Mother and I must have heard many conversations on the subject when letters to my Mother from her Cousin Henry Fox Talbot arrived..."

There are several works by Roger Fenton in the exhibition, including the cloud study, *Afternoon*, a salt print from a collodion negative, made in 1856. It was exhibited at the Photographic Society, London, the following year. Inspired by John Constable's cloud studies and J. M. W. Turner's painterly evocations of atmosphere and light, Fenton's rendition of clouds and sky is an intensely felt meditation on nature hovering between the visible and the imagined while manifesting a reverence for the observable world. Fenton began a career in law in 1839, the same year photography was introduced to the public. In 1843, he married, set aside his law studies, and moved to Paris to take up painting,

Left. **John Dillwyn Llewelyn.** *Lower Lake, Penllergare, South Wales*, albumen print from a paper negative, 1850s.

Top. **Roger Fenton.** *Afternoon*, salt print from a collodion negative, 1856.

a decision that transformed his life and provided the artistic context that allowed him to thrive subsequently as a photographer. In 1851, Fenton was shown waxed paper negatives, a modification of Talbot's calotype process, by Gustave Le Gray, and noted that "the wax process by which these pictures were produced... superseded in practical employment all the other kinds of prepared paper." By early 1852 Fenton produced his first known photographs, becoming one of the earliest photographers in Britain to use the waxed paper negative. That same year Fenton formed an alliance with the engineer Charles Blacker Vignoles who had secured the contract to build what was to be the largest suspension bridge in Europe across the River Knieper, at Kiev. Fenton received his first commission from Vignoles to photograph the building of the bridge. Fenton exhibited some of his Russian views at the Society of Arts in London in December 1852 to wide acclaim. In 1854 Fenton was appointed the first official photographer of the British Museum and made portraits of the royal family.

Working very little in waxed paper after Russia, Fenton instead chose to master the combination of wet collodion on glass negatives with smoothly textured albumen prints. In 1855, he was commissioned by the Manchester publishing firm of Thomas Agnew to document the war effort in the Crimea, where the Russians faced the combined forces of the British, French, and Turkish armies battling the growing threat of Russia's expanding Black Sea Fleet. Fenton's undertaking was the first serious and extensive photographic documentation of a war. In October 1855,



Agnew mounted an exhibition of nearly three hundred of Fenton's Crimean photographs in London, bringing them to the public's attention and creating a demand for portfolios of prints. After five months in the Crimea, Fenton returned to England a changed man. Over the next five years, his photographic output focused on architecture and landscape. The preeminent British photographer of the 1850s, Fenton mastered all its genres and advocated for the medium's place among the fine arts. After a decade of devoting himself full-time to photography and promoting the art to the public, Fenton abandoned it in 1862, sold his equipment at auction and resumed his former profession in the law.

Top. **Captain Horatio Ross.** *Lone tree, Scottish coast*, albumen print from a waxed paper negative, circa 1858.

Right. **John Payne Jennings.** *The Bowder Stone, Borrowdale, Lake District*, albumen print, 1870s.

With his photography, Captain Horatio Ross (1801-1886) created a unique picture of life in mid-19th century Scotland. A Highland aristocrat and legendary marksman, his enthusiasm for photography was second only to his passion for nature. For *Lone tree, Scottish coast*, circa 1858, Ross angled his camera upwards, silhouetting the tree against an empty sky, reducing its form to two-dimensional patterns, emphasising the intricate masses of tangled wood. In 1839, when Talbot first made public his mode of multiplying photographic impressions by producing a negative photograph, Captain Ross became one of his most ardent disciples. In those early days of photography, he probably had few equals; amateur or professional. He became a skilled practitioner in every branch and detail of the art, which he had laboriously mastered. Ross was one of the earliest and certainly one of the most accomplished of the paper negative photographers of the 1840s and 1850s. *Lone tree, Scottish coast* is one of the albumen prints

Ross made between 1858 and 1868 and compiled by him into a presentation album as a personal gift to his wife, Justine Henrietta Ross, in 1870.

The photographs of John Payne Jennings (1843-1926) are extremely rare compared with those from other successful British studios of the 1870s. Jennings's picturesque views were often included in special edition publications of British poets and novelists. On display are three albumen prints made in the 1870s from his English Lake District portfolio depicting the dramatic landscapes that inspired the Romantic poet William Wordsworth and that were adored by John Ruskin, who owned a home nearby on the shore of Coniston Water. One of the prints shows Boulder Stone, most often called the "Bowder Stone" possibly from the pronunciation in the local dialect. Weighing more than four million pounds, thirty feet high and fifty feet wide, it was once thought to have been carried from remote Scotland by Ice Age glaciers. However, it is composed of Lake District volcanic rock that probably tumbled from a massive rock fall more than 10 000 years ago. It was first developed as a tourist attraction by the wealthy eccentric Joseph "King Pocky" Pocklington, who set up the ladder in 1798, the successor to which stands to this day.

Also included in the exhibition is Henry White (1819-1903), a London lawyer and regarded as one of Britain's preeminent landscape photographers. Like Roger Fenton, he possessed a technical ability that enabled him to perceive and render a scene as monochromatic shifts of the subtlest distinction. His views, taken mainly in Surrey and North Wales, were instrumental in establishing aesthetic standards in British landscape photography, with subjects such as fields, cottages, mills, as well as closeup views of foliage and other images of nature. Included in the exhibition is *The Cornfield, Surrey*. As with many of his photographs, this print registers a city dweller's delight in natural surroundings, here finding a farmer napping in one of the stooks. It's a rare photogalvanograph proof on chine collé, produced for *Photographic Art Treasures Part V*, published in July 1857. The photogalvanographic process was invented by Paul Pretsch (1808-1873). He began his career under Alois Auer in the Vienna Staatsdruckerei, before moving to London. In 1854 this Viennese resident in London patented a process called "photo-galvanography" for the printed reproduction of photographs and his Photo-Galvanographic Company launched the first commercial attempt to print photographs. It was the beginning of a new era in the history of photography and printing:





photoengraving, the publication of photographs in printing ink, the first relief halftone and the first commercial use of the halftone.

Frederick H. Evans (1853-1943) is represented by prints as well as magic lantern slides, including *Woodland Study, Redland Woods, Surrey, 1893*. Evans started his professional life as a bookseller but was increasingly drawn to photography, "by my lifelong love and study of the beautiful", a goal he never deviated from. Around 1890 Evans began to photograph English and French cathedrals; it was his architectural photography that established his reputation. Later on, Evans turned increasingly to landscape photography, in which he explored the effects of light in forested areas. There is a sense of peace and stability in all of his photographs, an aesthetic that resulted from his absolute mastery over the tyranny of time. In order to secure the photographs that he pre-visualised, Evans would frequently slow down time, or speed it up. He used multiple exposures to

work in harmony with nature, rather than against her will. His preferred method of presenting his work was through glass lantern slides, which he crafted meticulously. He was a master of the platinum print, then called the platinotype, which created an image of clear grey tones whose subtlety of range allowed for exceptional realistic detail. His output declined by the 1920s due to the high price of platinum, his dissatisfaction with the new silver paper and his dislike of the photographic avant-garde's interest in abstraction.

British Landscapes

Runs until 30 April
Hans P. Kraus Jr.
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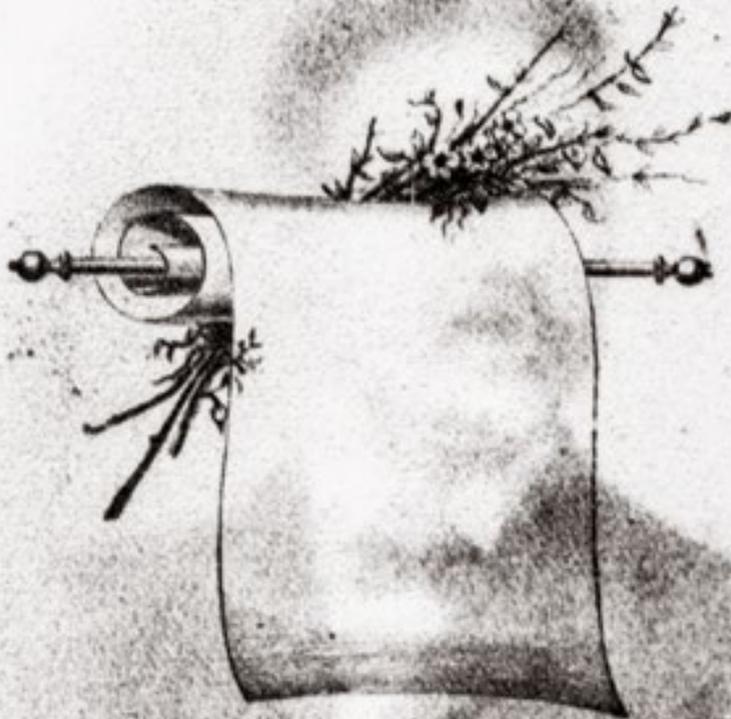
Left. **Henry White**. *The Cornfield, Surrey*, from *Photographic Art Treasures Part V*, published July 1857. Photogalvanograph proof on chine collé.

Right. **Frederick H. Evans**. *Woodland Study, Redlands Woods, Surrey*, lantern slide, 1893.

H

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François Kollar (1904–1979)
Palais de la Radio at the Paris World's Fair, 1937
Vintage gelatin silver print. 26.3 × 22.5 cm

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BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

Fan Ho

The master from Hong Kong

All images are courtesy of Blue Lotus Gallery and Fan Ho Trust.

During an intense period of some 10 years, Fan Ho (1931-2016) both captured and reimagined a Hong Kong that is now largely lost to history. Despite winning close to 300 international awards for his photography, most before he had reached 30, he embarked on a career as a film director, thereby diminishing his profile as a photographer not only internationally but also in Hong Kong. Still, those who had seen his images were not likely to forget them.

At the 2023 edition of Photo London, a selection of his works was shown by Hong Kong-based Blue Lotus Gallery. The gallery had taken a space on the first floor of Somerset House, which received much less traffic than the spaces on the ground floor and the temporary pavilion in the court yard. But word about the Fan Ho images spread quickly and soon the gallery space was absolutely packed. Many of the admirers of Fan Ho had only ever seen his images in books and magazines, while many of those who had never



Left page. **Fan Ho.** *Private*, gelatin silver print, 1960.

Right. **Fan Ho.** *Whitty Street Diary*, gelatin silver print, 1950s-60s.



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- 1. **Fan Ho.** *Life in a Slum*, gelatin silver print, 1966.
- 2. **Fan Ho.** *As Evening Hurries By*, gelatin silver print, 1954.
- 3. **Fan Ho.** *Street Scene*, gelatin silver print, 1957.
- 4. **Fan Ho.** *Obsession*, gelatin silver print, 1964.
- 5. **Fan Ho.** *Children's Paradise*, gelatin silver print, 1959.



seen his images at all asked themselves, “Why have I not heard of this photographer before?” As I found out, Sarah Greene, Director of Blue Lotus Gallery, had asked herself pretty much the same question when she first came across his images.

I started my conversation with Sarah Greene by asking her about Fan Ho’s early years.

– Fan Ho was born in 1931 in Shanghai, the only son of prosperous silk traders. His father owned a large, elegant shop in Huangpu, a lively district of old Shanghai near the Bund, the waterfront along the Huang River. The family lived in the Piers Apartments in Hongkou, not far from the Bund. One of Fan Ho’s earliest photographs depicts a rain-soaked road facing the river, taken from that apartment. He was deeply loved by his family. These were the glory days of old Shanghai, a vibrant and affluent international city on the brink of upheaval as the socio-political situation deteriorated. Life in Shanghai changed on Pearl Harbor Day, 8 December 1941. Four years after entering the city, the Imperial Japanese Army finally occupied the International Settlement. War had fully erupted, and Ho Fan’s parents, stranded in Macau, where they operated factories, were unable to return until 1945. Ho Fan, then just ten years old, found himself alone in the city, cared for only by the family’s governess.

You recorded his life story over several days. What did he tell you about those years?

– It was a very scary time, not least because planes were flying over the city, dropping bombs. He frequently visited his uncle and aunt for dinner and

escaped his loneliness by writing long letters to his mother, reading books, including Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* and Alexandre Dumas’ *The Three Musketeers*, and by going to the movies about three times a week, at a cinema called Grand Theater / Da Guong Ming, near the old race track, now People’s Park close to Nanjing Road. It was during that time that his three lifelong passions were formed. He loved movies, he loved reading; serious literature by Leo Tolstoy and the classics, tragedy and drama, and he loved photography. He was given a Box Brownie around that age and would venture onto the streets of Shanghai to take pictures. Even at that young age, he was not drawn to frivolous things but to the drama of life, as it was expressed in different art forms, and it set the tone for his later work.

When did he reunite with his family?

– His parents managed to return in 1945 to take him out of Shanghai and move the family to Guangzhou. Many merchants left Shanghai at that time, as the new Communist Party regime was confiscating businesses and property. Some people lost fortunes. Fan Ho and his family first moved to Guangzhou and then, in 1949 when Fan Ho was 18, to Hong Kong to reestablish themselves there.

Had he planned a career for himself at that stage?

– By the time the family settled in Hong Kong, he was 18 years old. He was thinking of studying literature and philosophy but his parents didn’t think

Fan Ho. *On the Stage of Life*, gelatin silver print, 1956.



it was a good idea. There's not much money to be made as a philosopher. He was reading and reading a lot. He told me once that he had been asked to write an essay and came back with something that was essentially a book! When Fan Ho did something, it was with a lot of passion and intense effort. Today, he would probably be diagnosed with ADHD or something, his energy was endless for the things he loved.

He was in his 20s when he started producing his now famous images. There's a story that he became more focused on photography as a result of him getting terrible headaches and that he would take long walks to alleviate the pain, always bringing his camera.

– It was on the orders of the family doctor who realised that Fan Ho's splitting headaches were because of him reading and writing so much. "You have to give yourself a break!" the doctor told him so he

Fan Ho. *Storm Approaching*, gelatin silver print, 1951.

decided to go for long walks but doing nothing wasn't for Fan Ho so he would take his camera. But Fan Ho being Fan Ho, he photographed with the same obsession. Taking photographs wasn't enough. He began reading all the literature on photography that was available. He also joined the Hong Kong Photographic Society and soon, he was put in charge of its library, reading every new book as it arrived.

He really went for it?

– He did and he was very aware of what was going on in terms of different schools of thought related to photography and the work that was produced in the rest of the world. At the same time, he kept an eye on Salon photography in Hong Kong and what was popular on the scene. He obsessively absorbed everything about photography. Still, he

continued to listen to music, especially opera, and going to the cinema. Rita, his wife, told me that sometimes he would take her to the cinema to see two movies in a row. Everything was very intense with Fan Ho and it comes out in his photography.

We are into the 1950s. What was the photography scene in Hong Kong like at that point?

– It was very, very active. There was a big scene, with great photographers and they got together and learned from each other. The bar was set high, which can be seen if you see the entry level of international salon magazines of that time. As I mentioned before, Fan Ho was very active in the Hong Kong Photographic Society. He was often on its jury and also taught his peers how to look at photographs, how to photograph and how to compose an image. He started to write essays about photography, which were published in local magazines. At the age of 28, he compiled all these essays into a small book called *Thoughts on Street Photography*. We recently republished the book in its original Chinese language with

some additional material and we hope to publish it in English at some point. He doesn't write about how to use your camera. It's about how to perceive the world, how to structure it, how to work with light, with compositions, how to work with subjective versus objective photography and all those principles still apply today.

In interviews, Fan Ho would often mention Henri Cartier-Bresson and *The Decisive Moment* but going through his images, there's also a strong influence of modernism and he would move seamlessly between the two.

– I think that's right. In Europe, you were either into objective or subjective photography, and you had to choose between the two. Being far away from all that, he felt freer. He had phases and would go from one style to another. Experimenting and trying new things were very important to Fan Ho. A lot of people compare him to Henry Cartier-Bresson and he was also very mindful of the decisive moment. But there is still a huge difference. For Fan Ho, it was never about honouring the truth. It was more a call for poetry, storytelling and expressing emotions. He was not interested in simply documenting the streets of Hong Kong as they were. Instead, he chose the streets to create theatre and drama in his pictures and that was probably also influenced by cinema in that regard.

Some pictures he found, others he staged and directed.

– Yes, and you can see him being a movie director. In many images, it's quite apparent that he directed them. Like the picture *Private*, showing two people in a window. There's a white wall and there is a small sign at the bottom, saying, "Private". It was a staged image. He had spotted the wall and the sign and asked two of his friends to help create the scene. He worked in different ways. Sometimes he would find an interesting view, analyse exactly when the light would be perfect and then patiently wait for something interesting to happen in that scene.

Fan Ho. *A Sail, Hong Kong*, gelatin silver print, 1957.





“He really liked the central market in Hong Kong because the light came in so beautifully around four o’clock in the afternoon and there was so much action and atmosphere, people rushing, dust and the smoke from cooking.”

Top. **Fan Ho**. *Little Women*, gelatin silver print, 1961.
Bottom. **Fan Ho**. *Afternoon Chat, Hong Kong*, gelatin silver print, 1959.

Fan Ho captured scenes and sometimes he staged them but he would also alter images in the dark room, with *Approaching Shadow* for instance, his most famous image, where he added a dramatic, diagonal shadow.

– For him, the result was the most important thing, however it was reached. *Approaching Shadow* was staged. He came across this huge wall, and having a very strong imagination, he suddenly had an idea for a story. He asked his cousin Vivian to pose against the wall and then burnt in the shadow in the dark-room. It’s the shadow of decay coming close. Youth won’t last forever. It shows that he was, in essence, a storyteller. It’s such a strong image. Once you’ve seen it, it does something to you and it remains with you. It’s like a *Mona Lisa* of photography. It’s also interesting that he made it in 1954 so he was still in his early 20s. It won so many awards at the time and it’s the one image that everyone remembers.

The image is also a reminder of the darkness in his work, especially compared to the work produced by the French humanist photographers such as Willy Ronis and Robert Doisneau, which is characterised by warmth, sometimes bordering on mushiness.

– Fan Ho was drawn to stories without happy endings and the inherent tragedy of life. That was what art meant to him, the source of its power. He was also deeply interested in people and the hardships they endured, their lives and their struggles.

In addition to the psychological darkness, the prints themselves are often very dark.

– True, and you might think that those images were shot at night but they were, in fact, shot during the daytime. It was because of how he developed and printed them. Fan Ho loved developing and printing. Initially, he did it in his mother’s bathroom. In addition to his vision, there was also another reason for the darkness, which was more practical.

Left. “A diagonal shadow added in the darkroom.”
Fan Ho. *Approaching Shadow*, gelatin silver print, 1954.



The salon juries would view photographs under super bright overhead lights so if a print was dark, all the interesting details would still be visible and would sustain the viewing experience.

I recall him saying somewhere that he never shot a lot, as film was quite expensive.

– Fan Ho was always very focused when he worked. He really liked the central market in Hong Kong because the light came in so beautifully around four o’clock in the afternoon and there was so much action and atmosphere, people rushing, dust and the smoke from cooking. It was one of his favourite spots and he would revisit it over and over again. When the central market was rebuilt, everything was torn down, except the staircase where he took so many great images, and it was kept intact in



honour of Fan Ho. They also kept the railings and the big clock because the developers realised that it was important to people, and these days, it's a tourist attraction.

He was photographing in Hong Kong, a city that was changing rapidly. After WWII and the Communist Party taking power, 1.5 million Chinese fled to Hong Kong.

– When he and his family arrived, Hong Kong had a population of only about half a million. Today, it has nearly eight million. At the time, the city's future was deeply uncertain. Hong Kong lay in ruins, but soon afterward a large influx of Chinese immigrants marked the beginning of an industrial, and later financial, transformation. Fan Ho documented Hong Kong just before and during these early changes. Most of the streetscapes he captured have since been completely altered and are now almost unrecognisable. Although documentation was not Fan Ho's intention, his work has become an important photographic archive of Hong Kong and its people at that moment in history.

Today, most of what he captured is gone, apart from the famous staircase.

– Yes, but sometimes I still see traces of the old city. The biggest difference is that the low-rise buildings have almost entirely disappeared, except for a few *glau*; six-story walk-ups in the older districts, now replaced by high-rises. Back then, exactly as he captured it, life unfolded on the streets: people cooked, worked, and socialised outdoors; women earned money by ironing, men repaired broken goods or wrote letters for customers, and children played in the alleys. People only went indoors to

sleep. Today, the streets are simply for moving from A to B. He photographed with an almost obsessive intensity. His photographic career was remarkably concentrated, spanning only about ten years, from the age of 18 to 28, so he was still very young. There is a story about the Royal Photographic Society honouring him with its highest title. When their representatives came to Hong Kong to meet the great photographer, they were introduced to Fan Ho, and immediately asked, "Where is your father?" They simply couldn't believe that such a young man had taken all those extraordinary photographs.

Did he ever work as a professional photographer in Hong Kong?

– No, he didn't, because being a professional photographer at that time would have meant working for a newspaper and he had no interest in being a photojournalist, or working as a portrait or wedding photographer. He wanted to be a pure photographer, to pursue his love for photography on his own terms. The only ever paid photography job he ever did was, oddly enough, for *Playboy* in 1987 while he was a movie director. It coincided with him shooting one of his last movies, an erotic movie, and the magazine asked him to do a shoot. And of course, unlike today, being an art photographer wasn't a way to create a sustainable income. Print sales were not a thing at that time.

Instead, he opted for a career in cinema, and in 1961, he was hired by Shaw Brothers, the biggest production company in Hong Kong.

– He was married, he had children, and he needed to create an income. He approached Shaw Brothers after having seen an advertisement. Shaw Brothers were looking for actors. He went to see them, "Look, I don't really want to be an actor. I want to be a director." They turned down his request but talked him

Fan Ho. *Black and White*, gelatin silver print, 1963.



into being an actor, as he was very good-looking. It was a start in the movie business so he signed a contract for eight years. Incidentally, Shaw Brothers changed the year of his birth from 1931 to 1936, as they wanted him to appear younger, and this has caused some confusion.

How did he fare as an actor?

– He was in quite a few movies but he hated it. I described him as a hyperactive, someone who needed to put his all his energy into something. He found it really hard to relax into a role, and he also felt uncomfortable in front of the camera so he knew he was never going to make it big. But he enjoyed being part of the movies and seeing how it

was all done. When his contract as an actor ended, he decided to become a director. I think Shaw Brothers offered him to be a director but he wanted to be independent to do his own thing. Cinema was huge in Hong Kong back then. Since he was so talented, a good storyteller, a good cinematographer and a good director, he was kind of all-in-one professional and became very sought after by the various production companies. He became quite a big name but he was also frustrated. He had always wanted to be a director but he really wanted to be an “auteur” like Federico Fellini. He wanted to create arthouse movies but he was struggling to find producers to give him the budgets to do that. Hong Kong cinema was more commercial orientated at that time.



Fan Ho. *Lines and Forms*, gelatin silver print, 1959.



He kind of did become an auteur, with the film *Lost*, made in 1969.

– It’s an astonishing short film. *Lost* is a tale of a young man who is very confused about whether he should be traditionally Chinese and conservative or embrace modernity and a western style. Those two worlds are expressed in the film by two different types of women. One is a very traditional woman residing in a traditional mansion with a large Chinese garden, spending her time playing Chinese instruments. The other is a Western-style girl in a miniskirt going out to dance at parties. The young man is conflicted, not knowing which one to choose. The film looks great but it was a low-budget production and he couldn’t find producers who would give him money to make bigger movies in that direction. Eventually, he left his career as a movie director, feeling frustrated about not achieving what he had wanted.

Fan Ho. *Pattern*, gelatin silver print, 1950s-60s.

Did he abandon photography during the years that he worked as a director?

– Movies took up all his time and he couldn’t make a living as a photographer. Consequently, his photography sort of stopped in the mid-1960s.

The rest of his family emigrated to San Jose in the US in 1979 and when he retired in 1997, he followed suit. Was that when he got back into photography?

– Yes, because he was so bored in San Jose, American suburbia, far from all his friends. He missed Hong Kong and the late-night conversations about cinema, photography, and literature. After his family moved to San Jose, he rented a room; living alone in a big house frightened him, or more precisely, he was afraid of ghosts, so he preferred to share a home.

As I understand it, he returned to his old negatives. Not content to simply republish his award-winning work, he also created a new body of work.

– In the early 2000s his famous work was republished by *Modernbook Editions*. For the third book in



this trilogy, he wanted to create new work. Although he had already published books and won some 300 awards, his creative spirit pushed him to keep experimenting. He began exploring his archive of negatives, constructing new images by combining elements from different shots. For example, he merged a boat scene with a street scene, creating a sort of “Hong Kong Venice.” This appeared in this third book titled *Hong Kong Memoir*. These images echo the way memory functions: not clearly, not as a documentary record, but blurred, layered, and intermixed. One standout piece was *Longing*, an extraordinary montage combining a street scene with a shadowed profile. He loved Hong Kong, missed it deeply, and missed all the friends he had left behind – and that emotion comes through vividly in these images.

Left. **Fan Ho.** *Shadow Saw*, gelatin silver print, 1960.

Right. **Fan Ho.** *Shadow Fingers*, gelatin silver print, 1957.



When did you start working with him?

– It was in 2011. I had opened my gallery just a few years earlier. It was a small space in an industrial building, and I was working with many Hong Kong artists across different media. When I came across Fan Ho’s work, I thought, “How come I have never seen this in Hong Kong?” The photographs were extraordinary, and I knew people would respond to them. It took some

time to convince those close to him to let me proceed. The first time, I showed ten small Fan Ho prints as part of a group exhibition. But once I began working with him, things started happening for me. I think it was his karma.

What happened?

– The space I had was a bit too underground, too far from the city centre. Then I connected with a Hong Kong publisher called *Asia One*, which owned an entire 14-floor industrial building. The owner approached me and said, “I love Fan Ho, and I’m starting a gallery in my staircase named AO Vertical. Can you help manage it?” So we became partners.

Our first Fan Ho exhibition, in 2012, was fantastic. We hung about 50 works along the staircase, creating a vertical experience for visitors, with additional photographs displayed on each landing. The show was covered across Hong Kong media, went viral internationally, and was picked up by *The Guardian*



and *The New York Times*. Shortly afterward, I met Fan Ho for the first time. I showed him the exhibition's visitor's book, filled with comments and little drawings. He was overwhelmed, in tears. His greatest wish was for people to feel something when they saw his work; he wanted his photography to convey poetry. The visitor's book made it clear that he still touched people from all ages, and all sorts of backgrounds deeply.

It must have been great for him to get that response even if it was very late in his life.

– Yes, it was very important, I think. We held follow-up exhibitions in 2014 in the same space, in 2017 with Sotheby's, and in 2019 at Blue Lotus Gallery at its current location in Sheung Wan near Central. Right before the 2014 show, the Sino Group had acquired a collection of Fan Ho's works to adorn their soon-to-open Pottinger Hotel. Every room still displays his photographs. The hotel kindly offered him and his wife a large suite to stay in during the exhibition at AO Vertical. During that visit, I became something of a bodyguard for him because there were so many people who wanted to interview him or simply meet him and shake his hand. For the book signings, we had to limit it to three books per visitor. People treated him like royalty. He summoned every bit of energy he had left to speak at length with journalists and to greet each visitor personally.

You worked with him on books and exhibitions. What were those processes like?

– Artists can be quite difficult creatures but of all the artists I've worked with, Fan Ho was the kindest. He knew he was good and was proud of his work, yet he remained altruistic, generous, and always open to other people's ideas. When you have real confidence, you don't need a big ego. When we created the book *Portrait of Hong Kong*, I visited him every day for several weeks to record his life story and also to look at so far unpublished work. As we began planning the book, he brought out his negatives. We needed to view the images clearly, so I went to a stationery shop and bought a light box. I

"He began exploring his archive of negatives, constructing new images by combining elements from different shots. For example, he merged a boat scene with a street scene, creating a sort of "Hong Kong Venice."

Fan Ho. *Hong Kong Venice*, gelatin silver print, 1962 / 2011.

cut out a square window in a piece of cardboard to place over the negatives on the light box, then photographed them with my iPhone. Using an app, I flipped them from negative to positive each evening, giving us the material we needed to continue working the next day.

Can you tell me how he cropped the images?

– Cropping was a very important part of his work, and he approached it playfully. He loved extreme crops, very narrow frames or selections using only a small portion of the negative. He didn't want all his images to remain in their original Rolleiflex medium-format square or any other rectangular ratio. For him, cropping was a key tool to strengthen composition and remove anything unnecessary. He told me that, with painting, you start with an empty canvas and build from nothing into something. But with photography, it's the opposite: you begin with too much information and must cut it down to the essence of the image. Being as generous as he was, he would often ask, "Sarah, how would you crop this?" I would try, and if he didn't like it, he would never say it was wrong. Instead, he'd say, "That's one way of doing it. But what about this way?" and then he showed me his version. And if I did it exactly as he'd envisioned, he'd say, "Oh, Sarah, you have an amazing eye!" His humanistic approach wasn't limited to his photographs. It defined the way he treated people, too.

Fan Ho sadly passed away in 2016. What kind of archive did he leave behind?

– He kept his negatives in small plastic zip bags. When he moved to San Jose, he initially considered taking only those and leaving the vintage prints behind, but thank goodness he didn't. I currently work with the family. I'm not responsible for managing the archive myself, but the negatives are well cared for.

What's next for you and the work of Fan Ho?

– So far, we've succeeded in bringing his work to the attention of people in Hong Kong. The next chapter is to share his vision with the rest of the world. There has yet to be a Fan Ho exhibition in a major European or American museum, and I hope to change that soon. I look forward to this next stage, introducing Fan Ho's photography to museums across Europe, the United States, and China, and ensuring his legacy reaches the global recognition it deserves.



BY LAURA LEONELLI

Rediscovering Carlo Mollino

INTERVIEW WITH ROSSELLA COLOMBARI

As his noble coat of arms, he chose the most delicate and sensitive surface, two female buttocks of sublime roundness on which he had pinned his initials, CM, with a make-up pencil. Next to it, completing the heraldic rebus were a bottle of Cordon Rouge, a champagne cup, modelled on Marie-Antoinette's breast as legend has it, and a typewriter. This is the chronicle of a male erotic dream, that of one of the greatest interpreters of architecture, design and photography of the 20th century, Carlo Mollino (1905-1973). A book, *Carlo Mollino. Architect Designer Photographer*, written by Rossella Colombari, internationally renowned Italian design gallery owner, together with her sister Paola, also a gallery owner, has just been published by Rizzoli. However, it is not only these pages that seal the union between Rossella Colombari and "CM", but much more because Rossella, together with her sister Paola, was the driving force behind the rediscovery of Carlo Mollino's design and its relaunch on the market. It started with love at first sight, not for a man but a piece of furniture. A piece of furniture without equal. A provocation.

Left page. **Carlo Mollino.** *Monument to those who died for freedom*, photomontage, Turin, 1946. The monument was created by Carlo Mollino together with sculptor Umberto Mastroianni. Created between 1946 and 1948, it won the competition organised by the City of Turin a few months after Liberation, on 29 August 1945. Courtesy Ettore Molinaro Collection.

Right. **Carlo Mollino.** Erotic photograph taken in the bachelor flat (*garçonnière*), Turin, gelatin silver print, 1950. Courtesy of the State Property Agency, Carlo Mollino Collection held at the Polytechnic University of Turin, "Gabetti" Library Archives Section.





I started my conversation with Rossella Colombari by asking how her encounter with Carlo Mollino came about.

– It happened in Turin, on a summer morning in 1980. I was twenty years old, the daughter of a famous antique dealer, who was himself the son and grandson of one of the oldest families of antique dealers in Piedmont. Among his clients were the Savoy nobility and the industrial high bourgeoisie. In practice, I had lived among wonderful objects since I was a child, and my grandfather in particular taught me all their secrets, from the quality of the wood to the techniques of working and restoration, and, of course, fakery, including fake woodworm. Mine was a high-profile, very masculine family, with a father of extraordinary personality, but slightly overbearing. Naturally, at the age of twenty, with the wind of feminism in my hair, I was looking for something of my own. Twentieth-century Italian design, despite extraordinary talents such as Gio Ponti, Franco Albini, Osvaldo Borsani, Marco Zanuso, Achille Castiglione, Piero Fornasetti, and Carlo Mollino himself, was not considered worthy of being studied, valued, and collected. In an instant, it became my kingdom. And, strange to say, I owe this enlightenment to another man, Iorio Zolino, also an antique dealer from Turin, who was very original because, unlike others, he knew how to bring together distant worlds and recognise the beauty of the recent past. It was he who called me on the phone that summer day in 1980 and invited me to see

Carlo Mollino's passport, issued 18 March 1965. He chose a portrait taken some 15 years earlier. Courtesy of Rossella Colombari.

a very original piece of furniture that had just arrived at the gallery. I took my scooter, crossed Turin, entered the gallery, saw the usual antique furniture, fabrics and paintings, and then suddenly noticed a strange creature, a piece of furniture balanced on a small foot that looked like a stiletto heel and continued like the slender leg of a beautiful woman, and which at a certain point opened like a fan. Before my eyes appeared, the room divider

that Carlo Mollino had designed for Ada Minola's private home in Turin between 1944 and 1946. I knew almost nothing about Carlo Mollino, except that he often visited my father's gallery.

But who was Ada Minola? Clearly, a cultured woman who stood out from the crowd and appreciated Mollino's genius.

– Carlo Mollino's eccentricity, his formidable creative freedom, even his anarchism and disregard for any danger, mental or physical, needed partners who were up to the task. And in Turin, despite the fact that the city was at the time, and still is to some extent today, very rigid and severe, Mollino had found a small group of enlightened clients. Ada Minola was one of these characters, eccentric in her own right, who could perfectly understand Mollino's uniqueness. Ada was one of the greatest jewellery designers of the 20th century, as well as a sculptor, painter and gallery owner. She had one of the liveliest salons in Turin, frequented by Benedetto Croce, Giò Pomodoro, Umberto Mastroianni, Italo Cremona and, of course, Carlo Mollino. Ada shared Mollino's taste for baroque imagination combined with the energy of Art Nouveau. Mollino also designed a pair of gloves for Ada. And touch, the sensuality of touch, was Mollino's guiding sense. Erotic in Mollino, I might say, is the sixth sense that sums up all the others.

Carlo Mollino needed another woman, you, to come back to life. A coincidence?

– I don't think it's a coincidence because Mollino's world, from architecture to design and more evident in photography, is a world inspired by female forms



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. "Suora" lamp, "Homage to Carlo Mollino", designed by Edizioni Galleria Colombari in 1994 and produced in an open edition as a reproduction of a prototype created by Carlo Mollino in 1947.

2. **Carlo Mollino**. "Type B chair", made in 1939 for the dining room of the home of Lisa Ponti, daughter of Gio Ponti, and her husband Luigi Licitra, in Milan.

3. **Carlo Mollino**. Chair designed and produced in two copies between 1939 and 1940 for the House Devalle 2. Courtesy Rossella Colombari Gallery.

4. **Carlo Mollino**. Unique version of the "Vertebra" table. This table was sold by Sotheby's New York on 29 October 2020 for a record price of \$ 6 181 350. Courtesy of the State Property Agency, Carlo Mollino Collection held at the Polytechnic University of Turin, "Gabetti" Library Archives Section.



and female creative power. All of Mollino's projects have this internal capacity to generate and release an ancestral, mysterious, dark energy. I would say that they are "female projects". Whether it is the Teatro Regio in Turin, the Vertebra table, the black and white photographs from the *Fiabe per I grandi* (Fairy Tales for Adults) series, taken between 1936 and 1943, or the famous Polaroids, these creatures enchant and seduce us, and if we are not careful, they devour us. They are sirens. And Mollino, despite his love of soaring through the skies in his airplane, was an avid reader of Joseph Conrad and his ocean adventures.

Let's go back to that morning when you became almost possessed by the genius of Carlo Mollino.

– I was standing in front of this wonderful piece of furniture, I could feel its call, but I didn't have the money to buy it, and I didn't feel comfortable negotiating on my own. I heard a male voice inside me saying, "all right, call your father". And in Turin, also famous for being a demonic city open to spiritualism, I truly believe it was Mollino's voice speaking to me. My father arrived and closed the deal at two and a half million lire, which was all I had in my

bank account. I took the piece of furniture, which I had christened "Clavicembalo" (the harpsichord), and brought it to our gallery's storage room. I looked for the right customer for a piece that, at the time, you had to be crazy to understand. I called the architect Tony Cordero, who came, saw it, and bought it. I touched the sky with my finger. I had sold my first piece of Italian design furniture. Everything that happened afterwards, and I say this with confidence, changed the history of Italian design and the place it occupies in the world today. If today the "Vertebra" table, which I presented in 1983 at the Monte Carlo International Biennale, was sold for \$ 6 181 350 at Sotheby's in New York in 2020, it is partly thanks to me and to my sister.

You mentioned your father, an authoritarian and an influential man. Perhaps this experience also brought you closer to Carlo Mollino. Can you tell me about his family life?

– I will begin my portrait of Carlo Mollino's father with an anecdote, but one that I believe is illuminating. Mollino was born on 6 May 1905. At the time of his son's birth, his father, the civil engineer Eugenio Mollino, was designing the municipal slaughterhouse in Rivoli. In some ways, the violence of the relationship between father and son is already there, sublimated in that place of pain, sacrifice and death. From childhood, Carlo, "Carluccio" as he was called in the family, had a very difficult

Carlo Mollino. Portrait of Evi, gelatin silver print, 1956-1962.
 Courtesy of the State Property Agency, Carlo Mollino Collection held at the Polytechnic University of Turin, "Gabetti" Library Archives Section.



and conflictual relationship with his father, and this constant confrontation generated, on the one hand, a perennial sense of inadequacy and affliction and, on the other, the need to escape, to flee from that constant judgement and seek a completely different, independent language. This very personal quest required space and time different from those of his logical and rational father. For example, in order to avoid meeting his father, with whom he shared a studio after graduating in architecture in 1931, Carlo Mollino worked at night. In the morning, his father would leave threatening messages in the studio, such as “Carlo, enough is enough, we can’t go on like this!” But it was precisely in this nocturnal isolation, in an already surreal dreamlike dimension, that the singularity of a genius like Mollino matured. Physical isolation made Mollino intellectually isolated. Another detail: Mollino shunned natural daylight, and it is no coincidence that he designed many lamps, each more extraordinary than the last. Just think of the “Suora” (Nun), a flexible parchment floor lamp designed in 1947. The title is sacrilegious in its own way, because it combines religious sacredness with the sensuality of forms, with that lampshade alluding precisely to a nun’s headdress but also to the volutes, the curves

of the female body and the astral dance of lovemaking. Obviously, when he began to take photographs, Mollino preferred indoor settings with artificial light. It all makes sense, even in a dreamlike man like him.

What were the women of the Mollino family like?

– The first women in Mollino’s life, like those in his adult life, were the antithesis of his father’s severity. His mother, Jolanda Testa, was affectionate and loving, and alongside her was the long-standing housekeeper, Aldina, who doted on Carlo as if he were her own son. Then there were his three aunts, who adored this reckless nephew, and two other maids, who allowed him to get away with everything. We must imagine the women of the Mollino family applauding and shouting in unison at the sight of this reckless child, obviously an only son, pedalling like crazy in his little red tin car and swerving suddenly before crashing into the wall of the house.

Turin Horse Racing Club, east entrance, photomontage by Carlo Mollino and Riccardo Moncalvo. Courtesy of the State Property Agency, Carlo Mollino Collection held at the Polytechnic University of Turin, “Gabetti” Library Archives Section.



The idea, in the sense of the soul of the “Bisiluro”, the car with which Mollino will participate in the 1955 24 Hours of Le Mans, is already there. Starting with the colour, red, red blood, red war, red sex, which is so important in Mollino’s world.

Were “Bisiluro”, like skiing and the passion for flying, sublimation of a desire to escape from that paternal love, so coercive and enveloping, for better or for worse?

– I would say yes, and in regard to this, I would like to quote a passage from a confessional letter that Mollino wrote on 15 October 1955: “I found my way late in life. I would have found it earlier if that affection had not prevented me, when I was still unable to understand it, from taking that one necessary act of rebellion: building my life from scratch by leaving home. By the time I understood this, it was too late;

I would have ruined the little I had started. I received a great deal from my father; above all, a moral and professional example. From my mother, I received an example of duty and a spirit of sacrifice and dedication, even if it was armed (editor’s note: my mother was the daughter of a general). Even though he explicitly wanted me to marry, deep down my father put it off, as he did with my professional independence; becoming someone professionally cost me a great deal; the separation was a drama that pained my father until almost his last years; it was almost a clandestine struggle that I felt I had to fight to the end, at the cost of any sacrifice, and which, at the same time, pained me like a fatal killing.” It brings to mind the famous slaughterhouse that welcomed the birth of Carlo Mollino like a cradle of blood. And then, to be carved in stone as guidelines in Mollino’s world, there are those two words: clandestine struggle. They explain everything, from rebellion against rationalism to secret eroticism, elegantly vulgar in the villa-garçonnière that Mollino built and furnished as a theatre of desire throughout his life.

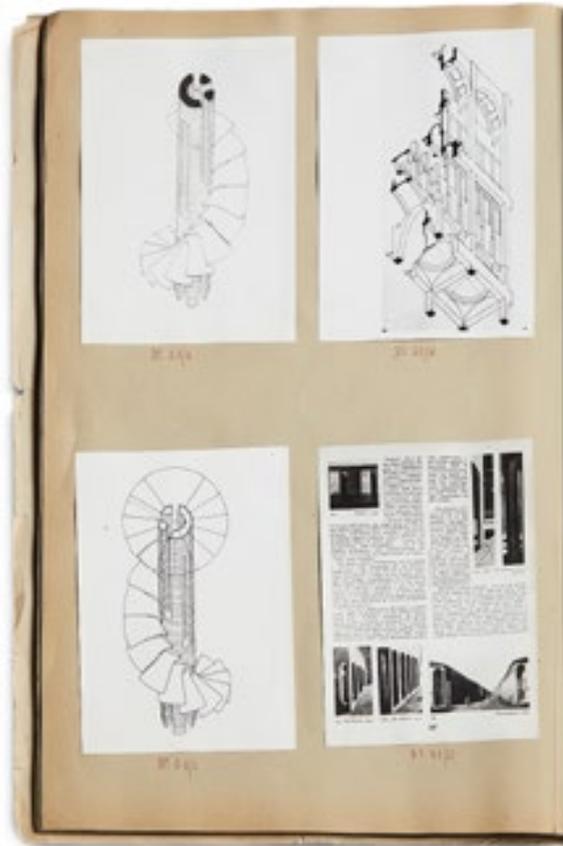
Carlo Mollino. Ski lift at Lago Nero, Sauze d’Oulx, gelatin silver print. 1946-1947. Courtesy of Rosella Colombari Gallery.

In the games of fate, you too managed, through Carlo Mollino, to rebel against your father. What happened in the months following the purchase of that first “fatal” piece of Mollino furniture, months in which, together with your sister Paola, who was studying Egyptology at the time, you discovered your Tutankhamun tomb. The young king was, of course, Mollino. And here too there is a treasure.

– As soon as I bought the first piece of Mollino furniture, the “Clavicembalo”, I started researching because neither my sister nor I knew anything about it. But at the time, Mollino’s archive, now managed by the Polytechnic University of Turin, was still to be catalogued. Despite Mollino’s death in 1973, all traces of him had been lost. Pure and simple removal. Even for us, this story seemed to be over when one day the gallery phone rang and on the other end was a collector, not Italian, who knew Mollino’s furniture very well and was looking for it. And above all, he was looking for us. He found us, came to Turin and commissioned us to find other pieces. The hunt began, searching for a ghost in the pre-internet era. Telephone directories, fruitless calls, overlapping agendas, anger, bursts of joy, disappointment, until one day an acquaintance of ours suggested we contact an old friend of hers, an engineer by profession, who kept some of Mollino’s documents in his office. My sister and I found ourselves in front of a luxurious early 20th-century building, rang the bell, and the owner opened the door. Perhaps he was struck by our enthusiasm, but the engineer showed us some old albums in which Mollino had collected designs, sketches, and photographs. This was the documentation that the great architect had prepared to obtain a professorial appointment at the Polytechnic University of Turin, and in fact, in 1953, he won the competition and became Professor of Architectural Composition. Under each photograph in the album were the names of the families for whom Mollino had designed the furniture. We daydreamed and, more concretely, took notes.

How did the treasure hunt proceed at that point?

– With difficulty. The phone calls resumed, but few answered; many did not remember, or pretended not to remember. Then one morning, as a last resort, convinced that we had lost the game, we called the Lattes publishing house in Turin. We introduced ourselves, explained the situation and, after several changes of office, the archive manager informed us that the company did indeed have some old 1950s furniture stacked in an old warehouse outside the city, and that Lattes executives were interested in selling it to modernise their premises. “If you want to come, please do,” the official told us. The next day, we rushed over, went down the stairs of an old warehouse full of books, entered the darkness, and



Carlo Mollino.

Top. Notebook with references to the architecture of Étienne-Louis Boullée, Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durant and Giorgio de Chirico. Courtesy of Rosella Colombari Gallery.

Bottom. Undated sketch. Private collection.



when the caretaker turned on the light, the treasure suddenly appeared: everywhere there were arabesque-shaped tables, sinuous and organic chairs, office desks, and a large meeting table with a support element in the shape of a spine, the gigantic spine of a prehistoric being, of course. The furniture that Carlo Mollino had designed for Mario Lattes' publishing house in the 1950s was there. Another meeting at the top of Turin's intelligentsia. Let us not forget that Mario Lattes, a highly cultured man, published authors such as Ilija Eremburg, William Faulkner, Léon Blum, Simone Weil, and Theodore Adorno, and his art collection included works by Max Ernst, Balthus, Giorgio De Chirico, and Giorgio Morandi. Lattes was also a painter and had participated in the 1958 Venice Biennale.

But why did Mario Lattes decide to get rid of these masterpieces?

– Honestly, because they were uncomfortable. But comfort is not a priority for the surrealist imagination, nor for Mollino.

If we wanted to enter Mollino's first home, the one where he spent his childhood, where everything took shape, including Mollino the photographer, where would we go?

– First of all, Mollino always lived with his parents, remaining a perpetual bachelor, and therefore all his "personal" homes, both photography

sets and bachelor pads, were attempts to escape from his family environment. For the record, Carlo Mollino lived between his home in Turin, at 35 Via Goffredo Casalis, and Villa Trucco Silogna, a large residence combining neo-Gothic and Art Nouveau styles, where he spent weekends and the summer months, always with his parents. A very long avenue, Corso Francia, connected the two houses and led to the entrance to the Susa Valley, dominated by the Savoy residence of Rivoli Castle, and from the villa one could see the imposing grandeur of this manor. In 1910, Carlo's father had built a darkroom in the attic of the country house. In the same year, a photograph taken by his father shows little Carlo, proudly holding a camera and surrounded by all the women of the family. At the age of fourteen, "Carluccio" began to take photographs and print them independently. Soon, the darkroom became a privileged place of reflection, where Mollino began a profound personal quest. Photography, in the words of Laura Gasparini, photography historian, became for Mollino "a cognitive investigation".

There was a fateful, magical year, 1933, when everything started simultaneously in Mollino's life: his career as an architect, writer and photographer.

– At the age of twenty-seven, Mollino began the long and sometimes painful process of emancipation from his father's guardianship. In 1933, Carlo won his first competition for the design and construction of the Farmers' Federation Headquarters in Cuneo, then published his autobiographical novel, *Vita di Oberdon*, in the magazine "Casabella", and began his first series of portraits of women. These portraits continued in the fantastical setting of Casa Miller, the first private space for which Mollino designed the furnishings, combining Surrealism and Futurism with his eclectic taste. In this sense, Casa Miller was truly an experimental home, in that it marked the beginning of the design of interiors as both autobiography and hallucination. In 1938, *Domus*, a magazine edited by Gio Ponti, published a long review of Casa Miller by Carlo Levi, a great Italian writer, painter and anti-fascist. In his article, Levi analyses the dreamlike quality of the spaces, punctuated by mirrors – the splendid mirror of Venus – the transparency of the glass tops of the consoles and display cases, the references to classical and Renaissance sculpture, such as the coffee table with Michelangelo's *Prigione*, and the curves of the furniture, including the tracks on which the chandelier slides. A project like this, says Levi, is entirely autobiographical, and the house has even become a character: "An ambiguous character in the first and third person, a deceitful Ulysses in search of lost places."

The enclosed space of the room becomes, in short, a mental space, where Mollino lets his dreams, desires and hallucinations run wild. And the interior space of the camera is, like a mirror, another magical, initiatory place, where these fantastical constructions become true in their own way.

– Let us remember that Carlo Mollino’s rich personal library contains two fundamental readings, among the most formative. First of all, *Voyage autour de ma chambre*, a fantastic biography by Xavier de Maistre, an Italian general in the service of Tsar Alexander I of Russia, who, on the eve of the 1790 carnival, due to a duel, was placed under house arrest for forty-two days in Turin, and every day he wrote an ironic and philosophical reflection on one of the objects in his room, reflections that were collected in the famous travel book written between 1794 and 1795. Another fundamental title is *À rebours* by Joris Karl Huysmans, published in 1884, the story of a young French aristocrat, Jean Floressas des Esseintes, who turns his back on society and locks himself away in a country villa in Fontenay, where he chooses every piece of furniture and lives as a wealthy hermit, misanthrope and misogynist.

Mollino, however, was not a misogynist.

– I would say that Carlo Mollino loved and hated women, as Man Ray loved and hated them, and Man Ray was an artist whom Mollino looked up to greatly. Think of the initials on the buttocks of his famous secretary, which are a clear reference to *Le Violon d’Ingres*. According to some, the name Casa Miller, a studio flat in Via Giuseppe Talucchi in Turin, is a tribute to Lee Miller, Man Ray’s muse and lover. We should add that Mollino was an avid reader of *Minotaure*, Albert Skira’s magazine, published between 1933 and 1939. So, looking back on his life, I would say that Mollino was, like all the Minotaur men of Surrealism, a misogynist who was deeply in love with women because he was obsessed with their beauty and because, at the same time, he was frightened by the transformative power of the female body: women give birth, architects build. Then, of course, there were the women-muse-models, such as the sophisticated Lina Suwaroski. Mollino did everything the surrealists did: he cut them into pieces, multiplied them in front of mirrors, locked them in a wardrobe, in a glass case like the living dead or butterflies, and combined them with architectural elements, horse heads, leopard skins, and shells to remind us of the dangerous softness of their sex.



A “social” portrait of these women?

– They are bourgeois women, always extremely elegant, at least in the forty black and white photographs collected in the series *Fiabe per i grandi* (Fairy Tales for Grown-ups), taken in the heart of Casa Miller between 1936 and 1942. It should be remembered that for Mollino erotic images were private. At most, he had used some of them for New Year’s greetings to friends. For his public debut, and it was not an erotic image but an interior, we have to wait until 1937 when Gio Ponti chose a photograph

Carlo Mollino.

Left page. The entrance hall of Casa Devalle 1, gelatin silver print, 1939-1940.

Top. Casa Devalle 2, Turin, gelatin silver print, 1939-1940. Among the furnishings, a table with marble supports and glass top, a tubular metal chair and a small temple with mirrored sliding doors.

Courtesy of the State Property Agency, Carlo Mollino Collection held at the Polytechnic University of Turin, “Gabetti” Library Archives Section.



that Mollino took of one of his interiors of Casa Miller for the cover of the April issue of *Domus*. Two years later, in 1939, Mollino joined the Turin Photographic Society and began participating in various photographic exhibitions in Turin and throughout Italy.

Who were Carlo Mollino's best friends at that time?

– Mollino's Turin circle was very stimulating and his friends included Piero Martina, Felice Casorati, Fillia, Enrico Prampolini, Mino Rosso, Tullio d'Albissola and Nicolay Diulgheroff. But his most important friend, his closest confidant, was Italo Cremona, also

born in 1905, a painter, set designer and costume designer. Cremona painted a beautiful portrait of Mollino, wearing a helmet and glasses, sitting in a racing car, and also took a much more dreamlike photographic portrait, in which the great architect appears as a shadow through the glass shelf of Casa Miller between a glove and a plaster hand. It is the portrait of an artist who brings himself into the world, who tells his story through his work.

At a certain point, the municipality of Turin also recognised Mollino's genius and entrusted him with the construction of the Società Ippica Torinese.

– The Società Ippica Torinese is, or rather was, one of Mollino's masterpieces, built between 1937 and 1940. It is a libertarian act with which the young Carlo rewrites rationalist rigour, alternating curvilinear surges, baroque references and transparencies, infusing a compositional fluidity that, on the eve of war, seemed to herald a new era. This masterpiece was destroyed on a tragic night in 1960, despite petitions from many intellectuals, including Bruno Zevi, and in its place the Vittorio Alfieri classical high school was built. A hideous building. I have never hated a school so much.

Meanwhile, Mollino changed the setting of his photography work, left his dream home and reinterpreted what is perhaps the most dreamlike, hallucinatory and Hitchcockian natural space: the ski slope. A blank, virgin sheet on which to start drawing.

– That's right, but before following Carlo Mollino, an expert skier and ski instructor, on the snow-covered slopes of Cervinia (for the record, my sister Paola was a downhill skiing champion), I would like to dwell for a moment on the verb "to draw". Mollino was always drawing. He was a virtuoso, an acrobat with a pencil, ever since he was a child, and he could draw with his right and left hands at the same time, even two different subjects, as if he were a pianist. Therefore, his use of photography, even when photographing his architecture, is never descriptive. It is not a copy of an already perfect drawing, but always goes further and becomes interpretation, or "transformation", as suggested by Francesco Zanot, curator and photography critic. And it is no coincidence that Mollino often used the technique of photomontage, for example in the Monument to the Fallen of Freedom, which he created between 1946 and 1948 together with sculptor Umberto Mastroianni, or when he inserted a horse's head into the portico of the racecourse by gluing it in, or when he

Carlo Mollino. Portrait of a Woman, gelatin silver print, 1940-1945. Archivi Alinari, Florence.

literally immersed the “Casa del Sole” in Cervinia in snow. Carlo Mollino found the same freedom of perspective while skiing on the slopes. Freedom and speed together. And this was a thoroughly futuristic Mollino.

When did Mollino discover his “sense of snow”?

– He discovered it as a boy, and once again it was his father who guided him, a reckless man himself, if we think of his passion for aeroplanes, which he passed on to his son. Carlo began skiing in 1934 in Claviere, on the Italian side of the Monginevro Pass, a two-hour drive from the family home in Rivoli. In the mid-1930s, he met Leo Gasperl, former world speed record holder in the flying kilometre in St. Moritz and, from 1935, coach of the Italian national ski team. It was Leo Gasperl who suggested to Carlo that he should look at skiing not only as a sport but as an artistic performance that the camera could capture and interpret in all its beauty. Carlo and Leo skied together, and Carlo photographed Leo. Many of these photographs were published in skiing magazines and in Gasperl’s 1939 manual on skiing technique. Then, in 1950, Mollino published his book, *Introduzione al discesismo* (Introduction to Downhill Skiing), which again featured many of these beautiful images.

The year before, in 1949, Carlo Mollino had published one of the most important books in the history of Italian photography, *Il messaggio della camera oscura* (The Message of the Darkroom), subtitled “The secret of photographic art, revealed through the history of taste and the photographic masterpieces of the world”. It is, above all, a personal story.

– I would say that the title alone takes us into the more authentic, more mysterious, world of Carlo Mollino: photography as an initiatory message from another dimension. Photography is a secret that arises in the shadows and asks the light to reveal it. It is no coincidence that the cover of the first edition features a portrait of the Egyptian queen Tiy, beloved wife of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, mother of Akhenaten and grandmother of Tutankhamun. I also remember that the Egyptian Museum in Turin, inaugurated in 1824, is the second most important museum in the world in terms of the wealth of Egyptian artefacts it houses, immediately after the one in Cairo.

Carlo Mollino.

Top. Model resting during a photoshoot, gelatin silver print, 1940-1945.

Bottom. Model looking at one of Carlo Mollino’s display cases, gelatin silver print, 1940-1945.

Archivi Alinari, Florence.





interest us when it is no longer a document, but has all the appearances of one.” The list of what did not interest Mollino is very long, and these are the subjects that most professional and amateur photographers of the time preferred.

Meanwhile, Carlo Mollino continued to photograph his women. But in the 1950s, he changed the address of his alcove, now in the hills of Turin, to Villa Scalero. New set, new style?

– I would also say new women. In October 1955, after seven years, his love affair with Carmelina Piccolis, artist, sculptor and partisan during the Resistance, came to an end. For Mollino, it was time to reinvent his female world. First, he transformed his flat into a real photography studio, and then he bought a quantity of clothes, shoes, lingerie, gloves, wigs and hats with which to dress and then undress the various ladies and young women invited to the “Teatrino della mezzanotte” (Midnight Theatre), as Mollino himself had christened his villa. The evening included a dinner served by a maid, who disappeared at the appropriate moment to make way for the “gallant” part, with or without sex, which could precede or conclude the creation of the so-called staged portraits. Everything took place at night, of course. At the time, Mollino used a Leica IIIb and had switched to colour film. So, relying on a trusted friend who developed the material, Mollino collected the proofs in a series of albums, which today allow us to reconstruct the atmosphere of each photo session, including costume changes and different poses. Mollino often intervened on the images he decided to enlarge, in 10x15 format, painting with a very

Who were the photographer-priests of this mystery cult revealed by technology?

– In the more than four hundred pages of the book, Mollino traces the history of photography from Niépce to the 1950s, through one hundred and thirty-two authors, including David Octavius Hill, Nadar, Eugène Atget, Brassai, Man Ray, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Eugene Smith, Richard Avedon and, modesty aside, there are also sixteen images by Mollino himself. For each of these masters, photography is a “subjective transfiguration”. Mollino writes: “A photograph that is a document in the literal sense is of little interest to us, or more precisely, in the figurative sense of the term, it will begin to



fine brush. Retouching and reinvention together, fetishism of the female body and fetishism of the body of the image

Did the women enjoy themselves?

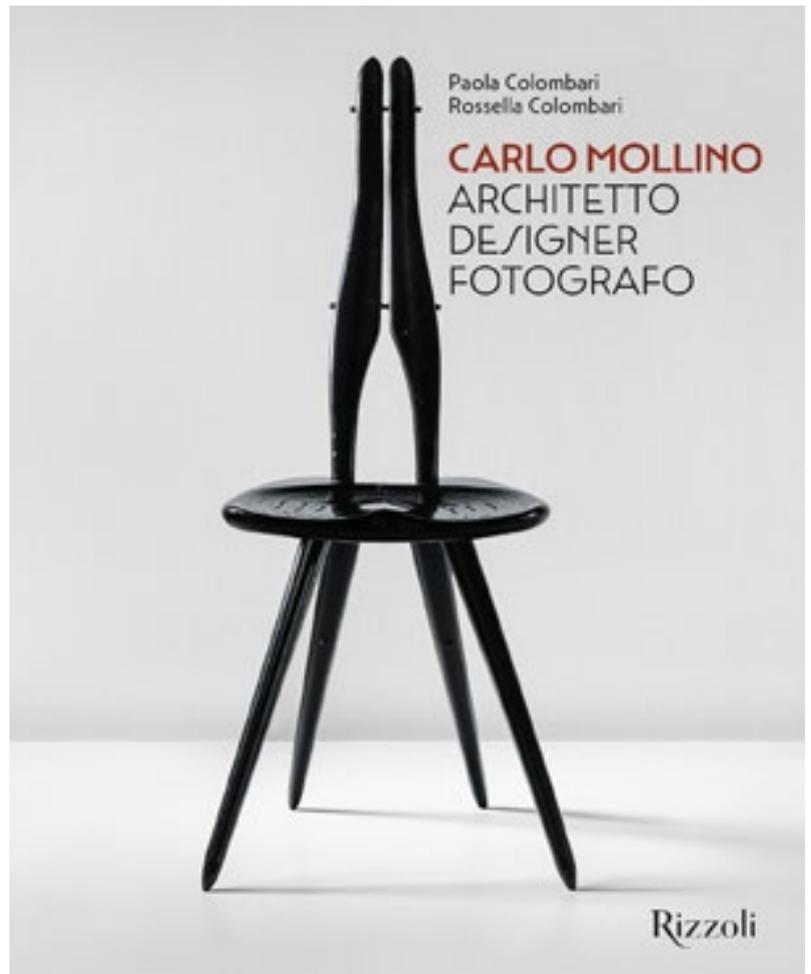
– I don't think so, because the creative fury and sober excitement were only Mollino's. Many of these models, and there is direct evidence of this, were bored.

And who were Mollino's muses?

– They were friends, dancers, nightclub strippers and prostitutes. But there is an anecdote that has always amused me: Mollino had instructed his waiter to note down the number plates of cars driven by beautiful women. A quick search and a seductive invitation to dinner, and beyond, would arrive. But let us also remember that, in Carlo Mollino's imagination, the car is not just a means of transport, but a means of entering another dimension where speed, as Futurism dictates, rewrites aesthetics. The construction of the "Bisiluro", which Mollino designed in 1955 together with the driver and designer Enrico Nardi, is the synthesis of this experience. Today, for those who want to see it, this amazing car is on display at the Museum of Science and Technology in Milan. In an article published in the September 2011 issue of *Domus*, Chris Bangle, one of the most famous car designers of the last fifty years, describes the Bisiluro as an "asymmetrical racing car", built by an aircraft enthusiast, Carlo Mollino, "who must have been greatly influenced by wartime innovations and, above all, by a twin-fuselage fighter plane with a single pilot". Let us not forget that in 1956 Mollino obtained his first-class pilot licence and became a pupil of Albert Ruesch, former world aerobatic champion. And, of course, he bought an airplane, a Jodel D111, followed by a Bücker Bu 131 Jungmann, previously owned by his friend Ruesch, and finally a Jodel 60, with which he crossed the skies of Europe. Many stunts and four accidents from which Mollino emerged unscathed.

In some ways, the Polaroids, to which Mollino entrusted the last chapter of his photographic research, are also part of this frantic search for speed.

– Perhaps so, but what is certain is that Carlo Mollino took almost a thousand Polaroids between the 1960s and 1970s, many of which were found in a shoebox in his flat in Turin. Mollino loved the soft colours of Polaroid. For the final chapter of his photographic obsession, Mollino created a new theatre, Villa Zaira, and we should bear in mind that in 1965 Mollino won the competition to design the Teatro Regio in Turin, which he inaugurated in 1973 with a memorable evening starring Maria Callas. During the same period, on his private stage, Mollino had other women pose and portrayed them, but now he



portrayed them with all their physical imperfections and individuality. Realism was ignited, in a way, and the scenography was simplified. None of these images had ever been exhibited before Mollino's death, which occurred in solitude on 27 August 1973, but all of them, in Mollino's own words, are fragments of a "great confession".

It is clear that, for you too, Carlo Mollino was and still is a great love story. But if you had to confess one of his faults, which would you choose?

– Certainly not narcissism, which I grant to every talented man or woman, nor the desperate search for love and therefore the condemnation to loneliness, but avarice, yes, that is unforgivable. And Mollino was a man of absolute avarice.

Top left page. **Carlo Mollino**. Portrait of a Woman, gelatin silver print, 1940-1945. Archivi Alinari, Florence.

Bottom left page. **Carlo Mollino**. Polaroid of a model taken in the bachelor flat, Turin 1962-1973. Courtesy of the State Property Agency, Carlo Mollino Collection held at the Polytechnic University of Turin, "Gabetti" Library Archives Section.

Top. The Italian edition of *Carlo Mollino. Architect Designer Photographer*, published by Rizzoli.



BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

WILLY Germany's First Art Director FLECKHAUS

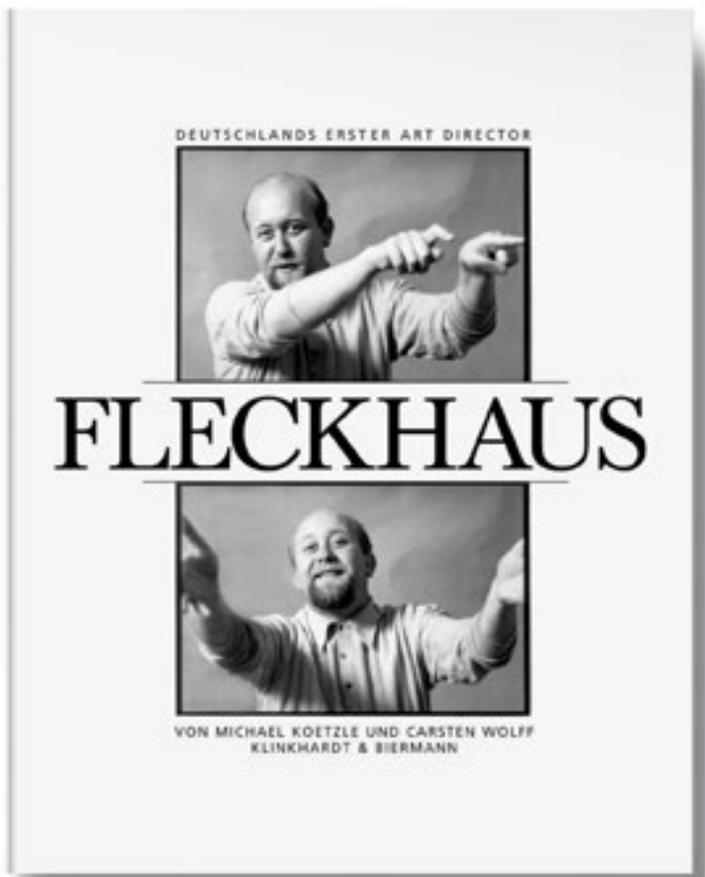
INTERVIEW WITH HANS-MICHAEL KOETZLE

He was a master at cropping pictures, ran them bigger than any other art director, and he regarded type as yet another tool to fulfil his visual dreams. Before the arrival of Willy Fleckhaus, the title “Art Director” didn’t exist at magazines in West Germany.

Today, he is best known internationally for his work on the magazine *twen* but he produced groundbreaking work for many other magazines, including *Aufwärts*, *Quick*, and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*, as well as designing book covers, logos, posters, corporate identities, and the famous rainbow design for *edition suhrkamp*, a series of books by leading authors, each in its own colour, dark blue for Herbert Marcuse’s *Essay on Liberation* and signal red for Samuel Becket’s *Waiting for Godot*.

Left page. Unknown photographer. Willy Fleckhaus, with the manufacturer Scharlemann and Christian Diener, circa 1964.

Right. *Fleckhaus; Deutschlands erster Art Director*, published 1997.



The Classic has featured pioneering art directors before, in issue 4, focusing on Dr M. F. Agha, Alexey Brodovitch and Alexander Liberman. Their route into the profession was anything but straight and none were formally trained in their profession. That was also true for Willy Fleckhaus.

Born in 1925 in Velbert in the Ruhr region, he was the son of conservative-Catholic parents. As a boy, he loved to paint and draw. Like his family, he took a firm stance against Nazi ideology and joined the Catholic Youth Organisation, later dissolved by the Nazis. At the end of 1943, aged 17, he was drafted into the Nazi Party's labour service and then to the Wehrmacht. Little is known about his time in the army but as evidenced by a letter, while stationed in Nordhausen, he paid a visit to artist Käthe Kollwitz, whose famous art cycles depicted poverty, hunger and war on the working class, a meeting that left a deep impression on him. As the Hitler regime collapsed, he was taken prisoner of war, then released in October 1945, whereupon he returned to the family home in Velbert.

His father had prepared for his return and had rented premises for a Christian art and antiques business, this to secure some kind of future for his son, in a country that lay in ruins. The initiative also led to the foundation of the Kunstverein Niederberg, which organised art exhibitions among its activities. By the time it ceased to operate in the late 1940s, he had already started working at the magazine *Fährmann*, a magazine for young Christians. He wrote numerous articles for the magazine, including one on Picasso. In 1950, he became an editor at *Aufwärts*, a magazine published by DGB, the Confederation of German Trade Unions, and that was where he first put his ideas on graphic design into practice, rarely to the liking of the top brass, leading to open conflicts.

Meanwhile, Fleckhaus made valuable connections elsewhere, including making friends with L. Fritz Gruber, initiator of the photokina fair. In 1956, he created the concept and design for the fair catalogue and the Magnum exhibition shown at the fair. He continued to design exhibitions for photokina and in 1958, he became managing editor of *Welt der Arbeit*. In 1959, he redesigned the magazine *Student im Bild* and that same year, the first issue of *twen* was published.

Willy Fleckhaus died of a heart attack at his home in Tuscany in 1983. He left no archive but his work has been meticulously researched by Munich-based photo historian and freelance exhibition curator Hans-Michael Koetzle. He has published several books on *twen* and Willy Fleckhaus, including *Fleckhaus; Deutschlands erster Art Director* (1997)

and together with Serge Ricco and Stéphane Darricau, *twen [1959–1971]*, published in 2024. Since 1995, Koetzle has explored the work of the art director in several exhibitions, most recently *All Tomorrow's Parties. twen – The Magazine of the Sixties* at WestLicht Gallery in Vienna (2025).

I started my conversation with Koetzle by asking him about the state of the graphic design industry in West Germany in the late 40s and early 50s. The Nazis had closed down the Bauhaus School on 20 July 1933, just months after coming to power.

– It wasn't just the Bauhaus, with Mies van der Rohe as its last director, that was dissolved after the Nazis seized power. Other, less well-known but important design schools in Essen, Frankfurt, and Halle were also swiftly closed or deprived of their leading figures. This doesn't mean, however, that certain design principles and achievements of the avant-garde couldn't survive under the Nazi regime. Consider, for example, important journals in the history of graphic design, such as *Gebrauchsgraphik*, *Die Form*, and *die neue linie*, which continued to be published until 1942 with contributions from László Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer. This demonstrates that the cultural policies of the Nazis were anything but consistent. Where it served the function of the system, the Nazis drew upon the achievements of, for instance, new architecture, new typography, or magazine aesthetics. Overall, and in retrospect, German fascism led to a cultural haemorrhage and consequently to a provincialisation of culture in all areas; film, photography, design, literature, fine arts, from which Germany never recovered.

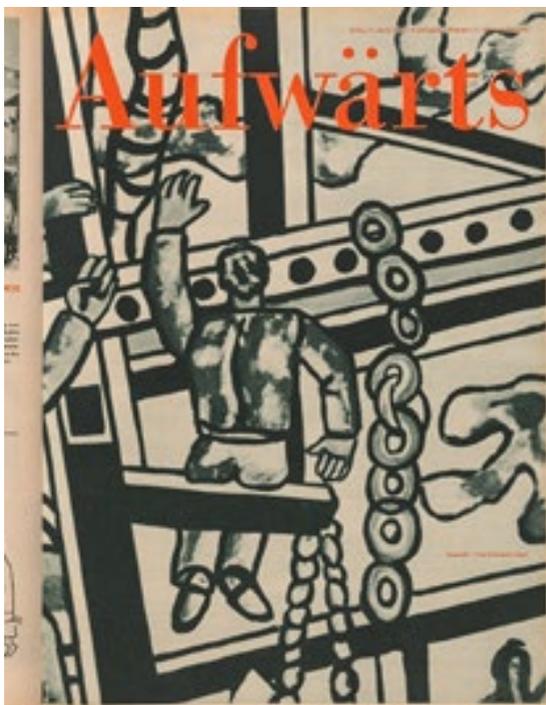
Did some pick up where Bauhaus had left off? Were there new schools or trends?

– The artists who were forced into exile by the nazis did not return to a politically contaminated Germany after 1945. Conversely, the old elites in West Germany quickly regained leading positions, particularly in the media. It's crucial to understand that none of the newly founded magazines in West Germany could operate without editors, photographers, or designers who hadn't already worked for the Nazi press before 1945. Aside from Art Informel, a post-war European abstract art movement that focused on expressive gesture, spontaneity and materiality, there were essentially only two phenomena that could be associated with a new cultural modernism: the "subjektive fotografie" (subjective photography) proclaimed by Otto Steinert from the late 1940s onwards, and the Ulmer Hochschule für Gestaltung (Ulm School of Design), founded in 1953 by Otl Aicher, Inge Aicher-Scholl, and Max Bill, which is often celebrated as a revival of the Bauhaus idea.

Aufwärts



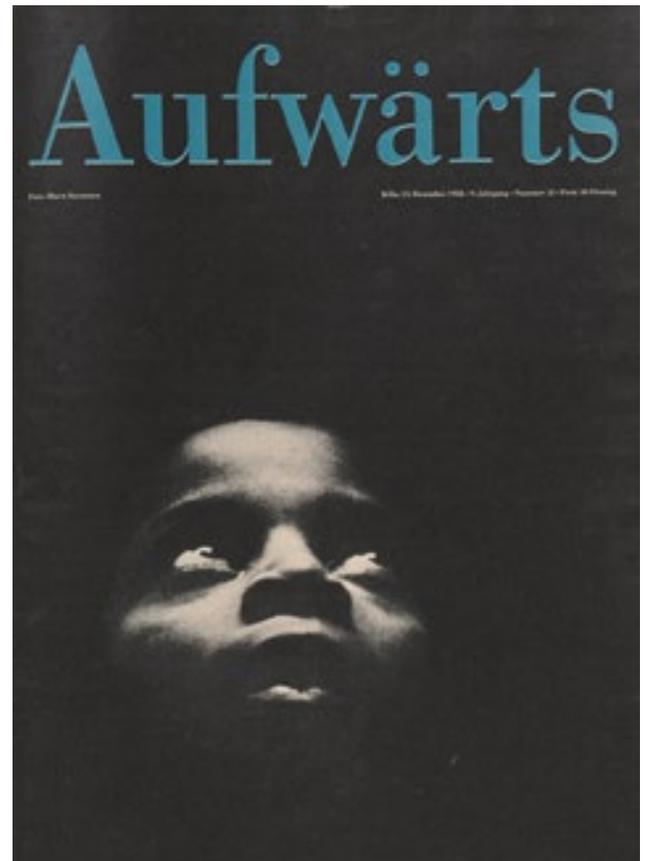
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1. *Aufwärts*, issue 14, 1954. Illustration by George Grosz.
2. *Aufwärts*, issue 4, 1956. Illustration by Fernand Léger.
3. *Aufwärts*, issue 15, 1954. Photography by Christa Peters.
4. *Aufwärts*, issue 12, 1956. Photography by Horst H. Baumann.

twen covers



Was art director even a title at magazines in West Germany during those years?

– If “art director” meant a binding authority for all editorial matters, then Mehemed Fehmy Agha, as “creative director” of the short-lived German *Vogue*, was probably the first in this position in Germany. Herbert Bayer and Moholy-Nagy could also be considered early art directors, though the term or even the function never gained widespread acceptance. After 1945, it was simply designers or layout editors who concerned themselves with generally staid layouts. In the masthead, the hierarchy of magazines, they ranked far down. Willy Fleckhaus was the first to adopt the term “art director” from America and endow it with the necessary authority. He truly determined the visual identity of his magazines.

Where did he study and what?

– As a devout Catholic and a member of the Nazi-banned youth movement “Bündische Jugend”, Fleckhaus came into conflict with the political system early on. He was unable to complete his secondary education or attend university. Instead, he was drafted, served as a young soldier, and became a prisoner of war. Like Otl Aicher, he was part of a “Lost Generation” that had been robbed not only of valuable years but also of a proper education.

He never received any kind of formal education in graphic design?

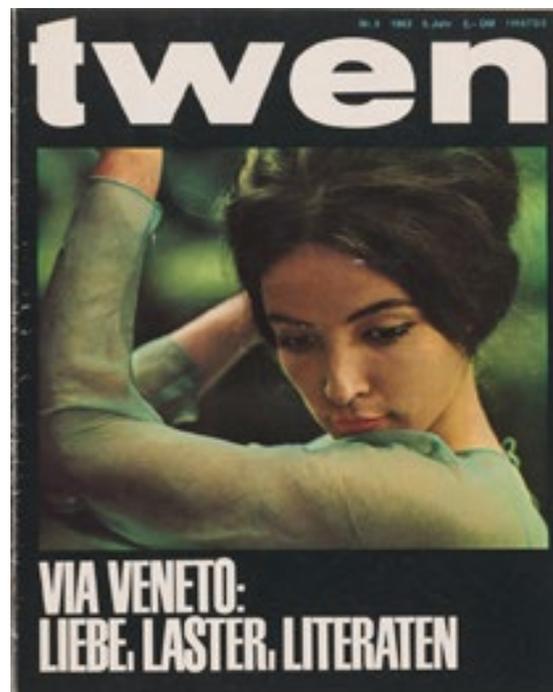
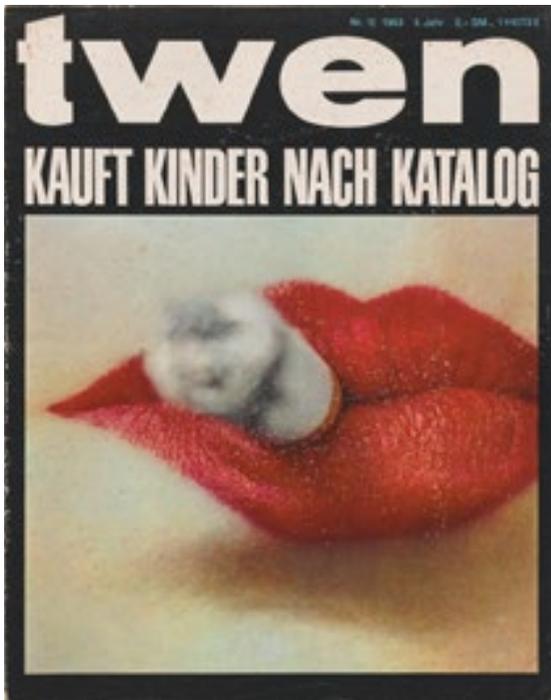
– Not really. But he was curious, inquisitive, and interested in art and culture. He used his time in Freiburg as an editor at a small Catholic youth magazine, the *Fährmann*, for excursions to nearby Basel, where he likely visited the legendary typographer Emil Ruder and thus became acquainted with Swiss design. American graphic design also proved to be a formative influence. As a designer, he was entirely self-taught.

His first major role as a graphic designer was at *Aufwärts*. What was the magazine about and what did he achieve with it?

– Originally founded in 1948, the magazine *Aufwärts* was a monthly publication for trade union youth, small in format, of mediocre quality and printed on cheap paper, typical of the generally impoverished post-war era. In 1953, Willy Fleckhaus joined *Aufwärts* as a journalist and editor. But after the responsible designer left, Willy Fleckhaus, self-assured as ever, simply took over his duties. He not only increased the format, improved the printing, and modernised the title typeface, but practically overnight transformed the staid union newsletter into a top-tier cultural magazine. He put a graphic by Fernand Léger on the cover, there was a photo essay on Le Corbusier and the Ronchamp Chapel, a report on the Ulm School of Design, and a preview of Steichen’s exhibition *The Family of Man*. Where else in the West German illustrated press could you find such a thing?

The reactions to his work were not all positive. What did people object to?

– Naturally, there was resistance and protest regarding the upward trend. This came from the officials of the German Trade Union Federation, but also from young readers. They wanted more sports, more chess and more crossword puzzles. Fleckhaus was unimpressed. He was and remained the consummate “art



director”, clearly also pursuing an educational mission. After the misguided path of National Socialism, it was crucial to educate people through serious content and uncluttered design. In other words, an intellectual upgrade through journalistic quality. A similar idea had initially been popularised after 1945 by the former Bauhaus member Max Bill under the term “Die gute Form” (“Good Design”).

He worked on the magazine until 1959 but he had also started working for the Cologne-based trade fair photokina in the mid-1950s. What impact did that have on him?

– I think photokina, a world trade fair for photographic technology with accompanying photo exhibitions, which began taking place in Cologne in 1950, became important for Willy Fleckhaus in several respects. Not only did he conceive and design the square catalogue in the early years, he also curated photo exhibitions for the fair. Through the photokina Youth Photography Prize, he also became acquainted with up-and-coming photographers, to whom he immediately offered a prominent platform in the magazine *Aufwärts* and, shortly thereafter, in *twen*. I’m thinking of names like Horst H. Baumann, Christa Peters, Michael Friedel, or the later Magnum photographer Thomas Hoepker. After all, he wanted nothing to do with the former propaganda

Left page. The very first issue of *twen*, 1959. Unknown photographer.

Top left. “Buys children from a catalogue”. *twen* issue 12, 1963. Photography by Irving Penn.

Right. “I like seeing nice girls”. *twen* issue 3, 1959. Unknown photographer.

Bottom. “Via Veneto, Love, vices, literati”. *twen* issue 8, 1963. Photography by C Kaufmann.

twen spreads



photographers working for major newspapers, such as Hanns Hubmann, Hilmar Pabel, Gerhard Gronefeld, or Benno Wundshammer.

And in 1959, the magazine *twen* was born. Where did the name come from?

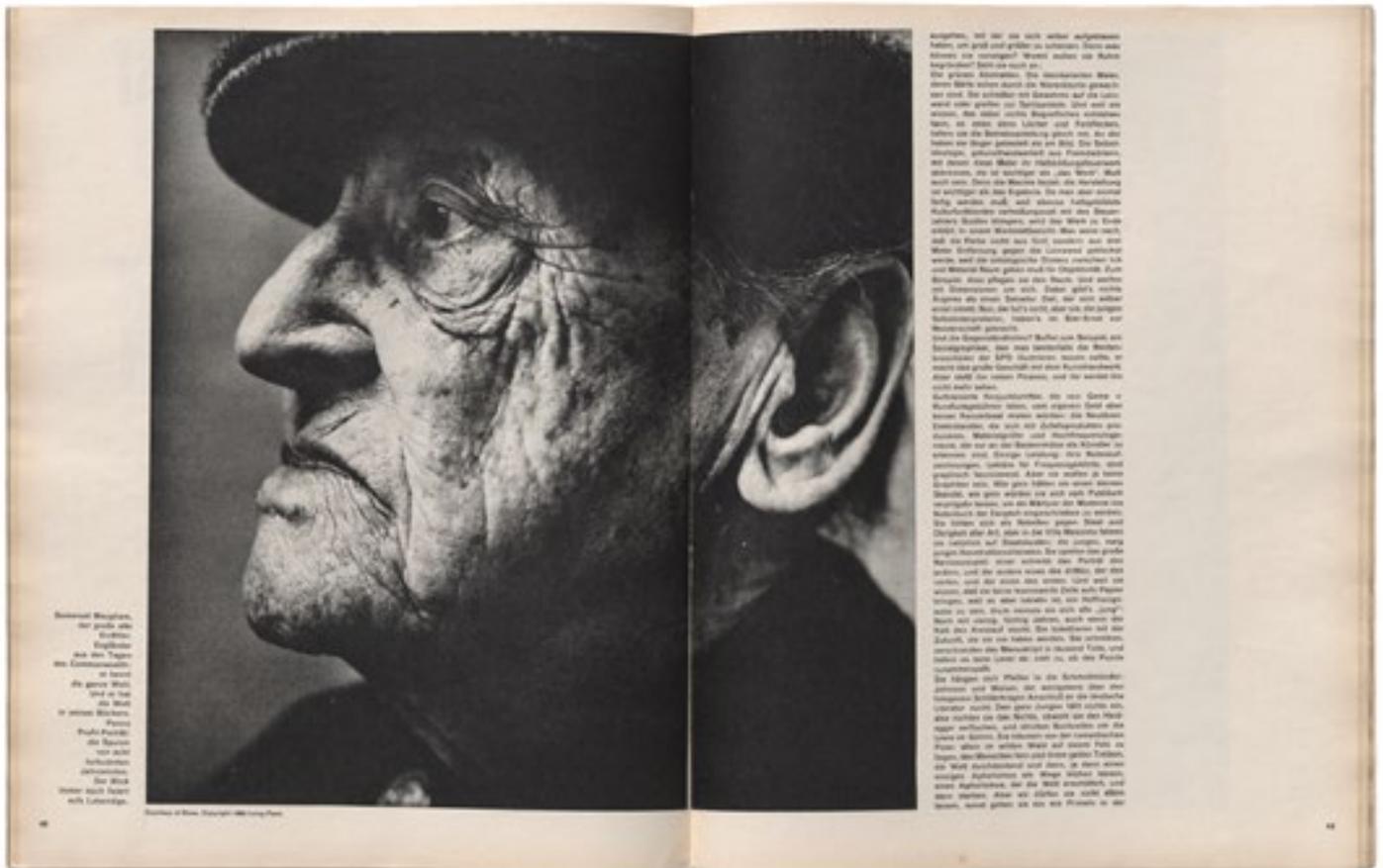
– The term “twen” was coined by a Cologne men’s outfitter, which, incidentally, still exists today as a retailer: Theo Wormland.

In the late 1950s, the company launched a collection of “riveted trousers” meaning jeans, sold under the labels such as “Jimmy,” “Junior,” “James,” and “Twen.” “Twen” didn’t exist as a term in either English or German, but its association with “teenager” made it a natural fit.



The aim was to appeal to the generation of twenty-somethings as a consumer-oriented group, also of legal age, meaning they were free in their decisions and with more than just pocket money. It was likely the young photographer Christa Peters, one of the magazine’s earliest contributors, who suggested “twen” as the title for the magazine. This Anglicism was, of course, also an attempt to differentiate the magazine from publications like *Praline*, *Bunte*, or *Das Schönste*.

The French singer and Actress Juliette Greco. *twen* issue 7, 1962. Photography by Horst H. Baumann.



What was the concept of *twen*?

– There was no concept in the strictest sense. The young team that launched *twen* in Cologne in 1959 with a small budget but great enthusiasm, acted spontaneously, including whatever they discovered as new, fresh, youthful, and perhaps even provocative, and compiling it into a monthly grab bag. Accordingly, it's difficult to define *twen* as a magazine. Photography played a crucial role, yet it wasn't a photography magazine. At times, *twen* was quite political. But *twen* wasn't *Der Spiegel*. Literature, film, and music played an important role. Cooking, too, though it didn't see itself as a food magazine. So, it was a mixed bag, which, incidentally, wasn't read only by "twenties".

Can you tell me about the design of the first issues?

– The black background of the cover was already a stylistic departure, as was the wide, negative-spaced title typeface in lowercase. Inside, the magazine surprised with its uncluttered double-page spreads. The designs Fleckhaus created were based on a strict grid. Photos and illustrations were printed large, often extending across the spine and cropped. Furthermore, white space played a significant role; the unprinted area. This set it apart decisively from other German illustrated magazines with their

pre-war aesthetic. The organising principle of a grid was unknown in German newsrooms. The cropped page was quite a novelty, as was the unprinted space. Photography, too, was rethought. In particular, Will McBride's available-light aesthetic, the coarse grain, and the deliberate blurring met with complete incomprehension, especially from an older generation of photographers.

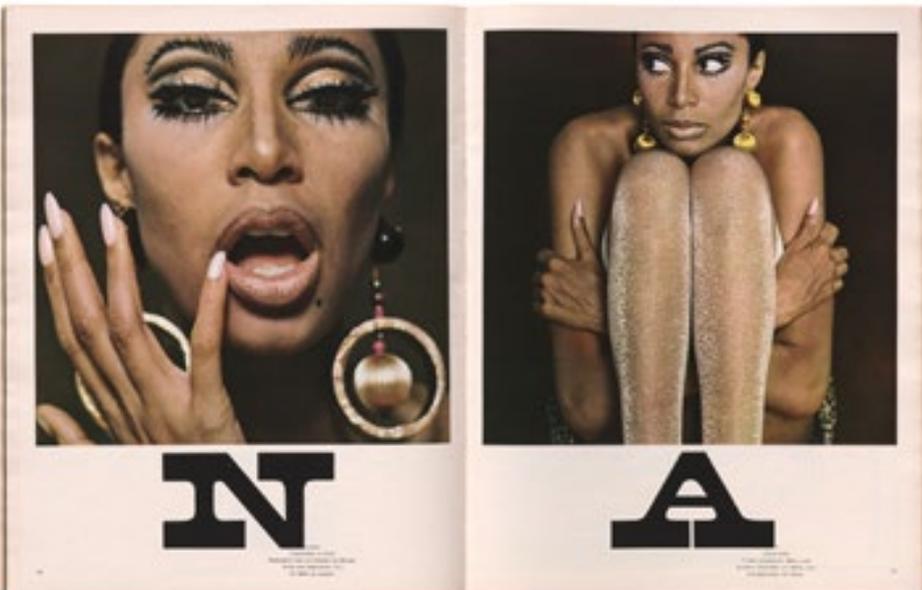
It was contrary to the standards of image and text presentation. He broke the rules?

– The way he cropped images, oversized headlines so that one almost had to distance oneself from the magazine, the way he used the initial copperplate printing for dark photography trained in existentialism, all of this was new and unusual, and for traditionalists an unparalleled break with tradition.

Looking at many of his spreads, they strike me almost as posters or film screens.

– The *twen* titles in particular do indeed have a very striking, graphic appeal. Incidentally, poster design wasn't really Fleckhaus's forte, although he

The English writer Somerset Maugham.
twen issue 11, 1963. Photography by Irving Penn.



did create posters for publishers like Suhrkamp. I believe Heinz Edelmann is the one who said about Fleckhaus, "His world began on page 64." In other words, the magazine itself, the flow of the pages, the cinematic effect experienced while flipping through them, that was his true domain.

What impact did Agha, Brodovitch and Liberman have on Fleckhaus?

– I don't believe Fleckhaus knew of Agha or his work. And Liberman's more journalistic design approach didn't really offer much guidance. Brodovitch demonstrably became a central figure

—
Donyale Luna, often called the first Black supermodel. *twen* issue 1, 1967. Photography by Charlotte March.

for Fleckhaus. The imagination, the wealth of visual ideas, the elegance of the double-page spreads at *Harper's Bazaar*, that was all formative for Willy Fleckhaus.

Like, Agha, Liberman and Brodovitch, he came from outside design.

– Indeed, as was true of the aforementioned Otl Aicher. Many people in those chaotic post-war years made their careers by changing careers. A design professor without a high school diploma would simply be unthinkable today.

What were the reactions to *twen*?

– Enthusiasm on the one hand. You could feel a breath of fresh air, even in the headlines that were sometimes provocative. What other West German magazine spoke openly about homosexuality, abortion, or antisemitism? There was clear resistance from conservative circles. For example, the Catholic Church felt compelled in the early 1960s to launch a graphically well-designed anti-*twen* magazine. The irony of history: The magazine *Kontraste* outlived *twen* by 25 years.

Will McBride was a frequent contributor. Can you tell me about the

other photographers he worked with?

– As mentioned, many came from the photokina scene, such as Horst H. Baumann, Roger Fritz, and Michael Friedel. Fleckhaus would later on travel regularly to Paris and secure the rights to photographs by artists like Bruce Davidson, Leonard Freed, and René Burri from Magnum. Pete Turner and Max Maxwell represented colour photography trained in photographic design. The young Charlotte March stood for a vibrant, bold interpretation of fashion. Furthermore, *twen* readers encountered names like Robert Doisneau, Lucien Clergue, Ed van der Elsken, David Hamilton, William Klein, Peter Knapp, Jacques-Henri Lartigue, Saul Leiter, Helmut Newton, and Irving Penn. But this was generally agency material, albeit of the highest quality and with a clear international focus.

He had his own way of working with photographers and their images. For Fleckhaus, the images were raw material that could be cropped as he saw fit. He also rewrote captions. How did the photographers react to this? Did some stop working with him?

– Fleckhaus had no problem cropping, counter-framing, or rasterising photos. Henri Cartier-Bresson would have vehemently objected to this. Consequently, he was never featured in *twen*. All the other photographers were happy if they had a spread in *twen*. That was the best advertising they could get for their work. To my knowledge, there was never any protest.

He had the same approach to texts. You have written about his search for a visual grammar. Can you tell me about that grammar?

– Willy Fleckhaus began his career as a journalist. Contrary to popular belief, he certainly had respect for texts. But if the balance of a double-page spread demanded it, he would cut them down. Regarding his visual grammar, it's easy to see how he tried to transcend the physical limitations of a magazine.



By radically cropping heads in portraits, “sawing off their skulls” as one reader criticised it, he forced the viewer to think beyond the page. By depicting objects in their original size, isolated from the background and with shadows, he opened up a third dimension for the magazine. And then there was the eye-rhythmic montage of images, which created a wonderful cinematic effect. Here, too, he undoubtedly learnt from Brodovitch.

Top. *twen* issue 6, 1968. Photography by John Clarke.

Bottom. *twen* issue 2, 1968. Photography by Erich Klemm.





How extreme did he get? Many years ago, I heard an anecdote about Fleckhaus sending a photographer to a village in Africa. Neither he nor the photographer had been to the village, had no idea what it looked like, but Fleckhaus explained exactly how he wanted the lead image to look, “There’s a house here, a tree here, a well here.”

– It is said of Fleckhaus that he always took the yolk from ten eggs and the white from another ten eggs. So, he certainly didn’t skimp. Furthermore, he had very specific ideas about photography and illustration. He didn’t have to explain much to photographers like Will McBride at *twen* or later Andrej Reiser at *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*. Available light, cropped faces, Italy in the morning light were practically standard practice. Guy Bourdin, on the other hand, is said to have received a sketch from Fleckhaus as a guide for a shoot. That was also the last time the Frenchman was interested in working for *twen*.

Fleckhaus stuck to certain typefaces, which ones?

– Willy Fleckhaus was not a typographer. Developing a typeface like Otl Aicher, who wanted to create a monument to himself with his Rotis, would never have occurred to Fleckhaus. He contented himself to work with just a few typefaces: a narrow, bold sans-serif at *twen*, and for his book design, Times New Roman or Garamond.

As the years progressed, did the design of *twen* change? The photography?

– Not really. The format remained stable. The organising grid was retained. However, the typography became more playful. In photography, staging took hold – what we now call photo design. And then, of course, there was the arrival of colour. *twen* was the first periodical in the country to feature extensive

colour spreads from 1961 onwards and, more generally, to make the aesthetics of colour, long discredited, a central theme.

The 1960s started and became the Swinging 60s. Youth became much more political as the decade progressed, demonstrating against the Vietnam War, and there were the student protests of 1968. Did *twen* change to reflect this?

– In retrospect, one could distinguish three distinct phases in the content of *twen* magazine. An initial, more literary-oriented phase. A middle phase that focused primarily on cooking, travel, buying houses in Tuscany, or service-oriented topics like “Love via Computer.” And a final phase around 1970, when there was an almost desperate attempt to politicise the inherently hedonistic *twen*. This was the phase with the white covers. A rather implausible shift, however. Anyone interested in politics would read *Konkret*, *Pardon*, or *Der Spiegel*.

John Blackburn, who worked for a time as art director at the British magazine *Nova*, launched in March 1965, once told me that *twen* had been a huge inspiration for *Nova*. Did *twen* have a similar effect in West Germany?

– Of course, the industry watched *twen*. And many of its elements were adopted by competitors. Photographs became larger. They printed edge-to-edge and dispensed with decorative elements. But the impact remained limited. A magazine of such

“Miss Commune and her life as a family of eight”. *twen* issue 6, 1969. Photography by Guido Mangold.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin



visual radicalism has never existed in Germany again. The advertising industry was the one that truly learned from *twen*. It wasn't until the 1970s, with its extensive photo spreads, that we saw *twen*'s influence. And then, a decade later, in zeitgeist magazines like *Wiener*, *Tempo*, and *Max*.

In 1971, *twen* ceased publication. Why?

– From the outset, *twen* positioned itself as a “magazine for two”, a publication for both genders, for young couples. Accordingly, it advertised lipstick as well as luxury cars, perfume as well as men’s

shoes. But are young men interested in lipstick, young women in cars? Suddenly, advertisers were talking about “wasted reach” and

redirecting their advertising budgets elsewhere, specifically to magazines for men or young women. Added to this, of course, was the fact that *twen*, with its highly aesthetic photography, travel tips, and recipes, no longer truly appealed to the politically engaged generation of 1968. The initially innovative design had also lost its lustre. The competition had caught up.

What did Fleckhaus do after that?

– Even before *twen*, Fleckhaus had designed book series and covers for Suhrkamp Publishers. His most famous work is undoubtedly the legendary design for *edition suhrkamp*, conceived as early as 1963 and known internationally as the “Rainbow Series.” He also worked for Hoffmann & Campe, and later for Piper and Boringhieri. So, he certainly wasn’t unemployed. What he did lack, however, was a magazine. That only came again when he was commissioned to design the supplement for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. And it was there that he truly reached his peak.

He also became an educator? Where did he teach?

– Fleckhaus taught graphic design in Essen from 1974 and at the University of Wuppertal from 1981. He seems to have been a good teacher, primarily because he assigned practical tasks to his students. This meant less theory and more concrete magazine projects that also generated income. Furthermore, he regularly put his students in contact with leading figures in the industry; publishers, art directors, and photographers. “Meet famous people” was one of his mottos.

He was only 57 years old when he died.

– I never met Fleckhaus personally. But what I know, or rather what I have learnt from interviews, is that he didn’t live a healthy lifestyle. Sports were foreign to him and he loved plenty of wine and good food. A true hedonist. His sudden death at his home in Italy came as a complete shock to his family, friends, and the industry.

Fleckhaus had a massive impact, but just like Brodovitch, who was fond of quoting Serge Diaghilev’s instruction to Jean Cocteau, “Astonish Me!”, he didn’t leave behind a coherent design philosophy. Fleckhaus once stated, “a magazine is something three-dimensional; it’s not just height times width, it’s an experience. And we should understand that, when we make typography, it’s not just about characters, not just a simple matter of bold and Light Futura. What we actually do is delight, inform and entertain our readers, whichever it may be. Nothing else.”

Left page

Top images. “Anita has a lucky touch when it comes to advertising; her fingers are in high demand as models”. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*, issue 179, 1983. Photography by Marion Nickig.

Bottom. “His name is Rabbit, he knows nothing but persecution and false suspicion at Easter. No one holds his banner. Poor little rabbit.” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*, issue 110, 1982. Photography by Peter Dine.

Right. “The Rainbow series.” *edition suhrkamp*, 1963, the first 48 titles.

– Willy Fleckhaus, and this quote illustrates it beautifully, worked intuitively, from the gut. If there is such a thing as perfect pitch, then he had it. He wasn’t guided by theories or concepts, but by the desire to create something coherent and compelling that would resonate with the widest possible audience. In short, he wanted to make an impact through a design that was both honest and sensual.

What is his legacy?

– Design, like so many other things, is subject to trends. Nevertheless, there are solutions that remain valid beyond their immediate time. Consider certain creations of the Bauhaus for example. In his magazine design, Fleckhaus sought the enduring, the beautiful, the harmonious. And his ideas resonated with publishers and editors willing to embrace them. Those days are gone. But perhaps precisely for that reason, it is worthwhile to study the visual world of Willy Fleckhaus. If there is anything that should still convince us today, beyond mere aesthetics, it is the uncompromising way in which he defended his ideas. And his belief in a better world. Design, not as an end in itself, but as a force for change.





Beyond the FINE PRINT

Collecting Copper Photogravure Plates, Negatives, Contact Sheets & more

In the world of collecting classic photography, the emphasis is very much on the fine print, connoisseurship being the vital skill to determine the quality of prints by masters such as Gustave Le Gray or Man Ray. But the implements used to create those prints, or bringing them to the printed page, be it books or magazines, are equally, if not more sought-after by select groups of aficionados, and in some cases, the implements sell for more than the prints.

The Curtis Copper Photogravure Printing Plates

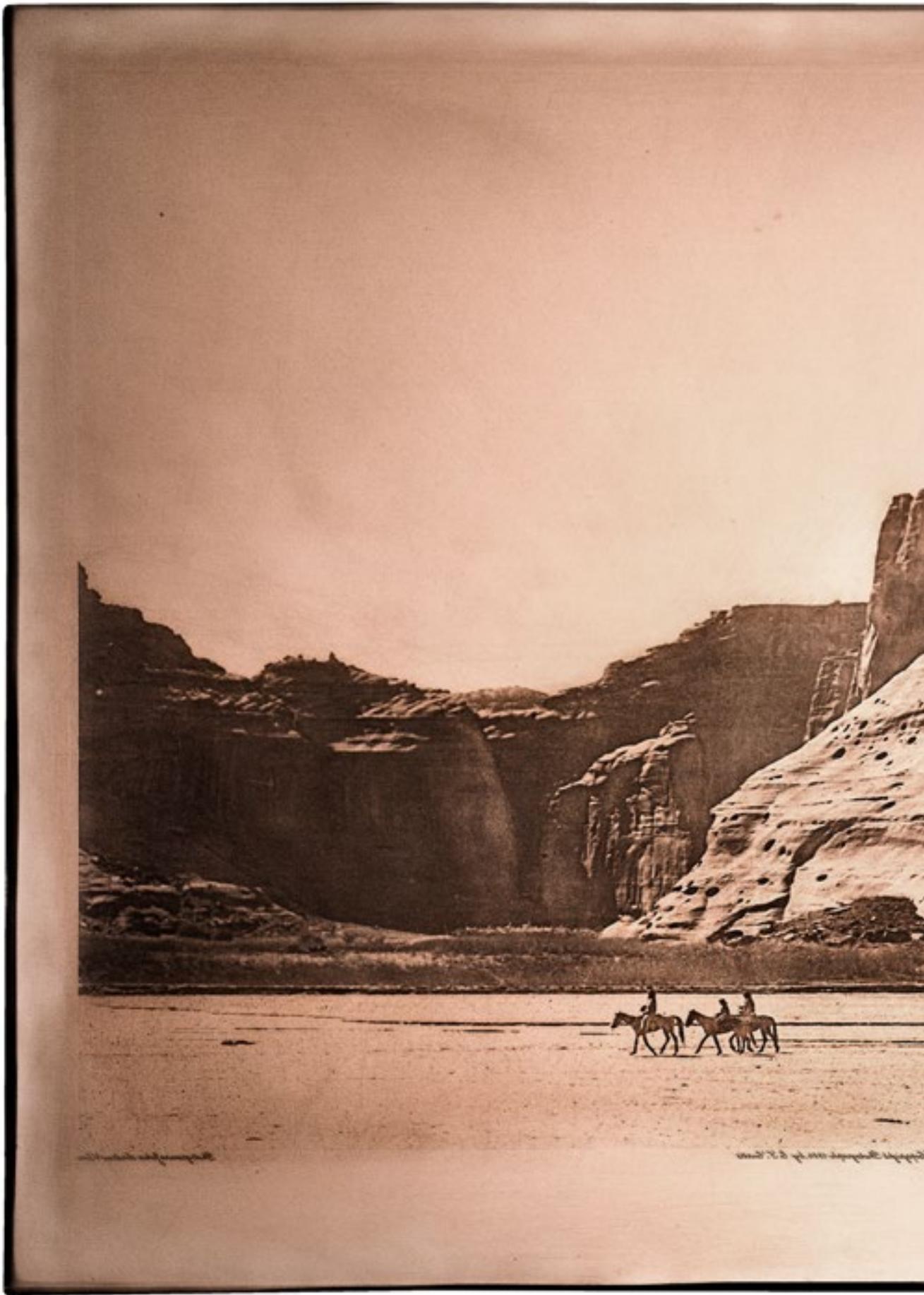
Works by Edward S. Curtis from his mammoth project *The North American Indian*, be it Goldtones, gravures, platinum or gelatin silver prints, have been staples of the photography auctions since the modern photography market was established some 55 years ago. But lot 42 in the auction at Sotheby's,

New York, on 30 September 2014, was something different altogether; the original copper photogravure printing plate for *Bear's Belly - Arikara*, plate 150 in *The North American Indian*. It was the first time that one of the original printing plates had been offered for sale. Estimated at 40 000 - 60 000 USD, it sold 82 500 USD.

It had been consigned by Bruce Kapson, a leading authority on the photography of Edward S. Curtis, who has been in the field for over four decades. The following year, Kapson showed a selection of copper photogravure plates from *The North American Indian* at Paris Photo LA, a highlight of the fair, as they were at Paris Photo that same year. Kapson holds the plates in special regard.

– To me, these plates are the high point of the genius of Edward S. Curtis. Their three-dimensionality offers a wholly new material and aesthetic experience that is distinct from Curtis's more widely exhibited gravures, photographic prints and Goldtones. The immediacy of the copper plates is unlike any other vehicle for these iconic images. It is as though they allow the viewer to be transmitted through the frame to the very moment the image was captured. People were simply in awe when I exhibited them.

Edward S. Curtis. *Bear's Belly - Arikara*, 1908, copper photogravure printing plate. Courtesy of Bruce Kapson Gallery.





Edward S. Curtis.
Canyon de Chelly - Navaho, 1904,
copper photogravure printing plate.
Courtesy of Bruce Kapson Gallery.

101. 428



CHIEF JOSEPH - NEZ PERCE

Did Curtis use a specific company to produce the plates? Or several?

– John Andrew & Son was an engraving firm in Boston, Massachusetts, established in 1869 by John Andrew and his son George T. Andrew. A department of the Suffolk Engraving & Electrotyping Co., John Andrew & Son and Suffolk Engraving Co. produced all the copper plates and photogravures and for *The North American Indian* from 1906 to 1930.

Did all the plates for *The North American Indian* survive?

– Surprisingly, of the original 2223 plates comprising *The North American Indian*, only 60 or so are unaccounted for. Among those missing is the wonderful *Curtis Self-Portrait in Field Attire, 1899*. Additionally, in perhaps a dozen of the plates, the etch was so worn down that they couldn't be conserved.

You consigned *Bear's Belly – Arikara*, to Sotheby's in 2014, the first outing for the plates. Have you achieved good sales since then? Or are collectors hesitant because they are tools for printing rather than fine prints?

– The Sotheby's auction was the first time one of the plates had been offered for sale and I worked tirelessly with the head of the department to have a gatefold in the catalogue. I must clarify that while I introduced the Curtis plates to the market, I never owned nor controlled the archive of the Curtis plates. I have severed my relationship with the current owners of the plates but I still own about a dozen plates. I'm proud to have introduced these wonderful works to the fine art photography market as well as the overall fine art market. The most iconic of the Curtis plates have realised individual six and seven figure prices in private sales. I have sold a large number of plates but the most iconic images of the plates were sold, not to photography collectors, nor to collectors of Native American art but to two very sophisticated and well-known contemporary art collectors, who saw them and described seeing them as a truly transcendent experience. *Chief Joseph*, *Canyon de Chelly*, and *Geronimo* are now displayed in a room across from works by Jean-Michel Basquiat.

It's sobering to think that the Edward S. Curtis copper photogravure plates could have been lost forever. They are now owned by ZAK Partnership, The Curtis Collection, that is, Steven Kern and Ken Zerbe, two accountants, the latter being the first

CFO of Apple Computers. They became friends when they helped set up Apple's operation in Ireland. My phone conversation with Kern is interrupted several times when the line is cut. "Probably the famous Curtis Curse!" Kern comments and it has been a curse for many, as he explains.

– In 1906, Curtis was paid 75 000 dollars by financier J.P. Morgan to produce *The North American Indian*. There were to be 1500 photographs, in 20 volumes, and Morgan was to receive 25 sets and 500 original prints as payment. Well, the project went on and on. Curtis took some 40 000 photographs of over 80 tribes over 20 years. In 1928, Curtis was desperate for cash so he sold the rights to his material, including the copper photogravure plates, to the financier's son, J. P. Morgan Jr. In 1935, Morgan Jr. made a deal with booksellers Charles E. Lauriat Company, Boston. It sold whatever it could but the copper photogravure plates ended up in a basement in Boston, and lay there, forgotten, until they were discovered, almost by chance, in 1972.

The plates were acquired by Cerro Gordo Associates in 1972, then sold in 1973 to The North American Indian, Inc. and sold again in 1976 to Classic Gravure Corporation. All tried, unsuccessfully, to make profits from making restrikes. In 1982, the plates were acquired by the present owners, Kern explains.

– I had left accounting to strike out as an entrepreneur. One day, Ken Zerbe called and asked me to go to New Mexico and kill a deal that a business associate of his, Don Anderson, had proposed. Ken didn't want to do it himself, as he was working on other things with him. Anderson was looking for a new project and had met one of the owners of the Curtis collection, which included the plates; Classic Gravure Corporation. The partnership was evidently not a happy one, as he just recently had been hit over the head with a metal chair by one of the other partners. Anyway, I went to New Mexico. Anderson was very keen and chose to make his presentation of Edward S. Curtis to me on Sandia Peak, the top terminal on the famous tramway in Albuquerque. I had never heard of Edward S. Curtis. Anderson spoke about making new prints and making trillions of dollars from them but all that was irrelevant to me. He had brought a copper photogravure plate with him and I just couldn't take my eyes off it. Anyway, Ken and I went into business with Anderson and as soon as the deal with the previous owners was made, with us accepting all their liabilities, we were hit with all manner of lawsuits from people and companies they owed money or prints to and that took a long time to deal with.

Edward S. Curtis. *Chief Joseph - Nez Percé*, 1903, copper photogravure printing plate. Courtesy of Bruce Kapson Gallery.



The new owners decided to open a gallery in Santa Fé. – Anderson ran the gallery. Like others before us, we produced restrikes, and that didn't work out. In 1985, we closed the gallery, and Ken and I bought Anderson's share of the partnership. Right after we had bought them in 1982, I took the copper plate for *Chief Joseph* home with me. Sometime later, I made an appointment with the head evaluator for Sotheby's in San Francisco. I asked her what the plate was worth and how much it would sell for at auction and she replied, "My advice to you is

Edward S. Curtis.

Top. *Offering the Buffalo Skull - Mandan*, 1908, copper photogravure printing plate. Courtesy of Bruce Kapson Gallery.

Right. *Ready for the Charge - Apsaroke*, 1908, copper photogravure printing plate. Courtesy of Bruce Kapson Gallery.

to take a razor blade, score it up, and throw it in the garbage can." Later, of course, in 2014, Sotheby's sold *Bear's Belly - Arikara* for 82500 dollars.

Kern and Zerbe stored the plates away for quite a few years and then Bruce Kapson got involved.

– Bruce Kapson was, and is, a highly respected Curtis dealer, and he did an excellent job of establishing the early market for the copper photogravure plates. He was the only outlet for the plates for a long time but then we had disagreements and severed our relationship. After that, we offered the plates to the other Curtis dealers we work with, Andrew Smith, Bob Capone and Flury & Co. Over the years, we have also

made large donations of plates to the Smithsonian Institute, the Center for Creative Photography and the Seattle Art Museum, and in 2021, we made a further round of donations to eight institutions around the US. We are pleased to have made all the donations. *The North American Indian* is a key project in photographic history.

While the Curtis plates command high prices, affordable copper plates can sometimes be found at antique markets, or, of course, on eBay, once described by Patrick Pound as "the unhinged photo album", where a few years back, I bought the copper photogravure plate used to print Horst's *Bacchanale* (Salvador Dail's costumes for Leonid Massine's 1939 ballet) for his first book, *Horst; Photographs of a Decade*. You can read about it on The Classic Platform.



1880

1880

BEADY FOR THE GREAT WARRIOR



Negative Land

Negatives have been featured in *The Classic* before. In the very first issue of the magazine, American dealer/collector Alex Novak was interviewed about his collection of early negatives on paper and glass, believed to be the largest collection of its kind in private hands. And if you missed issue 1, you can download it from our website.

Novak told me that he had bought his first negative in 1997, from legendary dealer Harry Lunn. “It was a Louis Robert of a Cascade, Château de Saint-Cloud, circa 1854.” Novak also noted “Paper negatives have always been an ‘insider’ obsession. Dealers have always recognised them for what they are: unique art objects. Museums and collectors have been slower to pick up on this, but now the trend is in full swing, especially after dealer Hans Kraus, Jr.’s exhibition on the negative several years ago and the second Sotheby’s Paris Jammes auction in 2002.”

There were, in fact, two auctions of material from the collection of Marie-Thérèse and André Jammes at Sotheby’s in 2002, on 21 and 22 March. The first, a multiple artists sale, the second devoted to the Charles Nègre archive. Sotheby’s had held a multiple artists sale from the collection a few years prior, in London, on 27 October 1999. There had been no early negatives in that auction but there were plenty in the 2002 auctions and they firmly established negatives as vital components of any serious collection of early photographs. In the early days of photography, positives could only be made by contact printing negatives, so the the latter are large and impressive.

As noted by Novak, negatives were an “insider” obsession. I commented that in the 1850’s, some photographers exhibited negatives as objects of beauty in their own right and Novak said, “It was relatively common and is documented in a number of publications of the time, including *Le Bulletin de la Société française de photographie*.”

For this article, I contacted Dr Michael Pritchard about the situation in the UK. After 20 years as a photographic specialist and director at Christie’s,

Baron Louis-Adolphe Humbert de Molard. *The Hunters* (*Les deux chasseurs sur le perron du château d’Argentelle*), paper negative, 240 x 184 mm, circa 1848.
Courtesy of Alex Novak.

London, he left to complete his PhD. He joined the Royal Photographic Society as Director in 2011, and as of 2024, is an independent consultant. In 2009, he started the highly recommended British Photo History blog. Pritchard told me.

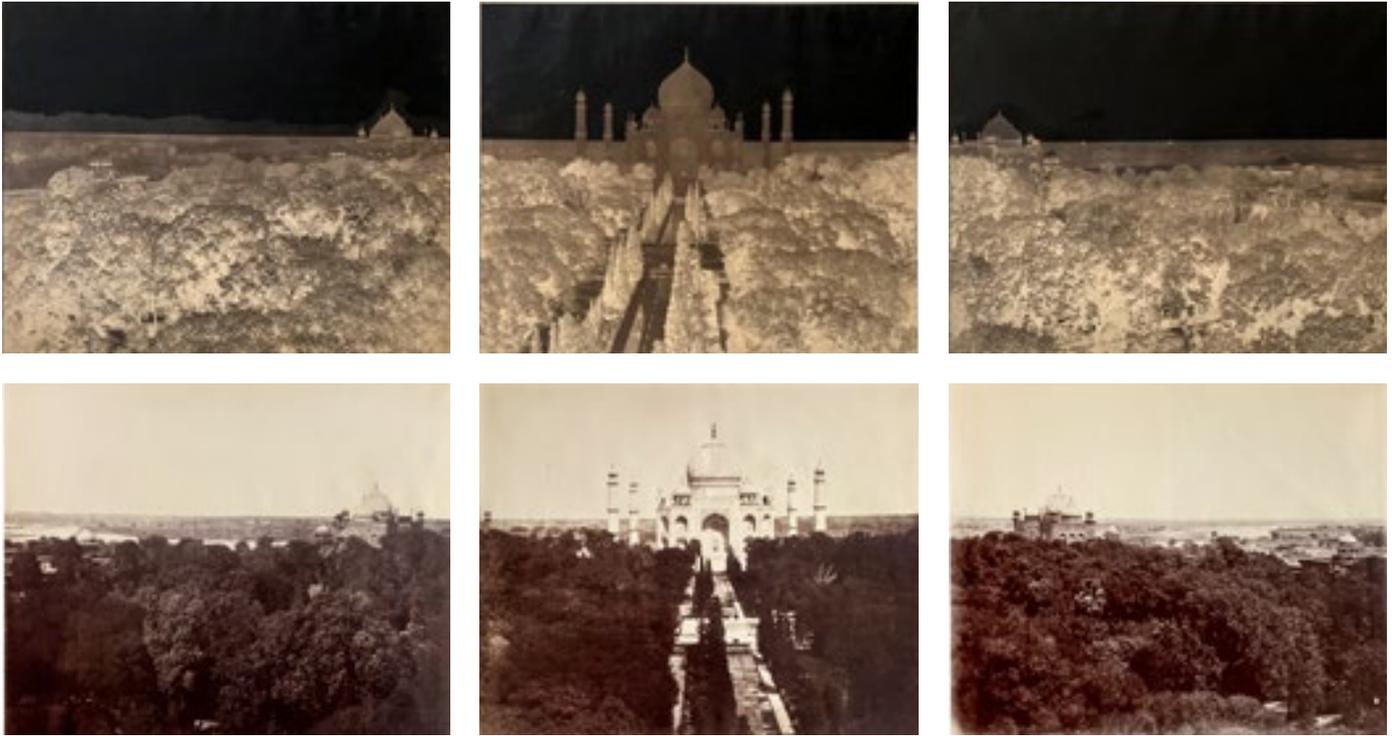
– From my own research in British exhibition catalogues during the 19th and 20th century, it was rare for negatives to be exhibited. There are some examples of them being shown in the 1850s, 60s and 70s but this seems to be more about demonstrating a technique or process rather than for their own aesthetic. I haven’t found examples after this, suggesting that the focus was exclusively on the print or magic lantern slide.

Novak has added some three dozen negatives to the collection since 2019.

– They include some important Baron Louis-Adolphe Humbert de Molard paper negatives; *Le dépeçage du cochon* and *Les deux chasseurs sur le perron du château d’Argentelle*, some very early and rare glass plate negatives by Charles Nègre and Alphonse Jeanrenard, more Louis Robert paper negatives, including the important negative of a positive of a Group on the Steps of the Garden of the Sevres Factory. I also added two positives to their respective negatives, one for Julien Vallou de Villeneuve and one for Félix Teynard, and a glass plate negative, *Female Nude reclining with Fan*, circa 1880. One of the glass plates in this series is monogrammed with what could be an “H”.

I asked Novak if there’s increasing competition for the material.

– I see a bit more museum purchasing, particularly from regional French museums, and there has always been competition from major, sophisticated collectors. The disappointment is the lack of interest or understanding by museums in North America. France is the main source for early paper negatives, understandable, as French photographers were the main users of the paper negative, despite Talbot’s invention of the early version. Most other countries didn’t really adopt the process to the degree that France did. At the Jammes auctions in 2002, prices went into six figures. These days, private sales of early negatives are often in five and six figures for the more important images, especially with matching positives.



Dr John Murray.

The Great Panorama of Taj Mahal, 24 March 1864,
waxed paper negatives, each approx. 360 x 430 mm.

The Great Panorama of Taj Mahal, January - March 1864,
albumen prints, each approx. 360 x 430 mm.

Collection of the author.

Keeping in mind the high prices for early negatives, some would perhaps expect that there would be a thriving market for negatives of iconic 20th century images. Well, there isn't one, at least not a coherent one. The sizes are much smaller, 8 x 10, medium format (4 x 5, 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 etc.) and 35mm. Furthermore, the negatives of the leading 20th photographers are mostly kept by institutions, foundations or descendants of the photographers. The core collection of Paul Strand's negatives is held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Most of Edward Weston's negatives went, as part of his archive, to the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, in 1981. Still, material will invariably find its way to the market.

On 16 May 2012, Christie's, London, offered two glass negatives by František Drtikol for sale, nude studies 1925-1928, provenance stated as having been bought at auction in Prague in 1994. I know of at least one other auction house that turned them down, thinking they wouldn't sell. Well, they did. Both works were estimated at £6 000 - 8 000. One went for £13 750, the other for £16 250.

Occasionally, material turns up in galleries. Gilles Peyroulet & Co, Paris, has an extremely rare glass negative by Constantin Brancusi; *Lizica Cordeanu dancing to Gymnopédies by Eric Satie in Brancusi's studio, 8 Impasse Ronsin Paris, 1921-1922*. Dominique Chenivresse explained.

– Brancusi gave everything in his studio to the French state and this negative comes from a different source, the estate of Lizica Cordeanu, a Romanian-born dancer. We bought it at auction some 10 years ago. 20th-century negatives by the masters are very rare but we do have a few, including a negative by Dora Maar. In the 1980s, she reworked a negative of one of her nudes by scratching it, a very interesting process. We also have a negative by an unknown photographer, of Germaine Krull at work with a companion. It's wonderful material but unlike our 19th-century negatives, we haven't had many sales of 20th-century material. The Brancusi is expensive and compared with 19th-century material, it's also small so collectors are hesitant.



František Drtikol. *Nude studies*, glass negatives, circa 1925-1928. Reproduced from the catalogue for the photography auction at Christie's, London, 16 May 2012.

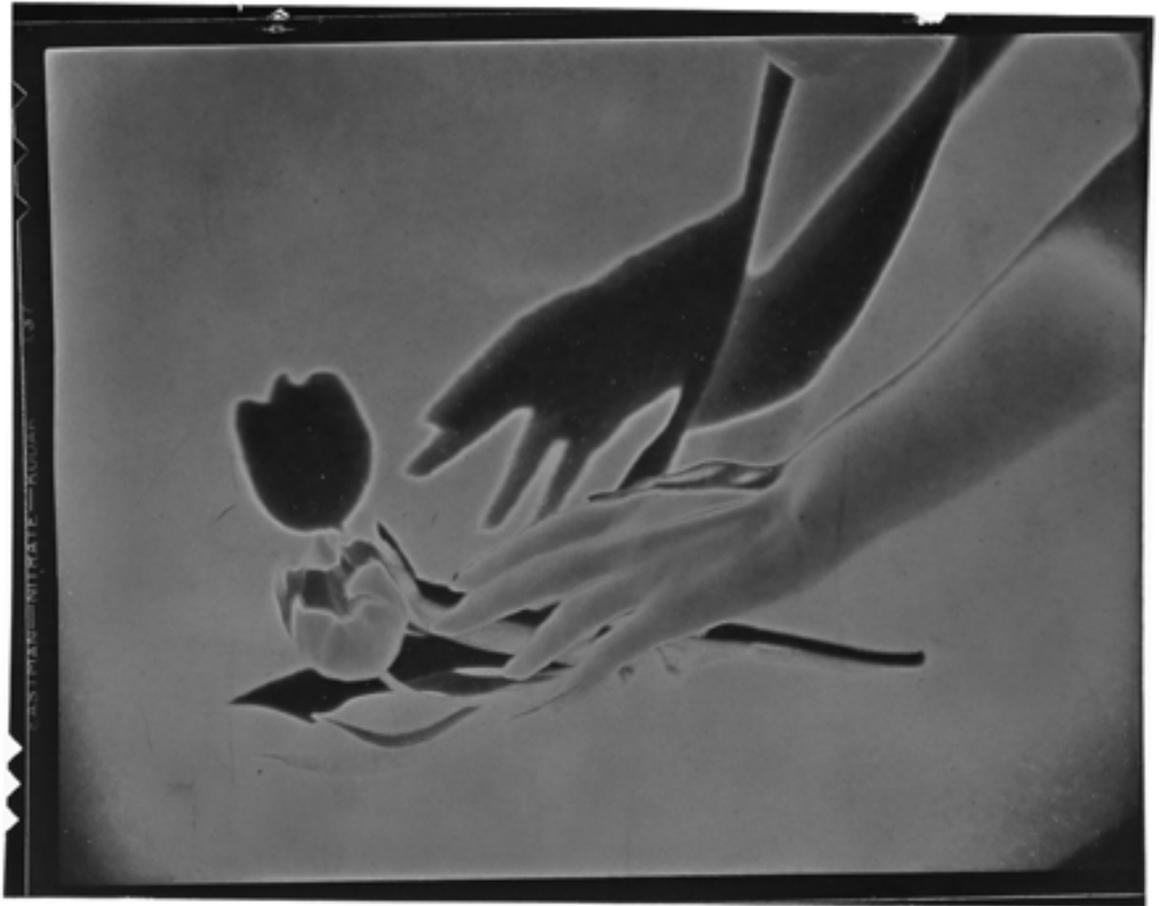
Next pages

Constantin Brancusi. *Lizica Cordeanu dancing to Gymnopédies by Eric Satie in Brancusi's studio, 8 Impasse Ronsin Paris, 1921-1922*, silver gelatin negative on glass 12 x 9 cm. Courtesy Gilles Peyroulet & Cie, Paris.

Dora Maar. *Female Nude*, experiment on silver gelatin negative nitrate on cellulose support, 1935/1980, 16.6 x 8.6 cm. Courtesy Gilles Peyroulet & Cie, Paris.







Others have had the same experience. On 19 March 2019, Chiswick Auctions, London, held a special sale of positives and negatives by American photographer Francis Bruguière (1879-1945), best known for his much sought after light abstractions. It garnered a lot of interest from both collectors and the media.

In 1977, the Witkin Gallery, New York, published a portfolio of 10 photographs by Bruguière, printed by George Tice, each signed by Tice and Rosalinde Fuller, Bruguière's last partner. A year later, Fuller sold a large group of Francis Bruguière material to James Enyart; correspondence, scrapbooks, an incomplete autobiographical manuscript, but the bulk consisted of 4x5 and 5x7 inch negatives, including experimental work, portraits, nudes, architecture, and landscape views. Enyart made new contact prints from the negatives in 1982, and then donated the Francis Bruguière material to the Creative Center for Photography in 1982 and 1995.

The material in the Chiswick Auctions sale was interesting rather than great; portraits, still lifes, solarisation and multi exposure experiments, but there were no negatives of light abstractions and just one small positive. It was the second sale organised by Chiswick Auctions' new Photographica

Department, headed by Austin Farahar, the first sale having been a mix of cameras and photographs. Farahar explained.

– The consignor wished to remain anonymous, but the material originally belonged to Rosalinde Fuller; material that she had kept back, to keep examples of his work and perhaps because a lot of the images were of her and her friends from the world of theatre. There was just one light abstraction, though not a great one. Still, it went for £3600 plus commission. The top lot was a solarised portrait of Rosalinde Fuller and her sister; £3900 plus commission. Several lots had a negative and a positive. The highest price for a single negative was achieved for lot 131; Solarisation (Clasped Hands); £550 plus commission. We sold about 65% of the lots and around and 80% of the unsold lots were negatives which were later snapped up as a job lot by another buyer post sale. The results prove that buyers' confidence remains with known prints with signatures and stamps. The exercise of investigating the archive and bringing it together into a coherent sale catalogue was thoroughly enjoyable and really helped establish Chiswick Auctions in the field of Fine Photographs.



1.



3.



2.



4.

Francis Bruguière.

Left page. Lot 130. *Solarisation (Hands with Rose)*, 1936-1940, 5 x 4 Eastman Nitrate Kodak negative.

1. Lot 51. Multi exposure experiment, Rosalinde Fuller, 1936-1940, 10 x Kodak Eastman negative.

2. Lot 39. From *The Way* (Sebastian Droste), circa 1923-1925. 10 x 8 negative, gelatin on nitrocellulose sheet film.

3. Lot 131. *Solarisation (Clasped Hands)*, 1936-1940, 5 x 4 gelatin on nitrocellulose sheet film.

4. Lot 117. *London, Self-Portrait*, circa 1930, 5 x 4 gelatin on nitrocellulose sheet film.

Courtesy of Chiswick Auctions



While the famous names attract attention, others are focused on negatives by unknown makers. Eric Dumage is a French cinematographer and collector of vernacular negatives. He describes looking at them as “entering another world. I not only collect them. I also interpret them, crop and enlarge details in them.”

I asked Dumage when he started collecting negatives.

– I had a history with negatives before I started collecting them. I finished cinema school in 1975 and as I didn’t have any contacts in the film business, I spent six months after graduation working in a laboratory, enlarging black and white negatives, mostly of architecture but also some fashion pictures. It taught me a lot about reading negatives. I started collecting negatives in 2008, when I went to the flea market where Marcel Minck had his stand, selling vernacular photography. In addition to prints, he also had vernacular negatives and I immediately fell in love with them. That same year, I went to New York, came across a flea market and found similar negatives, and then I was completely hooked.

What kinds of negatives do you collect? Are they on glass, film, medium format, 35 mm? And do you collect specific themes?

– I would say that only 1% are on glass; the rest are on celluloid. Most of them are from the 1920s until the end of the 1950s. Some are 8x10, some are medium format and some are 35 mm. There are certain kinds of negatives that I’m instantly drawn to. My favourite theme is accidents, where something has gone wrong for the photographer, whether the image is blurred, double exposed or something else. I also love images of shadows and images that are taken inside cars, where you can see the steering wheel, the dashboard or the inside of a car door.

There are thousands of negatives for sale on eBay,



with prices ranging from a few dollars to thousands. Do you have growing competition for the themes that you collect?

– I don’t buy from eBay. I’m not that fanatic. I’m fanatic about the relationship within The Snapshotters, a group of nine people, including Marcel Minck, who are passionate about vernacular photography. The human relationships come first; the passion for amateur photography comes second.

If you find the positive for the negative, do you buy that as well?

– I prefer the negatives. The reason is that I not only collect them, I like to enlarge them and make them absolutely huge so that I really get into the grain and the texture. I love to crop a negative, reframe the image and get into the details. I find that many negatives that are not that interesting at first glance can get really, really interesting if I focus on just a small part. Marcel has been very kind to me over the years. He himself doesn’t like negatives and has given me many, many negatives. So many that I haven’t had time to go through them all. Marcel keeps the originals, but I work on the details in the negatives. For me, that’s where the magic is.

Unknown photographer.

Left. Nude, cellulose acetate negative, 1940s-1950s.

Right. Nude, cellulose acetate negative, 1950s.

Courtesy of Eric Dumage.

The Woodburytype Process

Invented by Walter Bently Woodbury, patented in 1864 and launched in 1865, the Woodburytype process was not a photographic process but a photomechanical process, the first of its kind that enabled reproduction of the delicate continuous tone of photographs with true middle values. Regarded as the most beautiful of photomechanical processes, it was used to print several historically important publications, including *Galerie Contemporaine* (1876-1884); portraits of leading cultural figures by Nadar, Étienne Carjat, Adam Solomon and others, *Street Life in London* (1877-1878), photographs of street vendors and labourers by John Thomson and Adolphe Smith, and *The Moon: Considered as a Planet, a World, and a Satellite* (1874), a pioneering astronomical work by James Nasmyth and James Carpenter.

While Woodburytype prints are easy to find, the elements used in the process to print them are extremely rare. The most desirable material is expensive. The last Jammes auction, held at Sotheby's, Paris, on 15 November 2008, included a matrix used for printing the Étienne Carjat portrait of Charles Baudelaire in *Galerie Contemporaine*. It sold for 51 150 euros. The catalogue entry stated that there was another known matrix of the portrait, in the Collection Clayeux, Paris.

I spoke to Nicholas Burnett, collector and photography conservator, well known in the UK and abroad for his Cambridge-based studio, Museum Conservation Services Ltd, who has two matrices used for *Galerie Contemporaine* in his collection.

– One is a portrait of Adolphe Cochery, the other is a portrait of John Lemoinne. I also have the corresponding Woodburytypes from *Galerie Contemporaine*, and in the case of Lemoinne, the reprint from *Galerie Contemporaine des illustrations françaises*, the reissue

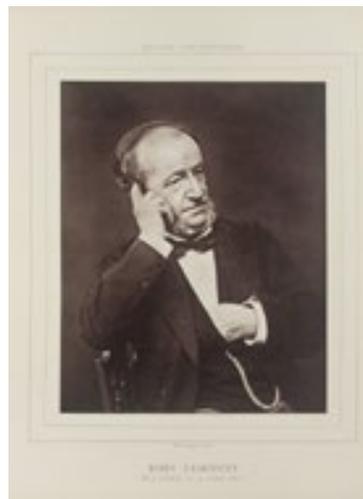
of the former, where they got the gelatin matrix the wrong way around! The result was a slight softening of the harder edges in the image, a bit like using beauty mode on the early digital cameras.

Burnett acquired the two matrices in 2018.

– I bought them from French dealer Serge Plantureux. He had a lot of matrices from *Galerie Contemporaine* and the prices depended on how famous the sitters were and whether he had the corresponding positives. I had to go for the not-so-famous sitters and find the positives myself but that was easy and I found them on eBay. I paid 500 euros for the two matrices but prices for the more famous sitters ran into four figures. I was extremely pleased to acquire the two matrices. I had collected photographic processes for decades but had never managed to buy a single Woodburytype matrix. As for the lead matrices, I have never seen one for sale.

For the Woodburytype process to be invented, two strands of image making had to come together, Burnett told me.

– The first was nature printing, where objects such as leaves are pressed into a flat surface such as annealed copper using an etching press. When the leaves are removed, a shallow indentation is left, which can be filled with ink and used for printing, like an etching or engraving. The earliest known nature print was made by Leonardo da Vinci towards the end of the 15th century. Artists occasionally used nature printing in the following centuries but an important development occurred in 1835 in Vienna when Alois Auer used soft lead plates for nature printing. Combined with high-pressure hydraulic presses, the results he produced were beautiful, crisp and had photographic qualities, though, of course, they were not photographs.



The other strand was the development of photographic images which have a relief that is proportionate to the density, i.e. the darkest areas are thicker and the brightest areas are thinner. One such is the carbon process, which creates a gelatin and pigment image in low relief, was developed independently by Joseph Wilson Swan and Alphonse Poitevin. The carbon process was perfected by 1864 and the following year the Walter Bently Woodbury announced the Woodburytype process in the *British Journal of Photography*.

Burnett explained the process.

– Woodbury used an unmounted, uncoloured carbon print placed on a polished lead block and subjected it to huge pressure, 5000 pounds per square inch. This impressed the carbon print into the lead. He then opened the press and removed the carbon print (which could be used for impressing more blocks). The lead block was transferred to a second press and a hot gelatin solution with pigment in it was poured into the recess left by the carbon print. A piece of very smooth paper was then placed over the lead block and the press closed with enough pressure to keep the paper in contact with the pigmented gelatin while the gelatin cooled. When the press was opened, the paper was peeled away from the lead block and the pigmented gelatin came away with the paper. This essentially creates a near perfect copy of the carbon print.

Left page. John Lemoine (1815-1892), French journalist, member of the Académie française. Matrix and the final Woodburytype. To the right, matrix lit to show the relief. Courtesy of Nicholas Burnett.

Right. Étienne Carjat. Portrait of Charles Baudelaire, Woodburytype matrix used for printing *Galerie Contemporaine*. Reproduced from the catalogue for the Jammes auction at Sotheby's, Paris, 15 November 2008.



Why not just make carbon prints?

– Well, once the block was made, it was much quicker to make Woodbury types. The production process was speeded up by having six hand presses and six identical lead blocks so that by the time the sixth block was filled with ink and the press closed, the first was ready to be opened, the print was removed and the process was begun again. I say that Woodbury used carbon prints to produce his printing plates because that is essentially what they were. My own minor contribution to the research of the Woodburytype process is that I went through the records of the Autotype Company, held at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, and discovered that it had produced the carbon printing paper that Woodbury used for producing the gelatin reliefs, their main product being carbon printing paper.

Woodbury's earliest gelatin matrices had no colour but fairly rapidly it was realised that adding a little colour made it easier to see what image was on the gelatin relief.

Woodburytypes were widely used for high quality reproduction in the last quarter of the 19th century. Publications such as *Street Life in London* and *Men of Mark* in the UK and the equivalent *Galerie Contemporaine* in France used the Woodburytype process. Woodbury also published his own images, such as in the beautiful *Treasure Spots of the World*.

Woodbury developed the process in the years that followed.

– Later on, he used glass as an alternative paper to produce Woodburytype lantern slides. He also developed a variation of the process for home use, the Stanotype, which didn't need a hydraulic press. He also produced Woodburytype gravures where the cooled ink was transferred from its support, directly onto the publication page, though they rarely appear on the market. Woodbury did all sorts of weird, wonderful things. He was quite a good inventor, and his own photographs are very good as well. He just wasn't a very good businessman.

Although the Woodbutype was efficient, halftone printing was even quicker and hence cheaper. It wasn't the same quality but it was good enough. The demand for Woodburytypes died off and so did the process. But the Woodburytype process has had something of a revival in recent years, Burnett explained.

– Barrat Oliver, an American photographer, wrote a book; *A History of the Woodburytype*, and he uses the traditional process for producing high quality limited edition photographic images. Here in the UK, Dr Susanne Klein and her research group at the Centre for Print Research at the University of the West of England have been updating the Woodburytype process using rubber moulds, computer cut moulds and suchlike, preventing counterfeiting being one possible use.

A Stylish Conundrum

In the early 2000s, I bought an Edward Steichen transparency on eBay. The seller was Gallagher's Fashion Magazine and Photography Archive, located on East 12 Street, New York, an Aladdins' Cave for anyone interested in vintage fashion magazines and photography. It wasn't an original and it had halftone dots in it. The image had been taken for a story entitled *Impressions of Hawaii: Edward Steichen Speaking*, published on 15 July 1934 in American *Vogue*. Dr M F Agha was the art director at the time and just two years earlier, the magazine had published the very first photographic colour cover. Michael Gallagher described it in the eBay listing as a "reproduction positive" but didn't know what it had been used for. Neither did the art directors I asked. "Sorry, before my time!" And then I put it in a box.

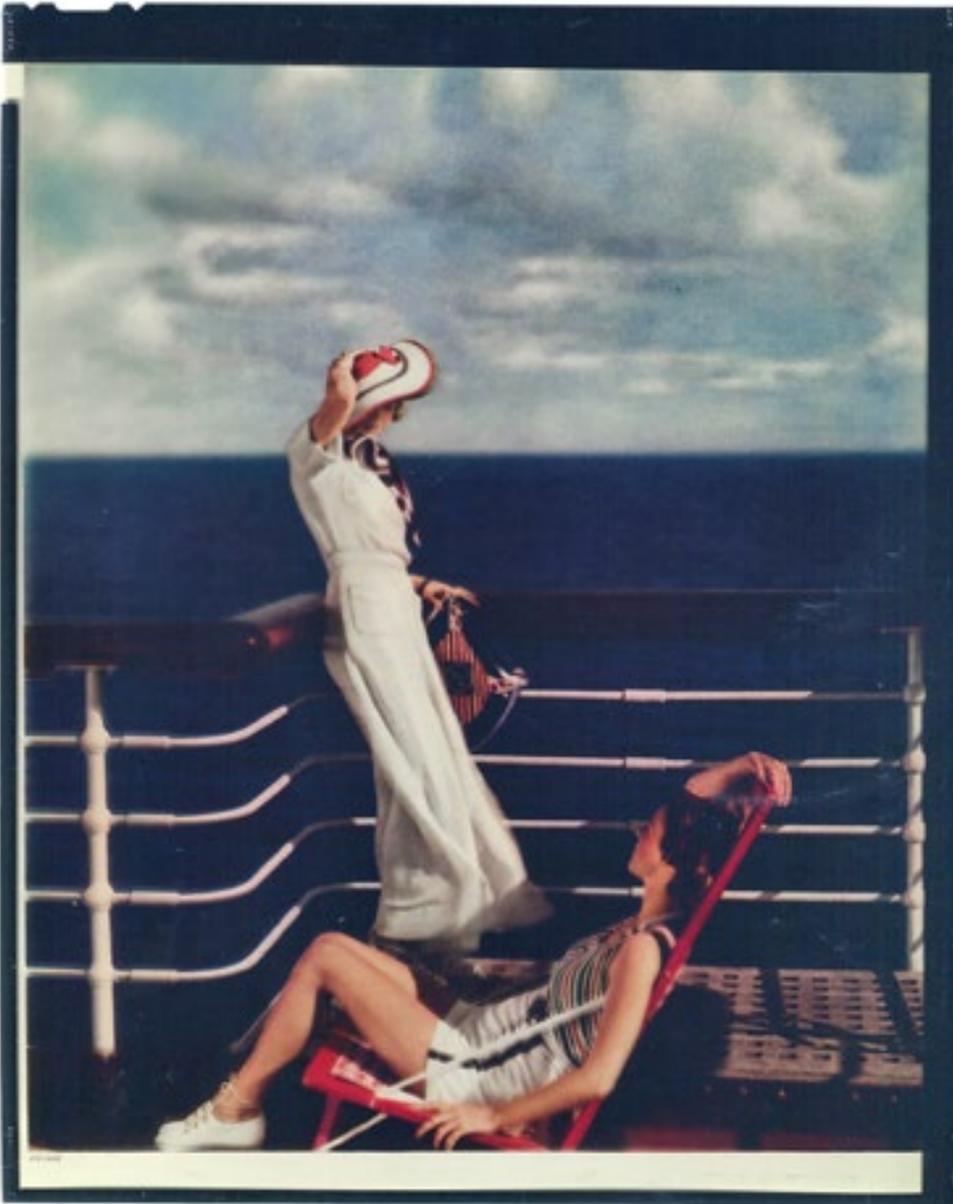
This article reminded me of the transparency and so I contacted Ivan Shaw, Corporate Photography Director at Condé Nast, who told me.

– I'm not entirely sure what this was for but if I had to guess, Steichen would have made a print from the original colour negative. This would have allowed them to do any needed retouching on the print, which then would have gone out for reproduction. But it's just a guess.

Then I remembered my conversation with Charles Churchward, published in issue 4 of *The Classic*. Charles Churchward is an art director, designer and author. He first started working at Condé Nast in 1975 for two years, then returned in 1982, working for another 27 years, much of that time with Alexander Liberman. He is the author of *Alexander Liberman – It's Modern* and designed and selected images for *Then – Alexander Liberman Photographs 1925-1995*. Churchward told me about Liberman, "It was at *Vu* that he began doing collages. A lot of his concepts came from the fact that they didn't have photo stats then. They would project images and texts with a little projector so images overlapped and he saw how he could tell a story by overlapping them. That's how many *Vu* covers came about."

The above reminded me that back in the day, some art directors would do layouts by placing images and mock-up texts between sheets of glass. I emailed Churchward about the "reproduction positive" and he replied.

– I'm not familiar with the term and imagine it was just a way to describe the (work) print made to size for their layout. I would agree with Ivan on this. I'm not sure they would have been able to engrave from a negative at that time. They were probably in a rush as well, since they did two issues of *Vogue* a month. There were all these (now crazy) procedures when it came to engraving that have been erased over time. I used to hear stories from the older engravers, of things they did to print *Vogue*. One engraver, a Frenchman named Guillaume, who had fled to the US because of the war, was famous for tracing his hand for use as a cover for *Vogue* when they had nothing else. Alex, and maybe Agha too, would send engravers in taxis or trains to museums in Boston, Philadelphia or Washington to check the colour of the original art to the proofs they carried with them. They're lucky they missed working on those 800-page issues of *Vogue* that Alex and I worked on! Those engravers are all gone now, but it would be fascinating to gather all their stories. As for the sheets of glass made to magazine spread size. When I started working in the early 1970s, there was a tradition at magazines, especially fashion-related magazines, where layouts were made to size using photostats, xeroxes of type and headlines, and even found printed material. The layouts were placed



Edward Steichen. *Impressions of Hawaii:*
Edward Steichen Speaking, published on 15
July 1934 in *American Vogue*, reproduction
positive. To the right, enlargement showing
the halftone dots. Collection of the author.



gently on a sheet of layout paper and held only by a frame of plastic or cardboard. Art departments were filled with shelves full of them, as well as 1/8" to 1/4" inch thick pieces of glass that would come in handy if a designer had to step away for lunch or a meeting. Editors enjoyed stopping by during those times to tamper with their stories to show what they cared about and we would come by to discover something completely

different from the way we left them. The glass often saved us because it was heavy and awkward, too much so for most of the editors who were stylish women constantly getting manicures. Everything changed with the discovery of non-stick Scotch tape and the heavy glass was disposed of.

Making Contacts

In 2002, I began gathering and curating material for an exhibition on contact sheets, or proofs, entitled *Contacts*, presented in March - April the following year at Art & Photographs, London. There wasn't much literature available at the time, Ralph Gibson's excellent *Contact: Theory* (Lustrum Press, 1980) being one of the very few books. An exhibition seemed timely, as photography was increasingly moving from analogue to digital, with physical contact sheets becoming a thing of the past. Before I started, I was mindful of Elliott Erwitt's statement that contact sheets should be kept "as private as a toothbrush" and "guarded as jealously as a mistress". And I found that many photographers did just that. But other photographers and estates came onboard.

Contacts wasn't the first exhibition to feature photographers' contact sheets but it was, I believe, the first historical survey, starting with uncut CDV sheets from the 1850s by Disdéri and John Jabez Edwin Mayall, moving onto sheets by amateurs in the early part of the 20th century. The interwar and postwar years were represented by Lee Miller, Erwin Blumenfeld, George Rodger, André Kertész, Imogen Cunningham, Marc Riboud, among others, and British *Vogue* kindly lent sheets by John Deakin and Clifford Coffin. Martin Parr, Nadav Kander, Peter Lindbergh and David LaChapelle supplied sheets of recent work. The exhibition garnered more reviews than most of the current museum shows in London but was not a great success when it came to sales. A few months later, *The Saturday Times Magazine* started a series on contact sheets, featuring several of the sheets that had

been included in the show. In 2011, Magnum published *Magnum Contact Sheets* and since then, it has been increasingly common to offer contact sheets for sale. But I have noticed that die-hard collectors prefer the original working sheets, no matter how beat up, illicit or not, to pristine sheets, printed for selling purposes.

I was therefore all the more intrigued to come across Joel-Peter Witkin's actual working sheets, offered for sale by Etherton Gallery, Tucson. I interviewed Terry Etherton in issue 11 of *The Classic* and he talked about having been a photographer himself and his career in the film business before opening his gallery in 1982. In addition to Witkin, he has also sold sheets by other photographers, he explained.

– I have always loved looking at contact sheets. They tell you so much about how a photographer thinks and works. When I was a student, we were always taught how important it was to make contact sheets. I have sold quite a few sheets, by O. Winston Link, Graciela Iturbide, and others though it wasn't material I was actively looking for. But then the opportunity to sell sheets by Joel-Peter Witkin came up and they are by far the most important.

I was surprised when I came across them because they are his actual working sheets, not sheets that were produced later for selling purposes.

– I was surprised myself that he was willing to sell them at all because I thought they should be part of his archive. Joel's opinion, however, was, "As long as I've got high-resolution scans of them, I don't need the physical objects." He had just over 600 sheets. We have tried to get a book published on the sheets but haven't been successful so far. I'm determined, however, to get a book published because the sheets are a revelation. You can see step-by-step how he works to achieve his images, follow his compositional ideas and see the enormous amount of work he does to make an image, from hiring models and actors to makeup people, to lighting, sets and props, etc. I have never seen any other contact sheets like them. With other photographers, it's a case of looking at the sheets to find the best image. For Joel, they are tools for his creative process. There's writing, some are cut or pasted, some are collaged. They are extraordinary objects and we have all his contact sheets, which is remarkable. I should add that Joel has always been very open about his work, patiently replying to letters from students and so forth. He has never felt threatened that somebody was going to copy him.



Rodrigo Moya. *Che melancólico, La Habana, Cuba, 1964*, gelatin silver contact prints. Courtesy of Etherton Gallery.



On the subject of openness, have you had many cases where you've asked to see a photographer's contact sheets but been refused?

– One example is Danny Lyon. I'd love to see them, especially the sheet for *Crossing the Ohio River near Louisville*, to see what he shot just before and after that image but he's never going to show his sheets to anyone. And I understand why. A lot of photographers don't want you to see he mistakes they made or how they crop images, preferring to keep it secret.

You have also sold a contact sheet by Keith Carter; *Fireflies*.

– It's probably his best-known image. The image was printed in an edition of 50 and it sold out almost immediately. A few years later, he decided the enlarged contact sheet, 16 x 20 inches, in an edition

of 20 as a way for those who had missed out, to get the image though in a different form and that edition sold out too. When you look at the sheet, there's not a great deal of variation between the frames but he really nailed it in one frame. A great photographer.

In addition, you also have sheets by Rodrigo Moya (1934-2025), the Mexican-Colombian photojournalist, writer and publisher.

– We worked with Rodrigo for many years, a wonderful man. Rodrigo had his own way of working with contact sheets. Instead of just putting the negatives on a piece of paper and exposing them

Keith Carter. *Fireflies*, 1992, enlarged gelatin silver contact sheet. Courtesy of Ether-ton Gallery.

W. DeW



DOWN SPOT 2000 w/s - 250AS
SOFT BOX 2000 w/s - 1570D

[Handwritten signature]



Joel-Peter Witkin.

Left. *Retablo (Kissing Woman)*, NM, 2007, contact sheet, gelatin silver print, paper and tape.

Top. *Our Daily Bread*, 2013, contact sheet, gelatin silver print.

Courtesy of Etherton Gallery.

and printing them the actual size, he would make the contact sheet, cut this apart and mount the images with some space between them on paper. The sheet that I fell in love with immediately was for his portrait of his friend, the writer Gabriel Garcia Márquez. On the back it had the title of his most famous book, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and the portrait was used as the author's portrait

in the original edition of the book. It's a great sheet so we have used it for our advert in your magazine this time. We also have the sheet for his portrait of Che Guevara.

I find that most collectors who acquire contact sheets regard them as an element of their collections. American graphic designer and collector Mark Schwartz (1956-2014) was an exception. He and his wife Tina began focusing on contact sheets in the early 2000s, building a formidable collection. A selection was shown in the exhibition *PROOF: Photography in the Era of the Contact Sheet in 2019* at the Cleveland Museum of Art, accompanied by a book of the same name.

– We sold a few sheets to Mark over the years. The thing that blew my mind was that he seemed to have sheets by ALL the great photographers,



Robert Frank, Richard Avedon, Harry Callahan, Irving Penn, etc. And he would have had to be very careful, especially with somebody like Avedon who was very litigious. I remember asking him, "How did you get these?" There was no point in asking because he really wouldn't say. My theory is that once photographers or their agents realised just how serious he was about contact sheets, he was able to wrestle sheets away from them like nobody else could. And look what happened. The book was

done and the sheets went to the Cleveland Museum of Art. Mark focused on a specific area where there wasn't much competition. It was such a cool thing to do. He built a very important collection that will be studied for years and years.

Joel-Peter Witkin. *Un Santo Oscuro*, Los Angeles, 1987, contact sheet; gelatin silver print. Courtesy of Etherton Gallery.

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Andre Kertész. Martinique, 1972 © The Estate of Andre Kertész / Courtesy of Peter Fetterman Gallery

Galerie Bruno Tartarin



Alfred Enke. Circa 1900, Photographie au charbon

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