

#16
THE

CLASSIC

AUTUMN 2026

A print and digital magazine about classic photography



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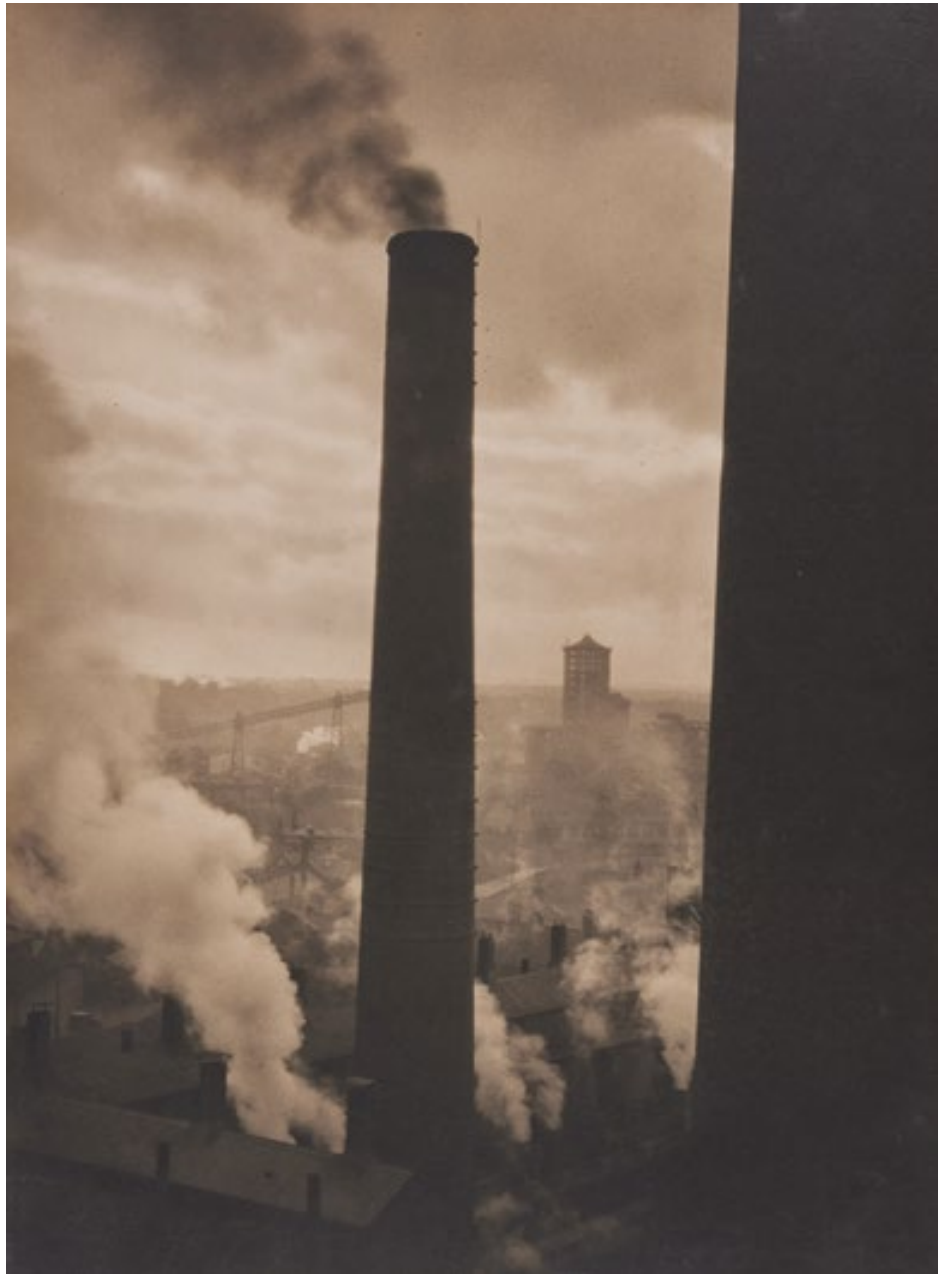
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Francesca Woodman, *Untitled*, 1978, lifetime gelatin silver print.
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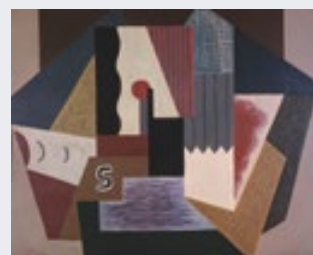
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Cover: Florence Henri. Advertisement for Jeanne Lanvin's perfume Arpège, gelatin silver print, 1929. Courtesy Archives Florence Henri. © Martini & Ronchetti.



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Paris Photo
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Lisette Model, Café Metropole, New York, c. 1946 © Estate of Lisette Model, boudoin lebon

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From the editor

And so we write a new chapter. In May this year, Barnabé Moinard took over the reins from Bruno Tartarin, as publisher of The Classic. Barnabé Moinard is a well-known Paris-based dealer in vintage photography and the promoter of the 24.39 Classic Photography Fair. He will also exhibit at Paris Photo this year, sharing a stand with Serge Plantureux.

I will remain as editor-in-chief, Laura Leonelli as contributing editor, and Jasmine Durand and Mike Derez will continue as the magazine's outstanding design team.

I am now asking you for your support. While The Classic is a free magazine, it's not free to produce and ship. We do raise revenue from advertising, but costs for paper, printing and shipping have gone up. The best way to support the magazine and to secure its future is to subscribe.

I realise it's a big ask but on the other hand, as a regular reader, you will have had the magazine for free for all these years. Your support would be appreciated. Here are the details;

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Michael Diemar

Editor-in-chief

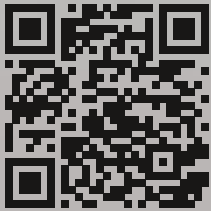
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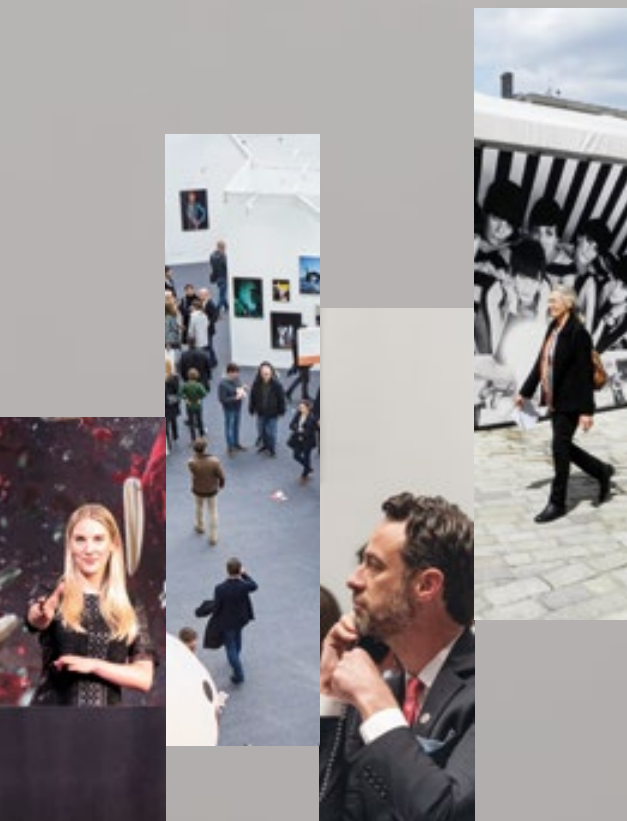
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Bernd BECHER (1931-2007) & Hilla BECHER (1934-2015)
Stone breaker (for gravel). Gunzburg, Germany, 1989.
Gelatin silver print, signed. Edition of 5.
60 x 50 cm

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PREVIEW

Tuesday 10 November, 11 am – 6 pm
Thursday 12 November, 11 am – 6 pm

This is Photography

The First 200 Years

Coinciding with the two-hundredth anniversary of the first-ever photograph, this lavish publication, edited by Nathalie Herschdorfer, curator, author and director of Photo Elysée, sets out a path through the history of the medium. Presented chronologically, the book showcases key photographs and objects year by year, each accompanied by a short text entry offering historical, technical, or critical context. Interleaved throughout are longer thematic texts by contributing writers, including David Company, Luce Lebart and William Ewing, as well as extracts from the writings of photographers and major thinkers on the subject, including Lucia Moholy and John Szarkowski, bringing a depth of understanding to the principal genres and developments in photography, with cross-references suggesting connections.

Starting in 1826 with Nicéphore Niépce's *View From the Window at Le Gras*, the world's earliest extant photograph, now believed to have been taken in 1827, between 4 June and 18 July, it moves on to his early experiments with Daguerre, Hercule Florence's 1833 photograph of

pharmacy labels, here described as "the world's first photocopy", Fox Talbot's 1835 *The Oriel Window, South Gallery, Lacock Abbey*, the first extant negative, and Daguerre's 1838 *View of Boulevard du Temple*, the first photograph to catch people.

Some of the choices are expected: cyanotypes by Anna Atkins and Eadward Muybridge's motion studies, a 1934 by Edward Weston and a 1978 *Film Still* by Cindy Sherman. Others are rarer treasures or unusual, such as Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii's 1915 autochromes of the Russian Empire, and "Photograph 51" by Rosalind Franklin and her student Raymond Gosling, the first X-ray diffraction image of DNA.

The image enabled her fellow researchers James Watson and Francis Crick to build their double helix model of DNA structure. She died in 1958 and so did not share in the 1962 Nobel Prize awarded to Crick, Watson and Maurice Wilkins.

Photography has blossomed and proliferated to a point where some 1.9 trillion photographs are snapped annually. Photographs are now at the core of our image-dominated culture. On 11 June 1997, Philippe Kahn took the first ever camera phone photograph, of his daughter Sophie Lee.



Three years later, Google Images was launched, with a photograph of Jennifer Lopez in a green dress being the most popular search at the time.

Artificial intelligence is only mentioned twice in the book, and as far as I can make out, there are no AI aided photographs in the book. Instead, it ends with a photograph by Rinko Kawauchi, shot on film this year, of a young girl, seen from behind, on a beach, with a quote from Kawauchi, "It's about creating mystery, but also expressing my own feelings about time passing, the fragility of life. They are metaphorical images, (about) how fragile our world is."

This is Photography – The First 200 Years
Thames & Hudson

Lewis Carroll. *Alice Liddell as "The Beggar Maid", 1858.*
Albumen silver print. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gilman Collection, Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005.



Elsewhere during Paris Photo...

24.39 Classic Photography Fair

The Paris tabletop fair has become as much of a magnet for classic photography aficionados as the main fair. Previously known as Photo Discovery – The Fair, the 24.39 Classic Photography Fair is back for its third edition under the leadership of Barnabé Moinard, since this spring, also publisher of *The Classic*. Coinciding with Paris Photo, this independent fair brings together nearly fifty international exhibitors on three floors at the Pavillon Wagram for a day dedicated to vintage and modern photography. Moinard comments.

– Amidst celebrations marking the bicentenary of the invention of photography, the fair reaffirms its ambition more than ever: to place photographic heritage back at the heart of the contemporary gaze by revealing the diversity, charm, and importance of original prints and a material approach to photography. Works on offer range from the 1840s to the late 20th century, including daguerreotypes, salt prints, albumen prints, gelatin silver prints, snapshots, books and more. Prices range from 30 euros

to several thousands, with a wide selection of photographs available between 200 and 2000 euros, attracting collectors, the curious, and enthusiasts alike. The exhibitors include galleries, dealers, collectors, and auction house specialists, from France, across Europe, the US, Argentina and Canada.

Barnabé Moinard himself is a dealer specialising in vintage and modern photography. He founded Barnabé Moinard Photographies in 2022, a company dedicated to the promotion, appraisal, and distribution of vintage and modern prints. 24.39 is a code name: it evokes the fifteen formative years of the 19th century, between 1824 and 1839, during which photographic experiments proliferated, leading up to the medium's official invention.

We were deeply saddened when news reached us in March this year that legendary 19th-century photography dealer Robert Hershkowitz had passed away. The business that bears his name, Robert Hershkowitz Ltd. continues under the leadership of his wife Paula and his daughter Kate and they will be exhibiting at the fair, bringing, according to Kate, "a mix of travel photography, British and French architectural studies, portraits and landscapes, a few 20th-century works and a small number of cased photographs".

14 November

24.39 Classic Photography Fair

Pavillon Wagram
7 avenue de Wagram
75017 Paris
24-39.com



Square Montholon

The 24.39 Classic Photography Fair. Credit Stefan Fiedler.

Charles Marville. *Lamppost, Square Montholon*, albumen print from a glass negative, 1865. Robert Hershkowitz Ltd.

24 39
CLASSIC
PHOTOGRAPHY
FAIR



Italy's leading photography fair returns for its 16th edition

FRANCESCA MALGARA

MIA Photo Fair was founded in 2011 as Italy's first contemporary art fair dedicated exclusively to photography. Today MIA Photo Fair BNP Paribas has become an important centre for galleries, photographers and photography collectors. Organised by Fiere di Parma and directed for the fourth year by Francesca Malgara, the fair returns for its 16th edition in March 2027, consolidating its position as Italy's foremost fair devoted to fine art photography and as the leading platform where the art market, curatorial practice and contemporary visual culture converge.

The fair will once again be held at Superstudio Più, located in the heart of one of Milan's liveliest districts. Following the previous editions' explorations of Change, Dialogues and Metamorphosis, the sixteenth edition focuses on the multifaceted concept of Belonging. Francesca Malgara comments.

– With Belonging, we have chosen a word that resonates with many of the profound transformations shaping contemporary society. Photography is perhaps the medium best equipped to explore how we connect with people, places, communities, ideas and memories. It will serve as the guiding thread of an edition that views photography not only as a means of representation, but as a space for relationships and exchange.

The sixteenth edition also introduces a renewed curatorial structure, designed to further strengthen the fair's ability to interpret contemporary photography through complementary perspectives.

– The Main Section will continue to represent the core of the fair, bringing together leading Italian and international galleries specialising in photography and contemporary image-based practices. This evolution of the curatorial programme reflects the fair's commitment to accompanying the ongoing transformations of contemporary photography through diverse perspectives, while maintaining a dynamic dialogue between artistic research, the art market and visual culture.

Beyond Photography – Dialogue | Work in Progress will be curated by Rischa Paterlini, who, after overseeing the international FOCUS section for the past four editions, has been invited to



rethink Beyond Photography through a renewed curatorial vision. Conceived as a platform for contemporary artistic research, the section takes photography as its conceptual point of departure while expanding into hybrid practices and experimental languages.

Reportage Beyond Reportage continues under the curatorship of Emanuela Mazzonis di Pralafra, reaffirming its role as a platform dedicated to the evolution of contemporary documentary practice. Bringing together photographers from different generations and geography, the section highlights projects that move beyond traditional reportage towards more layered and interpretative forms of visual storytelling, offering critical perspectives on contemporary reality.

Gallery applications for the 2027 edition are open until 10 December.

18 - 21 March

Private view 17 March

Superstudio Più

Via Tortona, 27, 20144

Milan

www.miafairbnpparibas.it



Francesca Malgara © Giovanni Gastel.

Zima Studio | MIA Photo Fair BNP Paribas.

Launching at Paris Photo

COLLEKTON



Julian Sander, the great-grandson of August Sander and a second-generation gallerist for over seventeen years, has teamed up with Ruediger Glatz, artist, publisher and entrepreneur, and chairman of the German Photographic Society, to develop a new software called COLLEKTON, which will launch at this year's edition of Paris Photo. And COLLEKTON grew out of frustration, Sander explains.

– I built the first version of COLLEKTON for my gallery. When it came to documentation, I found that every artwork existed in five versions: inventory, artist's list, insurance files, loan forms, a PDF in an email. None matched, and every time the work moved, somebody typed in the information again. I have been coding since childhood, and the systems on offer felt unstructured to me. At first, I simply wanted better software for my own gallery. Then it became clear that a gallery's real asset is the record, not the software, and that the record has to stay with the work and stay correct. My family's artistic legacy has had a profound effect on COLLEKTON. The artist is the only person who knows the edition data and the last person anyone asks. I decided to develop not another software for galleries, but software and a database that let the artist, the gallery, the collector, the curator, and all involved parties view the same entry once shared.

How does it work in practice?

– Everyone has their own space, data, and rules about who sees what. Nobody can look into anyone else's business. What can be shared is the work: its record, provenance, and exhibition history, which is entered once and kept current by everyone connected to it; a shared record with private rooms around it. For the artist, the catalogue becomes a living record: editions, locations, exhibitions, etc., and it grows as the work moves, and is shared with the galleries, collectors, and museums the artist chooses. An estate inherits not only the physical work but also the structured records.

Some collectors might be wary of putting their collections online.

– It stays exactly as private as they want. What they get is a record that the artist and the gallery have confirmed, provenance that does not depend on papers surviving the next move or the next generation. Everyone has held a print whose history stops at "Private collection, Paris". Behind COLLEKTON sits The Art Register. It is the part meant to outlast all of us, including the company. A work's confirmed existence and history, readable in fifty



years on whatever software people use then. Galleries keep their business in their accounts. The Art Register keeps the facts.

Sander and Glatz decided to aim COLLEKTON at the photography market before the art market as a whole.

– That's because photography is the hardest case, the most complicated. Editions, vintage and later prints, and what a photograph is worth depend on its record. If COLLEKTON works for photography, it will work for the rest of the market. Ruediger and I look forward to the launch at Paris Photo. We open, by invitation, in waves, with the first galleries, artists and estates, and we migrate their data ourselves. People can come and see COLLEKTON at the fair or open the app wherever they are. It guides them to galleries, museums, and exhibitions around them. Others are given a database with a record of their artists, their collectors, and the register they already know.

collektion.com

Adolphe de Meyer. The Substance of a Venetian Dream

In 2019, a remarkable discovery was made in the municipal library of Tours: a series of 75 photographs that were attributed to Adolphe de Meyer, documenting his life and photographic work in Venice. The collection is being displayed in its entirety for the first time at Huis Marseilles in Amsterdam this winter. Born in Paris in 1868, De Meyer had a successful career spanning Europe and the United States. Historians recognise him principally as a pictorialist photographer, a virtuoso portraitist, and a fashion photographer. Venice had a special place in his heart. Between 1904 and 1909, Adolphe and his wife Olga rented the Palazzo Balbi-Valier, an opulent 17th-century palace surrounded by gardens, which De Meyer transformed from a dilapidated building into a landmark attraction. The Palazzo was a vibrant cultural centre, whose guests included the photographers Gertrude Käsebier and Frances Benjamin Johnston and the art collector Isabella Gardner. He also invited Auguste Rodin to come and work there. Palazzo Balbi-Valier was an extension of De Meyer's studio, where he experimented with light, staging, and early colour photography, developing an aesthetic that would strongly influence his work and fashion vision. The title of the exhibition, which is accompanied by a book, is derived from an article that De Meyer published in *Vogue* in 1916, in which he reflects on his years in the city.

Runs until 7 February 2027

Huis Marseilles
Keizersgracht 401
1016 EK Amsterdam

Attributed to Gertrude Käsebier. *Adolphe de Meyer posing on a balcony, Palazzo Balbi-Valier, 1905.* Courtesy of the Bibliothèque municipale de Tours.



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| 12-15 nov. 26



Grand Palais

International fair dedicated to
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PARIS PHOTO

PARIS PHOTO, the world's leading art fair devoted to photography, returns to the Grand Palais for its 29th edition, bringing together 242 exhibitors, including 195 galleries and 47 publishers from 38 countries, in the special context of the Bicentenary of Photography. The celebration will unfold throughout the fair, from the galleries' presentations to an exceptional invitation extended to Centre Pompidou, with an exhibition that will bring together over 100 works from its collection by

nearly 30 historical and contemporary artists, offering a transversal perspective on the evolution of photographic practices from the early twentieth century to the present day.

Paris Photo also welcomes the Pictet Group as a new official partner, alongside BMW, which has been a partner for 24 years. Established in 2008, the Prix Pictet, the leading international award for photography and sustainability, will be presented for the first time in the nave of the Grand Palais, featuring a selection of works by past laureates.

Once again, *The Classic* is an official media partner with Paris Photo, so should you need more copies of the new issue, you will find them at several distribution points, in the racks by the entrance of the fair, the kiosk, and the VIP area.

There's much going on outside the fair, 24.39, the satellite fair for classic photography is held at Pavillon Wagram on 14 November. The photography auction calendar is as busy as always. To keep yourself updated, visit:

www.theclassicphotomag.com/
the-classic-auction-calendar

Grand Palais
12-15 Nov. 2026
Preview 11 Nov.

www.parisphoto.com



Alberto Damian

Alberto Damian Gallery, Treviso, presents a tribute to Nicéphore Niépce on the occasion of the bicentenary of the first photography and a reflection on nature. In addition to Polaroids by painter, photographer and film-maker Paolo Gioli, the gallery devotes a section to a dialogue between two women artists, Marialba Russo and Benedetta Casagrande. There will also be a private collectors' room, hosting works by Letizia Battaglia, Lori Sammartino, Giovanna Borgese, Nicoletta Deva Tortone and Mario Peliti.

Marialba Russo. Untitled, from the series and book *Confine*, gelatin silver print, 2005. Courtesy of Alberto Damian Gallery. © Marialba Russo.

Howard Greenberg

Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York, is presenting masterworks of classic photography, by Jaromir Funke, Gordon Parks and Edward Steichen, among others. Taken outdoors rather than in a studio setting, Steichen's portrait of his wife Dana evokes a sense of intimacy. In the same year that he took *The Blue Sky*, *Vanity Fair* declared Steichen to be "the greatest living portrait photographer", referring to his glamorous and widely circulated images of models and celebrities. It was also in 1923 that Steichen became chief photographer for Condé Nast publications.

Edward Steichen. *Dana Steichen, "The Blue Sky"* *Long Island, New York, 1923.* Palladium print; printed circa 1923. Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery. © The Estate of Edward Steichen.

Michael Hoppen

The presentation of Michael Hoppen, London, includes works by Harley Weir, Sohei Nishino and a group of recently discovered collages by French artist Zaven Paré, offering a rare glimpse into an unexpected and previously little-known chapter of his artistic practice. Created during a concentrated period in the mid-1970s, these unique hand-cut assemblages reveal Paré at the beginning of a lifelong fascination with transformation, invention and the possibilities of the human figure. Drawing from family albums, found photographs and images discovered in markets, Paré meticulously cut and recombined countless heads and faces, constructing new characters that are by turns uncanny, playful, absurd and unexpectedly humorous.

Zaven Paré. From an album of original collages, number 19, 1970's. Courtesy Michael Hoppen.



Bruce Silverstein

Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, marking a quarter-century of exhibiting photography history and contemporary art since opening in New York in the spring of 2001. Over the years, it has presented over 150 exhibitions and participated in 75 international art fairs. The presentation includes works by Francesca Woodman, Ruth Bernhard, František Drtikol, Nat Fein, Paul Outerbridge, Frank Paulin, among others.

Francesca Woodman. Untitled (MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire), gelatin silver print, 1980. Courtesy Bruce Silverstein Gallery.

Jecza Gallery

Jecza Gallery, Timișoara, is exhibiting a transgenerational presentation of seven artists in which photography becomes a space for negotiating subjectivity, embodiment, and visibility. Works by Ion Grigorescu, Iosif Király, Constantin Flondor, and Paul Neagu from the 1970s-1990s employ self-portraiture and performative gestures as subtle forms of resistance within the constraints of communist surveillance, positioning the body as both medium and site of articulation. This historical layer enters into dialogue with Mircea Cantor's *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi* and Adina Pintilie's *The Third Body*, developed within *You Are Another Me – A Cathedral of the Body*, where questions of gender, intimacy, and relational identity emerge as fluid and negotiated. Extending these concerns, Dumitrița Razlog's works reconfigure the photographic image as an object, translating a transient domestic moment into a material and affective trace shaped by memory and presence.

Iosif Király. Untitled, unique vintage print, 1986. Courtesy Jecza Gallery.

Galerie Miranda

Galerie Miranda, Paris, presents a solo show with American photographer Merry Alpern, featuring her series *Dirty Windows*, (1993-1994). Photographed from a neighbouring apartment in Manhattan, the photographs focus on a single window, where blinds, curtains and fragmented bodies make the act of looking part of the image itself. Between intimacy and observation, Alpern shifts the conventions of street photography towards the private sphere. Alpern has stated, "Although the notion of the 'female gaze' has never really interested me, as a woman I could project some of my own experiences onto the pantomime in the window."

Merry Alpern. *Dirty Windows #06*, 2015, gelatin silver print. Courtesy Galerie Miranda.



Alta

To mark the bicentenary Galeria Alta, Andorra, presents *The Years Between Us*, a suite of some seventy unique works by Bruce Weber. The inspiration comes from the collection Weber and Nan Bush have built over fifty years, the photographs that fill their home, and from the artists he counts among his heroes: the photographers Edward Weston, Lisette Model, Cecil Beaton, Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon, Édouard Boubat, William Gedney, Danny Lyon, Larry Clark and Robert Mapplethorpe; the painter Paul Cadmus and his circle, including George Platt Lynes; and two poets of cinema, Jean Cocteau and Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Bruce Weber. *Self-portrait with Peter, Golden Beach, Florida, 1999*, gelatin silver print. Courtesy Galeria Alta.

MEM

Tokyo-based gallery MEM, which stands for Multiply Encoded Messages, is presenting a group show of important Japanese photographers, including Shigeru Onishi Koichi Sako, Kaoru Ohto, Gen Otsuko, Tsugio Tajima and others. Tsugio Tajima was among the photographers active in the Nagoya avant-garde milieu that consolidated at the end of the 1930s. Later on, he participated in the Group Spiral and the Japan Federation of Subjective Photography.

Tsugio Tajima. Title unknown, gelatin silver print, 1968. Courtesy MEM.

Barnabé Moinard

Barnabé Moinard, sharing a stand fellow Parisian Serge Plantureux, is presenting an eclectic selection reflecting his open and democratic approach to the medium, bringing together works by Alinari and Hill & Adamson alongside lesser-known and anonymous photographs spanning the 19th and 20th centuries, through to the contemporary work of Costanza Gastaldi. The presentation brings photographic history into dialogue with a formal and conceptual engagement with the medium.

Unknown photographer, antique statue Venus, calotype, circa 1850. Courtesy Barnabé Moinard.



Large Glass

Large Glass, London, presents *Echoes*, a group exhibition that pays homage to the bicentenary year of photography, showcasing new and key works by Mario Cresci, John Gossage, Guido Guidi, Mark Ruwedel and Ursula Schulz-Dornburg. Each artist is paired with another or a historical figure, connected by places of significance or shared themes. Guidi considers Paul Strand's *Un Paese* (1955) to be a foundational photobook. He revisited Luzzara to take his own photographs. Ruwedel's 21st-century landscape photographs of the American West allude to 19th-century pioneer photographer Carleton Watkins, while Schulz-Dornburg's series *Buddha, Pagan Burma* (1978) alludes to early explorers.

Guido Guidi. *Luzzara, 7 Ottobre 2025*, C-print.
Courtesy the artist and Large Glass, London © Guido Guidi.

Vintage Galeria

Vintage Galeria, Budapest, presents different aspects of international relations and local positions in Hungarian art of the 20th century. László Káldor created his *Budapest Diary* in the 1930s parallel to André Kertész working in Paris and New York. While Kertész and György Lőrinczy became internationally recognised abroad and met each other in New York in the 1960s, Gyula Holics also had his works exhibited worldwide. József Jakovits and János Megyik left Hungary, but through their networks they remained important to the non-official art scene. As a Hungarian-Austrian dual citizen, Dóra Maurer also fostered the development of the international relations of the Hungarian neo-avant-garde. These artists were friends and colleagues to artists such as Péter Türk, whose work remained almost barely internationally known up to this day.

Gyula Holics. *Glasses and shadows*, gelatin silver print, 1955. Courtesy Vintage Galeria.

Gallery FIFTY ONE

On the occasion of the bicentenary of photography, Gallery FIFTY ONE, Antwerp, presents a booth that brings into dialogue different generations and geographies of the image. The project is structured around a historical core: a cabinet dedicated to vintage African photography, featuring rare and previously unseen works by Malick Sidibé, Seydou Keita, J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, and Cornelius Azaglo, which have shaped the gallery's identity. In resonance, the other part of the booth showcases contemporary works, including a new project by Stig De Block, as well as recent works by Katrien De Blauwer. Finally, a selection of photographs by Harry Gruyaert accompanies the publication of his new book devoted to New York and echoes his exhibition at the Rencontres d'Arles.

Stig De Block. *Hand on Fence, Los Angeles*, Fine Art Print on Hahnemuller, 2023.



Hans P. Kraus Jr.

Hans P. Kraus Jr., New York, also celebrates the medium's bicentenary, with an impressive selection of works created using the earliest processes, including camera lucida drawings, photogenic drawings, calotype negatives, daguerreotypes, Daguerreian engravings, and photograms by some of the earliest practitioners: Louis Daguerre, William Henry Fox Talbot, Girault de Prangey, Anna Atkins and Hippolyte Fizeau, among others.

William Henry Fox Talbot. *Asparagus fern*, early 1840s, photogenic drawing negative.
Courtesy Hans P. Kraus Jr.

Julian Sander

Galerie Julian Sander, Cologne, presenting both classic and contemporary photographs from its gallery programme, including works by August Sander, Lisette Model, Chargesheimer, Oliver Abraham and Sean Hemmerle, as well as individual pieces from the Gerd Sander estate, such as works by Erwin Blumenfeld and Alexander Rodchenko. As some of the names might suggest, the focus of the exhibition is by no means solely on the genre of portraiture. Landscape and cityscapes will also be on display.

Alexander Rodchenko. *Regina Lemberg mit Leica Kamera*, gelatin silver print, 1934.
Courtesy Galerie Julian Sander.

Gilles Peyroulet & Cie

Gilles Peyroulet & Cie, Paris, presents "A short and incomplete history of photography" to celebrate the bicentenary of the medium.

From the 19th century to the mid of the 20th century, the presentation includes 15 important images made with different techniques, daguerreotypes, salt prints, albumin prints and silver gelatin prints, by Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey, Félix Teynard, Jean Painlevé, László Moholy-Nagy and others.

László Moholy-Nagy. *Pont transbordeur, Marseille*, gelatin silver print, 1928.
Courtesy Gilles Peyroulet & Cie.

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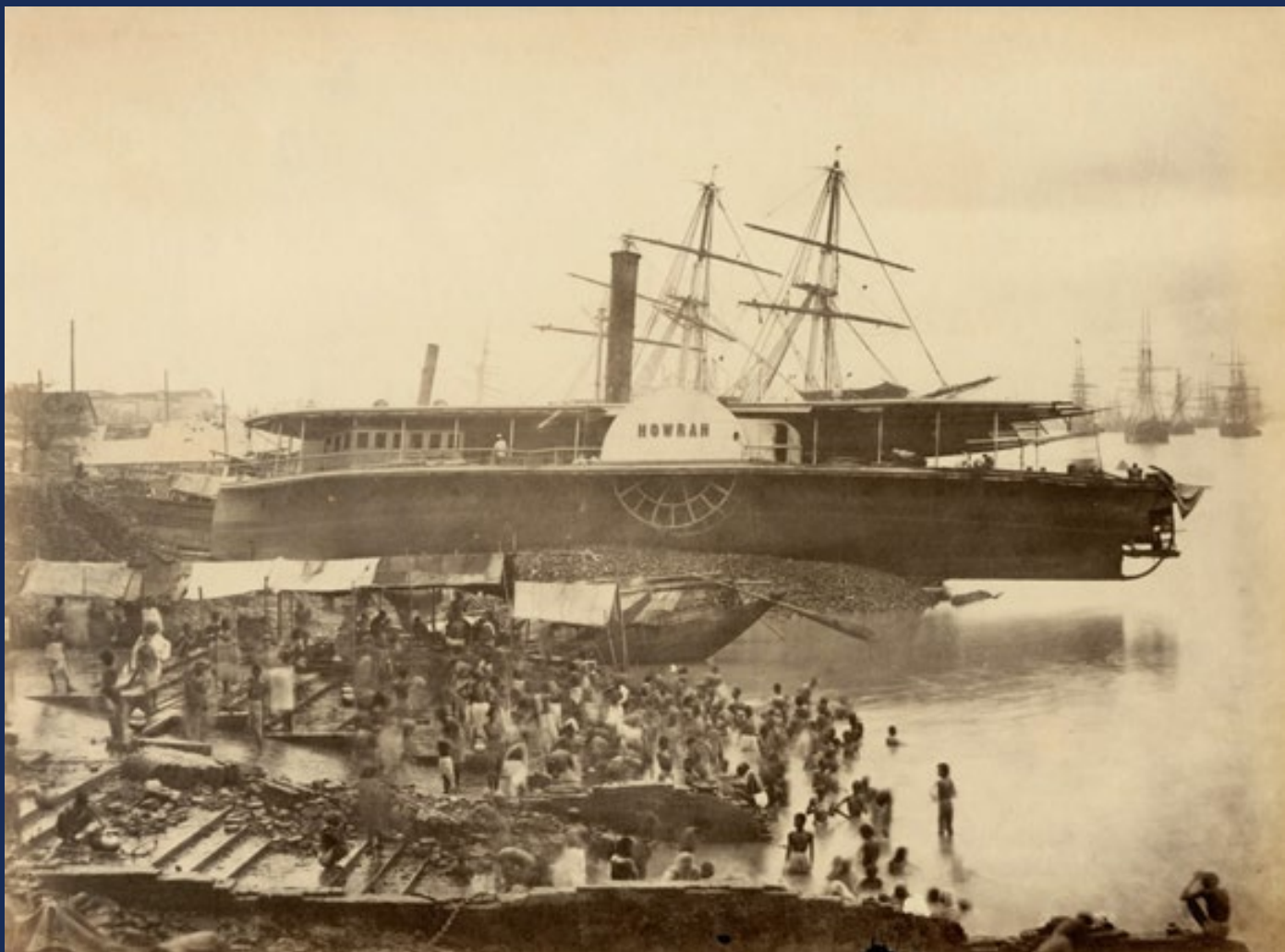
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Unidentified photographer, *Damage from the Typhoon, Calcutta*, albumen print from a set of 21 photographs, 1864, 17x23 cm

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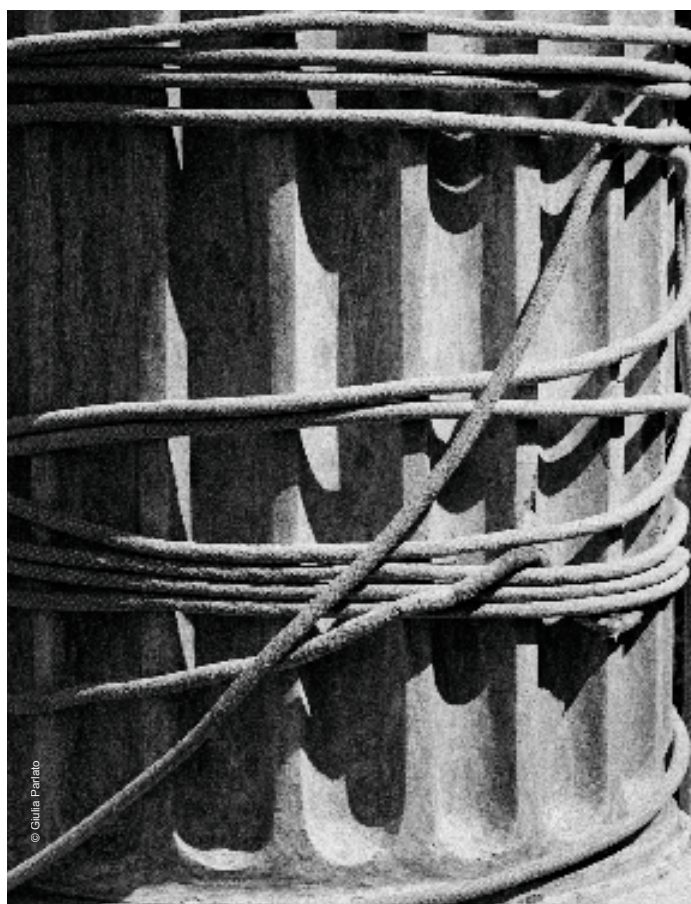
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BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

In Sepia & Prussian Blue



Adolphe Terris & the reconstruction of Marseilles

Founded in 600 BC by Greek settlers from Phocaea in present-day Turkey, Marseille is the oldest city in France. The Greeks named it Massalia, later changed by the Romans to Massilia. Precious little architecture from that period survives, as 2600 years of urban building recycled or buried the past. A major transformation took place in the 19th century, fuelled by colonial expansion and the Industrial Revolution, changing the city into the grand “Gateway to the French Empire”, all documented by photographer Adolphe Terris (1820-1899).

Marseilles-based photography and auction house specialist David Zerbib explains.

– Initial planning of the city’s reconstruction began in the 1840s. At that time, Marseille retained a medieval structure, with narrow streets that fostered epidemics. Both the port and the urban centre were ill suited to the city’s surging economic and population growth. The intensive phase of construction spanned



from 1852 to 1870 but major works were carried out until the 1890s, which meant more than 40 years of continuous transformation. The medieval blocks and old houses around the Old Port were destroyed. Lower-income populations were displaced to the outskirts, a phenomenon comparable to what was seen in Paris under Baron Haussmann. New buildings and monuments were created, while others were renovated. Architectural transformation focused primarily on standardising facades through the use of dressed stone. Buildings followed strict alignment rules and a classical aesthetic. The new monuments were characterised by a certain Romano-Byzantine eclecticism. Prime examples include the Cathédrale de la Major, where Napoleon III laid the foundation stone in 1852, and the Basilica Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, which would become the city’s emblem.

Left page. **Adolphe Terris.** *Ouverture de la rue Impériale*, albumen print, 1863. Private collection.

Top. **Adolphe Terris.** *Rue Caves de l’Oratoire*, albumen print, 1862. Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.



The Neoclassical style was also employed, notably for the Palais Longchamp; built to celebrate the arrival of water from the Durance River into the city via the Marseille Canal.

David Zerbib has, in recent years, researched the life and work of Adolphe Terris.

– He was born in 1820 in Aix-en-Provence. After his marriage to Claire Elodie in 1847, the couple relocated to Marseille, where he had opened a bookshop two years earlier. Terris was not merely a bookseller; he also published several works illustrated with engravings. 1852 was a pivotal year in his career. He co-published *Histoire de Marseilles*, a substantial work featuring engravings and maps but his bookshop went bankrupt and the stock was sold at auction. But there was a silver lining. He continued as a bookseller but had also taken up photography and that year he received his first private

commission: an assignment from architect François Reybaud, to document the construction site of the Church of Saint Vincent de Paul, now known as the Church of the Réformés. The church was located close to Terris's studio. Later on, he shared premises with fellow photographer Ferdinand Vitagliano. During my research, I consulted directories of that period, including *L'Indicateur Marseillais – Guide du Commerce*. His job titles vary, likely reflecting the business strategies of this bookseller-publisher-photographer, as well as the evolution of his career and professional partnerships. I came across an advertisement from 1861, which stated, "Vitagliano and Terris, photographers – formerly of 27 Place Noailles, now at 4 Allées de Meilhan, on the ground floor and in the garden."

In 1860, Terris cofounded the Société de Photographie de Marseille.

– The society emerged from the boom in photographic practices during the Second Empire and the desire to elevate this new medium to the status of the fine arts. Formed around Terris, it brought together

Adolphe Terris. *Construction du pont du Vallon des Auffes*, albumen print, 1863. Private collection.

several practitioners and knowledgeable enthusiasts, including Léon Vidal, the society's future secretary-general and inventor of the photochrome printing process. The very first photography exhibition in Marseille was held in Terris's studio in 1861. The society, which would grow to over three hundred members before its dissolution in 1875, played a pivotal role in spreading collodion processes and in shaping a documentary perspective on Marseille's urban transformations.

And it all had to be documented.

– In 1862, the City of Marseille commissioned Terris to create a photographic record of the old streets prior to demolition. This was the first album he produced for the city, a portfolio consisting of twenty-six albumen prints, entitled *Photographic Album of Old Streets Demolished in 1862 for the Opening of Rue Impériale*. In 1863, a second album was commissioned, focused on the construction project for Rue Impériale, (since 1870, Rue de la République); *Opening and Construction of Rue Impériale in Marseille, 1865-1866*. Yet another album was commissioned; *Photographic Album of the Major Public Works in Marseille, 1864*, with some prints sourced from the previous album. It comprised approximately 54 large-format albumen prints, featuring the coat of arms of the City of Marseille on the mount boards and it was presented to H.M. Napoleon III in 1867. Many of the images are strikingly modern. Sure, there were other photographers in Marseille at that time, but Terris was the only one to invest so much in the very expensive photographic equipment which allowed him to take his large, spectacular outdoor shots. His technical skills and graphic sense are remarkable.

Terris would continue to document the city of Marseilles.

– He fulfilled a commission for the Department of Bridges and Roads, producing an album of 28 prints, entitled titled *Marseille Port Works, 1875-1878*. He produced further series from 1870 until the end of his life in 1899, documenting towns near Marseille such as La Ciotat and Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône. He also



Top. **Adolphe Terris.** *Sculpture, Musée du Palais, Marseille,* cyanotype, 1868. Robert Hershkowitz Ltd.

Bottom. **Adolphe Terris.** *View of Cathedral Balconies,* cyanotype, circa 1868. Clark Art Institute, gift of Fernando and Gloria Barnuevo Ybarra.



created views of Provence for the French Alpine Club. His innovative compositions and framing techniques became his signature style and he was awarded various gold, silver, and bronze medals, as well as other forms of institutional recognition.

As David Zerbib notes, the photographs of Adolphe Terris have long been sought after by museums and private collectors. But some 30 years ago, a cache of hitherto unknown photographs by Terris turned up in Marseilles, not albumen prints but magnificent cyanotypes, soon making their way to Parisian collector Serge Kakou, who tells me.

– I acquired them from a Parisian “chineur”, a picker who hunted all sorts of goods at flea markets and second-hand shops. I was immediately struck by their beauty. The cache consisted of some 80-100 cyanotypes. They weren’t collected in an album, just loose prints that had once been attached with rope and there were two holes on the left side of each print. The prints had originally belonged Henri-Jacques Espérandieu, the architect responsible for three of the major reconstruction projects in Marseille; Notre-Dame de la Garde,

Cathédrale de la Major and Palais Longchamp. The cyanotypes showed sculptures, decorative features, models, plans and some architectural details of the projects that he was working on. Each print from this set is unique, I believe. The cyanotype is an easy process. I suspect Henri-Jacques Espérandieu needed a cheap and quick way to document his work. There are no other cyanotypes by Terris that have come to light. Terris made some albumen prints from a few of the glass plates he used for the cyanotypes. In the albumen prints I have seen, he cut the images down to the sizes of the objects. In retrospect, I wish I had documented the whole cache of cyanotypes. I kept several but also sold many, which went to important museums as well as private collections.

In Marseilles, the institutions are themselves conducting research into Adolphe Terris, David Zerbib concludes.

– The Municipal Archives of the City of Marseille and the Departmental Archives of Bouches du Rhône have carried out provisional inventory work of their holdings relating to Adolphe Terris. Today, Adolphe Terris is renowned in the collectors’ sphere. Still, I believe that his work should be much more valued and publicised in order to be known to everyone and especially to the people of Marseille. A national exhibition, dedicated exclusively to the photographer, would be well deserved.

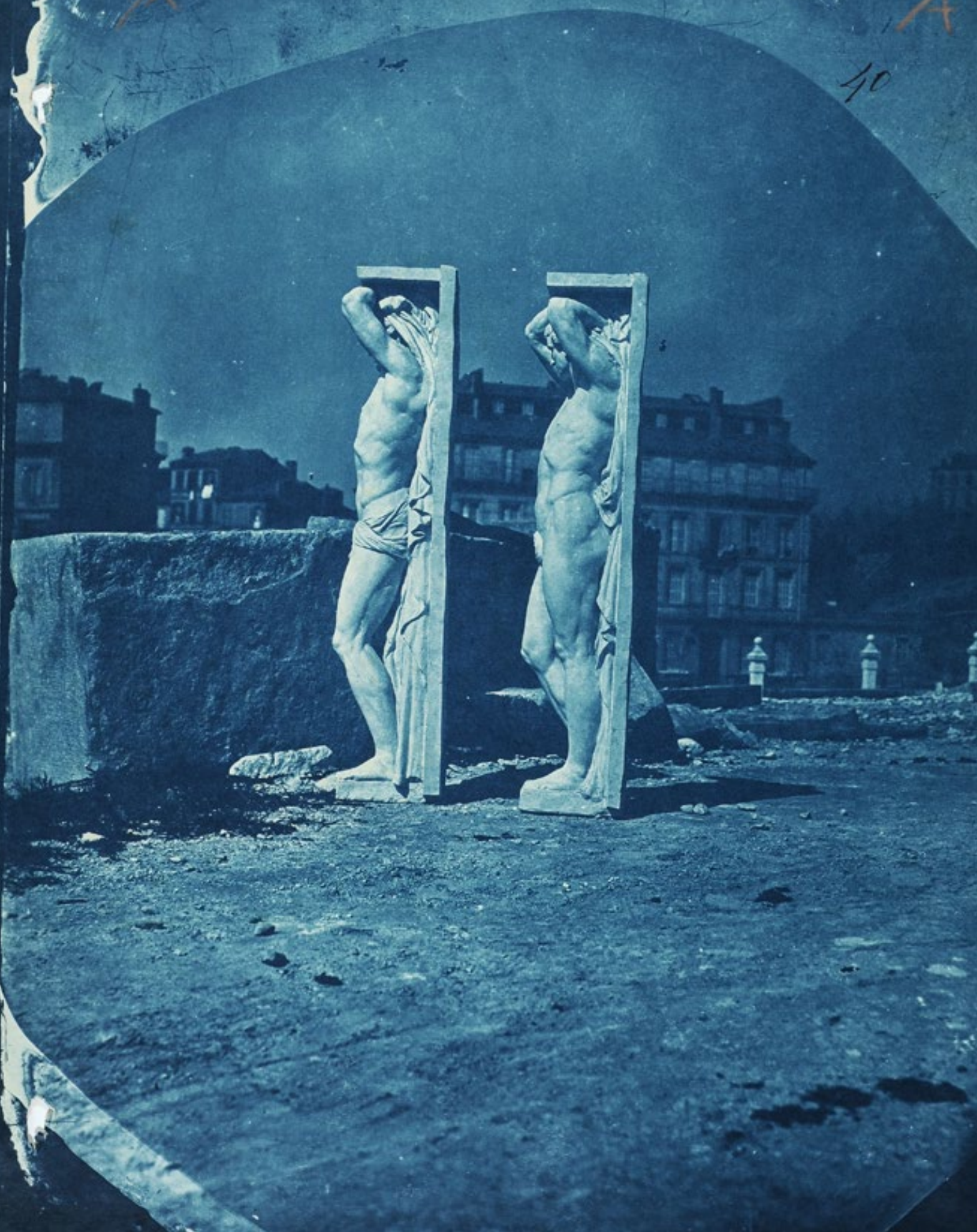
Top. **Adolphe Terris.** *Sculpture of a Griffin on a construction site in Marseille*, cyanotype, circa 1869. Pepita Melmore Memorial Fund. National Gallery of Art Washington.

Right page. **Adolphe Terris.** *Cariatides au Palais Longchamp*, cyanotype, circa 1868. Courtesy of Serge Kakou.

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Melissa Shook, Fuller Street, Brookline, ca. 1974, gelatin silver print, © Kristina Shook and The Estate of M. Melissa Shook

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Don Thompson. This Couple, 1991.
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Erwin Blumenfeld.

Top. *Lena*, gelatin silver print, Paris 1937.

Bottom. *Paul Citroen*, gelatin silver print, Holland, circa 1930.

Right page. *Henry on swing*, gelatin silver print, Holland, circa 1931.



BY LAURA LEONELLI

A Parade of Snaps

The Erwin Blumenfeld family album

All images, copyright The Estate of Erwin Blumenfeld.

Born in Berlin in 1897, Erwin Blumenfeld would go on to become one of the most celebrated photographers of the 20th century. Since his death in Rome in 1969, his work for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* has continued to influence generations of photographers. After serving as an ambulance driver in the German army during the First World War, he sought refuge in the Netherlands. In 1921, he married Lena Citroen, cousin of his friend, the dadaist artist Paul Citroen. Their daughter Lisette was born in 1922, Henry in 1925 and Yorick in 1932. At the time, Blumenfeld, who had already produced dadaist collages and drawings, had a leather goods shop in Amsterdam. In issue 8 of *The Classic*, Nadia Blumenfeld Charbit, daughter of Henry Blumenfeld, was interviewed about her grandfather and how the Blumenfeld family were interned in a succession of Nazi internment camps before finally escaping to New York in 1941. But



his photography didn't start with elaborate studio shoots. It started with family snapshots. More than 2500 of them have been painstakingly recovered by Nadia Blumenfeld Charbit, and presented in a selection in the book *Erwin Blumenfeld. Snaps Parade*, published by *La Compagnie des Snapshotters* and launched at Paris Photo this year.



The snapshots chronicle the life of Erwin Blumenfeld and his family. Through the richness of an already original vision, the private album reveals much more and heralds the emergence of a master of photography before he became one, before *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* featured his fashion photographs. Each snapshot is both an existential document and a canvas for experimentation during a still-happy period of the twentieth century, between the mid-1920s and the approach of war, when a father, a mother, their three children, and cousin Paul would gather at their home in Zandvoort-Bad and pose for the camera with generosity, carefree spirit and a touch of madness, taken in front of the mirror, in bed, in the bath, in the courtyard, on the beach, in

the mountains, and in mid-air as Erwin and Paul toss little Lisette between them. I had the privilege of meeting, at his home a few kilometres from Paris, one of the protagonists of this extraordinary photographic chronicle: Henry Blumenfeld, aged 101, a particle physicist at Princeton and a student of Nobel Laureate James Rainwater, who remains, to this day, a man of remarkable clarity and the custodian of his family's memories.

How did these images survive the tribulations your family endured during the persecutions and the Second World War?

– First of all, it must be said that these images are not all of the same nature. Some are vintage prints, while others are new prints made from original films and plates. Before leaving Paris in 1939, my father entrusted a large part of his archive, including these images, to a friend and model, Jo Regaldi, who kept them in her flat. My father retrieved them after the war. Another part, however, was sent by Paul Citroen to New York, where our family arrived in 1941.

Erwin Blumenfeld.

Top. *Paul Citroen, Lisette, Erwin Blumenfeld*, gelatin silver print, Holland, circa 1930.

Right page. *Lena and Erwin*, gelatin silver print, Holland, Zandvoort, 1930.



In this parade of images, one senses the pleasure of being together and of relying on photography to capture happiness, tenderness and understanding. But one also gets the impression that photography, magical and visionary, manages to sense the more hidden, darker aspects that might, in later years, have shaped certain dynamics within the Blumenfeld family.

– Photographs reveal a great deal, even what cannot be seen. For example, I was afraid of my father until I was four, and so adding further tension to our relationship, I didn't speak until I was three. Instead of "ja", yes, we spoke German and Dutch at home, I used to say "là". My pronunciation was corrected with shouts and spankings. As I grew up, our relationship changed, but I was always closer to my mother. And that my mother was the centre of the family is evident from many of these photographs: from the way my father looks at her, without needing to make her look beautiful, and from the way she returns his gaze with such intensity, even when she's crying. My mother cried a great

deal. Even in our New York flat, there were boxes of Kleenex in every room. It was almost a sport to make her cry.

When did your father take these snapshots?

– Always on Sundays, when he was at home and had a bit of free time for himself and for us. On other days, he'd come home late and we'd already eaten and were ready for bed. On Sunday mornings, it was a ritual to go into my parents' big bed and stay there for a while, until around midday when we'd get up for breakfast. During these family gatherings under the covers, my father would let us play, while my mother told us stories from Greek Mythology, *Arabian Nights*, *Sinbad* and *Ali Baba*, *Struwwelpeter* with his long nails and unkempt hair, and *Rumpelstiltskin*, a dark fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm featuring a wicked goblin. There are loads of photographs taken in bed, in various groupings. Clearly, we were happy there. Then we'd go and play by the sea. Our house was on the dunes facing the beach, and it was a huge beach. If you walked along it, you could get



Erwin Blumenfeld.

Top. *Lena and Lisette*, gelatin silver print, Holland, circa 1930.

Bottom. *Erwin and Henry*, gelatin silver print, Holland, circa 1930.

Right page. *Erwin, Lena and friends*, gelatin silver print, Holland, circa 1930.



as far as IJmuiden, where the ships that had set sail from Amsterdam reached the North Sea. My father really enjoyed playing football with us and going for a swim. Once, back in 1930, he was arrested by the police because one shoulder strap of his swimming trunks had slipped down and, apparently, a few extra centimetres of skin had been visible.

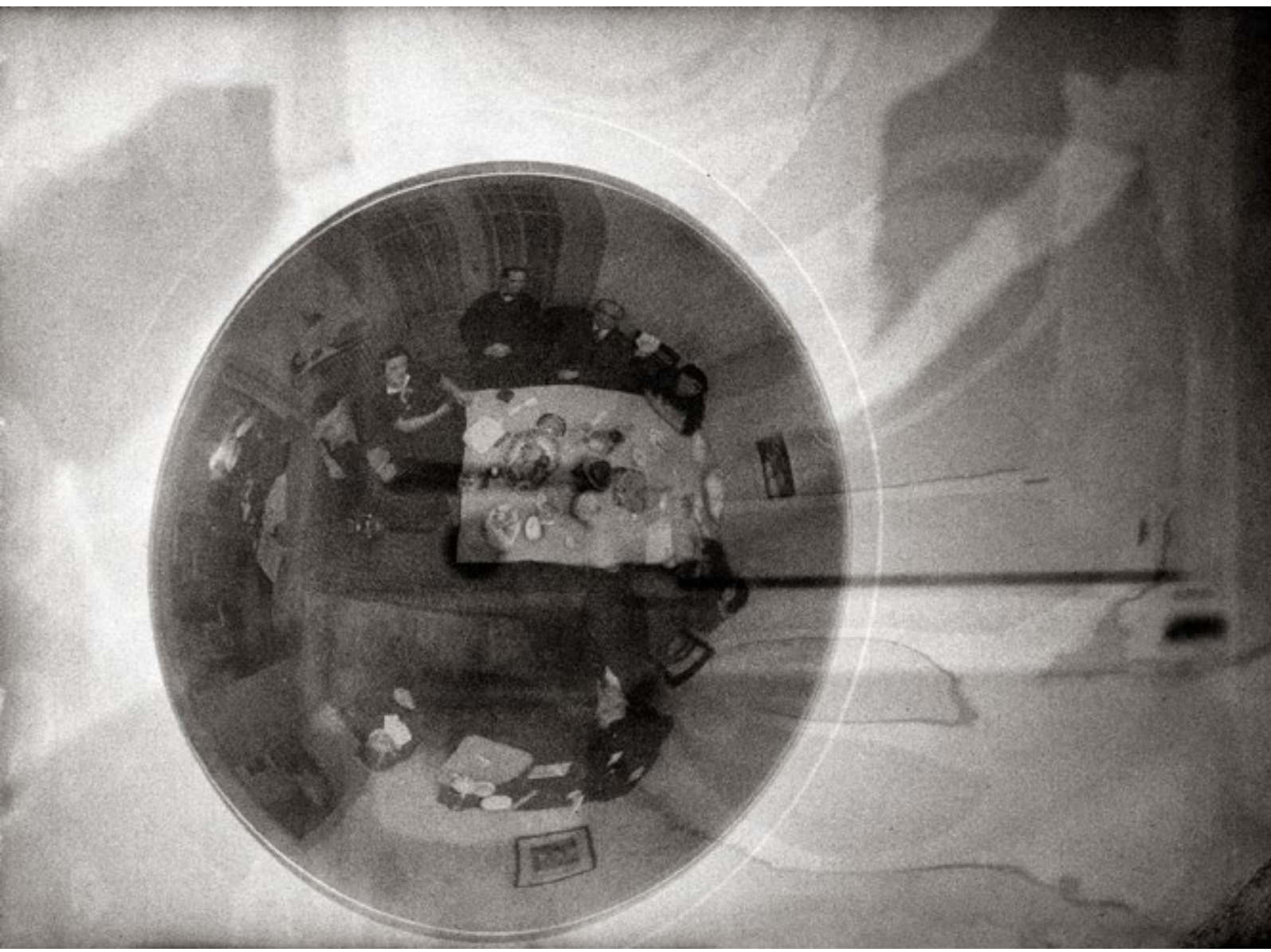
Where did your father develop his photographs?

– At first, in Paul Citroen's studio and it was all done in a hurry. In fact, there are smudges and scratches on the negatives. Then, in 1933, when my father discovered a secret darkroom hidden away in his Amsterdam shop, the Leather Fox Company, the developing and printing process became more professional. There was an enlarger, trays, chemicals, and paper boxes on the shelves. Sometimes I'd help my father, and my job was to gently swirl the

trays so that the developer would coat the sheet of paper evenly. While we were doing this, my father, whom I called Perf, would tell me about his childhood memories and, above all, about the war. I am named after his brother Heinz, who was killed near Verdun in 1918, just a few days before the armistice.

The story of his family and the snapshots depicting them are also the story of the name Henry and its various forms.

– The first Henry in our family was Heinz Cohn, who was born in Poland and fled to the United States in 1852 to avoid military service. He arrived in California, became Henry, made his fortune and returned to Germany, where he married his cousin,



Rosa Cohen. Now, to understand my father a little better, and perhaps also a certain exuberance of his, you need to see the portrait of my grandmother, who was of an implacable severity. Then I was born and took the name of my father's brother, which became Henri when we moved to France in 1936 and Henry when we reached the United States. On 4 April 1944, I obtained American citizenship and officially became Henry Blumenfeld. The circle was complete.

In your vast family album, Erwin Blumenfeld captured moments of affection and joy, but he also began to explore the possibilities of the photographic language: shadows, perspectives, mirrors, windows, bodies creating shapes, photographs containing other photographs, and close-ups of eyes, for example. Which images are dearest to you?

– The images that move me the most are those of my mother. Sometimes, when my father was at work and Lisette was at school, I would curl up next to my mother and feel as though nothing bad could ever happen to me. Not even when she locked me in the coal cellar and left me in the dark because of my constant temper tantrums. It was a terrible punishment. And to think that my mother, who was a psychologist, had read everything by Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud and Marie Bonaparte! But there was a point to it, because being inside the darkness of the coal cellar was like being inside the darkness of a camera. And discovering the secret workings of photography, that photography sees what we do not, can be very frightening, of course, but it is also very instructive.

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A vintage, slightly faded color photograph of a traditional Japanese street scene. In the foreground, there are several wooden stalls or tables displaying a variety of colorful flowers, including red and yellow roses. The background features traditional Japanese wooden buildings with tiled roofs. The overall atmosphere is nostalgic and historical.

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BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

Light & magic

Pictorialism at Tate Modern

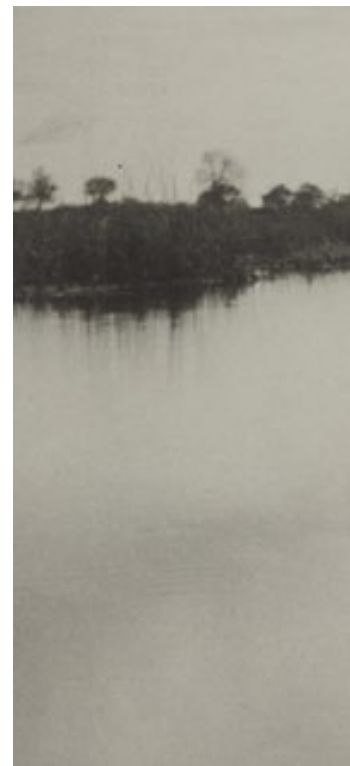
They were known in Japan as “Nagashi”, strolling musicians or singers who would wander from bar to bar, playing or singing for tips. In 1932, Japanese American photographer Frank Sato (1868-1946) staged a scene in his studio on 1627 Geary Street in San Francisco, with a Nagashi playing the Kokyū, a string instrument which, like Shamisen, has its origin in Okinawa. The photographer signed his prints, F. Y. Sato and was the most frequently exhibited and reproduced nationally and internationally among the city’s Japanese American photographers. In 1932 he joined the Royal Photographic Society and two years later, he published an article in the magazine *Camera Craft*. Entitled “How It Was Done”, he described, with diagrams, his method of creating decorative designs and shadow effects. And then he faded from view.

Frank Sato is one of over 80 artists included in the exhibition *Light and Magic*, on show at Tate Modern until 27 February, then travelling to Seoul Arts Center (9 September 2027 – 2 January 2028). The exhibition traces the development of pictorialism, the first international art photography movement, from the 1880s to the 1960s. While history books usually mark its end around 1920, many pictorialists carried working in the style, new acolytes came along, keeping it alive well into the 1960s. The subject of late pictorialism has been the subject of previous exhibitions and books, notably *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910-1955*, an exhibition organised by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which toured 1997-1998, with a catalogue written by the curator, Christian A. Peterson.



Left page. **Frank Sato.** *The Nagashi*, bromide print, 1932.
Collection David Knaus, Palm Springs.

Right. **Alvin Langdon Coburn.** *Wapping*, photogravure from the portfolio, *London*, 1909. Wilson Centre for Photography. © The Universal Order.



Light and Magic, curated by Charmaine Toh, also stretches the common timeline but it throws the net much wider. While it includes famous names, like Peter Henry Emerson, Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Alvin Langdon Coburn and Rudolf Koppitz, it also features a large group of little-known artists, from Japan, China, India, Singapore, South Korea, South Africa, Brazil, Egypt and other countries.

Pictorialism has no shortage of detractors, dismissing it as soft lens sentimentality and similar. But dig deeper and the story becomes much more complex. Prior to joining Tate Modern, Charmaine Toh worked as curator at National Gallery Singapore. In 2023, she published the book *Imagining Singapore. Pictorial Photography from the 1950s to the 1970s* (Brill), the first in-depth study on the subject. It argued that photography during the period took on multiple roles, acting as a symbol of democracy and modernity, staging a national identity and providing a mechanism for Singaporeans to engage with ideas of the past, present and future.

Some will no doubt be surprised that so many of the photographs in *Light and Magic*, especially many from non-western countries, not only stray stylistically from typical pictorialism but would fit more neatly into modernism and/or surrealism, some based on a more documentary approach. But as Sarah Greene commented about Hong Kong photographer Fan Ho, also included in this exhibition, in issue 15 of *The Classic*, “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.”

Fan Ho was very active in the Hong Kong Photographic Society but never considered becoming a professional photographer. Greene noted, “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.”

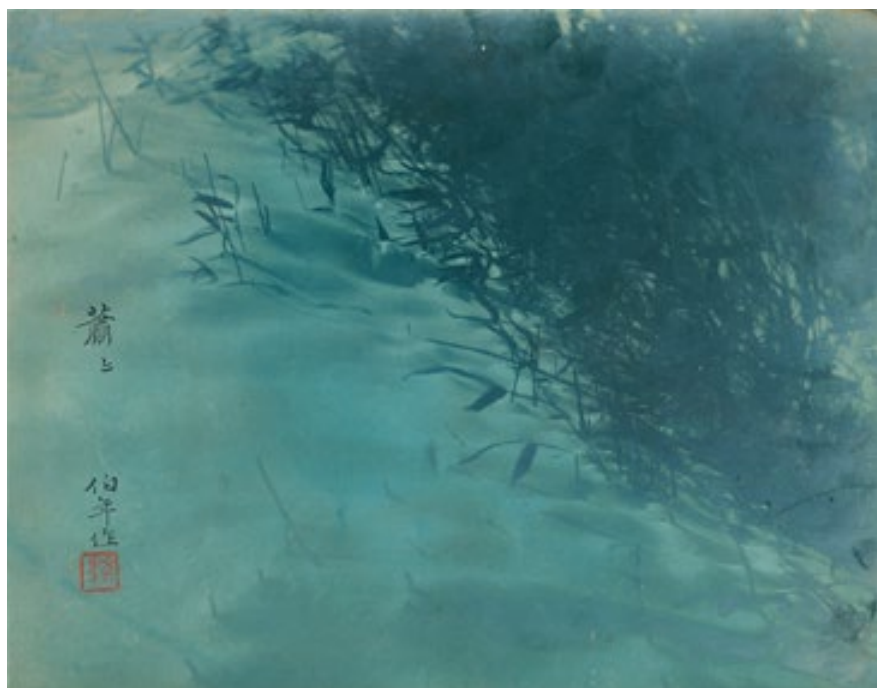
It could be added that Alfred Stieglitz himself expressed disappointment at how pictorial photography had developed during the years of *Camera*



Work, 1903-1917. Instead of encouraging experimentation, the publication helped create what amounted to a house style. In the final double issue, numbers 49 and 50, published in June 1917, he featured the straight photography of Paul Strand, marking a definitive shift towards modernism. Still, I suspect that some artists in *Light and Magic* would have refuted the label pictorialist, being claimed here for pictorialism in much the same way that Frida Kahlo, to her deep dismay and great irritation, was claimed for surrealism by André Breton.

I started my conversation with Charmaine Toh by asking about her work as curator at National Gallery Singapore and the 2022 exhibition *Living Pictures: Photography in Southeast Asia*, and if pictorialism was central to that exhibition.

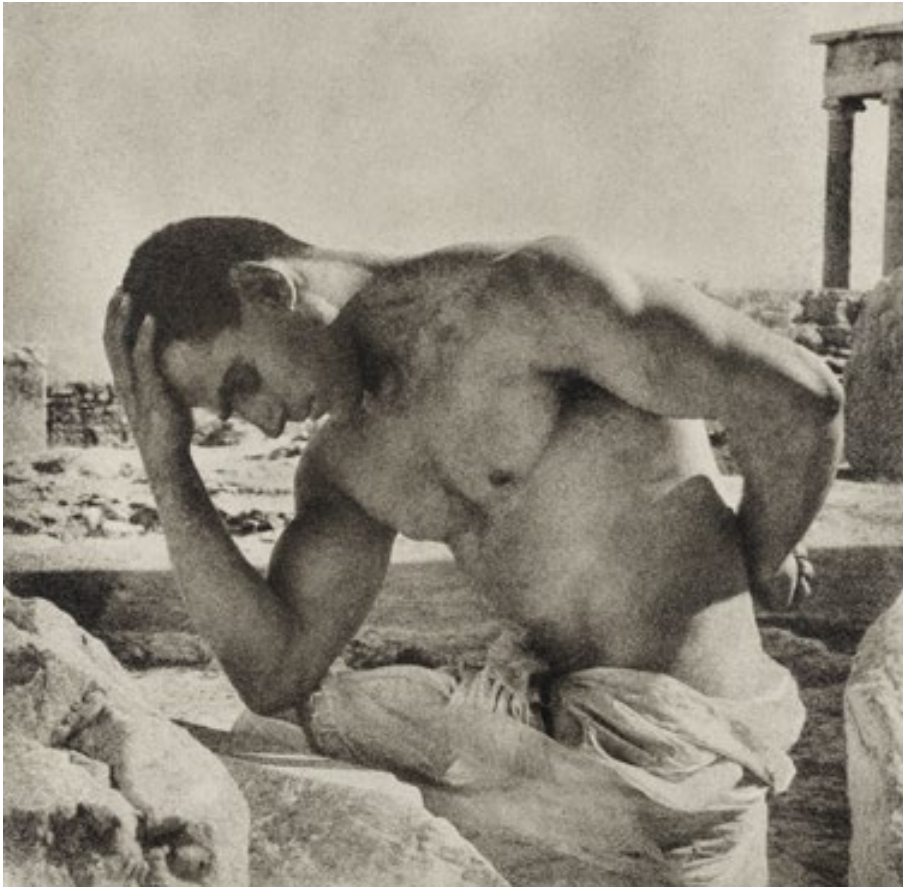
– I did a variety of shows there, not just photography, but I was in charge of building the gallery's collection of Southeast Asian photography. *Living Pictures* sought to tell a history of photography in Southeast Asia so we had works from the 19th century and all the way to contemporary photography. What that exhibition has in common with the Tate Modern show is the desire to tell unknown aspects of photographic history, which is a broader research and curatorial interest of mine. With *Living Pictures*, I wanted to establish a historical narrative of photography in Southeast Asia, something that had not been written at that point. With *Light and Magic*, it's more complicated and I want to draw marginal histories into one that has been already written.



Left page. **Limb Eung Sik**. *Homeward Route*, gelatin silver print, 1935.
Limb Sang Chul by Limb Eung Sik Photo Archive © Estate of Limb Eung Sik.

Top. **Peter Henry Emerson**. *Thomas Frederick Goodall, Rowing Home the Schoof-Stuff*, platinum print, 1885. Wilson Centre for Photography.

Bottom. **Luo Bonian**. *Whistling*, gelatin silver print, 1933.
Luo Bonian Art Foundation and Three Shadows Photography Art Centre. © Luo Bonian Estate



When and how did you first get interested in pictorialism?

– I first got interested in pictorialism in Singapore because there was just so much work that no one seemed to know about. One of the photographers in the show at the National Gallery Singapore was Wu Pengseng. Born in China in 1915, he became one of Singapore's foremost photographers, noted for his landscape photography. He died in 2006. By the time I started my research, many of the photographers were in their late 80s and early 90s so it was very time-sensitive. There was also the issue of entire oeuvres being lost because of heat and humidity. I came across several cases like this so I had to rely on salon catalogues to see reproductions. Then I started wondering why these histories of pictorialism never seemed to intersect the official history. And it became this larger project. Much of the written history of pictorialism has focused on Europe and North America, so for the catalogue I have invited writers to contribute essays on lesser-known developments and artists.

Left. **Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidaris**. *Nude study at the Acropolis*, 1925-6. Benaki Museum, Photographic Archives, Athens.

Right page. **Rudolf Koppitz**. *Bewegungsstudie (Movement Study)*, carbon print, 1925. The Collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish.

The exhibition, then called *Global Pictorialism*, was planned to open at the end of 2025. It was postponed, the title replaced by *Light and Magic*.

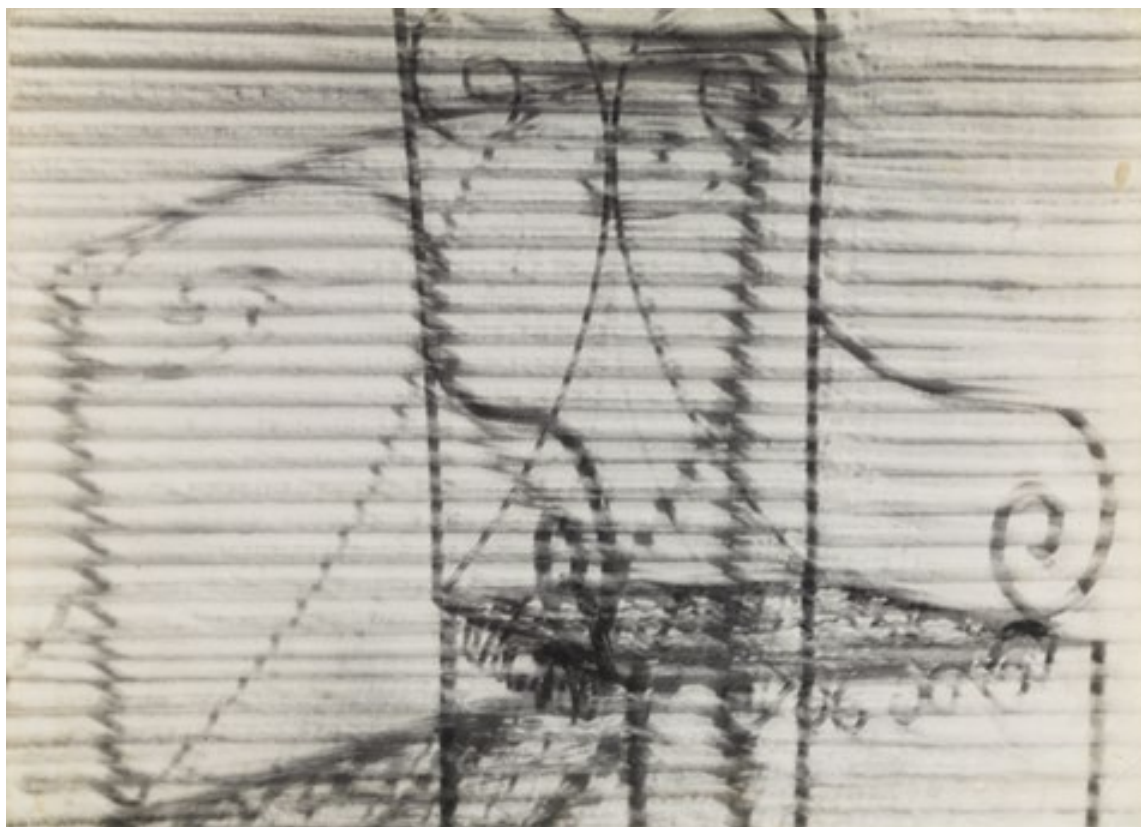
– *Global Pictorialism* was always a working title. As the various Tate teams continued workshopping the exhibition title as we do for all exhibitions, we finally landed on *Light and Magic* because these photographs truly are quite magical to look at. The show seeks to introduce pictorialism to the general public, as a movement that seems to have been largely forgotten, but one that was so important in establishing photography as an art form. I also want to expand the existing story and bring to attention many of the photographers that have been forgotten. Pictorialism was truly international, possibly more than any art movement at the time, so it allows historians multiple entry points to rethink this history. Key figures whose

work extends our understanding of pictorialism include Long Chin-san, Fred Holland Day and Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari, known professionally as Nelly's. But you'll also find surprising work from Paul Strand and Heinrich Kühn in the show, work that doesn't sit comfortably within either pictorialism or modernism.

Pictorialism was an extremely well-organised movement and it was international. Journals and magazines were sent across the Atlantic, as were photographs for large group exhibitions. It should be pointed out that there was a two-tier system within pictorialism. There were the masters, including Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Heinrich Kühn and Robert Demachy, and there were the photographers in camera clubs, mostly amateurs, though many were highly skilled. The former group is well documented and there's plenty written about the second group, well, at least some of the photographers. But that's in the west.

– Well, the 2-tiered system is how history works, isn't it? A really interesting aspect of my research has been the discovery of female photographers who were actually really successful in their time. They were accepted into the salons and their works were reproduced in magazines and journals and they gave talks at the Royal Photographic Society. Yet even photo historians today will not know their





names. It's not just that some photographers weren't well known in their time, there are also those who simply disappeared from history. Another interesting figure is the Chinese photographer Long Chin-san. He is incredibly famous in Asia but none of my curatorial colleagues here in London had even heard of his name. I found two boxes of his work in the RPS collection and we are showing four prints in the exhibition.

Was there a similar two-tier system in the east?

– There is no one history for how pictorialism emerged beyond the west. A lot of the development within it was affected by colonialism and wars. What is clear, however, is that it was very much driven by the setting up of photography clubs and many of these clubs were affiliated to the RPS and PSA. As you mentioned, it was a well-organised movement and that was the case for clubs and societies everywhere. They had to be when there were no formal academies and museums weren't exactly interested. Photographic societies and clubs were formed to exchange ideas and discuss the latest developments, publishing their own journals and organising their own salons and exhibitions, styled after painting salons. These groups were also instrumental in

forming international connections and disseminating ideas from one city to another, with the portability of prints allowing photographers to send their work to exhibitions around the world. The shows would have juries, often comprising well known photographers, which enabled connoisseurship and criticism. Every exhibition would be accompanied by a catalogue listing the name of each photographer in the show and the titles of their works, including reproductions if budget allowed. These systems burnished photography with the glow of fine art and encouraged an interest in developments internationally.

In the west, the camera clubs would gradually move away from pictorialism in its purest form.

– Photographic clubs remained active around the world, even as interest in pictorialism waned in Europe and North America in the 1920s and debates about modernism started to take place. The clubs continued to play an important role in the search for what photography could and should be. Japan and South Korea, for example, saw an intense debate over the role of realism in the development of modern photography.

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Geraldo de Barros. *Untitled (São Paulo) Composition II*, gelatin silver print, 1949. Tate © Fabiana de Barros.

what photography could and should be. Japan and South Korea, for example, saw an intense debate over the role of realism in the development of modern photography. These debates often played out in the formation of clubs, as groups of photographers seceded from old clubs and started new ones. In Japan the rise of New Photography (*Shinko Shashin*) was closely associated with the formation of the New Photography Society in 1930 and the launch of the magazine *Koga* (Light Pictures).

Among the ephemera in the exhibition is a large group of exhibition catalogues, from Hong Kong, Malaysia, India and Singapore. Which camera clubs and societies there were the most active? Did they keep archives that you could research?

– The Photographic Society of Singapore was the most active in Southeast Asia. It was also well funded and they made very comprehensive catalogues that now serve as important documents. In Hong Kong, there were quite a few large and active clubs, including the Photographic Society of Hong Kong. Earlier, there was the Guangshe/Light Society in Shanghai, short-lived but very important. These clubs operated very similarly to those in the west, they were styled after them. In Singapore, all the catalogues are in National Gallery Singapore because I got them in while I was curator there! In Hong Kong, a good number of catalogues are in the public library. I also managed to access some that



were kept in private collections and you can still find them on eBay occasionally. India was more difficult. I think there are microfilm archives but they're quite scattered.

In the west, the pictorialists had attempted to establish photography as an art medium, and by extension, create a market for it. Included in the exhibition is Alvin Langdon Coburn's famous portrait of Clarence H. White, a leading pictorialist. He founded an important school for photography. Many of his students would go on to forge successful careers, though not as art photographers but as advertising or documentary photographers. What was the situation like in Southeast Asia?

– The closest figure to Clarence White would be Long Chin-san who organised many events to raise the profile of art photography. But in general, many of the Asian pictorial photographers were either full amateurs, or ran their own photo studios.

How did you conduct your research? Were there surprises, good or bad, during the research process?

– I spent most of the summer of 2024 at the V&A going through the Royal Photographic Society collection. Just sitting in the prints and drawings room and going through boxes and boxes of photographs. This, plus my existing research on photography in Southeast Asia, formed the starting point of the show. I wasn't able to interview photographers or their descendants, often not possible with such a



Top. **Ilse Bing**, *Laban Dance School*, gelatin silver print, 1929.
Tate © Estate of Ilse Bing.

Left. **Lionel Wendt**, *Untitled*, gelatin silver print, 1933-1938.
Tate: purchased with funds provided by the South Asia Acquisitions Committee 2013.



Top. **Shigeru Onishi**. Title unknown, gelatin silver print, 1950s. © Estate of Shigeru Onishi.

Right. **Nakayama Iwata**. *Composition*, gelatin silver print, 1930. Tate: Purchased with funds provided by Jack Kirkland in honour of Yasufumi Nakamori 2025.

Bottom. **Yagaki Shikanosuke**. *Sudden Wind*, gelatin silver print, 1930-1939. Tate: Purchased with funds provided by the Asia-Pacific Acquisitions Committee 2010.

Right page

Luo Bonian. *Whistling*, gelatin silver print, 1933. Luo Bonian Art Foundation and Three Shadows Photography Art Centre. ©Luo Bonian Estate.

group historical survey, but I did go through a lot of the RPS journals. Also, I used the information on the backs of the prints to ascertain exhibition history. An interesting aspect of pictorial salons are the stickers they affixed to the back of prints. We are reproducing those in the exhibition also. The best surprise was really the discovery of women photographers like Emma Barton, Eveleen Myers, Helen Campbell and Yvonne Gregory. All of whom I did not know about previously.

Pictorialism is quite a strange animal. While regarded as a spent force by some by the end of WWI, the style remained a force for others, including William Mortenson and Lionel Wendt, both included in the exhibition. And there were plenty of cross fertilisations of styles, mixing pictorialism with modernism and/or surrealism.

– Pictorialism did not simply disappear in the 1920s, completely banished in favour of the new modernist photography. The focus on pictorialism, merely as a style that embraced painterly aesthetics, is a red herring in the writing of photographic history. Rather, the pictorial movement laid the groundwork that future photographers would later build on. Their debates on realism and interpretation liberated the photograph from its documentary function and their manipulation of the image has found new echoes in contemporary digital practices. The pictorialists' insistence on subjective vision and aesthetic intent continues to resonate in contemporary photography, where debates about what distinguishes artistic photography from mere image-making remain as live as ever. Artists such



as Wolfgang Tillmans, Taryn Simon and Dayanita Singh, whose work moves fluidly between the gallery, the photobook and the archive, are, in many ways, inheritors of the pictorialist conviction that the photograph is above all, an authored object. More than anything, it is the unwavering pictorialist belief that photography could be a genuine art form to which we owe the medium's place in the art world today.

Light and Magic – The Birth of Art Photography is published by Tate Publishing.

Astronomy

from 1870 to 1950
& Nasa

Male Nudes

of the 19th
and 20th Centuries

Portraits of Artists

from the 19th
and 20th Centuries



Attribué à Man Ray ou à Bérénice Abbott - Jean Cocteau en ange Heurtebise, c.1926



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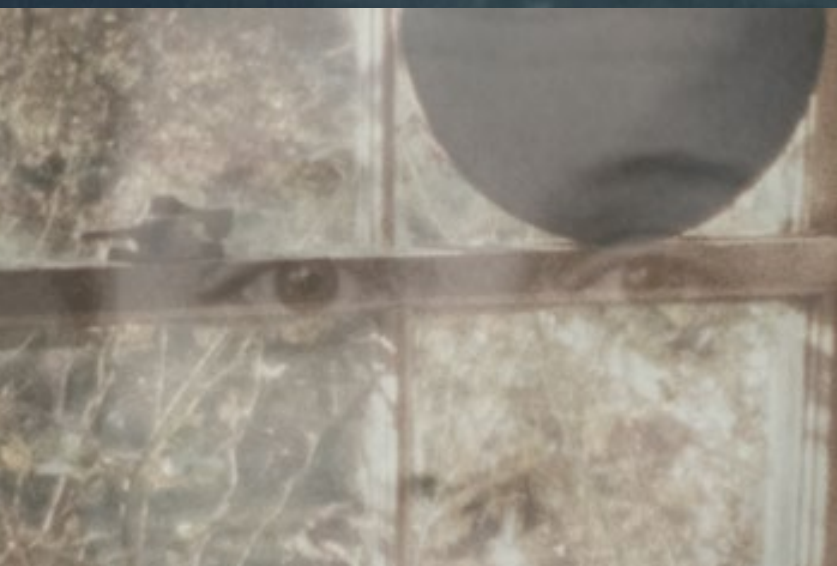
Artists' Study by Dr Hermann Heid, circa 1885

Contact: meara@btconnect.com

Jeannette Klute (1918–2009), Woodland portrait, circa 1950, dye transfer print 47 x 36.7 cm (detail)



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Melissa Shook

The Making of a Documentary

All photographs and Super 8 stills by Melissa Shook.
Kristina Shook & The Estate of M. Melissa Shook.
Courtesy MIYAKO YOSHINAGA, New York.

In early 2025, a huge box was delivered to the home of Los Angeles-based filmmaker Sarah Feinbloom. Inside were some 150 photographs, taken in the 60s and 70s by New York-born photographer Melissa Shook (1939-2020). The photographs had been sent by Kristina “Krissy” Shook, the photographer’s daughter, to start the process of making a documentary, Feinbloom tells me.

– I have known Krissy since we were in our early teens. We became friends after she and Melissa moved from the Lower East Side in New York to Boston. She stood out immediately. Krissy had a New York toughness but also a disarming vulnerability. We stayed close friends over the years and then she asked for my help, as she wanted to make a documentary about her mother. I went on to study

political theory at my university because I was trying to be practical, but my passion was art history. Later on, during my own explorations, I was drawn back to the art world, and especially feminist artists, photographers and performance artists. As a teenager, I had been aware that Krissy’s mother was a photographer but it was much later as an adult that I really took note of Melissa’s work, including her incredible self-portraits from the 60s and 70s. These predated the work of so many of the artists I was studying. While many male photographers of the 60s and 70s focused on more public, political themes and subjects they often didn’t know personally, Melissa Shook’s lens was up close and relational, feminist and domestic. Her portraits were incredible. Sure, I knew that Melissa had a lot to deal with in her life, sexism, self-doubt, the struggles of being a single mother and other things but I remember thinking, “Why isn’t she better known?”

What was your reaction when you opened the box and went through the photographs?

– I had seen only a little of Melissa’s work by then, perhaps 10 photographs that she had taken of Krissy. And here were 150! Knowing Krissy and having known Melissa, going through the photographs of their lives together was such an emotional experience. And then I found out that these were just a fraction of all the photographs Melissa had taken of Krissy, from when she was a baby

Left page: Montage of cropped stills from the documentary *Your Eyes and Love in Grain and Shadow*.



and into her late teens. Wow! Krissy and I had discussed a documentary about Melissa while she was still alive but then she died in 2020. It was during COVID, a crazy time. I had my own documentary film company; GOOD DOCS, and I had to make a living. We discussed the idea of a documentary again. Initially, it was going to be a simple film, put together by a friend of mine, almost like a portfolio, with a spoken, formal biographical narration and some music, and I asked Krissy to send me photographs to use. When my friend got sick, I stepped in as director. After looking at this huge trove of photographs again and again, a very different kind of film started to form in my mind, something much more personal. I was astonished by the depth and breadth of the photographs and the creativity. The give and take between this mother and daughter is so unique and special and it's also complex, emotional, and at times painful. I started imagining the narration, Krissy's voiceover, and it was almost as if I was channelling Krissy, and I heard it as if she were speaking directly to her mother.



Melissa Shook.

Top. March 17 (?), 1973, from *Daily Self-Portraits* 1972-1973 series, gelatin silver print.

Bottom. March 19, 1973, from *Daily Self-Portraits* 1972-1973 series, gelatin silver print.

Right page. Untitled, *Krissy by the window*, circa 1969, from *Krissy* series, gelatin silver print.



Were you planning to use photographs only initially?

– Initially the concept was basically to show a selection of photographs, add some music and a voice-over but that's not a film, more like a souped-up slideshow. I was sitting there looking at the photographs, thinking, "Damn! it would be really nice if there was some film!" At first, I thought of acquiring some stock footage of the skyline of New York and the Lower East Side, just to set the stage but that didn't feel right, since the photographs were so personal. I asked Krissy if she had any film but she said, "No, there's nothing. You have the photographs, and that's enough." But I pressed her, "Are you sure?" And she said, "Well, there is one roll of Super 8 but I've never watched it and I don't know where it is." Anyway, she found one roll and sent it to me and I was spellbound because it was really atmospheric. I suspected there must be more Super 8 footage somewhere, and kept prodding Krissy. She was overwhelmed at that time, because she was working on a photo book as well. Slowly, more film rolls arrived. They had never been processed or seen, so we had to send them to a specialist to be developed. The 17 rolls of footage that Krissy found

turned out to be very poetic, beautiful, eerie and powerful, Krissy as a baby, Melissa, young and beautiful, beach scenes with Darryl Clegg, Krissy's father, cats in their apartment and Melissa's friends. There was also footage of hippies on the streets of the Lower East Side, which really captured the zeitgeist. Melissa clearly had talent, and you can see the makings of a young cinematographer. It is too bad she didn't get to really pursue it further. Krissy and I watched all this newly discovered footage together on Zoom and I knew that we had the material for a great film, not just a slideshow.

How did you structure the film at that stage?

– My idea, along with my editor Alex Regalado, was to move in and out between the Super 8 footage and the photographs and weave them to connect everything. We felt an immense responsibility to Melissa, a woman who was not only a great photographer but who had the essence of a cinematographer and it was all there and it was beautiful. There's poetry to her filming, a stillness, you can sense Melissa observing, but there is also playfulness. Krissy runs towards the camera; it's really lovely and innocent. Alex enhanced the footage here and there

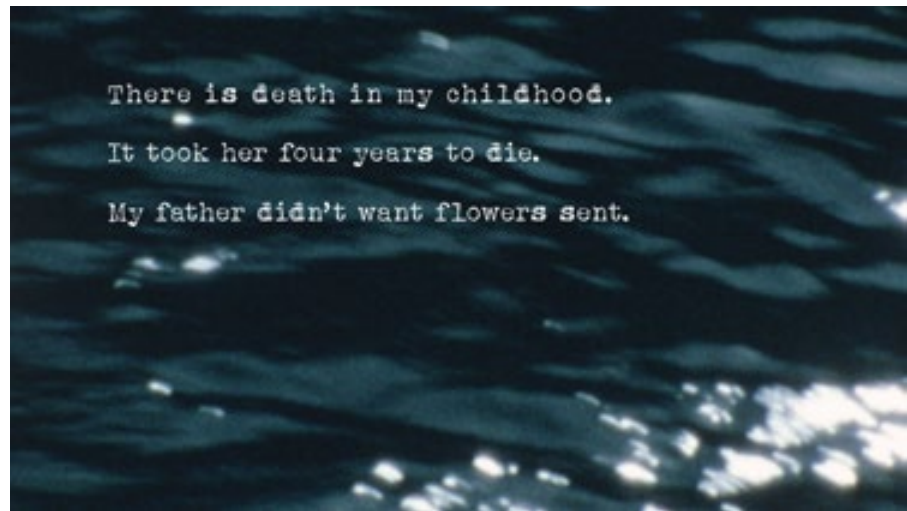


Stills, one cropped, from the documentary
Your Eyes and Love in Grain and Shadow.

by slowing it down to make it more lyrical. Super 8 is such a rich medium. It has lovely colours and a grainy feeling that feels very poetic. Getting the 17 rolls of Super 8 was as if somebody had handed me a box of gold, and said, "Here you are, just polish it." And then a final roll of Super 8 film emerged. Krissy found it in a purse of Melissa's. It felt as if she had left it there for us. "Here are all these bread crumbs, and now you can put them all together and make something." Maybe I'm fabricating this, but I have a feeling that Melissa saved this footage, hoping that someday it would end up being used. The last roll was just incredible. It shows Krissy dancing in high school, and Krissy shimmying in a sequin dress.

It seems to me that the opening footage in the film was chosen with great care.

– Yes, you are right it was a huge decision, and the idea to open the film with footage of Melissa sitting in the park came from our great producer S.C. Smith. He insisted on it, and it was a brilliant idea. She



looks very sad and then she looks directly into the camera and you can't ask for anything better as a filmmaker. This opening shot lets the viewer know that this is a film where you can connect with this person, that she is very honest and that nobody is hiding anything and I think that's really true of how Melissa lived her life.

Did Krissy open up more and more in the voice-over as the work on film progressed?

– The first time we recorded the voiceover, essentially a scratch track, Krissy did her best when reading the first draft of the script and adding a little



here and there. We weren't in a professional studio, so it was hard. That was in May 2025, three months before we even knew that there was Super 8 footage at all, we thought we only had the photos. The final voiceover was recorded in a professional recording studio and that was very important for the result. Money was an issue and developing the Super 8 films cost thousands to get processed so we were lucky when our consultant Swiss Nigerian director and actor Jarreth Merz managed to get us a good recording deal. We arrived at the recording studio and it was there that Krissy brought it all home because now she had seen the film and the new footage and she was in a professional setting, in a booth by herself, so she could really get in the zone. It got very emotional. All I had to do was say, "You're talking to Melissa, to your mother," and that's what she did. The film was something that Krissy promised Melissa she would complete when Melissa was dying. And when we finished our film, Krissy said to me, "Sarah, I feel so complete, so relieved, like I have honoured my mother's wishes." For us as friends, to be creative together was very special. I have made a lot of films over the years; about the Lakota on Pine Ridge, about hill tribe people in Thailand, about child trafficking, all very intense topics but this film really stands out to me as one of the great honours of my life. To top it off, we were incredibly lucky to be able to license music from a great American composer, Pulitzer Prize and Grammy winner Caroline Shaw. We are all very proud of the finished film.

Entitled *Your Eyes and Love in Grain and Shadow*, the film premiered at Photo London in May. It's short, roughly 16 minutes, but it's an intense experience. While deeply personal, it's also a love letter to a particular time in New York and the community on the Lower East Side. More footage could have been used, as well as a vast number of black and white photographs. Did the text for the voiceover dictate the length of the film?

– I have an intrinsic belief that there's a blueprint for how long something is supposed to be and that I simply have to discover it. I don't really think about length. I think about how interesting and rhythmic a film should be and what the energy should be like as I'm watching it. I felt that this film had to be structured chronologically, Melissa's early years, Krissy as a baby, Krissy growing up and at the end, Krissy appears as a grown woman and as an artist in her own right. I knew we were going to make a short film, because we didn't have enough footage to stretch it much further. I also don't think that something has to be long to be really good. Rhythmically, I wanted to do certain things differently in each section, like I wanted the baby section to be really slow and lyrical, and then I wanted things to be more staccato, and then a section with a funky feeling, and then something almost frantic. In the end we used all these strategies to convey our core themes. A glimpse of girlhood, a vanished New York City, the early experiments of a remarkable female artist. And an important reminder to cherish those we love.



Since her passing in 2020, Melissa Shook has become much better known, thanks to the efforts of her daughter and New York gallerist Miyako Yoshinaga. *Daily Self-Portrait 1972-1973* was published by TBW Books in 2023, and next year, Bilder Atlas will publish *Krissy*. Initially, Melissa Shook's self-portraits and the photographs of her daughter might seem obsessive but as Krissy Shook explains, there was a reason for that. I started my conversation with her by asking her about her mother's early years.

– She didn't have an easy childhood. Her mother died from stomach cancer when Melissa was 12. She had gone from Long Island to a hospital in Chicago to try to get care. She kept thinking she was going to get better because, at that time, doctors in America did not tell patients if they were dying of cancer. Her father was an alcoholic, and just drank while her mother was sick. When her mother died, a nurse came from Chicago to Long Island and married her father. Her new step-mother treated her like a rag-doll, cut her hair, chose what dresses she should wear and so on. Eventually, my grandfather sobered up and divorced that woman and married for the third time, the love of his life. For Melissa, it had all been deeply traumatic and it ricocheted into a kind of amnesia. She told me she didn't remember anything about her mother; her voice, if her mother had a nickname for her, if she had ever said that she loved her. Years later, we did find a letter her mother had written to Melissa's father, saying she was going to get better soon, be a better wife, and that Melissa's dress and coat were in the cedar chest, a very detailed letter, and that's the only thing we have from her. Melissa was indifferent towards her father. I was very close with my grandfather and his third wife. I asked my grandfather several times, "Before you pass on, can you please write a letter to Melissa about her mother?" I wanted him to fill in the gaps. What colour did she like? Did she wear perfume? Did she play backgammon? Did she speak French? Anything, anything! I told Melissa that I had asked him to write that letter. After he died, Melissa searched absolutely everywhere in his house but there was no letter to be found.

Her father gave her a Pentax camera for her 18th birthday. Had she asked for a camera?

– There are several snapshots of my grandfather with a camera. Maybe he thought, "I have a camera, I should give her one." He didn't know



Melissa Shook.

Top. Page Street, San Francisco, 1967 (Krissy on her father's shoulder), 1967, from *Krissy* series, gelatin silver print.

Bottom. December 13, 1972, from *Daily Self-Portraits 1972-1973* series, gelatin silver print.

Right page. Krissy and Niki, Ellen's loft, circa 1969, from *Krissy* series, gelatin silver print.



he was helping her find her life's calling. She took the camera to Bard College. She studied English literature and I have an old resumé, where she wrote "Photography" under "Hobbies". There are lots of contact sheets of her college friends, especially Barbara Colby, who later became an actress. Sadly, she was killed in a drive-by shooting in Los Angeles. Later on, Melissa took classes at Columbia University with Paul Byers about using photography in an interdisciplinary way, branching into anthropology and other areas. This was a very different time and my grandfather insisted she train as a typist to have something practical to fall back on. She did learn to type 90 words per minute. She might have worked as a typist in her early years. She had all sorts of odd jobs to make ends meet, she crocheted bikinis, did research for libraries in New York, worked as a dancing model. Financially, life was a real struggle for her. Late in life, she made a little recording, stating that if she hadn't sold some of her photographs to MoMA, thanks to John Szarkowski, she would have never been able to become a teacher, first at Dalton in New York City, then at MIT, then the University of Massachusetts in Boston. For the first time in her life, she had a solid job.

The documentary really captures the atmosphere on the Lower East Side in the 60s and 70s.

– When we were living on East Fifth Street, she befriended a wonderful commercial photographer named Will Faller and his ex-wife, Marion Faller, also a photographer, Will taught Melissa how to use the darkroom and she loved the darkroom. She and her friends would talk endlessly about darkroom work. Will was also a street photographer and Melissa would roam the streets from early morning to late at night with him and watch him take pictures.

I don't recall having seen any street photographs by her.

– Melissa didn't do street photography. She didn't feel comfortable photographing people she didn't know. She really needed to have a personal connection with people and spend time with them. In the 80s, she did a whole series on homeless women and only because she had volunteered at Pine Street Inn, a homeless shelter in Boston, for five years before starting the project. Somebody told her, "You have to do what you do, take pictures of these women and document their stories." Melissa wouldn't have thought of that herself, because again, these were other people's lives but she got to know them really well.



Your father, Darryl Clegg, appeared in the early part of the *Krissy* series and in the Super 8 films. You say in the film that it was you and her, and that he disappeared, as did other men in her life. – They had both studied at Bard College but didn't date there. He was the only student who was given his own art studio to paint in, indicating that he had real talent. Darryl had presence and people

Still from *Your Eyes and Love in Grain and Shadow*.

Above. Melissa Shook, *Untitled (Krissy with disheveled hair)*, circa 1974, from the *Krissy* series, gelatin silver print.

took notice when he entered a room but he had deep emotional scars. His mother had died of skin cancer when he was eighteen and it really crippled him. Melissa tried very hard to get him to stay in our lives but she couldn't make it work. She paid for his clothes and art supplies but eventually she said, "Darryl, I can't pay for your stuff and for Krissy's." Then he left us, eventually turning up with a new girlfriend. Visits that were supposed to last for hours ended up being 20 minutes. Later on, when I was in high school, we met up and I told him I was struggling with depression. His answer was, "Oh, well, it builds character", and I said, "No, I'm sorry, it doesn't." Melissa saw other men after he left. She would get so excited, and then they would leave but she understood that everybody comes with a certain amount of damage, so she never, ever got angry about it.



You were photographed by her on a daily basis. Was it ever irritating or bothersome?

– Not at all! Maybe it's my genetic makeup, or a New York thing. I'm quick to grasp what people are about. And my mother came with a camera! The *Krissy* series came about, photographing me endlessly. Not because I was a cute child, not because I was biracial, but because Melissa wanted to save memories because she had lost all her memories of her mother and early childhood. The beautiful thing was, I had all this freedom that she didn't have in her childhood. I danced at the Henry Street Settlement, in our apartment. I would paint walls and we would sit on the floor and eat our food. It was the 60s and 70s on the Lower East Side, everything was sort of funky. You didn't have to have rules and regulations. I didn't have to pose for her. Some of the pictures are out of focus, and Melissa loved that, because I was being me, and so were my friends, whom she photographed in their lofts and apartments.

You grew up in New York on the Lower East Side when it was pretty buzzing and wild, and in some parts dangerous. And then you moved to Boston. What was that like?

– It was a culture shock. I loved the Lower East Side. I didn't really pay much attention to the junkies and the drunks. There was a great vibe and anything went. Melissa's friend Jeanne Lee was a great jazz

musician. I was friends with her daughter Naima, and all the others that you see in those childhood pictures. We would go to their homes in the afternoon and stay until late. Melissa had a tremendous amount of support from friends, telling her, "Go there and show your work." I never wanted to leave New York. I also felt being mixed race and kind of wild, that New York was the place that I fit in but Melissa needed a stable income so we moved to Boston. Jim Hughes, editor at Camera 35, helped her fill in the application to teach at MIT. She included seven of her photographs and got the job. We lived in Brookline. I made some wonderful friends but they lived in homes with couches and matching arm chairs, had dinner tables with table cloths, very different from homes on the Lower East Side. Later on, I moved back to New York to study at Sarah Lawrence College on a full scholarship.

She did have exhibitions, but in the context of the gallery world, they were pretty low-key. Why didn't she manage to establish a career as a photographer?

– She did have a few shows when I was growing up. I remember walking through SoHo, seeing a Krissy show at one of the galleries. The thing was, Melissa was incredibly shy. I have been told that, at gallery openings, she wanted to run to the bathroom and hide out there and until it was over. She just didn't



have that kind of moxie personality that it takes to break through in the art world but she was very solid when it came to her photography. Her friend Sally Stein and other people have speculated that had she not left New York, she would have been forced to get herself out there and I think people would have rallied when they saw the work. Instead, we went to Boston and hit the ground running. She carried on teaching and doing her incredible work with me until I was 18, later with homeless women and other projects. These days, when Miyako Yoshinaga shows her work at the fairs, there are always people who were students of hers coming to the stands, saying how important her classes were to them and how they deepened their passion for photography, making them decide to become photographers. She tried to interest galleries in the 80s and 90s but at that point nobody was interested in the 60s and 70s. She kept all of her rejection letters. It must have been deeply depressing for her. She would have liked to have seen what's happening now, but she had no regrets about being a photography teacher.

What were her last years like?

– She was working on a series on aging, photographing herself, documenting it with newspapers and writing. Melissa had made a wonderful friend, a dancer, and he got her dancing again. I watched

them dance in a beautiful dance room in Cambridge that you could rent for \$15 an hour. I regret I didn't get up and dance, but I wanted to just watch my mother dancing. Later on, we went to have tea and coffee, and she said, "It's like the 70s again!" and she was so happy. And then she got sick. She was diagnosed with brain cancer. It came at a point when she was so busy creating art. I packed my stuff and came back east and took care of her for the last two years of her life. I was honoured to do that because she had done so much for me.

She passed away in 2020.

– We went to see a lawyer to go over everything, and she said, "I'm giving you all my photographs!" She told me about all the things she had wanted to do, books, shows and a documentary. I promised to make books of the *Krissy* series and the series of daily self-portraits taken 1972-1973. Those were the two series that were most personal to her. And then she passed away. I panicked because I was sitting there with boxes and boxes of photographs so I contacted Sally Stein, pleading, "Sally, please help!" She told me that she knew a gallerist in New York, Miyako Yoshinaga, and that she had done wonders for Ken O'Hara as well as other photographers. Within two weeks we had a conference call. About four weeks later, Miyako came to Boston. We met at my place.

Melissa Shook.

Left page. Just before going to Washington D.C. for Vietnam protest march, circa 1967, from *Other Self-Portraits* series, gelatin silver print.

Right. Krissy and Melissa, August 1973, from *Daily Self-Portraits 1972-1973* series, gelatin silver print.

Bottom. Krissy, Short Street (Boston), circa 1975, from *Krissy* series, gelatin silver print.



She spent four hours looking at photographs and was very impressed by what she saw. She opened her suitcase and started putting photographs in, and I had to hold back and not shout, “Hallelujah!”

It led to her gaining the recognition that eluded her in life.

– It has been unbelievable. We have shown her work at Paris Photo three times now, and at Photo London this year. Miyako has reintroduced her to a wide

audience. Some people knew her, and most didn’t. My mother wasn’t a talker like I am. She communicated through her photo-

graphs and it has been emotional to see visitors respond to her work, that the photographs speak to them on a deep and personal level. It has been a dream come true. As for the documentary, I think Melissa would have loved it.

To see the trailer and request a link to the film, go to miyakoyoshinaga.com/video



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“C’est pas vrai!”

The rediscovery of Florence Henri

All images are courtesy Archives Florence Henri.

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In a photograph taken in 1976, Florence Henri, the groundbreaking photographer who had changed the course of the medium in the interwar years, is seen in her home in conversation with two very young gallery owners from Genoa, Giovanni Battista Martini and Alberto Ronchetti, whom she had met for the first time three years earlier. After years of obscurity, they would bring her work to the attention of museums, historians, collectors and the wider public.

It’s a fascinating story. It is also a story of urgent requests. In a letter that Florence Henri sent to them, she included a red and gold wrapper for a “Cuneese”, a masterpiece of Piedmontese confectionery, consisting of two

meringue wafers, rum-flavoured custard and extra-dark chocolate. Her supply of these delicacies had run out and she was politely requesting a new batch.

The letter is preserved, along with paintings, photographs, letters, documents and objects, in Florence Henri’s archive, kept and curated by Giovanni Battista Martini, owner of the gallery Martini & Ronchetti, where the latest retrospective dedicated to the great photographer was conceived. Entitled *Fokus. Florence Henri*, it’s on display at the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern until 10 January 2027 (www.zpk.org).



Left page. **Florence Henri**. Self-portrait, gelatin silver print, 1928.

Right. Giovanni Battista Martini and Alberto Ronchetti with Florence Henri at her home in Bellival, France, in 1976.



I met up with Giovanni Battista Martini at the gallery and started our conversation by asking him how he and Alberto Ronchetti first came across the work of Florence Henri.

– We were two young gallery owners. I was just 23 years old and an architect. Alberto was 26 and had an extraordinary passion for historical and contemporary avant-garde art. We'd begun studying Futurism, the Italian avant-garde movement that had revolutionised the art world but in the 1970s, had been sidelined because of its political complexity. During our research, we'd come across an issue of *Stile Futurista*, and in an article entitled *Fotoplastica*, written by Arturo Ciacelli, a painter and set designer, we saw the name Florence Henri for the first time. The article focused on an exhibition

of her work that Ciacelli, her partner at the time, had curated in Turin, at the Liguria Stadium, a café and gallery in one, decorated with frescoes in the Futurist style. The article discussed the modernity of Paris, and “modern artists who have raised photography to the level of the plastic arts, to the extent that one might say that mechanical life is expanding the scope of art”. He mentioned several names but stated, “Among all these artists of the photographic art, none has succeeded in producing photographs as exceptionally modern as those of Florence Henri.” Accompanying the article were two of her abstract photographs and the portraits that Florence had shot of Fernand Léger and Wassily Kandinsky. Ciacelli also referred to Florence's training, that she had begun her career as a painter and had been a pupil of Fernand Léger himself at the Académie Moderne in Paris in 1924. And Léger was of enormous importance for Florence's artistic journey. She loved the multimedia aspects of his work and felt a strong affinity with texts such as *Aesthetics of the Machine* (1923), and the film *Ballet Mécanique* (1924). The opening sequence of the film, with spheres swinging through the air, must have remained etched in her memory, as many of her photographs would later demonstrate.

Having read Ciacelli's article, you decided to track down Florence Henri. How did you go about it?

– We were already in contact with Man Ray, Xanti Schawinsky, Hans Richter and Grety Wols, the widow of Wols. First, we wrote to Richter, a friend of Florence, but he hadn't heard from her for many years. Nor had the photographer Luigi Veronesi, nor the architect Alberto Sartoris, but Sartoris gave us a clue: “Go and see Wilhelm Maywald in Paris; he knew her well. Here is his address. Florence's studio was on the same street.” We arrived in Paris and went to 10 Rue de la Grande-Chaumière, in the 6th arrondissement, knocked on the door of what was once the famous Académie Colarossi, just a few metres from the studio where Paul Gauguin and Amedeo Modigliani had painted. Willy Maywald himself opened the door, this great fashion photographer who had worked for Christian Dior in the 1950s and who had spent a great deal of time and many holidays in Italy with Florence Henri,

Unknown photographer. Florence Henri with a selection of her paintings during a stay in Saint-Tropez.



on Ischia, and later in Morocco. We introduced ourselves: “We’re from Italy; we’re doing some research on Florence Henri. Can you help us?” and he replied, “Gladly, I’m actually on my way to see her because today is her birthday”. It was 28 June 1973. Florence was turning eighty. We bought a cake and set off.

A day that changed your destiny.

– Absolutely. Filled with emotion, and still in disbelief at the coincidence, we got into the car, with Maywald at the wheel and two of his friends on board, and set off for Bellival, a small village in the Oise region. An hour and a half’s drive from Paris and we found ourselves standing in front of a beautiful, old stone house, spread over two floors. Florence had been living there since 1963 with her dearest friend, Jeanne Taffoireau, and her cat, Socrates.

How did you introduce yourselves?

– As two very young gallery owners who saw photography as the medium that had most profoundly transformed the language of art between the two world wars. A very clear artistic statement. And it was precisely with this in mind that we had organised two exhibitions of Man Ray’s work, and presented



the work of Luigi Veronesi, László Moholy-Nagy and Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart. Florence was struck by our enthusiasm and perhaps also the fact that we were Italian. Italy was a very important country in her life and upbringing. Florence would look at us, smile and keep repeating: “C’est pas vrai”, it’s not true. Then, late in the afternoon, we returned to Paris with Maywald and we didn’t see Florence again until Christmas. But by then we’d made contact.

Florence Henri.

Left. Untitled, tempera on paper, 1923.

Top. *Composition*, oil on wood panel, 1924-1925. Private collection.

Bottom. *Composition*, oil on wood panel, 1925-1926.



Regarding those words: “C’est pas vrai”, “It’s not true”. Much of her art reflects on the concept of verisimilitude, and on the truthfulness of images and knowledge through images.

– It is precisely the central, highly contemporary theme of her work, which Florence approaches with originality, sensing that at a certain point painting, pure creation, falls short when confronted with the world because it can no longer challenge it. It had certainly done so with Impressionism and Cubism, but now there was a different society, a different rhythm, and only photography, that mechanism of mechanised civilisation could engage with this reality, exploring it, provoking it, pushing it beyond the limits of verisimilitude. All the while, of course, provoking and bewildering us, the viewers.

Florence Henri.

Left. Self-portrait, gelatin silver print, 1928.

Right. Double portrait, gelatin silver print, 1927-1928.



The rhythm that she set out from was, however, music.

– Yes, Florence begins with the musical experience. It is no coincidence that many of her paintings and photographs are entitled *Composition*. Composing space, inventing its rhythm, a new, fragmented, syncopated, contemporary rhythm, a rhythm “in pieces” yet perfectly harmonious, this was the central theme of her artistic exploration.

Who were her favourite composers?

– Florence was modern and free in every aspect of her expression, so she moved with great ease from Igor Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring* to jazz. A good friend of Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Florence was also friends with their son, Charles Delaunay, a promoter of jazz music in France and founder of the magazine *Jazz Hot*. She also made a portrait of Arthur Briggs, a Caribbean trumpeter who, in the 1930s, often played in Paris with Django Reinhardt’s orchestra. But Florence’s true musical training lay in the piano, on which she was already a virtuoso by the age of twelve in London.

Let’s take a look at Florence’s life story.

– Florence Montague Henri, known as “Monti” to her friends, was born in New York in 1893. Her father, Jean Marie François Henri, a Frenchman born in New York, was the director of an oil company. Her mother was German, Anne Marie Schindler, but died when Florence was just two years old. Her father was always travelling and entrusted his daughter to her maternal family in Grünberg in Silesia. At age nine, she moved again, to Paris, to a boarding school run by nuns, where she began to study the



piano. Then, in 1905, she found herself travelling between London and Sandown on the Isle of Wight, where great musicians such as Eugène Ysaye and Jan Kubelik were gathering at that time. In 1907, Florence's father died and she inherited an annuity, which, despite the inevitable devaluations she was able to rely on for the rest of her life. Another move followed, to Rome and the home of her father's sister, Anny, who was linked to Gino Gori, a theatre critic and friend of futurists Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Luigi Russolo. This branch of the family played an important role in her development, given that Florence would return to Rome in 1922 and frequent the Cabaret del diavolo, the "anti-chic" cabaret founded by Gori himself within the Hôtel Élite et des étrangers, featuring frescoes and furnishings designed by the futurist artists Fortunato Depero and Enrico Prampolini. While in Paris in 1927, Florence shared a studio with Prampolini, who was busy creating the set designs for his *Compagnia della Pantomima Futurista* a spectacle of spatial dynamism, combining dance, music, lighting, sculpture and painting, at the Théâtre de la Madeleine.

By this point, Florence had already become a painter. But what of her career as a pianist?

– In 1912, Florence moved to Berlin to continue her musical studies with Egon Petri and Ferruccio Busoni. She had a love affair with the pianist Michael von Zadora, who was himself a pupil of Busoni and one of the greatest interpreters of his works. One of the couple's closest friends was the composer Edgar Varèse. But then the First World War broke out, and Florence, no longer able to receive her annuity from England, was forced, in order to survive, to play the piano



in cinemas showing silent films. It was a degrading experience, which prompted her to abandon the music scene. Yet music remained a constant in her life, and during the years we spent with Florence, she would listen with great attention and concentration to the evening concerts broadcast by Radio France.

Did painting take the place of music in Florence's life?

– Yes, and even as a child she had shown a talent for drawing. At the age of twenty, she was in the right city, Berlin, to change direction. In 1912, the Der Blaue Reiter exhibition was held at the Der Sturm Gallery. This new chapter was also marked by her relationship with Carl Einstein, author and a theorist of avant-garde figurative art, who, in 1915, wrote the first text on African art. Among her friends during those years were Hans Richter, Hans Arp, John Heartfield, Ivan Puni, László Moholy-Nagy and Alexander Archipenko, whose studio Florence frequented and where she met the Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky. She also attended courses taught by Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky at the Bauhaus. And then, Margarete Schall arrived, also a student of painting, another vital connection, one that was entirely free, because in Florence's mind and heart, gender never mattered, only the person did. And Margarete, who was stunningly beautiful, would be the subject in 1928 of one of the first *Portrait Composition* pieces in front of a mirror.

Florence Henri.

Left. Double portrait, gelatin silver print, 1927-1928.

Right. *Composition abstraite*, gelatin silver print, 1929.

Let's return to Berlin. At a certain point, even this city was no longer enough for her, and Florence, modern in this respect too, set her sights elsewhere, almost as if driven by an artistic restlessness, and in 1924 she decided to move to Paris.

– To do so, however, as she was stateless, she had to marry to enter and remain in France. She married a Swiss citizen, Karl Anton Koster, and she retained her Swiss citizenship for the rest of her life. She enrolled at André Lhote's Académie Montparnasse and Fernand Léger's Académie Moderne and in 1925, she took part in the Exposition Internationale l'Art d'Aujourd'hui, the first international exhibition to offer an overview of the trends of the time; Cubism, Futurism, Purism, Surrealism, Constructivism and Orphism. In this melting pot of influences, Florence's painting also evolved, moving from a Cubo-Purist beginning towards increasingly abstract compositions.



In 1927, she enrolled in the summer courses at the Bauhaus in Dessau, where she celebrated her thirty-fourth birthday. There was a party, and a photograph shows her alongside Xanti Schawinsky, Josef and Anni Albers, Joss Schmidt and Oskar Schlemmer. Was this the birthday that marked her emergence as a photographer?

– Yes, and I would say that it all happened with “futurist” speed. The groundwork had been laid. As early as 1923, upon arriving at the Bauhaus, Lucia Moholy and Moholy-Nagy had been developing their research into photography, which had begun in Berlin a few years earlier in a Dadaist atmosphere.

Then, in 1925, Moholy-Nagy published his most important theoretical work, *Malerei Fotografie Film*, and photography became part of everyday life at the Bauhaus, both as a subject for reflection and as a record of the lives of students and teachers. Florence was also using photography, as evidenced by the many snapshots in her personal albums. There is a photograph of her from 1926, on the southern coast of France, with a camera in her hand. On 11 February 1928, the official announcement came in the form of a letter from Florence to Lou Scheper, another dear friend from the Bauhaus. Florence writes: “And now for some news: I’m taking up photography. If I continue to enjoy it, I’ll stop painting (for the time being). I’ve had enough of painting without a clear plan, and I have an incredible number of ideas about photography. I’d very much like to pursue a profession where the results are of interest to others too.” Evidence of the change can be seen in Florence’s first three self-portraits in the mirror.

Her career was meteoric.

– Yes, and in December 1928, two of her abstract compositions featuring spheres and mirrors, along with a self-portrait, appeared in the pages of *i10*, the international journal of architecture, music, film and photography, accompanied by a critical essay by Moholy-Nagy. It was also during this period that Florence Henri’s image became established, encapsulated in the portrait taken of her by Lucia Moholy. That look became almost a trademark. I’d like to recount an episode that caused a minor diplomatic incident. Florence had told us that the famous portrait, with that striking close-up, had been taken by Lucia, but that the framing, so tight around the face, so Bauhaus, had been László’s idea. When we asked Lucia about this, she flew into a rage, denying it outright. She said the portrait was hers from start to finish.

You first met her in 1973. What was she like?

– She was still the Florence with fringe, lipstick, powder and made-up eyes. She was extremely particular about her make-up. Just to give you an idea, Alberto once sprung a surprise on her and turned up unannounced. Florence made him wait outside the door for an hour. And it was winter! In her dress, Florence remained a woman who defied convention, embracing the beauty of geometry. Her favourite jackets had thin blue and white stripes, or black and purple ones, like those worn by waiters. She had a whole collection of them. I kept some after her death. For many years, these items from her wardrobe held

Florence Henri.

Left. *Carousel*, gelatin silver print, 1927–1928.

Right page. *Pariser Fenster* [Paris Window], gelatin silver print, 1929.





the memory of her favourite perfume, Mitsouko by Guerlain, created in 1919. We used to give it to her as a present. Polka dots were a real passion of hers. Her sheets and cushions were all polka-dotted. The box of chocolate eggs from Romanengo, a famous patisserie in Genoa, which we used to give her at Easter, was polka-dotted. Florence liked the contents, but, above all, she adored the boxes; she kept them all.

Florence Henri.

Top. *Composition Portrait Tulia* (Tulia Kaiser), gelatin silver print, circa 1930.

Right. Portrait of Robert Delaunay, gelatin silver print, 1934.

Bottom. Portrait of Jean Arp, gelatin silver print, 1934.

And what about her character, what impression did Florence make on you?

– Florence was a very private person but, at the same time, very direct. You could find yourself put on the spot if you weren't quite prepared because if Florence wanted to get to know you, she'd ask you deep and probing questions. She was very curious, but in a healthy way, and she could be just as sincere herself.

What was her home like? Did she have any of her own works on display?

– Yes, both paintings and photographs. I remember her portrait of Robert Delaunay and the famous photomontage from the 1930s featuring the wicker chair and the drape. On the upper floor of the house,

where her studio was, Florence kept her easel and a few canvases from the 1950s. In the bedrooms and the living room, hanging on the walls, were her beautiful patchwork quilts. What really struck us were the original pieces of furniture she'd brought back from the Bauhaus: the armchairs, two chrome-plated tubular steel tables by Marcel Breuer, the 1924 table lamp and the 1930 glass tea set, both by Wilhelm Wagenfeld. There is a little anecdote about this design masterpiece. At one of the parties and dinners that Florence loved to host, Alberto Sartoris broke one of the Wagenfeld cups. Along with the cup, a friendship was shattered. They did not speak to one another for years.

What else do you remember of her home?

–There was a “fratina”, a small table with a chequered tablecloth, and a lamp that Constantin Brancusi had given her, mounted on a tripod. There were ashtrays everywhere and packets of her favourite cigarillos, Ninãs, and in front of the windows there were metal étagères for succulent pots, which Florence photographed on several occasions. And then there was her Citroën 2CV, parked in the garden. Climbing aboard, with Florence at the wheel, was a real test of courage!

I imagine you didn't ask to buy any photographs at your first meeting. When did you start broaching this subject?

– First of all, Florence had absolutely no interest in money. At our second meeting, at Christmas 1973, we'd begun discussing the idea of an exhibition at our gallery and our wish to purchase some of her photographs. But Florence didn't want to part with them. Then a glimmer of hope appeared, and we showed her the market values of her contemporaries, such as Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy. She seemed to have agreed, but immediately afterwards she ran after us into the garden, gave us our money back and insisted on taking the prints back. Only after a long courtship, or rather, a siege, did Florence allow herself to be won over by our enthusiasm, and we began working together.

Florence Henri.

Top. *Femmes aux cartes*, (Woman with playing cards), gelatin silver print, 1930.

Bottom. *Composition Portrait Lore* (Lore Krüger), gelatin silver print, circa 1933.





How did you go about researching her work and reorganising her archive?

– We realised straight away that it was very difficult to label her or place her within a specific school, partly because her works contain references to purism, constructivism and abstract art, yet, there is an additional, more complex and advanced interpretation to be found. What immediately struck us as crystal clear was the “explosion” of Florence’s work. In 1929, one year after the official start of her career as a photographer, she took part in the major retrospective Film und Foto in Stuttgart, and exhibited twenty-one photographs, including the famous *L’Autoportrait* with the chrome spheres, two *Portrait Compositions*, a *Fenêtre* and other compositions. She then received a letter from Josef Albers, her teacher at the Bauhaus: “Dear Monti, you certainly wouldn’t have imagined this. But in my Stuttgart

Cover of the German magazine *Für die Frau*, April issue, 1931. The portrait is part of a series Florence Henri made of the model Cora.

catalogue, it’s noted in bold, next to Florence Henri, ‘the best’. Your old avant-garde mentor. And he really does know everything. So, congratulations and well done!” We saw these masterpieces for the first time at Florence’s home. It came as a shock to us, a photograph that begins as a reflection of reality, yet reflects upon itself. A *formidable tour de force*.

It’s a work that changes everything in the story of Florence Henri, but also in the history of the image.

– Perhaps we do not realise it, because today the word “virtual” is so overused, but Florence’s self-portrait with spheres is one of the first works to truly reflect on virtual reality. Florence exists only beyond physical reality; she is pure reflection; she is beyond, she is already “through the looking-glass”, as if she too, like Alice, one winter’s evening had imagined the world on the other side of a mirror hanging above the fireplace and, on a whim, had tried to step through it and succeeded. Then there is the theme of gender, another contemporary debate, in the sense that Florence identifies as female in the reflected image, but does so by passing through a mirror and two spheres, which have strong masculine connotations. Imagine the emotion we felt at the time upon discovering such an image, such a theme, which the conceptual artists we used to spend time with were debating at that time.

Self-Portrait with Two Spheres, let us recall, dates from 1928.

– Not only that, but this landmark image was followed by a flood of publications and exhibitions. Her first solo exhibition was in 1930, at Studio 28, a Parisian cinema-theatre, which still exists today, where, the same year, the premiere of *L’âge d’or* by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí took place.

The mirror, this magical object, has great significance in Florence’s work. Shall we explore this further?

– I would like to begin with a quotation from Carl Einstein’s 1913 experimental novel *Bébuquin*, of which Florence owned a dedicated copy. Einstein writes: “I am a mirror, a puddle, still and glistening, in which the light of reflections is mirrored. But has a mirror ever gazed upon itself?” Truly, a fundamental point for reflection. There is also Moholy-Nagy’s highly insightful commentary on Florence’s photographs, published in issue 17/18 of the magazine *i10* in December 1928: “With Florence Henri’s

Florence Henri.

Top. *Composition*, still life, gelatin silver print, circa 1931.

Bottom. *Composition*, gelatin silver print, circa 1931.



mirror, becomes ambiguous and illusory, and photography, already the result of a reflection of reality, presents both the real image and the virtual image simultaneously, prompting the viewer to search for the identity of the image itself.

Florence's acrobatics!

– Let's consider another famous composition: the advert for the perfume Arpège, created for the French fashion house Lanvin, in which the famous boule noire is multiplied by a system of mirrors

photographs, the practice of photography enters a new phase to a greater extent than could previously have been foreseen. The entire complex of issues surrounding manual painting is incorporated into the photographic work and, naturally, substantially expanded by the new optical instrument. In particular, reflected images and spatial relationships, overlaps and intersections are explored from a new perspective." In short, in the mirror, Florence finds a link between the experience of painting and the idea of photographic "production", which is understood as the opposite of "reproduction". The interpretation of the image in the mirror, and created by the

angled at different angles until it becomes a sort of necklace. For Florence, it was important to challenge the viewer, to unsettle them and, through this magical process, to seduce them.

It is also a statement of power.

– Florence had a very strong character; you had to obey her or face a very long journey. Humans had to obey her, but above all, so did her creations. In one of her seminal texts, she writes: "I would like to make it clear that what I want, first and foremost, with photography is to compose the image as I do with my paintings. The volumes, lines, shadows and



light must obey my will and say what I want them to say. And this must be achieved through the strictest control of the composition, because I do not seek to depict the world nor to express my thoughts.”

You and Alberto reintroduced Florence to the world. What were key stages in the process?

– In 1967, in the September issue of *Camera*, Romeo Martinez wrote a wonderful article about Florence, describing her as “the Grande Dame de la Photographie”. Then there was the interest shown by Claude Lemagny, head of the photography collections at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and by Gladys Fabre, an art historian who, in her studies on the Cercle et Carré group, had researched and admired Florence. Florence left Paris in the

The Florence Henri Archive. Wilhelm Wagenfeld’s glass tea set from 1930 on the top shelf, and below, the glass shade of her lamp and her cameras: a Rolleiflex and a Zeiss Ikon Compur. Her wooden tripod is seen on the bottom shelf, as well as one of the glass spheres that she used in many of her photographs.

1960s and had by then, withdrawn from the public eye, partly because her closest friends had passed away. In a sense, we had to start from scratch. The first thing we did was to donate 175 new prints of Florence’s most famous photographs to the Centre Pompidou, which had been inaugurated in 1977 but did not yet have a separate photography department. We made an identical donation to the University of Parma. From there, we set about reconstructing her career because, absurdly, Florence tended to back-date some works, when, in fact they were earlier and therefore even more significant.

Her pupils, all of whom were famous, are also a very interesting source for piecing together Florence Henri’s personality.

– Ilse Bing went to Paris in 1930 specifically to study under Florence Henri. Then there were Lisette Model, Dorothy Weyl, Lore Krüger, and, above all, Gisèle Freund, who had studied under philosopher Theodor W. Adorno in Frankfurt. They recollect a strong, communicative and charismatic personality. Florence made herself understood with very brief phrases and gave guidance that was more practical than theoretical. This applied not only to photographic technique but also the intellectual and creative level. The most detailed account is undoubtedly that of Freund, recorded in her autobiography *Memoires de l’oeil*. Gisèle writes: “My photographic experiences were purely empirical, so I decided to take some courses. I was referred to Florence Henri. She, too, was taking on pupils. Her studio was in a narrow street near Boulevard Raspail. I was immediately won over by her charm and the great kindness with which she received me. Her fees were within my meagre budget.” At one point, pupil and teacher took portraits of one another, but Florence, who had guided Gisèle on lighting and composition, decided to keep the negative of the image, taking care to tell her future great colleague: “In truth, it was I myself who took my own portrait.”

Was portraiture merely work for her, as Freund notes in her diary, or was it also a subject of personal exploration?

– Florence herself wrote, “Even in portraiture, what interests me is the composition. Of course, I am not indifferent to the physicality and facial features of my models, but what interests me above all is what I can derive from the whole... Naturally, when I shoot a portrait, I feel a connection being established between my subject and myself, and I strive to express the psychological interpretation I can draw from it, but it is the arrangement of the various elements within the whole that fascinates me above all else.” Evidence of this quest for modernity can be found in the portraits of Grete Willers, Sonia Delaunay, Tullia Kaiser, Lore Krüger, and the very famous portrait of Cora, as well as, on

the male side, the artists we have mentioned, and then author Ernst Jünger, who would sit for her on several occasions from 1942 through to the 1950s. There is also the series of portraits of Pierre Minet, a writer and key figure in the French avant-garde. Florence formed a romantic relationship with him that lasted for many years.

You first met her in 1973. Was she still painting and taking photographs?

– When she moved into the house and studio in Bellival, Florence resumed painting, and her work, having taken a more figurative turn in the second half of the 1930s, returned in the 1950s to a new form of abstraction. When we first met her, she had stopped painting and taking photographs but we encouraged her to take up collage again, and these works return to the syntax of the Purism of the Académie Moderne and Constructivism. Then, in 1978, Suzanne Pagé, beating the Centre Pompidou to it, organised the first major retrospective of Florence Henri's work at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. A close friend of hers, César Domela, attended the opening, and we bought two photographs by Florence from him. One was a negative print of *La Bottine*, from 1930, and the other was a *Fenêtre* from 1931. At that point, it had become essential for us to acquire as much material as possible and managed to reacquire a very important painting by Florence from the wife of Istvan Beöthy, the Hungarian artist who created the sculpture that completes the famous photograph of the ballerina Magda Förstner, taken by André Kertész in 1926, right in Beöthy's studio.

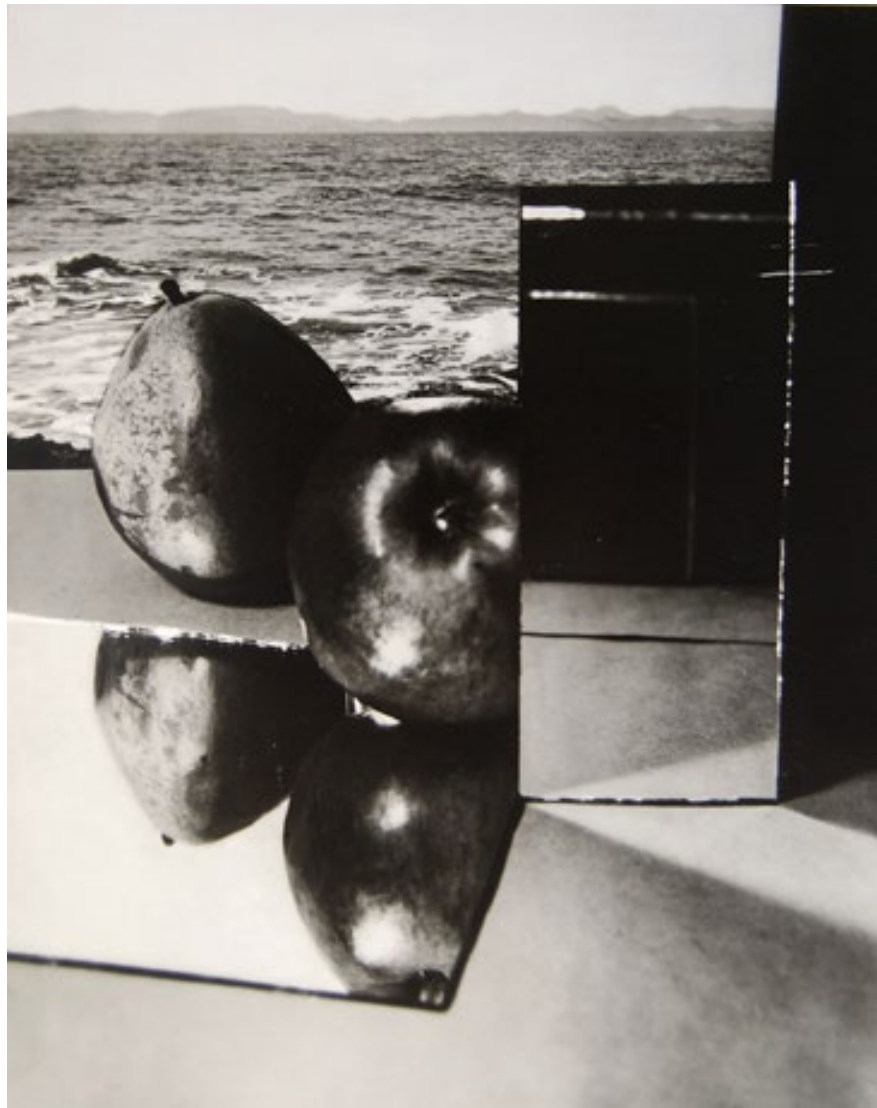
Did she attend the opening of the exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne?

– No, she came with Jeanne Taffoireau on the very last day. Three years later, following a serious accident that left her bedridden, Florence's creative work came to a halt. She died on 24 July 1982 and today her ashes rest in Père Lachaise Cemetery, not far from those of Isadora Duncan. Alberto is no longer with us either, he passed away in 2003, but his name lives on. The gallery is still called Martini & Ronchetti.

What do you miss about Florence Henri?

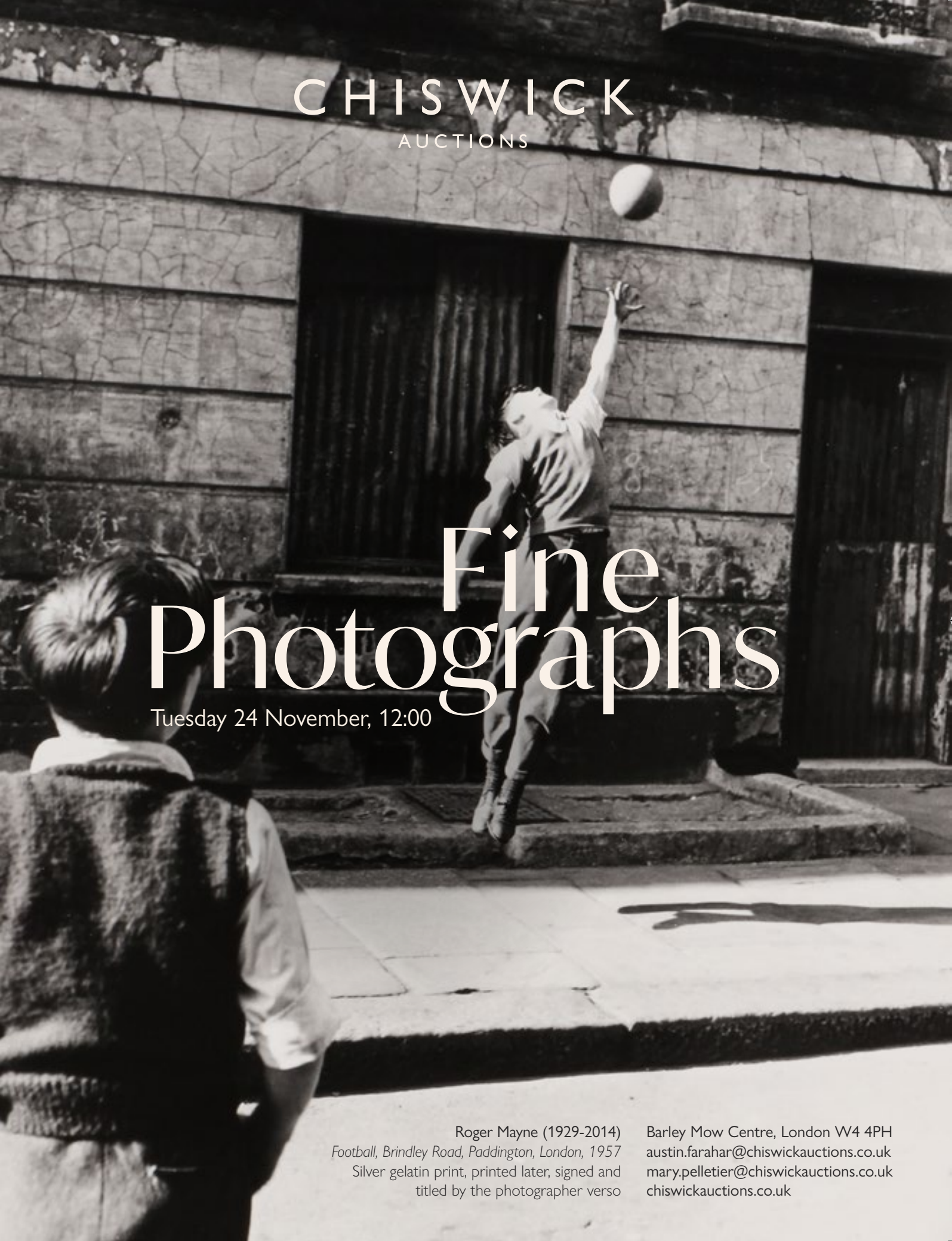
– Everything, and the fact that we started out as gallery owners at this level, rubbing shoulders with these giants, may even have caused a few problems. In the sense that Florence's generation had created such a new and authentic language that it subsequently proved difficult to work with artists of our own generation.

Florence Henri. *Composition, still life*, gelatin silver print, circa 1932.



Did she talk much about her past?

– Very little. She was an extremely private person and very strict, first and foremost with herself. She would be moved when she mentioned Carl Einstein's name, thinking back on his tragic end. He was Jewish and trapped in southern France following Nazi Germany's defeat of France, he took his own life in July 1940. She smiled as she recalled that Piet Mondrian wasn't quite the great dancer that he thought he was, stepping on her toes when they danced. Or, in passing, tell us about when André Breton used to visit her. Sometimes we'd witness an argument with Jeanne, mainly about the garden, which Jeanne tended to perfection, while Florence preferred it a little wilder, and one part of it was overgrown. But if we tried to interview her, Florence would retreat into a polite silence. All that remained on Alberto's tape was the sound of birdsong. But perhaps that is as it should be. It is only the work that can speak, that must speak, of the artist.



CHISWICK
AUCTIONS

Fine Photographs

Tuesday 24 November, 12:00

Roger Mayne (1929-2014)
Football, Brindley Road, Paddington, London, 1957
Silver gelatin print, printed later, signed and
titled by the photographer verso

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Edward Steichen, Grasshopper and Wheat Stalk, c.1921. © The Estate of Edward Steichen

Lost-Lost & found

Saved at the last minute

On 25 July 1944, Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, gender-neutral monikers of step-sisters and lovers Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe, were walking through St Helier, Jersey, which, along with the other Channel Islands, had been occupied by German forces on 30 June and 1 July 1940. The couple, artists who had held salons in Paris, attended by André Breton, Henri Michaux, Silvia Beach, among others, had moved to Jersey in 1937. Following the occupation, the two became active as resistance workers, creating flyers citing BBC reports of Nazi war crimes, translated into

German and signed *Der Soldat Ohne Namen* (The Soldier with No Name). They would also write brief messages on cigarette papers, lick the gum and paste the papers to German vehicles, proclamations, huts, etc.

On that day in July, Cahun and Moore were once again pasting cigarette papers, attaching one to the window of a police car, “The cowardly bureaucrats of the police, who live on lies and shameful cruelty, will be destroyed by the soldiers with no names.” Having run out of cigarette papers, they went to a newsstand and purchased a new packet. The owner of the newsstand decided to report them to the authorities. They caught the bus home but it was soon stopped. They managed to hoodwink the soldier who interrogated all passengers but were arrested later the same day. During their transport to prison, they swallowed the pills they had hidden should they be caught, suicide being the final rebellion. The doses were strong but not strong enough. Still, it took a week for them to recover.

Cahun and Moore had been working on a reworking of *Cinderella*, entitled *Cendrillon, l'enfant humble et hautaine* (Cinderella, the humble and haughty child), a sadomasochistic fantasy where the roles of tormentor and victim were intertwined. It was found along with much other material during the

Left page. “Lost”. Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore. Unknown title, unknown subject, gelatin silver print, 1937-1944.



search of their home, documented by none other than Baron Hans Max von Aufsess, commander on Jersey, in his report as well as in his diary, describing the finds as “horrific Cubist paintings” and “pornographic material of a revolting nature: a woman with a shaved head, first photographed naked and then in men’s clothing”, while other photographs, the officer continues, showed “both women engaging in sexual perversions, exhibitionism and flagellation”. The material was seized and destroyed. Cahun and Moore were put on trial. They refused to appeal for clemency, regarding it as a form of self-denial, and were sentenced to death on 16 November. Against their wishes, the court filed an appeal on their

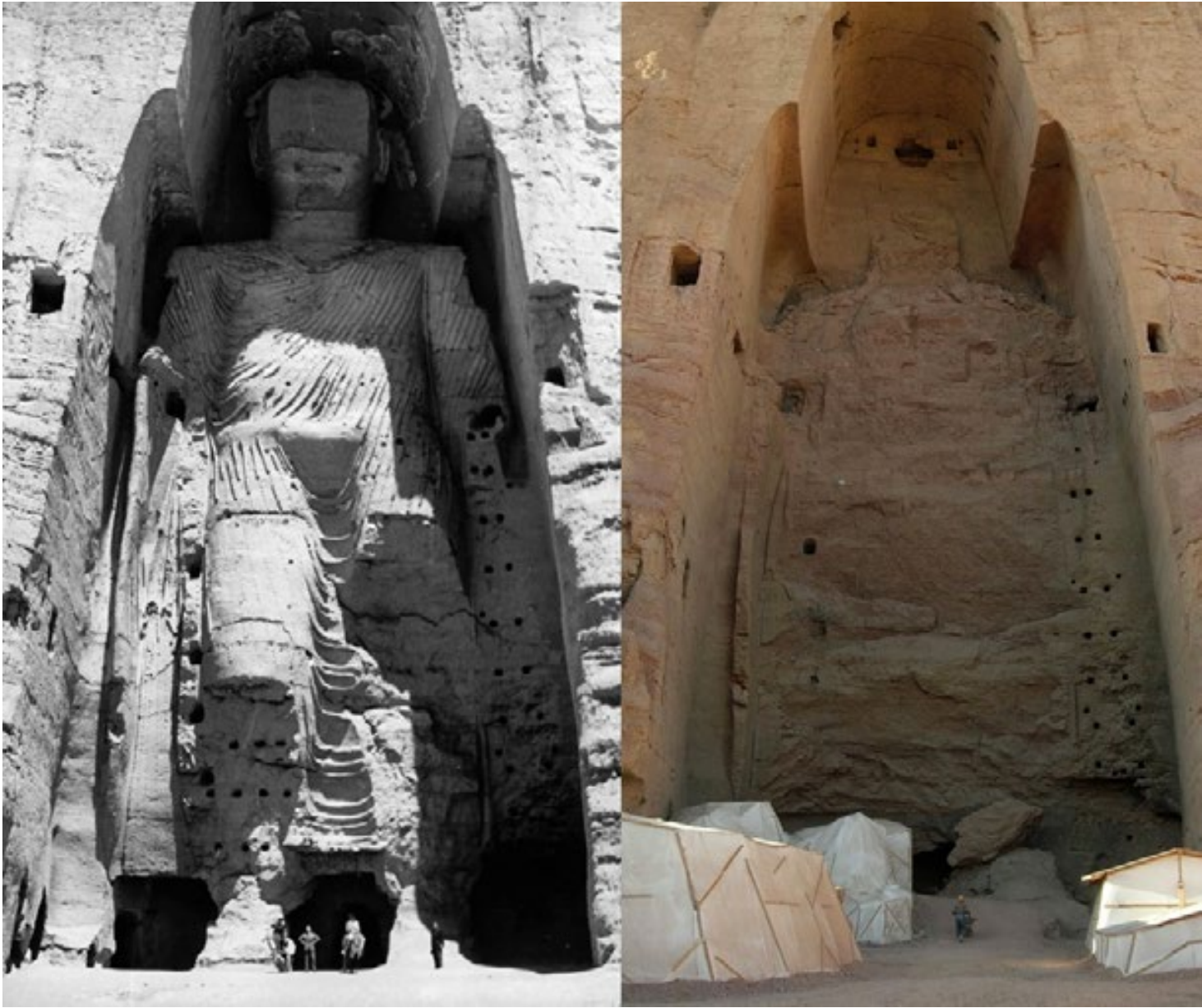
“Still missing”. Black and white photograph of Raphael’s *Portrait of a Young Man*, painted 1513-1514.

behalf, their sentence commuted to 10 years penal servitude. They remained in prison until Jersey was liberated by allied soldiers on 8 May 1945.

But was the seized material really destroyed? Laura

Leonelli, our magazine’s contributing editor thinks there’s a chance it could have survived.

– It’s a dream that the material seized by von Aufsess was not, in fact, destroyed, but was secretly kept by some officer, perhaps a fetishist, who hid it in his luggage. Perhaps the officer managed to return to Germany before the end of the war, or perhaps he followed his commander to the prisoner-of-war camp in England and was then repatriated with his suitcase. In my dream, the suitcase, with photographs hidden in a false bottom or behind the lining, was stashed away and forgotten in an attic; the owners of the house died; everything ended up at a German flea market; and one day the suitcase was bought by a film prop master. The suitcase is then examined more closely, and lo and behold, its treasure reappears, all the photographs of Cahun and Moore. Until then... They are lost.



The history of art is littered with lost works. Cultural heritage has increasingly become a frontline target. Destroy the heritage, destroy the people. Some heritage has been destroyed before the eyes, or rather, the cameras of the world, by the Taliban and ISIS. Other heritage is simply looted, only to disappear. That was the fate of Raphael's *Portrait of a Young Man*, by some considered to be a self-portrait. It was stolen by the Nazis, along with *Lady with an Ermine* by Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt's *Landscape with*

the Good Samaritan, from the Czartoryski Museum in Kraków in 1939. Destined for Hitler's unrealised museum in Linz, it was installed in the private apartment of Hans Frank, German Governor-General of the Polish territories, at Wavel Castle. *Lady with an Ermine* and *Landscape with the Good Samaritan* were returned to the Czartoryski Museum after the war but the whereabouts of *Portrait of a Young Man* remain unknown. As for Hans Frank, known as "the butcher of Poland", on 1 October 1946 he was found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg trials, sentenced to death and executed on 16 October. All that remains of *Portrait of a Young Man* is an empty frame and a black and white photograph.

The Bamiyan Buddhas, created in the 6th century, destroyed by the Taliban in March 2001. The process, using anti-aircraft guns, artillery, rockets, and dynamite charges, took 25 days. Seen here, the taller Buddha before and after destruction.
 Wiki Commons.



Photography has, certainly in previous years, been particularly hard hit by losses, no doubt because a photograph was long considered to be “Worth the paper it’s printed on.” Since the medium went digital, the statistics for photographs taken have exploded. According to current estimates, 5.3 billion photographs are taken worldwide every day, 94% of them with smartphones, and most automatically synced with cloud backup services. How many will get a second glance? Wiped due to unpaid fees for cloud storage? Or new storage methods?

In the analogue world, storage is a growing problem for museums, institutions, photographers and their descendants. Accepting whole archives is a huge and costly commitment. They require space, conservation and research. When I interviewed Martijn van den Broek, Head of Collections at the Nederlands Fotomuseum since 2008, for the E-Newsletter earlier this year, he told me,

– We get approached by a lot of press and documentary photographers to take on their archives, many who were shooting in the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s. Instead of taking on the archives of five press photographers who were active during the same period, we would take on one. In other cases, rather than taking on their whole archives, we decided to ask them to make a selection of images. For example, a selection could be made around a book or some specific project. It’s different with art photographers. An art photographer who has a very limited amount of four by five-inch negatives will be looked at differently from a press photographer with 500 000 photographs.

Many other museums are adopting similar strategies, or accepting only what is rated as exceptional. The question is, what will eventually happen to all the photographs that fail to find a home within an institution? Or have little monetary value? In the long run, how will they be regarded by descendants? In issue 14 of *The Classic*, Julien Faure-Conorton explained a frequent problem he came across in his research into pictorialism, including the French photographer René Michau, who rarely signed his prints. – Many of the practitioners of pictorialism were amateurs and that’s a real problem when it comes to researching the movement. The label would lead their descendants to regard their work as less important, despite it being highly regarded at the time. I suspect that Michau’s prints were dispersed following a house clearance, probably around 2010 when they began to appear on the market.

A mystery photographer

Sometimes, while photographs survive, it’s the names of the photographers that get lost. Earlier this year, Laura Leonelli showed me a group of photographs by an unknown maker. They were intriguing, clearly inspired by surrealism, reminding me of covers and illustrations of poetry books published in the US in the 1940s.

– I bought them on eBay, 22 altogether, from a seller based in New Jersey. He had only a few things on offer: ceramic penguins, design objects from the 60s and 70s and these photographs. I received them and the backs were completely blank. I contacted the seller to hear what information he had about them, which was very little. He had bought them at a garage sale in Brooklyn. Keen to identify the photographer, I looked online. I went through the archives of Julien Levy Gallery, the pioneering American gallery active from 1931 to 1949, which was the first to exhibit many of the masters of surrealism; Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, René Magritte and many others. That brought nothing. I then contacted several vintage dealers and galleries, again bringing nothing. I began to speculate that the photographer might have been a student of Val Telberg. Stephen Daiter, Chicago, was one of the gallerists who replied to me, sending a very nice email. As he explained, “There are literally thousands of photographers nobody has heard of and probably millions of photos that have no identification as to who made them, and often why or where they were made. Surrealism was popular in the 1930s. Sorry I couldn’t be of more help. Best, Stephen”

Unknown photographer. Unknown title, gelatin silver print, circa 1940s. Courtesy Laura Leonelli.



The fate of newspaper archives

Some 20 years ago, I heard a story about a collector who had purchased the entire photography archive of a recently defunct religious newspaper for the sole purpose of acquiring four vintage prints by André Kertész he knew were mixed in with the thousands and thousands of photographs. Having located the Kertész prints, he sent the rest of the archive to the nearest waste disposal facility. The same fate has befallen many other newspaper archives. The growth of the web has hit the newspaper sector hard, not least in the US. In March 2024, Frank D. Monto, former director of the Joseph L. Brechner Freedom of Information Project, and UF law student Lila Greenberg published a study entitled, “Photographic memory: Expanding ‘news deserts’ threaten to erase the visual record of contemporary history.” It found that the US had lost a third of its newspapers since

2005, 2886 in all, and that 204 counties had no local news media at all. Only a fraction of the photos taken by news photographers are published and the remaining photos have traditionally resided in “morgues” maintained by newsroom librarians. The authors stated, “While some forward-thinking news organisations have donated their archival photos for preservation, there appears to be no industrywide plan for doing so, meaning that countless thousands of unpublished, but historically valuable, photos are at risk of destruction as cost-cutting newspapers eliminate their libraries, sell off their buildings, or go out of business entirely.”

Elsewhere, archives have been saved. On 5 September this year, the Wende Museum in Culver City, California, opened an exhibition entitled, *Between Two Empires: Argentina in the Cold War Pendulum (1945-1989) – A Visual Theater of Ideology, Power, and Uncertainty*. Based on photographs from the archives of the newspapers *La Razón* and *Clarín*, it traces four decades of Argentine political life, from Perón to the return of democracy; rallies, coups, and daily life as the country swung between competing



Left page. Workers at the *La Razón* printing plant read the latest edition, in a photograph that captures the newspaper at work, producing the news and, at the same time, becoming part of its own visual record. Gelatin silver print, 1932.

Top. Circa 1930. Readers stop in the streets of Buenos Aires to read *La Razón*, reflecting the newspaper's place in everyday life and the role photography played in connecting its readers with events beyond their immediate surroundings.

Bottom. The article attached to photographs says, "Police Prevent March for the Disappeared. An impressive police presence prevented the March of Resistance from taking place in Plaza de Mayo. The march, which will continue today, is in support of the disappeared. Demonstrators remained throughout the day at the intersection of Avenida de Mayo and Peru, and some scuffles broke out with law enforcement. Around 3 000 people were present at midnight." Published 10/12/1982.

Photo credit, Daniel Rodríguez, *Clarín*. Courtesy of the Archive of Modern Conflict.



powers, in photographs that show how ideology shapes what a nation sees of itself. The exhibition runs until 31 January and is guest curated by Inés Marseillan, who tells me.

– *La Razón* was founded in Buenos Aires in 1905, at a time of enormous immigration and social transformation in Argentina. While *La Nación* and *La Prensa* had already begun publishing photographs, *La Razón* was the first Argentine newspaper to make photography a systematic and integral part of its visual language. For a rapidly growing population that included millions of immigrants, many of whom did not speak Spanish or were illiterate, photographs became a powerful way of accessing events and a world beyond everyday experience. *Clarín* was founded later, in 1945, by Roberto Noble, and quickly became one of Argentina's most influential newspapers, eventually becoming the country's leading daily and one of the most widely circulated newspapers in Latin America. In 2000, *La Razón* became part of Grupo Clarín.

When Grupo Clarín acquired *La Razón*, part of the photographic archives of both newspapers remained stored in boxes, sitting largely untouched in an abandoned area of the building.

– As a highly vulnerable material, photographs are

particularly susceptible to humidity, water and other forms of deterioration, and require specific care to prevent them from being damaged, sticking together or simply being lost over time. The archive could have deteriorated simply through the passage of time or as a result of an unforeseen incident.

A solution was found. Grupo Clarín and the Archive of Modern Conflict signed an agreement to work together for one year to preserve, digitise and make the archive accessible. Working alongside the newspaper's head of archives, a small team of three to four people edited, scanned and catalogued the photographs, adding the metadata necessary to make each image searchable and easily retrievable. In the course of that year, more than 25 000 photographs were processed and uploaded. The result is not simply a digitised collection, but an archive that can once again be explored, researched and used to generate new stories. It also gives the newspaper the opportunity to make the collection commercially available, creating new value from its photographic heritage. This is particularly relevant at a time when news organisations increasingly lack the resources to preserve, catalogue and activate their own archives. When you look at these photographs together, you can actually see a country gradually creating its own identity. It is not simply a story being told about Argentina; the identity is there in the images themselves, people, places, gestures and moments accumulating over time to create something that can almost be seen taking shape.

Original photographic envelopes from the *La Razón* archive, alongside images selected for "The Making of a Leader," a chapter tracing the construction of Perón's public image. Photographs of nurses, workers, military personnel and other groups reveal how images of mass participation became a powerful tool for presenting the new political movement.

Photo by Inés Marseillan.

Not known to have survived

Sometimes, photographers themselves are responsible for the destruction of their work. In 1930, Alvin Langdon Coburn destroyed some 15 000 of his negatives. The American photographer, one of the leading lights of the pictorialist movement, settled permanently in the UK following his marriage in 1912, first in London, later in North Wales. In 1962, he donated his remaining photographs, around 18 000 prints and negatives, as well as his equipment, to the George Eastman House. But 138 glass negatives remained in his home, discovered only after his death in 1966. Today, they are on deposit at the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester, thanks to the efforts of Roger Taylor, the British photography historian, author and former Senior Curator of Photography at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, now the National Science and Media Museum, who tells me.

– I had the good fortune to be introduced to Alvin Langdon Coburn in 1963. I was 22 and had no idea who he was, and though I had worked for seven years as a commercial and industrial photographer and taken photographs privately, I knew nothing about the history of photography. Coburn was absolutely delightful but he warned me that if I didn't get out of commercial photography, my soul would wither and die. He really took me under his wing and set me on a path which led me to give up commercial practice, go to art college and subsequently develop my career as a historian and curator.

During his years in Bradford, Taylor was in contact with John Hillelson, who opened his own photography agency in London in 1958, representing Magnum. – I told him about Coburn and the pivotal role he had played in my life, whereupon he told me how he had gone to Coburn's house shortly after his death and rescued 138 glass negatives. They had been found in the most unlikely place, in the service pit in Coburn's garage, underneath his car. Each negative was placed in a brown envelope, with annotations, and stored in two wooden crates. Oil and water had dripped down on them. My guess is that Coburn simply forgot about them. Hillelson said, "Roger, I think you should have these" but as a curator, I couldn't collect; it would have been a conflict of interest, so they went into the collection of the museum instead. It was interesting material. They dated from 1903-1904, and were made in his studio on 5th Avenue in New York. They are the only extant glass negatives by him from that period and the only negatives by him in the UK. They are mainly portraits, including the American Impressionist painter Van Dearing Perrine, Charles



Yarnall Abbott, a painter and photographer, and Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl, the mystic scholar who introduced the Baha'i faith to North America.

In 1996, Taylor took early retirement and left the museum.

– In 2014, the museum decided to deaccession the Coburn negatives, having done nothing with them, and asked me if I was still interested. I took them back, researched them and took advice about their conservation to remove mould and so forth. I digitised the entire group, including all annotations as these, crucially, gave dates and subject details for each negative. Prompted by their significance, I began collecting further Coburn material, the *New York* and *London* portfolios, and *Men of Mark*, along with little-known publications relating to his close association with Manchester and its cotton industry. Knowing their commitment to developing their photographic collections, I deposited the collection with the John Rylands Library, where it can be consulted by appointment.

Top. "Salvaged from a service pit". **Alvin Langdon Coburn.** Portrait of American Impressionist painter Van Dearing Perrine, positive from glass negative, dated 1903 06 05. Image provided by The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. © The Universal Order.

Taylor has researched lost and destroyed photographs in other contexts over the years, not least the *Biographical Dictionary of British Calotypists*, compiled by Taylor and Larry J. Schaaf and included in the catalogue for the exhibition *Impressed by Light – British Photographs from Paper Negatives 1840 – 1860*.

– The dictionary grew out of my longstanding interest in 19th century photography, which began in the 1970's. Very little was understood at the time so I became a “hunter-gatherer” and visited every possible source making photocopies of exhibition catalogues, journals, press notices, anything I could find. In the end it filled several four-drawer filing cabinets all indexed for retrieval. After my retirement in 1996, I was given a fellowship at the National Gallery of Canada based on my research into the calotype process in Britain. On learning about the data I had gathered, we collaborated on the publication of *Photographic Exhibitions in Britain 1839 – 1865*, published in 2002 as an 800-page book. This subsequently became the online database with over 20 000 individual entries, still going today, hosted by De Montfort University, Leicester.

Taylor's interest in British calotypes came into focus in 1989.

– That year, I met Janet E. Buerger, curator at the George Eastman House. She had just published a book, *French Daguerreotypes*, and suggested I do something on British daguerreotypes. I replied, “Actually, I think I should do something about British calotypes because nobody's done anything about them.” Many years later, I was given a residency at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to further my research and whilst there Maria Morris Hambourg asked me to put forward an exhibition proposal based on this work. It was accepted and became the exhibition *Impressed by Light*. My fellow curators were keen on including a biographical dictionary and successfully sought additional funding for its inclusion. As I was deeply immersed in completing the main catalogue text, I called upon my friend and colleague Larry J. Schaaf to work on the dictionary. His own research into the field added significantly to the final result.

The dictionary is widely regarded as an extremely useful tool. Going through it again, I counted just over 50 names of photographers, whose work is “not known to have survived”. Taylor laments.

– Yes, it's a shame that so much work hasn't survived. There's one name in particular that comes to mind, Thomas Milville Raven. He lived in the Yorkshire Dales and was very prolific as a photographer, exhibitor, and writer. To date only a single photograph by him has come to light, taken on the Channel Islands. Yes, it's a great loss and it would be wonderful to discover a major body of work by him.

The 1917 Marcel Duchamp portrait

Treasures can get lost simply by getting overlooked. The Marcel Duchamp exhibition, which opened at MoMa in April this year, is currently on show at Philadelphia until 31 January 2027, after which a version of it, co-produced with Centre Pompidou, will be shown at the Grand Palais in Paris. Among the many works, one has a special significance for gallerist Gregory Leroy.

– In the spring of 2004, I had just founded the photography department at Artcurial. Rémy Le Fur and I were clearing out a Paris studio near Hôtel de Ville that for forty years had housed an elderly American who had recently passed on, someone who had either worked for, or founded, I don't remember which, Trianon Press. We pulled out box after box of old photographs, of varying interest, which we later sold in a lively auction at Drouot. While in the studio, I suddenly noticed an old supermarket plastic bag. Just in case, I looked inside and found late portraits of Marcel Duchamp, two intriguing postcard-sized photographs, and also a portrait of an unknown man, whom I quickly identified as a collector's stamp appeared on the verso of the prints: Henri-Pierre Roché, the writer and critic, and a close friend of Duchamp. But I also came across the multiple exposure portrait of Duchamp, taken by an unknown photographer at the Broadway Photo Shop in 1917. The image had been published in countless art history books over the years but always from copy prints, and the original was long considered lost. But when I looked on the verso, I saw the stamp “Broadway Photo Shop – 1591 Broadway, N.Y.” I realised in that instant that what I held in my hand was the original! I could scarcely believe it! It felt like a miracle. The plastic bag could so easily have been overlooked or thrown out and been destroyed.

On 9 June 2004, the photograph went to auction.

– The print was hammered down at 70 000 euros to a Canadian collector who enjoyed, for a few fleeting seconds, the delight of ownership, only to be swiftly dismayed by the immediate pre-emption of the Centre Pompidou, a risk I had, in fact, warned her about. In the space of a few months, this remarkable photograph had travelled only a few hundred

Right. Page from the catalogue for Artcurial's auction in Paris 9-10 June 2004, showing the original of the multiple exposure portrait of Marcel Duchamp, taken by an unknown photographer at Broadway Photo Shop in 1917. Courtesy of Gregory Leroy.



19

**Marcel DUCHAMP 1887-1968
et Henri-Pierre ROCHÉ 1879-1959
PORTRAITS MULTIPLES, 1917**

DEUX TIRAGES ARGENTIGES DE L'ÉPOQUE.
LÉGENDES ET DATES AU DOS PAR H.-P. ROCHÉ.
DIVERSES ANNOTATIONS AU DOS, TAMPON DE LA COLLECTION H.-P. ROCHÉ.
8,7 X 14 CM (3,43 X 5,51 in)

PROVENANCE :
COLLECTION H.-P. ROCHÉ.
COLLECTION PARTICULIÈRE, PARIS.

60 000 / 80 000 €

En août 1917, Duchamp, Roché et Picabia flânent au Luna-park de Coney Island, à New York. Ils y trouvent un photographe forain qui propose de prendre des portraits multiples obtenus par un dispositif de miroirs inclinés à 60°. Cette fantaisie photographique répond étrangement aux préoccupations optiques de Duchamp, depuis le *Niv* descendant l'escalier jusqu'aux œuvres rotatives. Ces portraits multiples, parfaits *ready-made* photographiques, sont parmi les premiers et les plus célèbres exemples de photographies dada. On sait l'importance que la photographie va jouer dans l'œuvre de Marcel Duchamp. Et c'est précisément en 1917 que ce rôle va se préciser : lors de la célèbre exposition de l'Urinoir au Salon des Indépendants, puisque l'œuvre, qui s'apparente de plus en plus à une performance, est immortalisée par la photographie. Ainsi, de tous les *ready-made* de cette époque, aucun n'est parvenu jusqu'à nous, et ils ne nous sont connus que par la photographie.

Duchamp ouvre ainsi une part nouvelle de son œuvre, qui le verra collaborer principalement avec son ami Man Ray.

Ce portrait fut reproduit depuis les années 1950 dans presque toutes les études consacrées à Marcel Duchamp. Cependant l'original présenté ici avait disparu, et l'image n'était connue que par des reproductions ou des contretypes.

Ces tirages sont très probablement uniques.



metres, yet along a path of decisive consequence: from obscurity, and the risk of oblivion or destruction, to the walls of the Musée national d'Art moderne. Today, twenty-two years later, I found this small piece of paper, one I held in my hands, examined, and cherished, displayed on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art, enlarged a hundredfold. It all made me ponder the mysterious life of objects!

Out with the trash!

When I first got involved in French 19th century photography many years ago, I would sometimes hear stories about flea markets in France, how, back in the day, traders in bric-a-brac would bring furniture, books, gramophones, scrap metal, and often old photographs, to sell. And that some, as the fairs drew to a close and having failed to sell the photographs,

regarding them as not even worth the paper they were printed on, would simply discard them before heading home with the rest of their stock. Stories like that trigger the imagination. What treasures were discarded? Views by Baldus? Photo-etchings by Nicéphore Niépce?

As for being thrown away, that was close to happening with a print of *Navires de la Flotte Française en Rade de Cherbourg* by Gustave Le Gray, sold at Drouot on 1 June 2001 at an auction organised by the auction house Maître Gilles Néret-Minet, as American collector and dealer Alex Novak recalls. – I was told that an elderly woman had come into the auction house with a stunning Le Gray seascape. When she was told that it was a worth a considerable amount of money, she suddenly got up to leave. “Madame,” the staff implored her, “Let’s talk about this photograph.” She promptly told him that she had to leave immediately, because she had put the remaining prints out with the trash! She rushed back home and managed to rescue them before the refuse collectors came.

Then the independent photography specialist Arnaud Delas got involved.

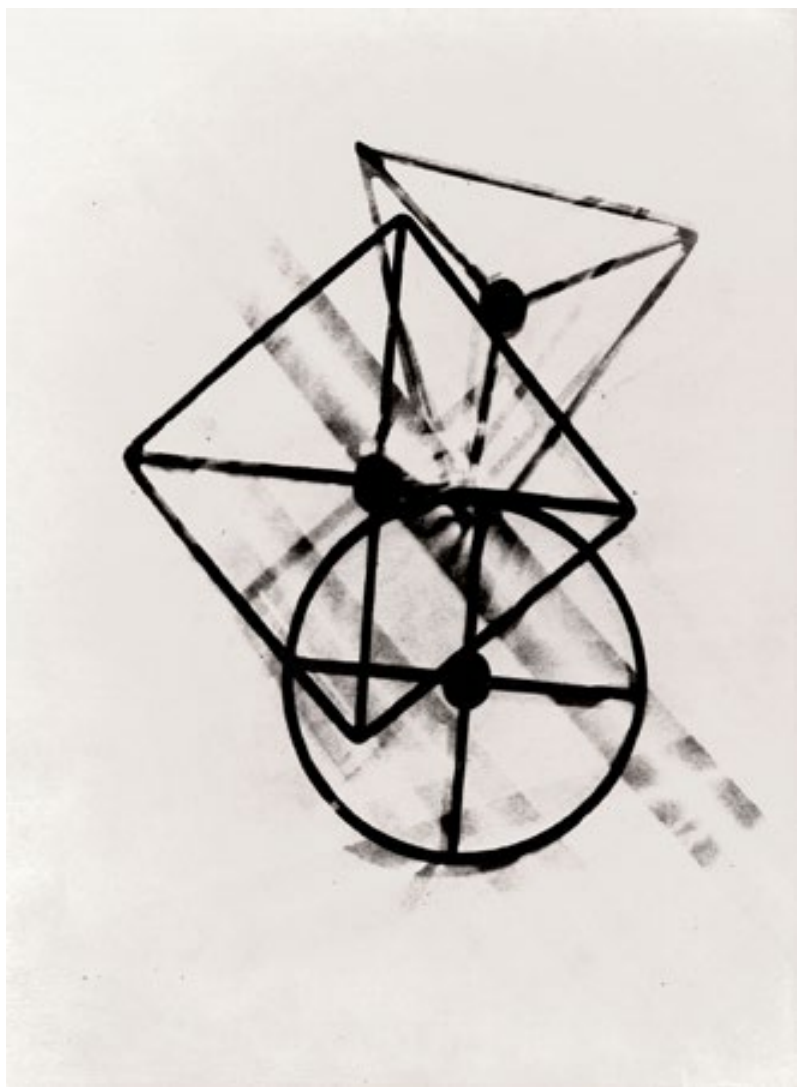
– I was asked by the auction house to give my opinion on the Le Gray prints. The prints were simply magnificent. I explained they were of great value and importance. I told the auction house that they should be sold in a special auction with other great 19th-century works, by Duc de Massa, Nadar, Caneva, Nadar and others, and to produce a beautiful auction catalogue and make sure that the auction was marketed in an effective way.

News of the auction also reached Alex Novak.

– After previewing and registering for the auction in the morning, I had my eye on one of the Le Grays; *Navires de la Flotte Française en Rade de Cherbourg* and a collector asked me to bid on another of the Le Grays for him, *La Reine Hortense, Yacht de l’empereur*. I didn’t want to bid in person at the auction, as I wanted to avoid some of the possible ego-bruising battling from competing photo dealers that I had seen recently in London and in Paris. Instead, I wandered down the street to a fast-food place and sat there with a cup of coffee, waiting for the call from the auction staff. I had luck on my side, and won the Le Grays, about the finest I have ever seen. I was very pleased to get them and later on, I sold *Navires de la Flotte Française en Rade de Cherbourg*.

Novak has acquired other masterpieces that were saved at the last minute.

– In the late 1960s, the Institute of Design at Illinois Institute of Technology needed more storage space and its director Day Doblin, who reportedly led an anti-László Moholy-Nagy movement at the school





during his tenure, decided to clear out, among many other things, all the old photographs from its files, including, unbelievably, the mid-1920s German work of its founder László Moholy-Nagy. Noted educator Will Larson, a Masters graduate student at the School of Design at the time, found out about it and salvaged a group of these early works before they were thrown out, most of which eventually found their way to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. A further group was apparently salvaged by the school's janitor, and these reportedly found their way to two important European institutions; the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Museum Folkwang in Essen. Larson may have also bought some Moholy's from his widow, Sybil Moholy-Nagy.

In the summer of 1993, Novak met Will Larson. – I took a table at a small paper and photography show at the Fort Washington, PA Conference Center. Larson told me that he had some interesting works for potential sale, including a couple of early prints by Moholy. We made an appointment and I went out

to his house, where I bought a wonderful positive of a photogram by Moholy-Nagy, one of Larson's own early *Firefly* faxes, and a large group of autochromes from his collection. The Moholy had been a duplicate in the collection that had been sold to Houston. My only regret was that I had left another Moholy photograph, of a ship mast, because I didn't particularly like it that much. The exact photogram from which this positive print was made has never been published, although variants utilising the same objects have appeared in other prints. Chicago gallerist Stephen Daiter sold my print some five years ago for just under six figures.

Left page. **László Moholy-Nagy**. Untitled Positive Photogram, gelatin silver print, 1925, unmounted. Stamped on reverse of print: "Moholy-Nagy, berlin, chbg 9, fredericiastr. 27 atelier." Courtesy of Alex Novak Contemporary Works/Vintage Works.

Top. "Saved at the last minute from the refuse collectors". **Gustave Le Gray**. *Navires de la Flotte Française en Rade de Cherbourg*, albumen print from wet collodion negative, 1858. Collection of the author.



When British *Vogue* pulped its entire photography archive

While lack of storage space, not deemed to be of interest or having no monetary value, are common reasons for destroying photographs, there are others. In early 1942, Cecil Beaton was photographed surrounded by hundreds and hundreds of his photographs, a pile so high it reached up to his neck. The pile consisted of all the photographs he had taken for British *Vogue* up till then and they were now to be sent to be pulped for the war effort. Britain had a severe shortage of paper following the German occupation of Norway in April 1940, which cut off its primary supply of wood pulp and newsprint. Robin Muir, historian, curator, author and former archivist at British *Vogue*, explains.

– The paper shortage was indeed severe, in fact, in Britain, paper was rationed more strictly than meat and sugar during WWII. In September 1939, British *Vogue* went from being a fortnightly publication to a monthly. Many other magazines had to cease publication, closing down for good, but British *Vogue* managed to pull through. It was able to petition the Ministry of Information to argue its cause as a vital instrument of war. And British *Vogue* really did go to war. It was transformed from a luxury magazine to a morale booster, with front-line journalism and practical advice on coping with scarcity and rationing. The magazine had always been aspirational for British women. The Ministry of Information realised this and used British *Vogue* to get vital messages across, advice on hairstyles being one of them. Actress Veronica Lake had made long hairstyles fashionable but these caused huge problems in British industries where women had taken over from the men who had been called up for military service. Long hair was caught in machinery and there were terrible accidents so the

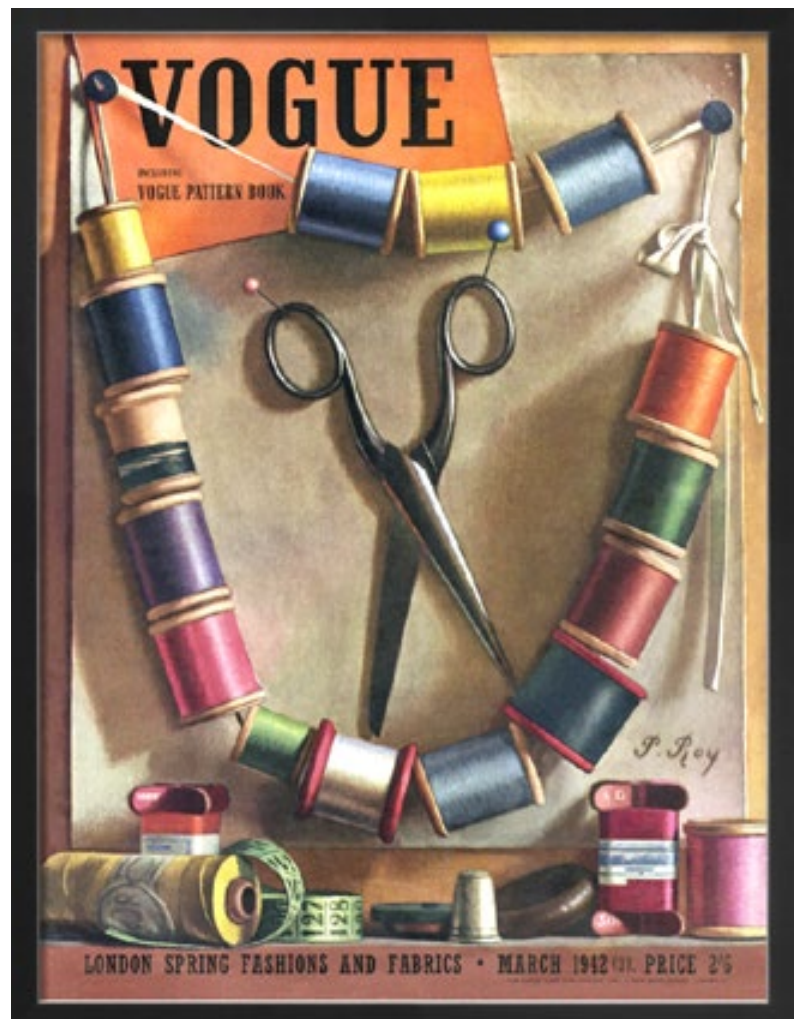
ministry asked the magazine to publish an article that it was now fashionable to wear short hair. And it worked. Accidents dropped. Audrey Withers, editor at British *Vogue*, worked very closely with the Ministry of Information during the war years, as she did with the British fashion industry, all in order to help the war effort and create a united front. The magazine really did step up. Going through the issues from those years, they're full of war-related articles.

Audrey Withers was made editor of the magazine in September 1940, just as the Blitz got started. There were intensive bombing raids over 57 consecutive nights. Barely having had time to install herself, a bomb exploded just beside the offices, whereupon staff quickly relocated to the building's basement, as they would every time the alarm was sounded. In the issue after the bombing, she published photographs of the devastation the bombing had caused, including a crater in the pavement below her office, with the text "There is *Vogue* after all!" I suggest to Muir that the war was the making of Audrey Withers as an editor. – I think that's true but the war was also the making of British *Vogue*. Previously British *Vogue* had been very much enthralled to American *Vogue*. Proofs of the covers would be sent over from the US, as well as photographs. Then war broke out, putting a stop to civilian transatlantic shipping. Meaning British *Vogue* had to go it alone, and it did, with great success. It also explains how Lee Miller became such a star. With the male photographers having been

called up, she was the only one left who could take fashion pictures. Later, she herself went to war, as a war correspondent for the magazine.

The pulping was announced with photographs in the March 1942 issue. How did the idea of pulping the magazine's photography archive emerge?

– It would have been Audrey's idea. British *Vogue* received an extra paper allocation during the war and the pulping was a way of giving back. It wasn't just the whole photography archive that was pulped, prints by Beaton, Baron de Meyer, Hoyningen-Huene, Horst and others, but also all back issues. It is possible that there was further pulping after 1942 because I can tell you that there are very, very few extant photographs from 1943 and 1944 in the archive of British *Vogue*.



Left page. "To be pulped". Unknown photographer. Cecil Beaton with all the photographs he had had taken for British *Vogue*, early 1942. Unpublished variant.

Left. "Announcing the pulping of the archive." From the March 1942 issue of British *Vogue*.

Right. Cover of the March 1942 issue of British *Vogue*. Illustration by Pierre Roy. Archives of British Vogue. © The Condé Nast Publications Ltd.



Hunting for silver in Beijing

Elsewhere, it's the silver content that has been of interest. Beijing Silvermine is an archive of over a million negatives that have been salvaged and assembled by the French collector and artist Thomas Sauvin, offering a unique photographic portrait of the Chinese capital and the life of its inhabitants in the decades following the Cultural Revolution. Sauvin explains how the project came about.

– It all began in May 2009. At that time, I had started collecting photo albums and prints at flea markets and online. I was trying to find new ways to collect photographs but I could never find negatives. I extended my online search and would always find some negatives on Chinese blogs. One of the blogs was by a guy who called himself Xiaoma. Initially, I thought he was a collector but I soon realised that he was running an illicit recycling facility, recycling X-ray films, negatives and CDs, to separate the silver content. I went to Beijing to meet him, which was not so easy. I was a foreigner and he was suspicious at first, thinking I might be a journalist. But we got

on well and he showed me the facility, which was anything but state-of-the art. He also showed me the end product, the silver nitrate, and it looked like silvery gunpowder. He told me that to get that much, he would have to destroy some 100 000 negatives so I realised I would have to make a deal quickly. We made a deal, whereupon I would buy negatives by the kilo. That was how the project started and I continue to buy from him. There isn't an editing process so I get the good, the bad and the ugly.

Most of the photographs in the project were taken 1985-2005.

– The negatives show the history of popular, analogue photography in China. Kodak and Fuji arrived in China with a big splash in 1985 during the years of the opening reforms of Deng Xiaoping. The history continues to roughly 2005 when digital photography started taking over. Of course, some people kept on shooting analogue photography, but it's quite rare that I get photos made after 2005.

The photographs are amateur snapshots, not press or documentary photographs, and they are surprisingly uniform, whether people are posing at popular tourist spots or attending family celebrations.

– I sometimes feel that they could have been taken

“Saved from recycling”.
Positives from negatives, 1985 – 2005.
Courtesy of Thomas Sauvin – Beijing Silvermine.



2006 and 2014, buying prints by well known and lesser-known Chinese photographers for them. I spent a lot of time with Timothy so when I came across the recycling plant in 2009, I was already infused with the archive's philosophy and could see the historical and cultural value of all those negatives.

by the same photographer. There seems to have been a photographic ritual in China, places, events and poses that were pre-qualified. The relationship between the photographer and the person who's been photographed, the way people are usually standing straight in the middle of the frame, smiling and staring at the lens, is consistent.

The collection has grown over the years.
– Almost everything has been digitised. There are over 1 million photographs in the collection, mostly 35 mm negatives but also some 300 albums and about 15 000 hand-coloured portraits. The project is entirely inspired by the work that Timothy Prus and the Archive of Modern Conflict have done over the years. I worked for the archive between

The project has been shown in various forms at festivals and in institutions, sometimes in collaboration with artists.

– I have worked with various artists, including Lel Lei, Kensuke Koike, Melinda Gibson, and Klara Källström & Thobias Fäldt, and each has their own way of interpreting the collection. I have also made more academic collaborations, for instance with the University of Sociology in Beijing. But photobooks are at the centre of my practice and I have published 15 so far. The collection is based in Paris, near the Seine. Anything could happen. There could be a fire or flooding. But books always survive and that's something I learnt from Timothy Prus. Every time I publish a book, I feel a certain relief. That it's "out there". That it has been saved.

Doubting Thomases

There are numerous stories of photographs, negatives and whole collections being lost or destroyed but sometimes it's worth pondering if they existed in the first place. I was first made aware of the enormous collection of pornography of King Farouk, the last king of Egypt, when I read James Hamilton Paterson's *Loving Monsters* (Granta Books, 2001). That he would have assembled such a collection seemed entirely plausible. The king was an obsessive collector; of rare coins, Fabergé eggs, stamps, cars, jewels, art, fine furniture, ties, as well as mundane things like paper clips and razor blades. He also acquired the nickname, "The Thief of Cairo", allegedly once stealing a pocket watch from Winston Churchill.

His rule came to a shrieking halt on 23 July 1952 when he was deposed through a military coup led by the Free Officers Movement. Three days later, he formally abdicated. His palaces and their contents were confiscated, the new regime making much of a huge pornography collection that was found, underlining the decadence of the former king. The treasures were sold at auction in 1954, but the pornography had, according to the new regime, been locked away and then destroyed. But had it even existed? Over the years, a number of historians have expressed their doubts, including Roger Owen, Professor of History at Harvard University and Arthur Goldschmidt Jr., Professor Emeritus of Middle East History at Pennsylvania State University, the latter pointing to the lack of access to any kind of documentation of a possible porn collection "that would pass muster in a court of law". Others have claimed that it did exist. In his 2012 autobiography, *Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Lives of the Stars*, Scotty Bowers, a Hollywood insider and pimp, claimed to have connected King Farouk with Dr Kinsey, biologist and sexologist, the former sending him a trove of his pornography collection, "I've got warehouses full of the stuff, so much that I'll never be able to look at all of it." Still, there seems to be no hard evidence of such a collection. The collection of Kinsey Institute, numbering millions of assets, has been catalogued by the Indiana University Libraries but has no records of the last king of Egypt as provenance. As for Farouk, he spent his final years dividing his time between Rome and Capri, before passing away from a heart attack on 18 March 1965.

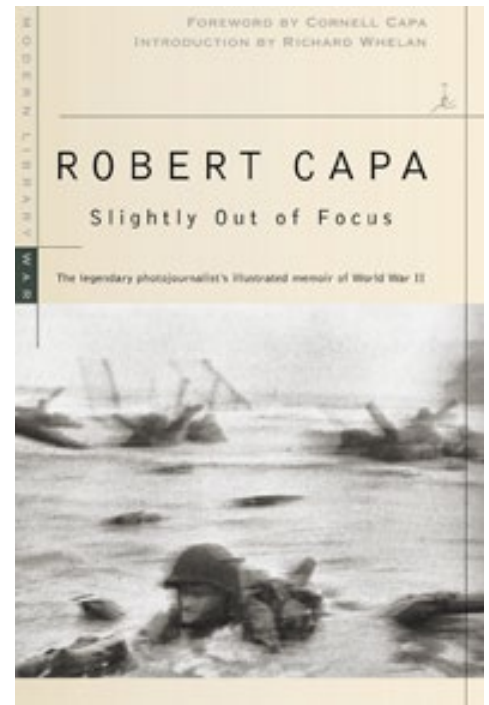
Whether the collection existed or not has, as far as I know, not been the focus of any serious scrutiny, unlike the photographs that were taken on D-Day,

6 June 1944, by Robert Capa, images that would take on a mythical status. According to Capa himself, he took a total of 106 exposures that day, with only 11 surviving, this due to an accident in the lab in London, when a darkroom assistant melted the emulsion having set the dryer too high. *Life* magazine printed five of the pictures in the 19 June 1944 issue, "Beachheads of Normandy: The Fateful Battle for Europe by Sea and Air." Explaining that the images were slightly out of focus, as Capa's hands were shaking in the excitement of the moment, which later inspired the title of Capa's autobiography, *Slightly Out of Focus*. As Capa hadn't supplied notes, the captions, written by staffers, later proved to be erroneous, as did the descriptions Capa himself would later provide.

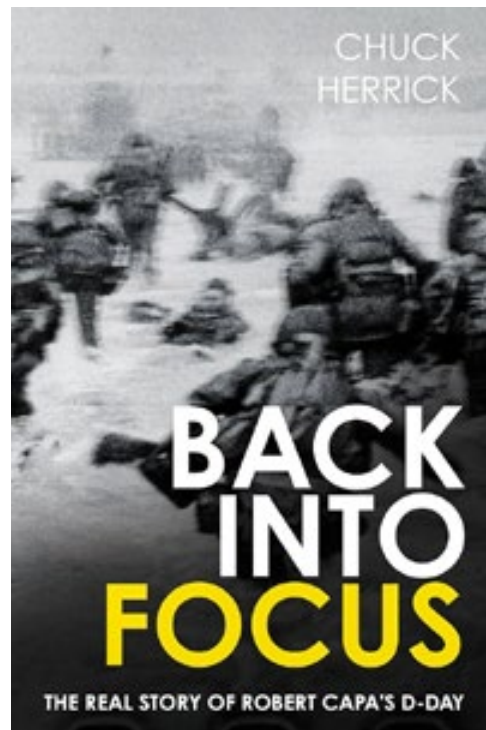
Capa was killed in Vietnam in 1954 when he stepped on a landmine. In his 1975 book *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq*, journalist, author and critic Philip Knightley became the first mainstream writer to question the authenticity of Capa's famous 1936 Spanish Civil War photograph *The Falling Soldier*, claiming that it was staged. Richard Whelan, one of Capa's biographers, defended the photographer, later presenting his findings in a 2002 article entitled "Proving that Robert Capa's 'Falling Soldier' is genuine: A detective story". The debate has raged ever since, both sides providing proof and theories. And it has expanded in recent years, with some historians, including Fernando Penco Valenzuel, claiming that it wasn't taken by Robert Capa but by his partner and fellow photographer Gerda Taro, that it was shot with a square format camera, like the Reflex Korelle that Taro used, whereas Capa used a 35 mm Leica, that the confusion has arisen as the couple often filed their work together. The Spanish Civil War would cost Taro her life. She was wounded on 25 July 1937 and died on the following day. Did she take the photograph? If so, did she stage it?

The controversy has inevitably led others to scrutinise Capa's D-Day photographs. In 2019, photography historian, curator and critic A. D. Coleman published an article on the *Exposure* magazine website, entitled "Alternate History: Robert Capa on D-Day", suggesting that Capa's version of events was implausible and that the dryers used at that time simply weren't hot enough to melt the emulsion, furthermore claiming that Capa had spent little time on the beach, and having taken the existing photographs, quickly left.

Coleman had started his investigation five years earlier, leading him to involve "the efforts of photojournalist J. Ross Baughman, photo historian Rob McElroy, and ex-infantryman and amateur military historian Charles Herrick". In 2024,



Herrick published an expansion of the investigation in the book *Back into Focus: The Real Story of Robert Capa's D-Day*: a forensic military analysis using SHAEF files, the official World War II records of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force records, including stills as well as film taken by cameramen who were near or with Capa, and a variety of accounts of witnesses. The book examines several aspects of Capa's narrative. Capa claimed that he landed in the First Wave with Company E, but Herrick concludes that he landed almost two hours later in Wave 13, with the regimental commander, and that wartime censorship protocols tied to Operation Fortitude, the Allied deception plan meant to hide the true invasion site, helped shape the myth, handling, and narrative surrounding Capa's surviving pictures. And Herrick



melted by the dryers. While Herrick's book has been praised by many military historians, others have found holes in the author's arguments and criticised its tone of personal animosity towards Capa. The debate will no doubt continue.

Left. "Did he, or didn't he?" Unknown photographer. Portrait of King Farouk, gelatin silver print, circa 1937. Private collection.

Right. Cover of Robert Capa's autobiography *Slightly out of Focus*, first published in 1947, Modern Library edition, published in 2001. Courtesy Modern Library.

Bottom. Chuck Herrick's book *Back into Focus: The Real Story of Robert Capa's D-Day*. Courtesy Casemate Publishers.

reiterates Coleman's finding, refuting the claim that the emulsion could have been



A box of broken glass

In the vintage photography market, photographs that are simply too damaged to be salvaged are often thrown away. Not so at the Getty Images Hulton Archive in Canning Town in East London. It holds a staggering 94 million analogue photographic assets on site, not just photographs but also film, video, engravings, illustrations, maps, and related ephemera. The 28 000 square-foot facility, with over 12 kilometres of linear shelving and racking, opened in 2016 and is custom designed to incorporate temperature and humidity controls, security, and fire prevention systems.

I was first shown around the Hulton Archive in the late 1990s, at its previous location in West London, by conservator Lenny Hanson, who told me, “It’s an enormous collection and every week, I have to make decisions as to what to save and what to leave aside.”

Hanson sadly passed away in 2017, and Getty Images named their conservation lab the Lenny Hanson Conservation Unit in his honour. The current Hulton conservator Emma Lowe echoes his words when I ask her how she decides what assets to treat and what to leave to the side.

– Nothing gets thrown away here, no matter how unrecoverable or unidentifiable it may seem. If the assets are still here there’s hope. I have to be strategic. I can’t do everything. Sometimes it feels overwhelming, but I try and tell myself that every small improvement we make is just that, an improvement. Making it more stable, giving it better care, and making it more likely to survive for generations. I am the only conservator, a member of the curatorial team who do a great job on collection care and rehousing. I try to focus on the most vulnerable materials in the collections, the least stable photographic processes, the most valuable and the most handled. We are a picture library so everything in here, all prints and negatives were used as tools of the trade. They have been pre-loved, or over-handled depending on your take. Nothing gets thrown

away, everything is preserved, old collection boxes are as much part of the history as their contents. Often one has to be protected from the deterioration products of the other.

The assets have different needs, which pose different challenges.

– Film prefers a dry environment, prints would rather be temperate, glass in the middle, gelatin is pretty robust, but albumen and collodion suffer. No-one likes it damp so it's a constant juggle to keep it all happy. We rely heavily on preventative conservation. Alongside 24 h electronic environmental monitoring data of the whole site and rehousing, upgrading sleeves and boxes to conservation grade ones, Hulton's curator introduced annual collection condition assessment sampling and a programme we call "Citizen Conservation" where everyone in the archive gets involved, reporting anything that they notice about the materials they are dealing with or the environment. Anything really, no matter how big or small, it all helps us know and understand what is happening in amongst the collections out there, chemically. It is such a vast space. All this comparative data analysis and monitoring help us plan, anticipate and respond as best we can to protect the collections.

Lowe's work differs from that of conservators who work for the photo trade.

– Unlike a private studio or a museum, the Hulton Archive is a commercial working picture library. Some of the photographers' work in here has never been seen. Archive editors are constantly reviewing the original files and choosing material from the collections to be digitised and made public. But in order to be digitised, the images, prints or negatives, have to be stable, and it's my job to make sure they are, and that they can be safely handled and digitised. The original is returned to its conservation grade home in the dark and the digital copy can go out into the world.

Lenny Hanson was the archive's first conservator, Lowe tells me.

– I never met Lenny, sadly, but his work can be seen throughout the archive. I can spot it easily, not just for the conservation expertise, that's obvious, but from the pencil labelling and numbering. He had beautiful handwriting.

Hanson also left behind a box marked "Broken Glass Negatives".

– I keep the box in the lab. It contains broken assets that he and the team came across in the archive. He worked on them when he had time. I continue that work when the opportunity arises. I have always loved puzzles, and this box of broken bits is exactly that. I have assembled some of the pieces



and identified them as glass negatives produced by the London Stereoscopic Company. Others are still a mystery. This lady for example, who knows if, or where, her face will turn up but her body is ready and waiting! She can then be identified, cleaned, and safely housed in a foam template and card 4-flap sleeve to ensure she is neither lost nor broken again.

It seems there is increasing customer demand for the original historic versions, Lowe tells me.

– It's probably because AI is making everything

Left page. Lenny Hanson's box of broken glass negatives.

Top. Pieces of glass negatives that could be identified and salvaged.

Bottom. Individual shards lacking information to identify provenance.

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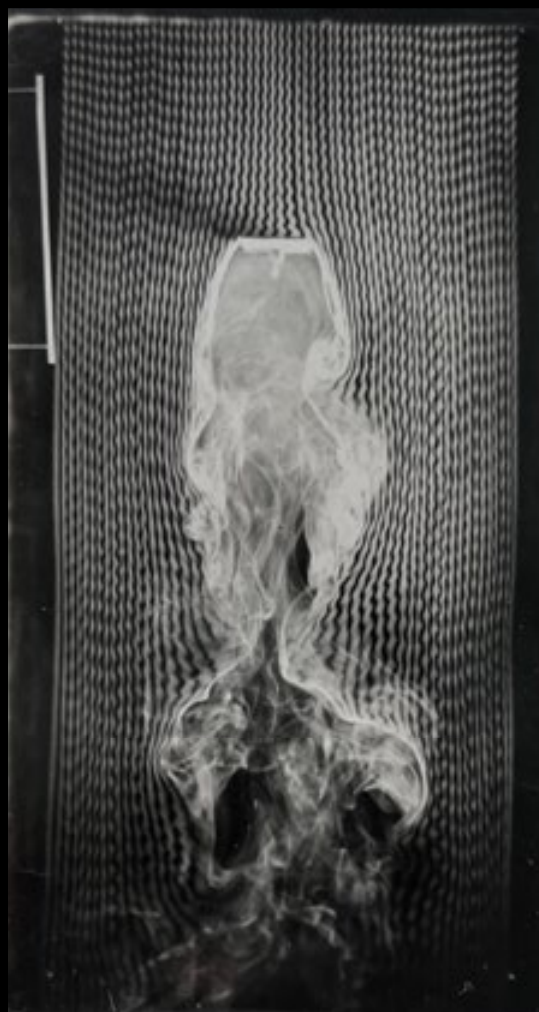


possible and impossible at the same time. You know where you stand with an original object. I saw the National Portrait Gallery exhibition of Marilyn Monroe yesterday, exquisite prints telling their own stories, all with their historic provenance given. But the ones I loved the most were the ones with added handwritten bits, personality and thoughts communicated through them, and all over them. The most striking to me, the ones she struck a cross through with her red-orange pen, deliberately damaging and

striking them out but making them ever more painfully beautiful in my eyes. We have lots of those X's across images and negatives in the Hulton Archive collections. Damage to some, extra to me, to be preserved at all costs.

Glass negative of a painting of an unidentified lady with cat.
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DANNY LYON

THIRTY PHOTOGRAPHS, 1962 - 1980



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A portfolio containing 30 gelatin silver prints, each 11 x 14 inches. Includes examples from Danny Lyon's most important projects. Ten portfolios were produced by Etherton Gallery in 2019. Each portfolio is housed in a custom clamshell box that includes a printed piece with an essay, list of images and colophon. Click the QR code to view the entire portfolio. Contact Etherton Gallery for current pricing.

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