

#01 THE CLASSIC

SPRING 2019

A free magazine about classic photography

In this issue

THE DENNIS HOPPER ARCHIVE

ROBERT HERSHKOWITZ

MARTIN BARNES

THE ALEX NOVAK COLLECTION
OF EARLY NEGATIVES

FAIRS, AUCTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND MORE



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Expert:
Christophe Goeury
+33 (0)6 16 02 64 91
chgoeury@gmail.com

Millon Head of Department:
Natalia Raciborski
+33 (0)7 88 09 91 86
photographie@millon.com

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Bud Fraker, Audrey Hepburn for "Breakfast at Tiffany's", 1961. Vintage silver gelatin print.

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Contact the editor at editor@theclassicphotomag.com

Masthead

Bruno Tartarin Publisher

Michael Diemar Editor-in-Chief

Mike Derez Graphic Designer

Pascale V Marquis Publication Coordinator

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From the editor

P RINT IS DEAD! THE FUTURE IS DIGITAL! The print sector has been hit extremely hard over the last 10 years, with closures, cutbacks etc., but it's not all doom and gloom. Small, specialist boutique magazines have found a way of surviving independently of the media giants.

Still, it's not easy. Whenever I stop by one of London's well-stocked newsagents I can't help but reflect on just how many photography magazines have disappeared. What remains on the shelves are mostly titles devoted to digital photography for amateurs. For the more interesting photography magazines I head off to The Photographers' Gallery and the museum bookshops. Every now and again I notice a brand new title, though practically all the new titles that are launched are focused on contemporary photography.

The magazine you're holding in your hands has a very different focus, classic photography. The term used to be applied to the venerated names in the history of the medium. These days, it's used as a moniker for just about everything that isn't contemporary photography and in these pages you will indeed find a very wide range of images, from early paper negatives to grey toned snapshots of West German terrorists from the 1970's.

When Bruno Tartarin, the French dealer and promoter of the biannual fair Photos Discovery, asked me to create a new magazine from scratch it was for a very distinct purpose, otherwise he gave me a completely free hand, with regards to content as well as its title. *The Classic* as I decided to call it, is a free magazine, available at fairs and selected distribution points in the major cities and through subscription. It may seem paradoxical that the reasons for the magazine's existence are essentially commercial. The magazine itself is not intended as a money spinner but to give a boost to the whole of the classic photography market, galleries, private dealers, auction houses, fairs big and small.

Some would no doubt expect such a magazine to be full of articles about "golden investment opportunities" and graphs showing market expansion and price increases for individual artists. But it wasn't the investment opportunities that turned me into a photography collector many years ago. It was the images, the prints, the Polaroids, the cased images, the wonder of the photographic object. And while books and museum exhibitions taught me a lot, they didn't provide me with nearly enough of the information I needed to operate as a collector. That information came from all the conversations I had with dealers, collectors, curators, auction experts, conservators, archivists, editors etc. And it's those kinds of conversations I have tried to replicate in this first issue of *The Classic*.

Most new magazines are preceded by months of planning and then at least two for production. The team and I had altogether seven weeks to pull everything together in order to be able to launch *The Classic* at AIPAD. I would like to thank Pascale V Marquis and Mike Derez for their hard work. They made the impossible possible.

Michael Diemar



DORA MAAR

“Who is Dora Maar?” That’s the question a travelling retrospective seeks to answer. The exhibition, organised in partnership between Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern and the J. Paul Getty Museum, will explore the breadth of Maar’s long career in the context of work by her contemporaries.

During the 1930’s, her provocative photomontages became celebrated icons of surrealism. Her eye for the unusual also translated to her commercial photography, including fashion and advertising, as well as to her social documentary projects. In Europe’s increasingly fraught political climate, Maar signed her name to numerous left-wing manifestos – a radical gesture for a woman at that time. Her relationship with Pablo Picasso had a profound effect on both their careers. She documented the creation of his most political work, *Guernica* 1937. He immortalised her as *Weeping Woman* 1937. Together they made a series of portraits combining experimental photographic and printmaking techniques.

In middle and later life Maar withdrew from photography. She concentrated on painting and found stimulation and solace in poetry, religion, and philosophy, returning to her darkroom only in her seventies.

Centre Pompidou 5 June - 29 July 2019
Tate Modern 20 November 2019 - 15 March 2020
J. Paul Getty Museum 21 April - 26 July 2020

Dora Maar. *Untitled (Hand Shell)*.

Courtesy Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Jacques Faujour

WARTIME

It’s a haunting photograph. Three generations of a Norwegian family desperately seeking shelter from German bombers among the cliffs of Narvik in the spring of 1940. It was taken by Alma Braathen and is included in the exhibition “Wartime” at Preus Museum outside Oslo. It’s a survey of Norwegian female photographers who documented war and conflict in Europe during the period 1935-1950.

Braathen had already seen war. She was sent to Finland in November 1939 by the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* to cover the battles following the Soviet invasion. A few months later she and Kari Berggrav would capture the battles in Narvik, then the liberation in 1945 and the reconstruction of the city during the following years.

Most of the images in the exhibition were taken by professional photographers, like Braathen and Gerda Grepp who covered the Spanish Civil War for the newspaper *Arbeiderbladet* as well as international publications. Others, like Sissel Lie and Kathrine Christie, became photographers during their national service. On show at the same time is a Lee Miller exhibition, of her fashion photographs and the images she took as a war correspondent for *Vogue*.

Wartime
Lee Miller - Fashion and War
Preus Museum / Horten, Norway
7 April - 8 September



Alma Braathen. *Three Generations Seek Shelter from German Bombings in a Mountain Crack, the Narvikfront Spring, 1940.*

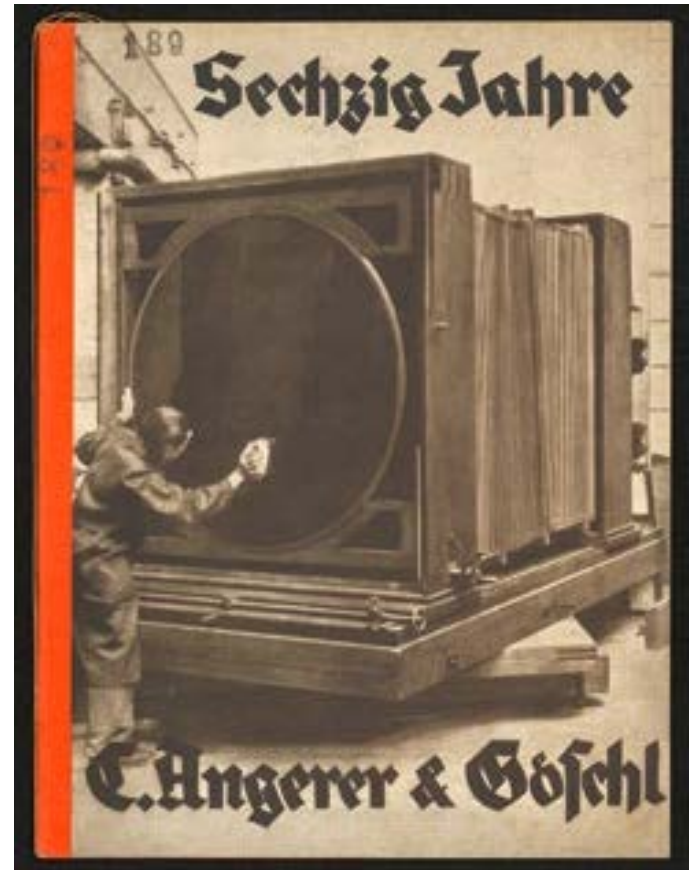
Courtesy Riksarkivet / NTB krigsarkiv

PHOTO.BOOK.ART

The early history of Austrian photography books is explored in an upcoming exhibition at Albertina in Vienna. It is now such a given for photography to be the dominant medium of illustration in all types of publications that the beginnings of its involvement have faded into oblivion. But the process by which photography came to books was lengthy and accompanied by myriad technical difficulties. While impressive volumes with mounted originals featuring motifs such as butterfly wings magnified 1,000 times, Emperor Maximilian's ceremonial armour, military exercises, and aristocratic theatrical performances reached enthusiastic audiences as early as 1860, few people could afford to purchase such publications. Only when it became possible to reproduce photographs in print, which permitted book editions of practically unlimited copies, did photography grow into a mass medium that would go on to visually dominate the 20th century. But even so, the combination of convincing photography, refined book design, and artisanal perfectionism did produce a broad spectrum of those earliest photo volumes in Austria – of which this is the first-ever public exhibition.

Photo.Book.Art
Albertina Museum / Vienna
28 June - 22 September

Bucheinband Zu Sechzig Jahre, C. Angerer & Göschl, Wien.



BALDUS EXHIBITION

On the occasion of the 180th anniversary of photography, WestLicht travels back to the early days of the medium showcasing the work of pioneering German-French photographer Édouard Baldus (1813-1889) who is considered one of the first professional architectural photographers. The exhibition offers the rare opportunity to explore his extraordinary album *Chemin de fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée* from 1863, which follows the railway line from Paris to the Mediterranean and which counts among the most important creations in photo book history. Touching on themes of travel and transportation, the project represents a recurring motif in the photographer's oeuvre: the relation of landscape and construction. His lucid style has occasionally been described as the birth of modern perception, the structure of his albums identified as a strategy anticipating subsequent serial concepts by the likes of August Sander or Bernd and Hilla Becher.

Édouard Baldus
Transit and Monument
WestLicht. Schauplatz für Fotografie / Vienna
5 April - 12 May

Édouard Baldus. *Orange, Théâtre Antique*, 1861-1863. Albumen print from the album *Chemin de fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée*.



John Beasley Greene. *Studies of Date Palms*, 1854.
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

JOHN BEASLEY GREENE

Little is known about him and he died very young, only 24. But John Beasley Greene (1832-1856) left behind hundreds of extraordinary photographs, now much sought after by collectors. A selection of them are included in his very first museum exhibition, at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Born in Le Havre, the son of an American banker, he studied archaeology and took up photography to document his work. He studied with Gustave Le Gray who taught him the waxed paper process. Both photographed the forest of Fontainebleau and the similarity in their images would suggest that they did so together.

In 1853, Greene made the first of two voyages to North Africa. Not only did he provide detailed records of Egyptian and Algerian antiquities but the images also offer the sensitive impressions of a thoughtful visitor in an unfamiliar land. Greene was acutely attuned to the aesthetic possibilities of photography and the compositions, some of them almost proto-modernist, display a masterful grasp of the relationship between negative and positive space. Greene died in Egypt, probably in Cairo and most likely from tuberculosis.

Signs and Wonders:
The Photographs of John Beasley Green
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
21 August - 5 January 2020



John Beasley Greene. *Thebes. Right Colossus*, 1854.
Bibliothèque nationale de France



John Beasley Greene.
Karnak. Hypostyle Hall. Northern Wall, Interior, 1854.
Courtesy Musée d'Orsay

BERTIEN VAN MANEN

Guest curator

“The Collection Illuminated by...” is an ongoing series of exhibitions at Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam. For the sixth instalment, the museum has invited photographer Bertien van Manen (The Hague, 1942) to act as guest-curator and make a personal selection of works from the museum’s rich and varied collection. Van Manen selected fifteen images that she finds inspirational or important.

In the course of selecting the photographs, Van Manen became fascinated by the work of Lucebert (1924-1994) and Paul Citroen (1896-1983). For her, it is mainly about the intrinsic strength and immediate impact of the images.

With personal comments accompanying each photograph, this intimate presentation casts new light on the collection while at the same time offering the public a clear idea of Van Manen’s own motivations as a photographer.

The Collection Illuminated by...
Nederlands Fotomuseum / Rotterdam
Runs until 8 December

Eva Bendien, 1932.

© Paul Citroen / Nederlands Fotomuseum



© The Historic New Orleans Collection.

CLARENCE JOHN LAUGHLIN

The High Museum of Art in Atlanta boasts one of the largest and most important monographic holdings of Clarence John Laughlin’s work. The exhibition “Strange Light” surveys Laughlin’s signature photographs between 1935 and 1965 from more than 80 prints in the Museum’s collection, including many from a landmark 2015 acquisition that will be on view at the High for the first time.

Often called “The Father of American Surrealism”, Clarence John Laughlin (1905-1985) was the most important Southern photographer of his time and a singular figure in the development of the American school of photography. He considered himself a writer first and a photographer second and saw image making as a kind of visual poetry and approached photography with a romantic, experimental eye that diverged strongly from the style of his peers, who championed realism and social documentary. Based in New Orleans for much of his life, he spent his long career exploring the history and mythology of his region. Known for his use of the literary metaphor, he recorded the South’s crumbling mansions and used the aging cemeteries as stages for improvised tableaux vivants or “living pictures” as he called them.

Strange Light: The Photography of Clarence John Laughlin
The High Museum of Art / Atlanta
May 11 - 30 November

Clarence John Laughlin. *A Living Glance Out of the Past*, 1939. Gelatin silver print.
 High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Robert Yellowlees, 2015.44.



László Moholy-Nagy. Untitled Photogram, Weimar, 1923.
Courtesy of Museum Folkwang Essen

BAUHAUS CENTENARY

2019 marks the centenary of the foundation of the Bauhaus school. The celebrations are already in full swing with hundreds of exhibitions and events honouring its history and legacy. The school was first located in Weimar, then in Dessau and finally in Berlin before being closed down by the Nazis in 1933.

Among the highlights are museum openings in two locations. The Bauhaus Museum Weimar opens on 6 April and on 8 September The Bauhaus Museum opens in the city park in Dessau. Berlin will also get a new Bauhaus museum though it won't open until 2020.

Museum Folkwang in Essen started its celebrations early in the year with an exhibition about Lyonel Feininger, followed by "Staging The World" (28 April - 8 September) tracing the school's philosophy through painting, graphic design, architecture etc. and finally "László Moholy-Nagy" (20 September - 21 December) which will showcase photography and film at the school.

www.museum-folkwang.de
www.bauhaus100.com

TERENCE DONOVAN

This summer, Huxley-Parlour Gallery in London will present an exhibition of rare vintage photographs by Terence Donovan (1936-1996). Drawn from his estate, which is represented by the gallery, the prints include some of his most significant fashion and portrait work from the 1960's when he was at the peak of his creative powers. The energy of his photographs from the period, and the force of his personality, have assumed in the intervening years an almost folkloric significance. With David Bailey and Brian Duffy, photographers of a similar background and outlook, Donovan was perceived as a new force in British fashion photography and together they would kick off The Swinging Sixties in London. Such was their impact that Cecil Beaton referred to them as "The Black Trinity" and "The Terrible Three". In the 1970's, Donovan diversified into advertising photography and commercials and in the 1980's into music videos, including Robert Palmer's "Addicted To Love".

Terence Donovan
Huxley-Parlour Gallery / London
2 - 27 July 2019



THE MOON at The Met

On July 20, 1969, half a billion viewers around the world watched as the first images of American astronauts on the moon were beamed back to the earth. The result of decades of technical innovation, this thrilling moment in the history of images radically expanded the limits of human vision.

Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, The exhibition *Apollo's Muse: The Moon in the Age of Photography* will survey visual representations of the moon from the dawn of photography through the present. In addition to photographs, the show will feature a selection of related drawings, prints, paintings, films, astronomical instruments, and space-flown cameras.

Apollo's Muse:
The Moon in the Age of Photography
 The Met Fifth Avenue / NYC
 2 July - 22 September

Neil Armstrong

Astronaut Edward E. "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. *Walks on the Surface of the Moon, Apollo 11, 1969.* Dye transfer print, printed later.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, 2017 / National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)



COLOUR MANIA

Since the earliest days of cinema, film has been a colourful medium and art form. More than 230 film colour processes have been devised in the course of film history, often in close connection with photography. For instance, the screen process *Dufaycolor* was initially developed in the context of still photography before being used in motion pictures in the 1930's. The exhibition highlights the historical connections of colour as a material in photography and film and also presents the application of historical film colours and techniques in the work of contemporary photographers. Alongside iconic works, the exhibition will feature rare exhibits that were discovered within research projects on this theme, as well as works that artists are specially creating for the exhibition.

The exhibition is realised in collaboration with the SNSF as Agora-project of the University of Zurich, the research projects ERC Advanced Grant: *FilmColors. Bridging the Gap between Technology and Aesthetics* and SNF Film Colors. Technologies, Cultures, Institutions of Prof. Dr. Barbara Flückiger and guest curator Dr. Eva Hielscher.

Colour Mania
The Material of Colour in Photography and Film
 Fotomuseum Winterthur / Switzerland
 7 September - 24 November 2019

Barbara Flückiger

Filmstrip from *Written on the Wind* (USA 1956, Douglas Sirk)
 Courtesy Harvard Film Archive



Star Wars on glass, Ambrotype by Jonathan Keys



On 18-19 May, the Special Edition of The London Photograph Fair returns to The Great Hall at King's College, adjacent to Somerset House. The fair, which coincides with Photo London, is the only established fair devoted to vintage photography in the UK.

The exhibitors this year include Photos Discovery, Christophe Lunn, Richard Meara, Daniella Dangoor and Linus Carr. Prices range from the lower hundreds to five figures, with photographs including everything from the quirky and the bizarre to masterpieces by leading photographers such as Baldus, Louis De Clercq, Gustave Le Gray, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Bill Brandt, Martin Munkasci, Erwin Blumenfeld to name a few.

The fair attracts not only experienced collectors but has over the last few years seen an upsurge in interest from a younger generation of collectors, in many cases first time buyers. The dealers, keen to encourage the interest in classic photography, have responded. In addition to displaying their individual stock of vintage images on the walls of their stands, this year, a number of the exhibitors have pooled their resources and have put together thematic collections such as "Out of The Blue – The Cyanotype Collection", "Death, Murder and Mayhem", "Travel and Exploration" to name a few. You will find them on Instagram alongside a selection of other offerings at the fair.

And "The fun of the fair" begins before you have even entered the building. The English photographer Jonathan Keys will in the manner itinerant, Victorian photographers will set up a photographic studio outside The Great Hall and make portraits on glass, using the wet Collodion process invented by Frederick Scott Archer in 1851.

And last but not least, *The Classic* will have its UK launch at The Special Edition so stop by and talk to the publisher Bruno Tartarin and editor Michael Diemar.



Jonathan Keys at work



Lou Landauer. *Two Sprigs*, 1936, Photogram. Courtesy of Linus Carr

Linus Carr is showing a rare collection of photograms and experimental works made by Lou Landauer in the 1940's.

Carr explains:

– It's exciting material to present because Landauer is not that well known. She was born Lou Levi in Cologne in 1897. After her marriage to George Landauer, she developed an interest in photography and studied at Staatliche Fotoschule München and then at Lette Verein in Berlin. In 1934, she and her husband emigrated to Israel. She worked as producer and camera woman

on the documentary "Aufbruch der Jugend" in 1936 and then took up a teaching post at an art school, Bezalel Hechadasch in Jerusalem.

Where she found life difficult, Carr says.

– She was full of passion for photography but the governors of the school looked down on it and didn't consider it a proper art medium. It didn't help that she was a woman of course so she was forced to teach the subject of her passion to her students at home. I think the works are wonderful, subtle and mysterious.

Last year, **Daniella Dangoor** presented a magnificent collection of 40 rare photographs of Samurai at the fair. She continues on a Japanese theme this year, with an exhibition of 36 views of Mount Fuji, taken in the 19th Century by a diverse group of photographers, including Felice Beato, Kusakabe Kimbei, Baron von Stillfried and Adolfo Farsari. Dangoor explains:

– Fuji is the highest, most beautiful, most famous mountain in Japan. Its height, the symmetrical curvature of its slopes and its solitary grandeur have made it one of the most famous mountains in the world. According to an encyclopedia called *The Wakan Sansai Dzuyé*, “in looking at it from anyone of the eight provinces that surround it its appearance is never different. Its summit is the shape of an eight-leaved lotus flower, and it shows three peaks however one faces it”. However, every hour of every day paints a different picture of the mountain. “There is the Morning Fuji, shaking off the mists of night; the Midday Fuji, with a belt of cumulous cloud floating across its waist; the Sundown Fuji, a symphony of pink and violet... and a hundred other phases for the mountain is never twice alike... The snow cap is seldom more than a day or two the same shape. The wind and the sun are constantly at war with it.”



Kusabe Kimbei

Kusabe Kimbei (N. 1 and 3), Baron von Stillfried (N. 2). Courtesy of Daniella Dangoor



Unknown photographer. *Three Apache Prisoners*, ca.1870-1880. Courtesy of Daniel Newburg

Out of The Blue – The Cyanotype Collection

The standout piece in the collection comes courtesy of the Fair's promoter, **Daniel Newburg**. A striking image of three Apache prisoners, taken in the 1870's. Newburg says:

– The expressions in their faces say it all. They may have been captured but they're unbowed, defiant. So far I haven't been able to identify the photographer but the image is clearly

made by somebody who knew what he was doing. It has a real magic and intensity.

I'm still researching the prisoners. There are some indications that the man in middle could be Geronimo. He has a mole on his right cheek, in exactly the same place as Geronimo has in the well known portraits taken in the 1880's but more research needs to be done to prove it conclusively.

Dringend gesuchte Terroristen

Im Zusammenhang mit dem

- dreifachen Mord an Generalbundesanwalt Buback und zwei seiner Begleiter am 7. 4. 1977 in Karlsruhe
- Mord an Jürgen Ponto am 30. 7. 1977 in Oberursel
- vierfachen Mord und der Entführung von Hanns-Martin Schleyer am 5. 9. 1977 in Köln

werden gesucht:



Wanted for Murder, Terrorists from the Baader-Meinhof Gang, 1977.

Courtesy of MD Photo

The collection “Death, Murder and Mayhem” covers roughly one hundred years of violence, human misery, catastrophes and natural disasters. From 1870’s images of the devastation wrought by an earthquake in an English market town to a 1977 circular issued by the West German police, with portraits and names of terrorists from the Baader-Meinhof gang wanted in connection with three murders. And in between there’s everything from 1920’s - 30’s portraits of American children, some as young six, who killed their mothers, plus train crashes, gangland killings, riots, earthquakes, typhoons and war atrocities. Most are taken by uncredited press photographers and unknown amateurs but there are some well known names as well, including the master of crime scene photography, “Weegee The Famous”.



*Unknown photographer.
Police Investigating Murder Scene,
Los Angeles, ca.1950.*

Courtesy of MD Photo



Julia Margaret Cameron. *Annie Chinery Cameron and Two Unknown Children*, 1870-1872. Courtesy of Richard Meara

Richard Meara always comes up with some very special material for The Special Edition and this year he will present a true treasure, a remarkable print by Julia Margaret Cameron. Meara explains:

– The print shows Annie Chinery Cameron and two unknown children. There is a version of it in the *Cameron Catalogue Raisonné* by Cox and Ford, it's number 204 to be exact.

The illustration shows a small part of the print that I have, and it's described as a reduced cabinet size print.

The provenance of that image is Harry. H. Lunn, and it is now in the Musée d'Orsay. The note says that it is a reduced print from a larger, original negative which does not survive. My print shows the image of the whole of the negative, and I suspect that it is probably unique.

Photo London returns to Somerset House 16 - 19 May, with private view 15 May. The fair, now in its fifth edition, will include almost 100 galleries from 21 different countries: Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland, South Africa, the UK and the USA.

The emphasis is on contemporary photography but you will find plenty of classic photography as well, with James Hyman, Roland Belgrave, Robert Hershkowitz, Augusta Edwards Fine Art, 29 Arts in Progress Gallery, Contrasto Galleria, Johannes Faber, Peter Fetterman Gallery, Robert Mann Gallery, White Space Gallery and others.

In addition to the exhibitor stands, there is a public programme with special exhibitions, this year with Gavin Turk, Roger Fenton, Vivian Maier, Josh Haner, Eamonn Doyle and Stephen Shore, this year's Photo London Master of Photography. The talks programme, curated as in previous years by William A. Ewing, is highly recommended.

One could hardly ask for a more beautiful setting for a fair. Somerset House is a large Neoclassical building, designed by Sir William Chambers in 1776. It does however pose a few challenges for the visitor. The stands and exhibition spaces in the main building are arranged over several floors and it's easy to miss something. You are advised to pick up a map in the reception.



**PHOTO
LONDON**

photolondon.org

A select group of participants have created special projects for this year's edition as part of the Public Programme, supported by the Luma Foundation.

Howard Greenberg Gallery will showcase a selection of works by the late American street photographer Vivian Maier, marking the first major presentation of the work in the UK, including hitherto unseen colour work.



Vivian Maier

Chicago, 1962

Ed. 8/15 Chromogenic print, printed 2018. 12 x 12 inches

© Estate of Vivian Maier, Courtesy of Maloof Collection and Howard Greenberg Gallery, NY

The Photo London Master of Photography award is given annually to a leading contemporary photographer and is the subject of a special exhibition at the fair, as part of the public programme, Shore will present a new body of work, which will be shown for the first time in the UK.

He will also be showing a series from 1969 titled "Los Angeles", which features 60 small photographs taken throughout one day in 1969 in LA.

The exhibition is produced in association with Sprüth Magers and 303 Gallery.



Stephen Shore

Los Angeles, California, February 4, 1969

1970 © Stephen Shore.
Courtesy 303 Gallery, New York

Galerie Johannes Faber is focused on vintage photography.
At this year's edition, Faber is showing works by Herbert List, Brassai, Frantisek Drtikol,
Josef Sudek, Otto Steinert, André Kertész and others.

Highlights will include a 1935 Man Ray from the series "Mathematical Objects",
the only known vintage print of it and a masterful Heinrich Kühn, a 1907 nude study.



Heinrich Kühn

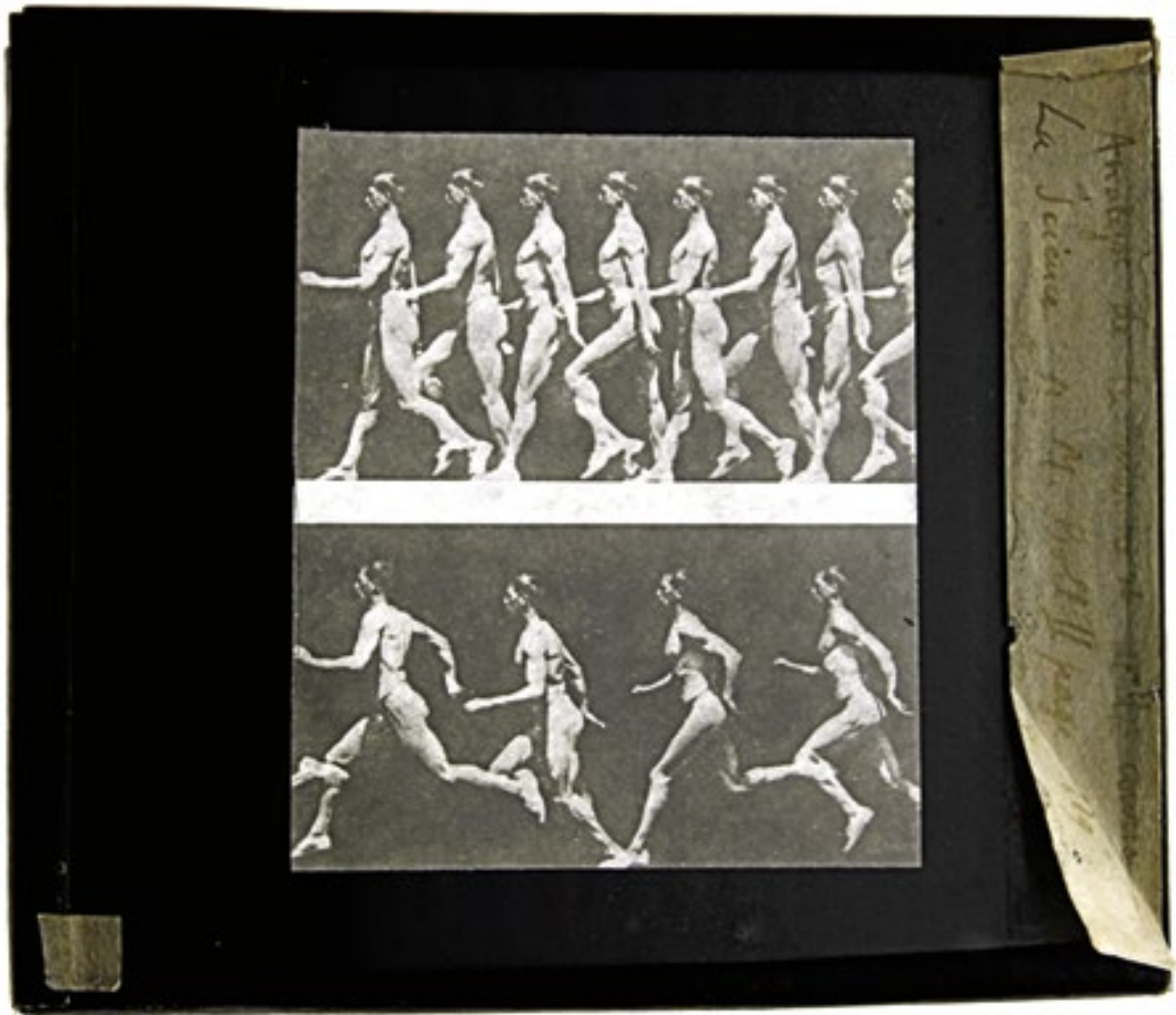
Nude Study, Tyrol 1907

Gum pigment print, 30,4 x 24,7 cm (12 x 10") Courtesy Galerie Johannes Faber

Étienne-Jules Marey

Analyse de la Marche et de la Course, Station Physiologique, 1886

Courtesy of James Hyman



James Hyman will be showing a selection of 19th and 20th century works, including a rare piece by the French photographer and scientist Etienne-Jules Marey. Hyman says:

– I’ve always loved this picture from 1886. It is entitled *Analyse de la Marche et de la Course Station Physiologique*, it is one of Marey’s most famous works.

A muscular male figure accelerates across our field of vision. The marble-like weight of his body, the patterns of over-lapping limbs and the rhythmic repetition present a new classicism that echoes the processional friezes of the Roman Parthenon. But it is not just this physicality that is so striking. The image not only embodies the creation of new aesthetic in photography but also foregrounds the latest advances in science.

Étienne-Jules Marey’s scientific studies of movement led not only to some of the most extraordinary photographs of the nineteenth century but also to the invention of cinema: Marey’s technique of recording movement – the chronophotograph – positive images made for projection and enlargement; and his use of strips of film to record sequential movement, were fundamental to the creation of the moving image.

As with so many of the greatest nineteenth century photographs, this picture is not just a glimpse of a remote past but has an immediacy that speaks to us today. It is surely appropriate that in recent years a massively enlarged reproduction of this work was incorporated into the glass facade of the Frank Gehry designed Cinémathèque française in Paris.



Travel and exploration are Brighton-based dealer Roland Belgrave's main themes.

This year he will present a rare folio, "Pompeii Photographed. London. William MacKenzie (Glasgow and Edinburgh) ca. 1860", with 24 views of Pompeii and two of Herculaneum. Alongside, he will also show a selection of nudes by Auguste Belloc, Vincenzo Galdi and Irving Penn.

Giorgio Sommer

The Temple of Iside, Pompeii, 1860

Albumen Print, Folio of 26 views of Pompeii

Vincenzo Galdi

Nude Study, ca. 1890

Albumen print





Auguste Belloc

Reclining Female Nude, 1855

Salt print

JULES MALACRIDA (FABRICANT)

Nécessaire complet pour daguerréotypiste, c. 1848.

Boîte d'époque en bois, à compartiments, portant l'étiquette de la maison Malacrída sous le couvercle « Malacrída. Ingénieur. Opticien. Mécanicien. Fabrique et fournit tout ce qui concerne le daguerréotype. Fabrique et magasin rue du Coq-Saint-Honoré, 11 ».

La boîte se compose des éléments suivants :

- une (1) chambre à daguerréotype 1/4 de plaque, bâti rigide à tiroir, un pas de vis pour optique et dépoli.
- une (1) optique Malacrída en laiton, obturation à bouchon.
- une (1) boîte à rainures contenant 12 plaques vierges non exposées au format 1/4 de plaque.
- deux (2) châssis contenant chacun une (1) plaque vierge non exposée.
- une (1) boîte à mercure, son thermomètre et son dispositif de chauffe.
- une (1) boîte de sensibilisation à l'iode avec sa cuve.
- une (1) boîte de sensibilisation au brome avec sa cuve.
- un (1) support pour polir les plaques.
- une (1) lampe à alcool avec sa mèche.
- ensemble de flacons et fioles en verre : rouge d'Angleterre ou rouge de joaillier (polissage) ; poudre de polissage avec un tamis en gaze ; mercure ; benzine ; alcool ; chlorure d'or (fixage) ; bromure de chaux ; éthanol ; fiole à iode.

Format de la boîte : 27 (h) x 25 (l) x 41,5 (L) cm

Format de la chambre : 18,4 (h) x 24,8 (l) x 14 (L) cm

Plaques : 10 x 7,5 cm



Personnage peu connu des premiers temps de la photographie, condamné avec Félix Moulin pour vente d'épreuves licencieuses, Jules Malacrída exerce pendant près de 40 ans par intermittence dans le quartier du Palais Royal. Il ouvre son premier atelier-boutique rue du Coq-Saint-Honoré (aujourd'hui rue Marengo) à la fin des années 1840. On y trouve le matériel nécessaire pour pratiquer le daguerréotype. Fabriquant d'optiques et de chambres, il propose à ses clients des boîtes complètes pour sensibiliser les plaques, les exposer, les révéler et les fixer. Si des bribes de matériel pour daguerréotypistes sont trouvées régulièrement, un ensemble préservé de la dispersion est en revanche beaucoup plus rare, presque unique, et témoigne des pratiques commerciales et des méthodes de diffusion du médium quelques années seulement après l'annonce de l'invention.



PHOTOGRAPHIES - Vente aux enchères publiques

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THE

DAVID FAHEY

INTERVIEW BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

IMAGES: DENNIS HOPPER TRUST

COURTESY OF FAHEY/KLEIN GALLERY LOS ANGELES

DENNIS

HOPPER

ARCHIVE



An impromptu snapshot, taken on a quiet side street in Southern France in 2005. Dennis Hopper is crouching, leaning in to photograph graffiti he has just discovered on a wall. The snapshot was taken by his friend David Fahey of Fahey/Klein Gallery who takes up the story.

– Dennis and I attended a photography festival together in the south of France. A few days earlier we had visited the famous Lascaux Caves. They were closed to the public but because of Dennis' standing as "a movie star", we were able to get a private tour of the caves and it was a fantastic experience. As a happenstance, I ended up photographing Dennis photographing graffiti in this little town Cahors where the festival was happening. And I was thinking, "We have just been to see markings that were made 20 000 years ago and here he is photographing markings from our present."

Fahey took a series of photographs of Hopper over the years.

– I started taking photographs of artists when we opened the gallery in 1975. Somebody asked me, "What does Helmut Newton look like? I have never seen a picture of him!" So I described Newton to him. And that prompted me to start taking pictures of every artist I met. I have hundreds of them and some really nice ones of Dennis.

Dennis Hopper passed away in 2010. Fahey/Klein Gallery now exclusively represents his archive, not only his photography but also his painting and sculpture. Hopper is of course best known as an actor and director but he was also a photographer, an artist and an art collector. And he managed to pack in awful lot during his life.

Dennis Hopper was born in 1936 in Dodge City, Kansas. He trained as a stage actor, moved to Los Angeles and made his first TV appearance in 1954.

Then came *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *Giant* where he appeared alongside James Dean. The latter suggested Hopper take up photography and introduced him to method acting.

Method acting was definitely not in favour at the Hollywood studios. Hopper had an infamous bust up with director Henry Hathaway on the set of *From Hell to Texas* (1958), which led to him being black-listed at the Hollywood studios. Hopper would still act in TV but he began to focus more and more on painting, photography and making assemblages. He had solo shows at Photo Lab/Gallery of Barry Feinstein in 1961 and Primus/David Stewart Gallery in 1964.

In 1965, he was allowed back in Hollywood, ironically enough to appear in another Hathaway film, *The Sons of Katie Elder* and this after an intervention by none other than John Wayne. Hopper appeared in a string of films the following years, including *Cool Hand Luke*, *The Trip* and *The Glory Stompers*. And then came *Easy Rider* in 1969. Made for roughly \$360 000, it grossed around \$60 million worldwide. More than a blockbuster, it became a phenomenon, "A Landmark Counterculture Film" as it has been called. It also opened the door for a new generation of independent filmmakers and was the first film to feature existing music, Steppenwolf's *Born To Be Wild*, *The Pusher* and others, rather than an especially written soundtrack.

Hopper co-wrote, starred in and directed *Easy Rider* and it made him Hollywood's hottest property. And his fall from grace with the studios would be spectacular. His next film, *The Last Movie* (1971), filmed in Peru, was essentially an art house film, a deconstruction of a western and what happens when the



Dennis Hopper photographing graffiti in Cahors, 2005. © David Fahey



Dennis Hopper installing his exhibition in Cahors, 2005. © David Fahey

movie business descends on a local community. Hopper wasn't given the budget to shoot the script and was forced to make compromises. Universal Studios hated the film, regarded it as an insult to everything Hollywood stood for and effectively buried it.

With the rise of the independents, Hopper could probably have continued his work in films. Instead he retreated to the Mabel Dodge Luhan Ranch in Taos, New Mexico, which he had purchased in 1970. And that was when the madness began in earnest. His friends noted what they saw was an unhealthy and dangerous obsession with guns. There were psychotic episodes brought on by drink and drugs, endangering not only himself, everyone around him but also his photographs. At least his friend Walter Hopps thought so. In the book *Dennis Hopper – Photographs 1961-1967*, published in 2011, Walter Hopps related "The Taos Incident", how he visited Hopper at the Mabel Dodge Luhan ranch

in the mid-70's and was terrified when Hopper started shooting up the walls of his own house with a machine gun. Hopper's photographs were scattered all around the house and Hopps decided to collect and take them away for safekeeping.

Even during these darkest years, Hopper turned in some very fine performances, in Henry Jaglom's *Tracks* (1977), Wim Wenders' *The American Friend* (1977), Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and *Out of The Blue* (1980) which he also directed. Hopper would eventually emerge out of the darkness and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) saw him fully rehabilitated in Hollywood. That same year, Twelvetreepress published his first book of photographs. It was followed by many others, as well as exhibitions, including "A System of Moments", a retrospective of works in all the media he had worked in over the years.

I caught up with David Fahey to talk about Dennis Hopper and the archive.

Dennis Hopper was a personal friend of yours. When did you first meet?

– I first met Dennis about 35 years ago. We had mutual friends like Helmut Newton and would run into each other here and there. Because of his interest in photography, he would come to our gallery on various occasions to see exhibitions. At one point in time I decided to do a show of portraits of artists and I asked Dennis to participate with one of his famous group portraits, the one of Andy Warhol, Henry Geldzahler, David Hockney and Jeff Goodman. That's kind of how our personal connections came to be. So while we weren't hanging out kind of friends, we were always in touch. Dennis sadly passed away in 2010. A couple of years back I met with his daughter Marin and asked to represent his work exclusively. And we have been doing that for some time now. We represent him exclusively for all his work, not just photography but also painting and sculpture.

So you met him when he had come out of his dark period?

– Yes, he was back and established in Hollywood and had assembled a great collection of contemporary art. He was a very committed photographer and was very curious about other photographers that we represented and showed. He was past the darkness and was very engaging and curious. Dennis was a very exciting person to know. Apart from his movie star fame he was a really serious artist. I think he really absorbed that attitude from all his friends in the art world.

In retrospect, it seems miraculous that the early photographs have survived.

They escaped the fire that swept through Bel Air in 1961 and burnt his house to the ground and Walter Hopps has described "The Taos Incident" when he effectively confiscated Hopper's photographs for safekeeping. Did Hopper ever mention photographs that had been lost?

– Dennis did care for and archive most of his work but over time things inevitably did get lost. As is the case with most photographers, prints were sent somewhere but not returned etc. Dennis never really gave me readout on his archive. We didn't represent him exclusively when he was alive so he and I didn't explore the depths of his archive. But I have done this since and there's an archivist assigned by the estate to catalogue and conserve everything that's available. For example, we just did a large sale of Dennis' fashion photographs. It went to a collection in Europe. I don't think many people know that he took fashion photographs. So we are slowly but surely going through the archive to make sense of everything, to find out what still exists and in what kind of numbers. But I would say that there are very few things available in multiples. He wasn't actively

selling in a big way since his work as an actor took precedent. So he didn't print 10 of this, 20 of that. So with "Double Standard" for example, there is only a very small number of prints. It's a problem since we don't have as much of the classic material as we would like to have. But there's enough.

***The Lost Album* was first exhibited in 2013 and quickly became legendary. Can you tell me about it?**

– *The Lost Album*, what his daughter Marin decided to call it, was found in storage, pretty much forgotten. It's a set of mostly vintage prints, some of which are unique. There are approximately 450 images. It's a comprehensive record of his work as photographer during the 60's. Not only detailing his vision but also the many portraits he made of artists who were his friends. It's a great record of that time and place. We are hoping to place it with important museum. It's such a valuable part of the history of that time. Those artists' sensibility dealt with the turmoil of the 1960's which is a really fertile time in our creative history. And Dennis was there, making pictures. There are still a lot people out there waiting to see what he had to contribute. The books are one thing but the prints are another experience altogether.

Twelvetreepress published *Dennis Hopper - Out Of The Sixties*, his first book of photographs, in 1986. It was a revelation, especially to those who had completely been unaware that he was also a photographer. The images have since become icons of the era, the biker couple, the portraits of Warhol, Ed Ruscha etc.?

– I think people don't realise that in many ways he was both equally important as an artist and a photographer. And shortly before his death, he told Marin that he wanted to be remembered as a photographer, which says a lot when you think of all the great work he did as an actor and director. Dennis was really serious about what he was doing as a photographer. And he had that kind of loose, reportage approach to recording what was in front of him. And there weren't as many photographers doing that as there is now. I think Robert Frank and Henri Cartier-Bresson were big influences on him as well.

He photographed the arts scene in the early 60's and then the west coast music scene. Looking at the images, it's obvious that he has a personal relationship with them or at least had a rapport with them?

– Well, being a naturally curious person and gregarious as well, he became friendly with almost everyone he photographed. Some were very close friends, the ones he didn't know he soon became friends with. He was always open, willing to talk and that was his personality. Because of our location, we deal with many celebrities and the best of them are very open



Double Standard, 1961

and engaging people. He was that way and it wasn't beyond him to educate and inform people about his past and his interest in photography.

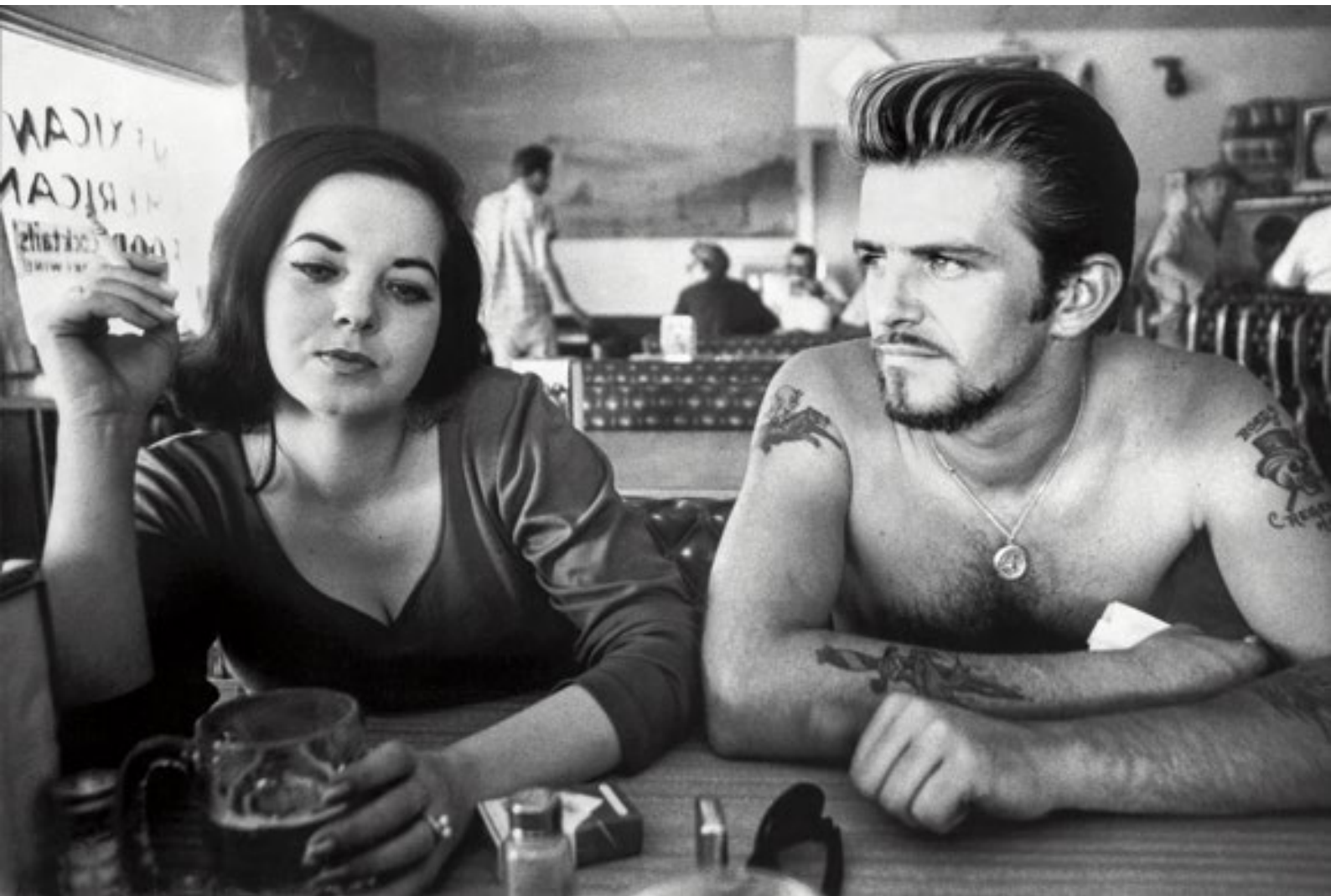
Can you give me an idea of the scope of the photography archive? Were there undeveloped films as well, developed films but no contact sheets and prints? If so, have you decided what to do with that material?

– The archive pretty extensive. 80 % of it is photography and the rest is painting and sculpture. There are some 700 contact sheets. There are no undeveloped films that we are aware of. And if there ever were, they were lost along the way. I was a close friend of Garry Winogrand and it's been reported that there were 800 - 1200 undeveloped rolls of film in his archive after he died. With Garry, that was certainly the case but not with Dennis. My guess is that he did photography, made contact sheets, went through them, made prints of the ones he liked, rather than just carry on shooting which is how things can messy as you get behind.

You have seen the contact sheets. Did he shoot a lot to get his images? And did he always use Tri-X?

– To the best of my knowledge, it was always fast film, 35 mm, Tri-X. He was very economical in his approach. He was purposeful and didn't shoot all day long to get a picture. He saw something and shot it. So there are no lengthy repetitions on the contact sheets.

In interviews, Hopper would relate the story about when on the set of *Giant*, he told James Dean that he wanted to direct and Dean advised him to take up photography as it would teach him how to frame a scene. But I'm wondering if Dean's influence on Hopper's photography went further than that. Hopper had trained as a stage actor in the traditional mould and he was deeply disturbed by Dean's acting style which was completely alien to him, method acting, that is, acting without preconceived ideas, being in the moment. So disturbed, that during the chicken-run scene in *Rebel Without a Cause*, he threw Dean into the back of a car and demanded to know what he was doing.



Biker Couple, 1961

Hopper embraced the method and later studied it under Lee Strasberg. It seems to me that there's a link between Hopper's method acting and his photography?

– One can't say that's the case for certain but I can tell you that the creative process, whatever that is, in his eye and in his mind, it's the same thing. It's a curiosity, a willingness to explore, looking at things from a different perspective. Everything that applies to the type of acting that they both did, that is, Strasberg's school of method acting, I think it applies to their way of making art. A creative process you go through to experience the new, to try and reach inside yourself in order to give the viewer a new perspective.

His first wife Brooke Hayward bought him a Nikon in 1961. Was that when his photography really took off? At that point he was effectively blacklisted in Hollywood after his bust-up with Henry Hathaway during the filming of *From Hell To Texas* in 1958?

– James Dean of course was also a photographer so they had a common interest at the time they made *Giant* so I guess they traded a lot of stories back and forth. But yes, that's correct. When he got the Nikon was when he really started to engage with photography. He took the camera with him everywhere he went. And it's worth keeping in mind that Henry Hathaway had told him that he would never work in Hollywood again. My guess is that Dennis took this into account and he focused that much more on photography.

Hopper was deeply immersed in the art scene in the early sixties, as an artist, photographer and a collector. He bought the very first Warhol Campbell Soup Can for \$75, *Stinking Sun* by Roy Lichtenstein and other Pop artists, before they had even had solo exhibitions. He did a number of exhibitions of his own art during that period. Did ever stop making art or were time gaps?

– There were big gaps over the years. This is my speculation but because he was an actor who was heavily



Andy Warhol, Henry Geldzahler, David Hockney and Jeff Goodman, 1963

immersed in the art scene, he would primarily show in contemporary galleries and museums. When the photography market took off in a big way, it sort of missed Dennis because he was in this other arena. I have been a gallerist since 1975. When I included him in the show I mentioned I thought, “Gee, you just don’t see Dennis’ work in photography galleries”. That was something of a missed opportunity because the photography market during those years was really exploding. And the people in the painting galleries saw photography in a different way, as an accessory to painting and sculpture. And because he was in that other arena, he didn’t enter the photography market until much later.

I met Hopper when he showed “A System of Moments” at MAK in Vienna in 2001. He gave me a fascinating insight into how photography was regarded in the art world in the early 60’s. He told me that many gallerists owned photographs, by Man Ray, Moholy-Nagy and others but would only show them in secret in the backroom. Photography wasn’t regarded as a serious art medium and therefore, a serious art gallery couldn’t be seen being in any way associated with it?

– Yes, and was the case up until the early 1980’s. I would say it was only around 2000 that contemporary art galleries got into photography in a big way. And of course now, they’re direct competitors with us. Earlier on, gallery owners would collect works by Man Ray, Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Weston but there are others that never really took it that seriously. It’s been a long journey I can tell you and I have done this so long. I can remember the first photographs we sold in 1975, a Cartier-Bresson for 350 dollars. That was a big deal! Then we sold an Ansel Adams for 1000 dollars and 1980 we sold an oversized by him for 80 000 dollars which was a record at the time. I have shown many, many artists but I tell people that as big as this photography collecting is, it still hasn’t really happened yet and I really believe that.

During the period when he was blacklisted he worked commercially as well, for Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar. I find it difficult to picture an editor sending Hopper out on assignment. Did he suggest the assignments himself?

– I think he found assignments challenging. To the best of my knowledge, he was mostly approached and he didn’t work that much editorially. But there

are surprises, such as the fashion work, which I was unaware of. His daughter Marin, asked him to do a fashion shoot for Elle for example. He was in a position where he could choose his editorial assignments. We are also in the middle of the process of really cataloguing everything in the archive. And archives tend to be much bigger than you imagine. Everything we do is very methodical, we're archiving, making an inventory and cross-referencing. We are doing it right and when you're doing it right, it takes a long time.

The image of Warhol with a flower was used on the cover of Art Forum, the December issue 1964. His 60's images that are now famous, were they mostly taken for his own pleasure or as part of assignments?

– I don't think the Warhol picture was an editorial assignment. He took it and it was later used editorially and for other reasons- but that's my guess.

In the early 2000's I think it was, Hopper produced limited editions of some of his 60's images. They were around for a while but then they seemed to disappear completely from the market. Can you shed some light on this?

– Yes, when he got back into photography in a serious way again, he started making editions but as we spoke about earlier, this was when he showed in contemporary art galleries, not photography galleries. So that visibility was pretty short-lived so to speak. The editions were not completed. Right now we are exploring how many prints were made in each edition. To the best of my knowledge, most editions were never completed. So if someone calls and says he purchased a print in the past, then we can tell how many were actually made.

Did he stop printing or simply withdrew them from the market?

– I think it was a combination of his film career becoming very, very active during this period in time and the fact that there was nobody really representing him as a photographer and pushing him to do shows. That being said, he never stopped working as an artist. He had a major show at MOCA in Los Angeles 2010.

He would later claim that he stopped taking photographs in 1968. Was really it as abrupt as that? In 2015, Damiani published *Drugstore Camera*, with images made with a disposable camera in 1970. Did he regard those as a more private affair? They were not among the photographs that Walter Hopps rescued following The Taos Incident?

– I don't think it was that abrupt. Marin found the *Drugstore Camera* photographs after Dennis' death and this was a group of pictures that were undeveloped. So I don't think he just stopped. He was just



Andy Warhol, 1963

less engaged with photography. Then came his dark period and then his career took off again.

He had an enormous success with *Easy Rider*. Then came *The Last Movie* which was more of an art house film. It seems he was extremely hurt by the fate of that film. Did he ever discuss it with you?

– Not really. We talked about *Easy Rider* when we were in the south of France. When did it come out? 69'? I was in Vietnam in 69' so I didn't see it until I got back. And I saw *The Last Movie* as well shortly afterwards. That was in the heyday of experimental European film, Jean-Luc Godard etc. I think Dennis was at the forefront in experimental film. I saw *The Last Movie* and I enjoyed it very much. It was such a strange movie. That was during the period when he was a little wild. And eventually he came out of it and had his comeback with David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*.

When did he take up photography again?

– That was in 1988 during the filming of *Colors*, which he directed. He took Polaroids of gang graffiti in Los Angeles. The SX70 became popular and Dennis really got into that in a big way.

And then he took up digital photography?

– Yes, and he was very excited by digital photography and we talked about it but it to be quite frank, we haven't reached that part of the archive. That part of his photography is much less known than the black and white images from the 60's. If you're shooting digital, you're mostly shooting colour. And we're just getting to those files. So far, I haven't come across any digital prints yet but I'm sure he made some.

What are your plans for making the archive visible in the wider sense? Are there books and exhibitions in the pipeline?

– The work on the archive is continuing. This autumn, we have a show here at the gallery and in addition to the iconic images I want to introduce some new works that people haven't seen. We have some vintage works that are signed, some that aren't, we have printed later works and we are making posthumous, small editions of 10 prints available, signed by his daughter.

You were friends for many years. What are your fondest memories of him?

– Dennis was always open, very much like the character he played in *Easy Rider*. He came from the mid-west and he kept reaching and searching. There are just a handful of people in every generation who are like that, scientist, composers and artists. Nothing stops them. He had that psychological make-up. When you think about what he accomplished with his film career, how he participated in the arts, it's incredible. He went against the grain and was not afraid to alienate the powers that be and he still survived and succeeded. He worked with all the edgy people as well as the established people. His friendships were far and wide and very diverse. That tells you a lot about the personality of an individual. He didn't have any of the pomp and circumstance that comes with being famous and he was very funny. He could flip from being very funny, to being very serious. Yes, Dennis was definitely my kind of person. ●





Ed Ruscha, 1964

INTERVIEW BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

ROBERT HERSHKOWITZ



Roger Fenton. *Cottage Overlooking the Dnieper, Kiev, 1852.* Courtesy of Wilson Centre for Photography

HIS CAREER AND ROGER FENTON



During a career spanning almost 45 years, the private dealer Robert Hershkowitz has been a leading figure in 19th century photography. His eye is legendary and such is his standing that at fairs, the knowledgeable 19th century photography collectors and curators will head straight to his and his wife Paula's stand as soon as the doors have opened to marvel at the masterpieces they have brought.

In addition to their stand at this year's Photo London, Robert Hershkowitz will also present an exhibition, "The Essential Fenton", dedicated to his mentor, "The inspirational Sam Wagstaff". The exhibition is a deeply personal take on the English photographer Roger Fenton (1819-1869). It's very different from previous exhibitions, mostly chronological and based on Fenton's biography; the lawyer who became a mediocre painter, then a master of photography, who photographed in Russia, the British Royal Family, the collections at the British Museum, landscapes, cathedrals, soldiers and officers during the Crimean War, still lifes etc. Unable to make a living from photography, he sold his equipment in 1863.

As beautiful as Fenton's images are, according to Hershkowitz, we need to look more deeply in order to unveil their meaning. *The Classic* spoke to Hershkowitz about his Fenton exhibition, his career and his friendship with Sam Wagstaff, curator, pioneering photography collector and Robert Mapplethorpe's lover and benefactor.

There have been quite a few Fenton exhibitions over the years as well as numerous publications. So why have you decided to do a show?

–The opportunity presented itself. My friend and colleague, Hans Kraus, with his show, "Talbot and his Legacy", set the precedent for a dealer curating an exhibition of nineteenth century photography in a public space in London. It was widely recognised as the outstanding moment of Photo London 2018. The directors of Candlestar were extremely

enthusiastic when I proposed a Fenton exhibition, following Hans' example. Fenton – like Rembrandt – moves me in a way that no other photographer does. For nearly forty years I have been storing thoughts and feelings about his photographs. I am especially intrigued by those aspects of his images that are recurring irrespective of subject. A Fenton project has been growing in me for a long time and now the opportunity has arrived.

When we met up last year, you told me that you regarded one particular image as a kind of portal leading into a deeper understanding of Fenton, *Cottage overlooking the Dnieper, Kiev, 1852*.

– That picture was included in an exhibition I presented at the Camden Art Centre in London in 1980, called "The British Photographer Abroad". I wrote then that his images record the discovery of abstract structures in the visual world of landscape and architecture which correspond to an idealised intellectual order. The image of the cottage is divided into two nearly identical shapes which suggest a Yin-Yang relationship. Later I wrote that the "Cottage" was the architectural equivalent of Blake's "grain of sand". The exhibition was not reviewed at the time. In the book *The Thrill of The Chase - The Wagstaff Collection of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum*, the curator Paul Martineau describes how Sam Wagstaff saw the show and how it led to us becoming friends. I was getting a review in 2016 of a show I did in 1980! It also made me realise how long I had thought about Fenton and many pictures I have seen since 1980 have confirmed my understanding. I can give you some examples of what is unique to him. For instance, that he trims a large number of prints to a square format or nearly a square format. He's the only British or French photographer who did this. In the exhibition there will be an architectural view, a landscape and a still life trimmed to square. A huge number of his prints have an arched top. It's not unique to him but what is unique is the extent to which he does it.

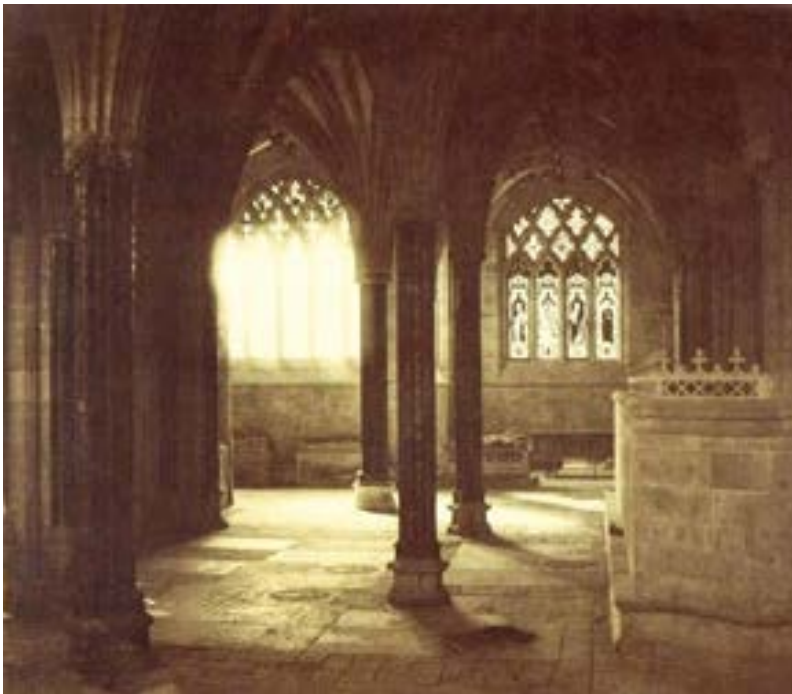
And then there are the images themselves?

– Let's deal with those and his use of triangles, as compositional elements and as a motif. A picture we know well, *A Valley of The Shadow of Death*, is basically four triangles, with cannon balls in two of them. But nobody has talked about the picture in that way before. Another thing that appears in a lot of his pictures is a line that goes across the picture horizontally and sometimes there's a secondary line leading from that line to the bottom of the picture. In my essay for the exhibition I call them the "dominant line" and the "auxiliary line". The iconic *A Valley of The Shadow of Death* has both of those. Sometimes he flattens out forms so that they read as shapes, as in the picture of Furness Abbey and in the one of the French princess on a horse.

A virtuoso of the varieties of photographic experience – his images can be minimal, complex, have a sense of immediacy and some pictures that are just about mood. In the last part of the essay I deal with thematic elements in Fenton: “The secret behind some of Fenton’s most potent images is that they are simultaneously totally accessible while also being seriously elusive”.

Can you give me a few examples?

– There’s a picture of a figure standing by the water, with two rocks in the water. It’s a nice landscape but it is only when I realised – and I call this “My Eureka Moment” – that the two rocks and figure’s head are three points on the same line and so does the Wordsworthian theme of the fundamental unity of mind and nature begin to make itself felt. And I hope to show with some other pictures that you have to look more deeply into the image to get to the meaning. The duality of the secular and the sacred is captured in both an early Russian view and a street scene in York. There’s a picture of York Minster, a view similar to one Talbot took, looking up the street to the Minster. In the Fenton the whole street aspect is very robustly printed but the Church seems dematerialised, ethereal – Fenton achieved this by painting the glass negative. There’s is an image of a chapel in Wells Cathedral, with light coming through two windows but in one window you can read the stained glass window quite clearly, and in the other on the light obliterates the stained glass. So you have the representation of a dialogue between secular light and the sacred light.



Roger Fenton. *Wells Cathedral*, 1857. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz

It’s difficult to imagine the mindset of times gone by but we are talking about a time of Christian faith, classical education, the use of symbolism in art. How much of what you’re saying was understood by viewers at the time?

– I don’t think they had a clue! The language to understand these things simply wasn’t in the Victorian aesthetic vocabulary. Fenton himself couldn’t have understood what he was doing in terms of words.

Fenton himself didn’t understand?

– Did Fenton know? No, because knowing means using language. It’s not a question of thinking. Simply Fenton could see more than he could say. He wrote letters from the Crimea but almost nothing about photography. Fenton was not like P.H. Emerson who wrote and thought a lot about what he was doing. I would estimate that Fenton made more than 3000 pictures over a ten-year period – a picture virtually every day. I’m guessing there are at least thousand pictures by Fenton in various collections that haven’t been catalogued as such, waiting to be found and attributed.

His pictures require time and a lot of it?

– With Fenton I would say, look, look again, look hard and look hard again and you start to see Fenton. If we take the York Minster picture, it’s powerful and completely accessible, but it is the relationship between architectural detail in the spires and the chimney pots which is the elusive part, not apparent on first or second reading. Much contemporary photography is idea based. You look once, you look twice, and that’s it. There’s not that much to see. So when people ask me why they should collect 19th century photography, I tell them that it’s a much richer experience, emotionally, intellectually and visually. The pictures require time and attention.

Can we talk about the subject matter in some of his pictures? The British landscapes for instance. They were taken during the height of the industrial revolution. There was noise everywhere, from factories and railways. He himself came from a family of mill owners who made their fortune from the industrial revolution. There isn’t a trace of it in his pictures. Was he photographing what he feared would be lost?

– I think he photographed what he responded to. But he did photograph London. It’s quite astonishing that Fenton seems to be the only one of any significance who photographed London during that period. Édouard Baldus, Charles Negre, Henri Le Secq and Gustave Le Gray photographed Paris extensively but the French took photography seriously in a way that the British never did and the same is true today.

Fenton met Gustave Le Gray and other French photographers in Paris in October 1851. It is often said that he modelled his practice on Le Gray. Compared to other English photographers, most of them wealthy amateurs or linked to the world of science, Fenton's practice was very different. He had to make a living from it, something the British photography establishment frowned upon. For him, self-expression went hand in hand with commercial considerations?

– Yes, but I wonder how much of living he made from photography? I suspect he lived off family money. Of course he wanted to achieve commercial success. He photographed the Royal Family and enthused them about photography, he photographed the collections at the British Museum and then he went to the Crimean War to produce a commemorative album.

The album was planned as a commercial venture. He went to enormous trouble and made a mobile darkroom and had it transported to the Crimea. But the images are not heroic. There is fatigue and weariness in the faces of the soldiers and officers, not the type of images that appealed to the intended audience, which pretty much defeated the purpose of the whole endeavour. He couldn't escape his humanity?

– I think he was feeling the horror of the whole situation. The pictures show how he responded. In the end, he couldn't make photography work financially and sold his photography equipment. But when I started to work on the show I tried not to read or reread anything about Fenton. I'm not interested in his biography – it's about the pictures and finding their essence. The approach is image based, not history based. It's what is called "The New Criticism" in literary theory.

One of pictures in the exhibition is the bird skeleton, *Dinornis Elephantopus* (1854-1858), a picture Sam Wagstaff bought at auction.

– I'm using a facsimile of it from the Getty Museum. When Sam Wagstaff bought it, I already knew I was seeing Fenton in a certain way and I told Sam that the picture was better than he realised. He laughed at that because he knew he saw nearly everything. There is a rectangle on the cloth acting as a backdrop to the skeleton. The bottom line of the rectangle intercepts the knee joint and the top line the highest vertebra, the beak angled down to touch the line. So it's about the relationship between the rectangle and the anatomy, between mind and nature. Concerning the beak touching the line, I hadn't noticed this until a sensitive new collector recently pointed it out to me.



Gustave Le Gray. *Cloud Study*, 1856. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz



Roger Fenton. *Dinornis Elephantopus*, ca.1854-1858. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum



V. Dijon. *Farmyard Scene*, 1854. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz

Where do the pictures in the exhibition come from?

– This show would have been impossible for me to even think about before the Royal Photographic Society collection was moved to the Victoria and Albert Museum, located 10 minutes from my London flat. I spent days there going through dozens of boxes. Martin Barnes, the Senior Curator of Photographs, kindly agreed to lend 13 pictures to the exhibition and Michael Wilson and the staff at The Wilson Centre also were extremely helpful, also agreeing 13 photographs. There are a few loans from other private collectors in London and New York and two facsimiles of images in institutional collections in America and a few of our own photographs.

You have dedicated the show to Sam Wagstaff (1921-1987). In the book *The Thrill of The Chase*, there's a quote from a letter you wrote to him, now preserved in Samuel Wagstaff Papers at Getty Research Institute, "Looking at photographs with you always opens my eyes that little bit wider, seeing things that I would otherwise have missed. Your questions, tough and on target, teach me still more... I wish others would look as hard as you do (and begin to see as much)".

– If I didn't see something, Sam saw it. I remember one time he pointed to something I had missed and said "Gotcha!" I'm so glad that Sam is being talked about

now. Paul Martineau brought out the book *The Thrill of The Chase*, there was Philip Gefter's biography *Wagstaff: Before and After Mapplethorpe* in 2014 and before that there was James Crump's documentary *Black White + Grey* in 2007. I traded with Sam two years before he sold his collection. For a short time I thought the bulk of my future inventory was to come from Sam – then he sold his collection to the Getty and the dream ended. I like to think I was his closest male friend who wasn't gay.

In *Black White + Grey*, Philippe Garner described Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe as Fin de Siècle characters, very much a double act. What were your impressions of Mapplethorpe?

– I had no contact with Mapplethorpe. Sam tried to get us together at one stage but the vibe wasn't there from the start.

***Black White + Grey* makes it clear that for Wagstaff it was very much about looking, not thinking and putting into words. The book *A Book Photographs from the Collection of Sam Wagstaff* (1978) has just a few poetic lines as an introduction.**

– That was publicly. Privately, Sam loved talking about photographs for hours while showing me pictures in his collection.

It was not just about looking for Wagstaff. It was about possessing, living intimately with the photographs?

– Only a dealer or a collector can take a print with him to bed, metaphorically speaking. It's a kind of intimacy unavailable to curators. The workload is such that if a curator spends an hour a week looking at photographs, that's a lot. Sam once said to me that he regretted not spending more time with his photographs.

Wagstaff sold his photography collection to the Getty Museum. And then he began collecting American silver. Many in the photography world were shocked and appalled. Did it surprise you? Did you discuss it with him?

– Yes, he showed the American silver to me and he absolutely loved it! I just didn't get it at all.

Apart from Wagstaff, were there others who influenced you?

– Yes, Clifford Ackley at The Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He was Curator of Prints, Drawings and Photographs. He was truly a world-class scholar. He wrote some wonderful books, including *Dutch Prints in The Age of Rembrandt* and *Holland on Paper in the Age of Art Nouveau*, one of the most beautiful books in my collection. Cliff would immediately focus on the best and most interesting of what was offered to him. One of the joys of being a photography dealer is that people point things out to me in my own photographs that I hadn't seen before. It's a chastising pleasure. Clifford had that great combination of being a great scholar and having a great eye.

You have often told me "I am a dealer, not a collector".

– I have a few things I like in extreme. I do offer them on occasion but the window of opportunity to buy them is very small. A good example is my absolute greatest French picture, by Dijon, *Farmyard Scene*, 1854. I had it up at Paris Photo a few years ago. Two people almost bought it but no deal was struck so happily it went back into the bank. The pictures I like most are not offered but that doesn't mean they're not for sale.

You're from The Bronx. What was your earliest art experience?

– It was seeing *The Annunciation* by the Master of Flémalle in the Cloisters, the Medieval branch of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in Fort Tryon Park.

Were you at art school?

– Initially I was in a in a PhD programme in literature at Indiana University. But I can proudly say I could have been the worst student they'd ever had in that in that department. Instead I left, dropped out and then I went travelling with Paula in India having



Peter Emerson. *The Snow Garden*, 1895. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz



Vicomte Joseph de Vigier. *Pyrenees*, 1853. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz



Captain Linnaeus Tripe. *Ye-nan Gyoung, Tamarind Tree*, 1855. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz



Roger Fenton. Princesse de Joinville, 1857. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz

met her earlier in Greece. I had no idea what I was going to do with myself. My English father-in-law was an antique restorer. I thought maybe he would teach me what he knew but he wrote me a very nice letter saying “No thank you”. While on a houseboat in Kashmir, Paula suggested I should go into the art business. So I applied to go to Indiana University to study art history as a steppingstone. Because I had studied there before they accepted me. I got my master’s degree and after that I got jobs in New York galleries, pushing a broom and typing letters.

So how did you get into photography?

– A friend of mine from Indiana, Russ Anderson, had gone to England. He was a photographer and he was about to start a job at Sotheby’s photographing furniture and painting. But he bought a photograph for £5 at a flea market and sold it to, I think it was Tom Halstead, for £30. He became a photography dealer the next day. About a year after that, he asked me to join him in business. He thought I was connected to the art world because I had worked in New York galleries. I could tell him which end of a broom to

push but not much else. So in 1975 Paula and I moved to England. I hadn’t looked at a photograph seriously before I became a dealer. A year later my friend moved to California, and he left the business to me. There was enough material at auction to self-educate and at that point in time, I knew a little more than people in America knew which meant that I could function as a dealer. I could buy at Sotheby’s and Christie’s and literally peddle my wares in America. And then it took me about ten years to gather up the courage to go to Paris and buy there. When it comes to photography Paris is the breast that never runs dry.

Did you know pretty quickly that you had it, that is, an eye and a feel for it?

– Not so much that I had it but that I could make a living from it. I think the first year I made about £12 000 which was adequate for the time. Surviving the first year as Robert Hershkowitz Ltd was a milestone and we got through it. Confidence came over time especially with the approval of Sam and Cliff.

Who were on the scene at the time? Who were your competitors?

– In the UK there was Ken Jacobson, the print dealers Lott & Gerish, Howard Ricketts, and Eric Sommer who was a collector. But the main competitors were people who came over from America to buy at auction, Sean Thackery, Sam Wagstaff, Paul Walther, Harry Lunn, Pierre Apraxine of the Gilman Collection, Richard Pare of the Canadian Centre of Architecture and Daniel Wolf. But there was so much varied nineteenth century material at that time and always something that could be bought well. Plus, I always bought for my own taste so if there were things that I liked that nobody else liked it was all the better for me.

I have met a number of dealers over the years who told me that you had been extremely generous with your knowledge, essentially educating them in 19th century photography.

– That's probably true. I have always had an impulse to teach.

Are you considering other ways of passing on your knowledge, a book for instance?

– Unfortunately not. People are going to have to glean what they can from the Fenton show and the essay I am writing for the Photo London catalogue. The notes I have in my inventory are incomplete and often I can't make sense of my own handwriting.

You did the show at Camden Arts Centre in 1980 and now the Fenton show. Do you wish you had done more shows over the years?

– Well, I did I shows at Paris Photo of French Calotypes and British Calotypes, partly because I was upset that when the major museum shows were put together, I had pictures that should have been included but were ignored. There were statements in the British Calotype catalogue *Impressed By Light* such as, “works by this photographer don't exist” and “Only negatives by this photographer exist”. And I had salt prints of both.

In addition to the Fenton exhibition, you also have a stand at Photo London. What will you be showing?

– Probably a couple of Charles Leander Weed mammoth prints of Yosemite, a few Captain Linnaeus Tripe prints of Burma including an expressive print of a Mosque in Burma – historically important because of the current atrocities against the Rohingya. Amongst others I will bring some P.H. Emersons, a Francis Frith of Cairo rooftops, which according to Paula is vaguely Burtynskyesque, Samuel Bourne, plus views of Oxford High Street by Fenton and Talbot, a unique Cameron and works by French masters including Le Gray, Teynard, Baldus, Marville and Salzmann. ●



Roger Fenton. *Oxford High Street*, 1859. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz



William Henry Fox Talbot. *Oxford High Street*, ca.1839. Courtesy of Robert Hershkowitz

AT THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

MARTIN BARNES

SENIOR CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHS

INTERVIEW BY MICHAEL DIEMAR



During the last 20 years, there has been a proliferation of photography museums and centres around the world, public as well as private. Alongside this, a number of older institutions finally accepted photography as an art medium. The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) however, embraced photography right from its inception in 1852. In October last year, it opened a magnificent new Photography Centre.

The Classic spoke to Martin Barnes, Senior Curator of Photographs at the V&A, to discuss his career, the new Centre and the museum's engagement with photography over the years.

Last year, the V&A opened its new Photography Centre. What's the concept behind it and how would you like it to work for the visitors?

– The catalyst for it was the transfer of The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) collection from Bradford in 2017 but we had been planning to expand the galleries for the V&A's permanent collection before we knew it was arriving. The arrival of the RPS collection meant a huge expansion of the collection, not just in terms of numbers, quality and depth but also the kinds of material in it, including camera equipment, negatives, journals, books and images that were meant to be projected in the dark, such as lantern slides and 35 mm carousel slides. All this made me and my colleagues think about presenting photography in all its diversity and different manifestations. We started to think about how a photograph moves from being an idea, jotted down in a journal, to being a negative on glass or paper or some other medium. We considered the kind of camera used to make the negative, the print and how it would appear in a book or magazine, projected or framed as a work of fine art. It was a tremendous opportunity to rethink how we might display a permanent collection of photography. The last gallery was called a "Photographs Gallery" and we wanted to move towards a "Photography Centre" looking at the whole process of photography and produce changing chronological displays that are based thematically. The current hang is on the theme of collecting - photography as a way of collecting the world and making sense of it and about collections within

the collection. The hang extends from the daguerreotype to the digital and actually even before that, an amazing early plate by Nicéphore Niépce and cut paper silhouettes from the 1820's.

And this is the first phase of the project?

– Yes, we are looking to double the space again by 2022. The Centre has been very successful, certainly in terms of the number of visitors. There are roughly 3000 people a day visiting since it opened in October and that's as good as the average for our temporary exhibitions. That's pretty remarkable for a permanent collection gallery. And we are finding that people spend a long time there as well. The exhibition is quite dense as well, about 300 photographs and the same amount of cameras.

Looking back, what sparked your own interest in photography?

– I can remember finding a box of glass negatives at my grandparents' house. They had been made in the 1910's by my great-grandfather who was an amateur photographer. But there were no prints so I printed those photographs when I was at Art College. The magic of working in the darkroom and seeing history come to life, through that family collection of negatives was very special.

You knew your way around a darkroom?

– I had done an O-level in photography at school and we had a great teacher who was very keen on Bill Brandt, Bert Hardy and Henri Cartier-Bresson. So printing the family negatives and being taught the history of photography overlapped. Another important thing for me was the opening of Tate Liverpool and I grew up near the city. I remember seeing an exhibition there when I was 18, and I now realise it was a V&A touring exhibition, called "Towards a Bigger Picture : Contemporary British Photographs" in 1989. It was the first exhibition of photography to be held at Tate Liverpool, and marked the 150th anniversary of the public announcement of photography. I remember very clearly a photocopy work by Helen Chadwick, called *One Flesh*. I also saw an early exhibition of Andreas Gursky there in 1995 so I was introduced to conceptual photography as well.

How did you progress from there?

– During my Art Foundation Course at art school I was wondering whether I should be a graphic designer, or a photographer and I couldn't think of how one might survive as a fine artist. This was pre-YBA and it just didn't seem feasible to me. Plus, I was more interested in reading and writing around art history. I finished my studies at art school and went to Leicester University to study English literature, art history and psychology. I spent every summer as a volunteer at the museums in Liverpool. I worked at Tate on a video festival, at The Bluecoat Art Gallery and at The Walker Art Gallery where I catalogued 19th century paintings, drawings and sculpture. That was my progression into the museum world. And those were really good experiences. After my degree at Leicester University I did



a year long master's degree in museum studies at The Courtauld Institute of Art and that was an important part of forming an interest in the balance between practicality and academia so I was working towards a career in museums.

When did you join the V&A?

– I joined in 1995, and it was the first paid proper job I had had in a museum. The V&A was running a fantastic five-year curatorial training program that I applied for. I was surprised to get an interview. I had applied to other museums outside of London and had interviews but was not offered a job. As part of the V&A training program, you were placed in different departments so it wasn't about the expertise you came with but about being a kind of generalist and letting the museum form your expertise. I worked briefly in the Furniture Department, then I was sent to photograph and sort out about 80 000 nineteenth-century topographical photographs. Mark Haworth-Booth headed the photography collection. Charlotte Cotton and Chris Bucklow were also here so it was a very exciting time to learn about photography from those three people.

You worked under Mark Haworth-Booth. What were the most important things you learnt from him?

– Mark was one of the longest serving curators, the

V&A's first Curator of Photographs, appointed in 1977. He was a wonderful person to work with in that he had a tremendous sense of humour, important as there can be an incredible amount of bureaucracy in a national museum. He had a sense of due process in how to move through things. He had good people skills and what I realised was a kind of low-level persistence at getting things done. He showed how you can create a kind of virtuous circle of activity, how research could be turned into an article, a publication, a display or a touring exhibition. But the most important thing I learnt from Mark was a quality of writing, his sense of incredibly engaging and poetic writing and his precision, really taking the high ground for photography as it can be and taking it as seriously as anything else in the museum, recognizing photography could be many different things depending on how it's applied.

You were also editor of *Talking Photography*. A very important resource that many people may be unaware of. Can you tell me about it?

– *Talking Photography* was a catalogue of the British Library's National Sound Archive collection, the part that was focused on photography. The library has a big collection called "National Life Stories", long, recorded interviews, roughly five hours plus, conducted in an oral history tradition. The interviewer



The V&A Photography Centre Interiors © Will Pryce

keeps the interview chronologically on track and the recording isn't edited in any way. Photography is one strand and it is called "The Oral History of British Photography" and it was focused on British practitioners and people who were involved in photography, including curators, printers, publishers and auctioneers. It was inspired by Val Williams and Rob Perks, The British Library's Curator of Oral History. They realised that there was a whole generation of people in the photography world who were getting quite elderly and whose stories hadn't been captured. Val and others did many of the interviews but more interviewers were needed so Mark, Charlotte and I joined the project. But there was no real listing or catalogue of those interviews and there was also material that had come from BBC radio and television so I worked on a catalogue to make the collection accessible. When we moved from analogue to digital, the catalogue as well as some of the interviews were made available on-line. The project is still going on, with at least few interviews made every year.

Most of the larger institutions came to photography very late in the day but the V&A, or The South Kensington Museum as it was called when it opened in 1852 and until 1899, was there right from the start.

– That came out of Henry Cole's interest in photography. He was the first Director of the museum. He had been instrumental in the administration of the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851 and the role of photography in documenting the prize exhibits. He was an amateur photographer himself. The museum was born out of the profits of The Great Exhibition and as it intended to address questions of quality of design in the industrial age, photography seemed to him an important tool in two aspects. One documenting the growing collections, contextualising and providing education for artists and designers and two, photography as an expressive medium in its own right that could be used by artists. So that was understood right from the start.

How was the early collection of photographs formed and what was in it?

– There were important photographs collected very early on, by Roger Fenton who photographed sculptures at The British Museum, a lot of those pictures ended up here, as well as Édouard Baldus' photographs of the Louvre. We had one of the earliest photography exhibitions here in 1858, a lot pictures which then came into the collection, by people like Robert Howlett. Gustave Le Gray's seascapes and other pictures came into the collection in the 1860's. Charles Thurston Thompson was on the staff and



© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Eadweard Muybridge. *Animal Locomotion, Plate 788, Camel Trotting*, 1887. Albumen print.

was the first permanently employed photographer at the museum. Julia Margaret Cameron had her first exhibition here in 1865. She and Henry Cole had a long correspondence and the letters are in our library. So there was a very interesting and sophisticated understanding of photography at the museum.

Was there a point when the museum stopped acquiring photographs?

– In the early years of 20th Century, there was a discussion across the whole V&A that it would be better off as a historical institution so there was a drop off in acquiring contemporary material. This was just post Art Nouveau and pre First World War. Photography suffered from this of course and it meant that the museum didn't acquire important Pictorialist photographs. A lot of those gaps have now been filled with the RPS collection. Then came the two world wars. They stopped the collecting progress right across the board and photography was one of the casualties.

So international modernism was not collected in any great depth. Apart from what was called "jobbing printing", meaning Bauhaus posters and graphic design which incorporated photography, as well as journals and books. But the collecting of prints had slowed down and it wasn't really until the late 1940's and early 1950's that photography picked up again at the museum.

Was it a question of acquiring what was then contemporary work or?

– It was mostly looking back. There was an important exhibition here in 1939, celebrating the centenary of photography. Quite a lot of material came in from the descendants of the pioneers of photography and it was then that the acquisition of contemporary photography began. The 1960's were important, when the Circulation Department began putting together photography exhibitions. The department had operated since the 19th century and was responsible for

packaging exhibitions to tour throughout the UK. There was a big push to package photography exhibitions as they were easier to manage than other objects in the collections. There were exhibitions of Bill Brandt, Don McCullin, Henri Cartier-Bresson and large amounts of classic black and white photography were collected by the museum for the purposes of touring. Photography really picked up in 1970's, with the support of Director Sir Roy Strong who had come from The National Portrait Gallery and who had a great interest in photography, particularly Cecil Beaton.

And he put Mark Haworth-Booth in charge of photography?

– Yes, Mark had worked in the Circulation Department and was put in charge of building a national collection of the art of photography. From 1977, he was given a substantial remit and a sum of money to look forward and collect contemporary photography and build the collection. At the same, the museum employed a full-time photographs conservator, Elizabeth Martin. Mark capitalised on what was already here and gathered together photographs, mainly from the V&A National Art Library, but also photographs distributed across other departments, partly inspired by MoMA and John Szarkowski's approach.

What did Mark collect?

– Some wonderful prints, real treasures by Man Ray, Walker Evans, Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Ansel Adams, large series of works, largely American, British and Western European photographers. That continued for a little while. Then there was a slight refocus in the early 80's when post-modernism appeared and the collection responded to that, acquiring prints by Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Helen Chadwick, Jo Spence and others. There was also support from outside the traditional canon, David Goldblatt's images of South Africa and work by black, British photographers, including Maud Salter and Ingrid Pollard. Fashion photography has always been a big part of V&A's collection, with Beaton, John French and David Bailey in the collections and with Martin Harrison invited to curate an important exhibition. This was picked up by Charlotte Cotton in the mid-1990's and she acquired works by Corinne Day, Nick Knight, Glen Luchford and many others. She also curated the first really significant Guy Bourdin show here.

It is often said that too many photography treasures have been allowed to leave the country, though others, such as The Herschel Album, were saved for the nation. Are there particularly painful memories for you concerning this? And joyous ones?



Ernest Payne. Album of X-Ray Photographs, 1896. Albumen print.
© The RPS Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

– There was a very important Roger Fenton album, *The Grey Album*, named after the grey pages the prints were mounted on. It was disappointing to see that leave the country but after the album had been split up, prints went to some very important collections, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. So yes, it is painful to see things leave the country but if it goes to a good home elsewhere, it can help improve understanding of British photography overseas. If The Met, Musée d'Orsay or the Pompidou has a representation of say, Cameron or Fenton, then that's a good thing. There is quite a lot of that material in the UK institutions already. If you went to the Met and there wasn't a single painting by Constable, you would probably feel that British art was underrepresented. So I don't think it's as clear-cut as, "treasures leaving the country". But some wonderful things have been saved for the nation, such as a group of Lewis Carroll prints and negatives which are jointly owned by the National Science and Media Museum and were shared by The National Portrait Gallery.



Herbert Ponting. *Scott's Last Expedition. A Dog Team Resting*, 1910. Gelatin silver print.
© Victoria and Albert Museum.

Looking at it historically, have treasures been allowed to leave the UK due to a lack of public funds? And is it easier now to provide funds for photography?

– I don't think it has become that much easier. When an item is sold, it has a certain value and it's been in the country for a certain length of time. It may need an export license and the matter is then sent by the Arts Council to an expert adviser. The question then is, does it meet one of the Waverley criteria? We then have to examine what that is. As long as it meets one of the criteria it has the possibility of an export ban being imposed on it for a certain length of time. It comes down its connection with British history and national life and if its departure would be a misfortune. Or if it is of outstanding aesthetic importance or has significance to a particular branch of study,

in our case photography. And in some cases, an object will match all three of those criteria, though it only needs to match one to qualify. If the panel that has been convened for The Arts Council agree, then there's an export ban for a limited period of time, usually six months, with the possibility of an extension. During that period, there needs to be serious interest from a museum or private individual willing to help a museum to secure the funds to purchase it. I guess there's more interest in photography here now than there was 30 years ago and there are more places one can apply to and there are more private individual who are willing to assist. So it's a little bit easier. But it's still quite rare that something comes up that meets all the criteria and will gather the support that's needed. It can be serious amounts of money that's needed, running into millions of pounds. And that's quite a tall order for photography.

Many in the British photography world regard British photography as undervalued and underappreciated internationally. Do you agree? And do you feel an obligation to support and exhibit it?

– I don't think I would agree that it's undervalued in the rest of the world. It depends on if we are talking about the whole of the medium's history or contemporary photographers. The National Gallery of Art in Washington, The Getty and The Met have been the major supporters in the study of British photography, and in putting together exhibitions and major publications of figures such as Roger Fenton, Captain Linnaeus Tripe and Julia Margaret Cameron, often in collaboration with British institutions and scholars. I think it's possibly more true when it comes to contemporary

British photography. There are some incredible figures who have been working here for the last 30, 40 years, who have serious bodies of work, who would have a higher profile if they had worked in America. That's possibly due to the infrastructure and smaller scale of photography in the UK, fewer outlets, fewer collectors, fewer museums. There's a huge amount of work from people who have worked here from the 1980's onwards who are seriously due for much more recognition. And I do feel an obligation to support and exhibit that. We have quite a lot of work by them. We show it in our galleries though we are not always able to do monographic exhibitions. In the last few years, we have acquired work by many British photographers, or photographers living and working in the UK, including Nick Waplington, Uri Gersht, Richard Learoyd, Jem Southam, Steve Pippin, Paul

Graham, Nigel Shafran, Susan Derges to name a few. So we are balancing the international fine art photographers with British photographers, not just by acquiring work but showing it as well.

Do you get a lot of offers of donations from photographers and estates and how does the decision process work?

– There is a written Collections Development Policy and it can be seen on-line. It's revised every 3 - 4 years and we are just in the process of revising it again due to the arrival of the RPS collection which means that the parameters have shifted. As curators, we need to write a proposal for our curators group meetings. The proposal needs to explain how pictures relate to what we already have in the collection, how they may be used in exhibitions, publications, research, if they deal with topical issues, if they illustrate particular processes and techniques or styles. Also, how they may be used, not just within the photography department but across the museum.

Do you get archives offered as well?

– Whole archives are more problematic. They take up a great deal of space and there's a lot of infrastructure required to conserve, catalogue and make those archives accessible. So even if an archive is offered, it has huge implications for a public institution. There are some really interesting initiatives happening at the moment that have a more joined up approach to photography in the UK. Jem Southam set up very useful website, www.photolegacy.co.uk, and it gives great advice to photographers working with large archives, particularly analogue archives, how to organise and do the first bit of work before it's offered to an institution. And then there's the Photographic Collections Network, a collaborative organisation that's supported by The Art Fund and The Arts Council that gives advice on how to preserve and take care of archives and how to connect with local archives as well as national museums.

The announcement in February 2016 that the RPS collection would be transferred to the V&A from Bradford caused an absolute uproar. One Bradford councillor derided the plan as “an appalling act of cultural vandalism”. On 6 March 2016, The Observer published an open letter opposing the transfer, signed by 88 leading figures in art, film and photography. Were you surprised by the reaction? In retrospect, do you think the whole thing could have been handled better?

– Surprised, yes! And do I think it could have been handled better? Yes! Some of the difficulty around it was really due to a misconception about exactly what it was that was being transferred and the fact that it was being transferred between two national museums. So it was not a collection that was being sold but it was moved without much public discussion.

It was an approach to thinking about where the best location was for the collection and about putting the collection first. Finding a place for it that would allow it to flourish. The difficulty was also that the Science Museum Group initially announced that it was the RPS collection AND the National Media Museum collection that was being offered up for transfer. They later retracted and it ended up being just the RPS collection. There's still the misconception that all of the photographic collections in the National Media Museum have come to the V&A. It's only the RPS collection and the reason was to keep that collection intact and for the Science Museum Group to slow down their process of thinking about what photographs were relevant to them and fit in with their rebranding and refocus. The RPS collection being predominantly but not exclusively a collection of fine art photography, especially Pictorialism, was less useful to them in their new approach

to what they wanted to do in Bradford. That collection was offered to us, we didn't go to seek it out. It was also offered to the Tate and both museums had the expertise and the infrastructure to take care of such a collection. I think there could have been more public discussion about the transfer before it happened. I still think it was the right thing for the collection to come to the V&A as we have the infrastructure and broad focus. Bradford, with their dwindling resources were sadly less and less able to cope with it, both in terms of making it accessible by appointment and to digitise it. Unless the collection is made available physically and digitally, in a sense it doesn't matter where it is. It's more accessible at the V&A than it's ever been.

One of the signees, Colin Ford, the founding director of The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television as it was called when it opened in 1983, would later have a change of heart. In an interview with the magazine *Apollo* in May 2017, he stated that he had been totally impressed and that “the V&A have already done more in terms of sorting it out and storing it than poor old Media Museum did.” But is there still bad blood out there do you think?

– I hope that having created a new Photography Centre and making the collection available in the study rooms here, we will have addressed a lot of the ill feeling. There will probably still be many



William Henry Fox Talbot's mousetrap camera. About 1835
© The RPS Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

people who see it as an emblem of the lack of parity between North and South England in terms of culture, and I agree with that having come from the North England and having worked in museums in Liverpool. That's a problem that's not specific to photography. And it is worth pointing out that the RPS collection was for most of its life based in London and was in Bradford for just 13 years and in Bath for some 20 years prior to that. The RPS collection was sold in 2003 and bought for the nation with most of the funding from the Heritage lottery Fund and Art Fund. The museum in Bradford did a fantastic job in the first stages in terms of sorting and storing it but it's such a huge collection that it has required significant work on it each time it has been moved. This is the greatest level of resources it has ever had and the collection dovetails perfectly with the V&A's existing collection. And I am pleased to see that Colin had a change of heart. When Colin set the museum up, the ambition was to be the national museum of photography, with everything under one roof. I think there's now an understanding, especially after Tate embracing photography, that it can't all be under one roof and that the national collection of photography is distributed between museums and libraries throughout the UK.

The RPS collection was delivered to the V&A in 22 lorry loads over six weekends in February and March 2017. I came across a blog entry detailing the enormous effort that went into taking care of the collection upon its arrival. Has the whole collection been catalogued? How many objects in total are in it? And can all the prints be viewed in the Print Room?

– The collection is estimated in size, it's still not itemised piece by piece. There are around 270 000 photographs, 6 000-10 000 pieces of photographic equipment, about 26 000 books and journals, plus an archive of pamphlets and letters. That's roughly the size of the collection we already had. We have had 160 years to build and deal with the V&A collection. The RPS collection arrived in pretty much one go. Some of it very well catalogued, some of it less so but most of it on paper. Only 2 % had any kind of digital records. But for the first time we were able to give each box a unique number and a basic description of its contents and that information is available on-line. We are now gradually working on itemising each piece. So far we have itemised Fox Talbot, Roger Fenton, Hill & Adamson, Julia Margaret Cameron, Frederick Evans, the holding of the big names, altogether about 6 000 items so there's a lot further to go.

Are there still gaps in the collection as far as you're concerned?

– It's a little bit hard to say as the RPS collection still hasn't been itemised so finding the gaps is going to take some time. There are obvious gaps in terms of

20th century modernism but by this point there are other museums in the world who have great examples that we will never be able to collect, unless there is a huge cache of material that we don't know about yet. The great museums in Germany and America already have great Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray prints so we have to think about gaps in different ways. So the notion of making an encyclopaedic collection of canonical works is past that point. We need to focus on the strengths of what we have. And who's to say what the gaps are? There's one way to think about gaps according to the standard history of photography but there are many other kinds of gaps that are different from what we might have thought of 20 years ago.

When I speak to exhibitors at fairs, especially in classic photography, they tell me that curators are more and more important to their business. Do you feel courted, chased even? And does it get irritating?

– It's not irritating! I like going to fairs to see what's there, talking to dealers as they have tremendous knowledge. It's about sharing an enthusiasm for photography. For me, fairs are one part of the eco system of photography and much of what I do is dealing directly with photographers or with writers and academics. And everybody in that eco system has something valuable to add to it. And I'm glad to be able to support dealers and photographers. Generally, people are very respectful and understand when something doesn't fit into our current plans.

To quote one dealer, "Curators are all different, from the ones who prefer to remain in their ivory towers, to the ones who will head off to any small fair, rummage through boxes, folders and albums". How would you describe yourself in this regard?

– Ha! Well, I suppose the V&A is probably one of the largest ivory towers! But I do go to portfolio reviews, I go to fairs, AIPAD, Paris Photo, I go to Arles. I try to be as invisible as I can to see as much as possible but I also have lots of colleagues who work with me, as well as former colleagues, friends and collectors who work with the museum. As a curator, I may not always be extremely visible but that doesn't mean I'm not looking in different ways.

You have curated numerous exhibitions, at the V&A as well as touring exhibitions. Has your approach to curating changed over the years and if so how? Is the audience more informed than say 30 years ago?

– One can never really assume what an audience knows or brings to an exhibition. It's interesting to work at the V&A where there are so many types of exhibitions being proposed. We who work in photography expect a certain level of recognition from the other departments but we can't expect that from a general audience. It's always worth being placed



Francis James Mortimer
*Alvin Langdon Coburn at the Opening of
His One-Man Exhibition at the Royal
Photographic Society, London, 1906.*
Carbon print.

in a position where you have to explain something to somebody who's generally interested in design culture but who may not be familiar with the names of Bill Brandt, Ansel Adams or Philip-Lorca diCorcia. My approach is always to present it as something the visitors may not know anything about but that the visitors are intelligent, interested and that the voice that you use is clear, not full of jargon and that the way you make a visual experience for somebody is enjoyable. And the approach at the V&A is always



Thomas Ruff. *Tripe*, 2018. © Courtesy of Thomas Ruff and David Zwirner Gallery

to go to the object, recognising its value, not just financial but the aesthetic and cultural. In terms of curating, I think I have become better at judging what would make a good exhibition as opposed a good book, magazine article, symposium or website. With exhibitions, it's about producing an experience that happens in a real place, in real time, in a design, executed almost in a theatrical way to make an enjoyable experience. We are lucky in that photography is very accessible. It's easy to do, in that making a piece of silverware is not. So there is an immediate understanding but the difficult bit is to explain why the best photographs are very difficult to produce. My job is to explain why the very best photographs are exciting and worth spending time looking at.

In October, the V&A unveiled a new commission by Thomas Ruff, inspired by Captain Linnaeus Tripe's images of India and Burma. Did you suggest Tripe to Ruff? Or did he come up with the idea?

– This was the first in a series of planned commissions. The concept is to let a photographer be inspired by the collection. Thomas was very interested in looking at the paper negatives we have. He looked at lots of different negatives, by Fox Talbot, Benjamin Brecknell Turner and others. He knew of Tripe but he had never seen actual negatives by him before. There are over 400 paper negatives by Tripe in the RPS collection and he was really excited by them, the aesthetics and the way that Tripe retouched the negatives, painting in clouds and other details. He made a final selection of 20 negatives. We shot them hi-res digitally and gave him the files to work with. We are very happy with that project because it represents a new way of looking at and understanding the history of photography.

What do you have planned in terms exhibitions and projects?

–We have a big exhibition on Tim Walker, curated by Susanna Brown, coming up in September. I'm working on an exhibition on Maurice Broomfield's photographs of industrial Britain in the 1950's and 60's. But the biggest thing is phase 2 of the Photography Centre. It will double its size and in addition to more exhibition spaces, we are planning a library, the inclusion of a period darkroom and a residency space for visiting photographers which explains why we have called it a Centre rather than simply a gallery. ●



Mark Cohen. *One Red Glove*, Wilkes-Barre, PA, 1975. Dye-transfer print. © Mark Cohen & Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Frederick William Bond. *Contents of an Ostrich's Stomach*, ca.1930. Bromide print. © The RPS Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum

ON

THE **ALEX NOVAK**
COLLECTION OF
EARLY NEGATIVES

PAPER

AND

INTERVIEW BY MICHAEL DIEMAR
IMAGES COURTESY OF ALEX NOVAK,
CONTEMPORARY WORKS/VINTAGE WORKS

GLASS



Strike up a conversation with dealers in classic photography and you will soon discover not only the depths of their passion for the medium but also that many of them started out as collectors before venturing into business. And at some point they inevitably reached a crossroads where they had to resolve the conflict of interest between themselves and their clients.

Some dealers resolve the conflict by collecting outside the medium, others by collecting periods or areas unrelated to their businesses. It's fairly common for dealers to assemble little thematic collections, be it photo booth strips, poker players, anonymous snapshots, often with a humorous twist.

For the American dealer Alex Novak however, collecting photography has remained a very serious pursuit indeed. Over the last two and a half decades he has put together a formidable collection of negatives from the 1840's, 50's and 60's, that is, negatives on paper, waxed paper and Collodion on glass.

Those unacquainted with negatives by the master photographers from this period are often surprised when they come across them for the first time, not least because of their sizes, the larger ones measuring around 35 x 45 cm and sometimes even bigger. A necessity for any photographer back then who wanted to offer large prints as positives had to be contact printed. It was fairly common practice to paint the sky area black to achieve bright clear skies. Gustave Le Gray, André Giroux and Édouard Baldus would paint in details or add clouds by using two negatives. This caused controversy in some circles as photography was supposed to give an accurate depiction of the world.

No doubt, early negatives are deeply fascinating and I have sometimes reflected that the negatives of some

fairly pedestrian positives can have a remarkable beauty and strong presence. As for prices? Smaller, less important negatives from the period can still be picked up relatively cheaply while the masterpieces now reach well into six figures.

Alex Novak is the owner of Contemporary Works/Vintage Works and has over 40 years' experience in the photography collecting arena. In 1997, following a successful career in publishing, he decided to launch his own business. "I just didn't want to sit in a gallery waiting for the occasional client to walk in. With the changes that were being made with the Internet, I decided to base my business around it." Within years, his portal, I Photo Central, had become one of the largest private photography dealerships in the world, with an inventory covering the whole of the medium's history.

And on April 25, 1999, Novak launched the E-Photo Newsletter, filled with auction and fair reports, industry matters and opinions. Initially sent out to few hundred recipients, today it has a readership of nearly 15 000. And it's still free.



Henri Victor Regnault or Louis-Remy Robert. Courtyard of the Manufactory, Sèvres, 1852. Paper negative.



Dr. John Murray. *Gateway Fort, Agra with Horse, Wagon, & Four Figures (Delhi Gate), 1858-1862.* Waxed paper negative.

I started out by asking Novak to provide an overview of the collection.

– This unique collection is thought to be the largest and most diverse collection of its kind in private hands, with more than 235 paper negatives in all, and that's way more than most institutional collections. It also contains approximately 50+ matching, or close matching, vintage positives, plus some additional modern positives. In addition, the collection contains some of the only known masks for printing positives from paper negatives, which consist of 18 such masks, which are part of the Eugene Nicholas collection. These were acquired from the André Jammes collection in November 2017.

Most of the major French photographers are included

in Novak's collection, as well as a large group of negatives of English, Belgian, Italian, German, Portuguese views. Novak continues.

– Just some of the photographers that are in substantial depth or are represented by multiple images in this collection include: Charles Negre, Julien Vallou de Villeneuve, Eugene Nicholas, Félix Teynard, François De Campigneulles, Édouard Baldus, Gustave De Beaucorps, Louis De Clercq, Dr. John Murray, Louis Alphonse de Brébisson, Octave de Bermond de Vaulx, Varin Frères, Baron Louis-Adolphe Humbert de Molard, Louis Robert, Louis-Alphonse Poitevin, John Beasley Greene, Frédéric Flacheron, Gustave Le Gray, Fortune-Joseph Petiot-Groffier, Capitaine Louvel, Rev. Calvert Jones, John

Jabez Edwin Mayall, Louis-Alphonse Davanne, Dominique Roman, Pansin, George Hilditch and Ferdinand Tillard. Other important photographers that are represented by single negatives, although there might be a matching positive, include: Lewis Carroll, John Moyer Heathcote, Henri Le Secq, Ange Eugene Henri Mailand, Antonio Giannuzzi, Jean Sosthène Pector, Auguste Salzmänn, Adolphe Bilordeaux, Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald, Richard Dykes Alexander, John Wiggin, Samuel Smith, Nevil Story-Maskelyne, August Wilhelm Wedeking, Marquis de Rostaing, John Brampton Philpot, Captain Thomas Biggs, Frederick William Flower and Jules Dubosq. While the value of the collection is inestimable, its financial worth is in the vicinity of \$4 million.

What was the first negative you bought?

– The first paper negative I purchased is still in my collection and I bought it from Harry Lunn in 1997. Buying it from Harry was an experience. It was a Louis Robert of a Cascade, Chateau Saint Cloud, circa 1854. Harry's wife was a relative of the Roberts. Harry told me that they would only sell him one or two a year, in order to force him to come and visit with his wife. Harry quoted me the price after a lunch that included a bottle of wine. He later told me that he had made a mistake in my favor but that he was going to keep that quoted price because it was his birthday.

And then you carried on collecting negatives. What was it about them that grabbed you?

Was it the rarity? A negative is a unique object.

– I guess what struck me about the negative was a number of things. First, its fragility, either in paper or glass. It was rarely kept, even in many family archives. And it would often be destroyed in fires, floods, or through accidents. The uniqueness and rarity was something appreciated by only a few top 19th century century dealers and one or two collectors. I remember what auction expert Philippe Garner told me after the Jammes sale at Sotheby's, "It is easy to get enthused. When you are looking at the paper negative up to the light, the light brings the thing to life. The highlights on a positive print can only be as bright as the papers themselves, which in the 19th century were never that white. You had to manipulate the highlights by contrast or other forms of stealth. But the negative seen against the light has that extraordinary light source itself for viewing, which is very magical."

What was the market like when you entered it? Did you have much competition?

– I kept hoping that there weren't many people interested in the area, but there were always other dealers and collectors in competition even well over 20 years ago. And material would rarely come on the market, and then usually in France.

Serious collectors of early photographs will have at least a few negatives in their collections. Was it always that way or was there a sea change at some stage?

– Paper negatives have always been an "insider" obsession. Dealers have always recognized them for what they are: unique art objects. Museums and collectors have been slower to pick up on this, but now the trend is in full swing, especially after dealer Hans Kraus, Jr.'s exhibition on the negative several years ago and the second Sotheby's Paris Jammes auction in 2002. Then there were the auctions of Louis De Clercq and Félix Teynard paper negatives in Chartres.



Louis De Clercq Seville. Alcazar. Porte d'Entree, 1860. Albumen print and its corresponding waxed paper negative.

As collector Michael Mattis commented, “That, among many other ‘firsts’, the Jammes auctions mark the long-awaited arrival of the waxed paper negative as a fully valued component of the 19th century photography market.”

He must be right because the world record for a paper negative fell four times during that sale. The six-figure paper negative is now a reality many times over. Glass had already made it to that level with Sotheby’s Lewis Carroll sale in London, which all got National Treasured. The one in my own collection came out of the U.K. in the mid-1970’s, which will tell you a little about the change in interest.

How did your collection grow? Where there stages in the collecting process? Different strategies? A change of focus?

– I guess it started a bit accidentally. I would buy a negative, along with other positive prints, rarely distinguishing between them. Both were held equally in my esteem. But as I saw the occasional rare opportunity to acquire a new group of negatives, the collection began to take on a unique importance. As a dealer, I never wanted to compete with clients for an image, so negatives became an area where I could build a collection that few of my clients really pursued. And as it grew, I started to focus on new names to add to the collection, although I always tried to buy a top image as well.

There are individual negatives in the collection, as well as combinations of negatives and their positives. Do you usually try to acquire the positives as well?

– Wherever I can, I try to buy or find the negative’s complementary positive print. Often they are very separate purchases. One good example is the Lewis Carroll in my collection. I had bought the glass plate negative from Hans Kraus, Jr. in early 2012. During a visit to the small vintage fair in Paris during November 2017, I bumped into West Coast dealer/collector Stephen White, and we decided to have lunch and catch up with each other. Stephen is a long-time friend, and, like a good dealer, is always selling. Over lunch he showed me things on his phone that he had for sale, including a single Lewis Carroll that he had repurchased from an old client. I said that I might be interested, and he should send me a jpeg. He did and I matched it exactly with the glass plate negative that I had bought from Hans Kraus. After a little negotiation, the positive joined its negative companion in the collection.





Louis Alphonse de Brébisson. *Chêne de Henri IV*, Château de la Tour, near Falaise, 1850. Paper negative.
Oak Tree of Henry IV. Extremely rare and early negative by one of the French pioneers of photography.



Lewis Carroll. Xie Kitchin as "Chinese Tea-Merchant" (*On Duty*), 14 July 1873. Collodion wet-plate glass negative and albumen print positive.

What can the negatives tell us that the positives can't?

– Negatives are a purer expression of what the photographer saw without the addition of their second-guessing. Often you see the retouching of the sky and other parts of the image, so you see more clearly the hand work that the photographer put into their image.

During the preview of the Dr. John Murray sale at Sotheby's in 1999, many dealers and collectors got the impression that he seemed to have been more focused on making negatives than printing positives from them. Can you think of similar cases?

– I think that was true of many photographers, particularly the early aristocratic amateurs. It's a bit like 20th century photographers and their contact sheets. You can see how many images that they took and how many or few they printed. Admittedly many of the early practitioners took fewer images because of the expense and difficulty processing them. Even the "failures" are wonderful to experience and learn from.

There are a number of photographers whose extant work consists solely of negatives, among them Alexander John Colonel Greenlaw (1818-1870). The earliest known positives of his images of Hampi were printed in 1910. Are there others that come to mind?

– Except for the "published" photographers, mostly photographing antiquity, or documenting the impact of war or changing architecture, positives of early paper or glass negatives are often extremely rare or non-existent. Many of the amateurs would never get around to printing much of their oeuvre. But there are other examples of later printing. Dr. Thomas Keith's positives are quite rare outside of the later platinum prints of his negatives made by Alvin Langdon Coburn. I have a negative by Frederick William Flower with two later-printed positives – one from around 1900 and the other from 1980.

I have seen references that in the 1850's, some photographers exhibited negatives as objects of beauty in their own right. How common was this?

– It was relatively common and is documented in a number of publications of the time, including *Le Bulletin de la Société Française de Photographie*.



Louis De Clercq. *Heliopolis (Baalbeck), Remains of the Temple to Jupiter*, 1859/1860. Waxed paper negative and Salt print from paper negative.

Today we take standardisation for granted. Back then, papers had to be purchased from a paper dealer and then prepared by the photographer. During a meeting at the Heliographic Society in Paris 1851, Édouard Dellesert complained that from the batch of 500 papers he had purchased 15 days earlier, only 10 were usable, the rest being contaminated, impure and uneven.

– It was indeed an age of experimentation, but former Getty scientist Dusan Stulik once told me that “I only wish we would have their selection of thin negative papers now!” Some sources, of course, were better than others, and as time went on, more consistent paper for such photographs was produced, even apparently in large rolls.

The paper negative process went through stages, first paper, then waxed post-exposure, then waxed pre-exposure?

– Like a lot of photography, the creative process wasn’t always in a straight line. People were still using paper in the 1870’s and even later. Some of the same experimenters would return to older approaches later for effect. Gustave Le Gray is often credited with much of the technical advancement in the negative, but many others were certainly involved. Work went on in parallel.

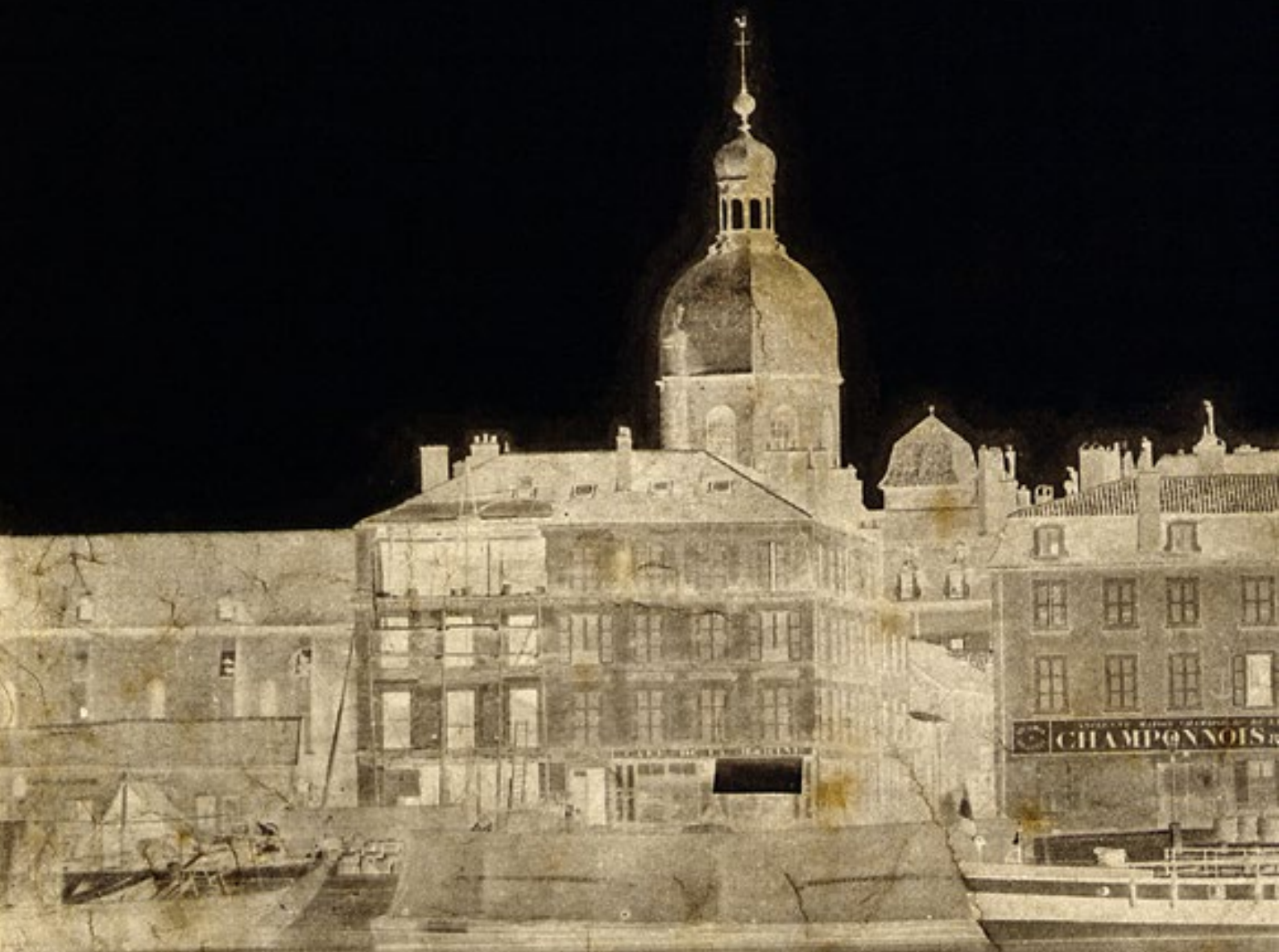
Wet collodion on glass was introduced in 1851. Then as now there was a hunger for the new. By the time Félix Teynard’s paper negatives of images of Egypt were printed and offered for sale in 1858, the market preferred images made from glass negatives as they offered greater clarity, like those made by Francis Frith for instance. And yet some photographers remained faithful to the paper negative, among

them Henri Le Secq and Benjamin Brecknell Turner who experimented briefly with glass but returned to paper. Are there others that come to mind?

– There were good reasons for early Middle East photographers like Teynard, Greene, Giannuzzi, De Campigneulles and De Clercq to use paper. In fact travel photographers tended to use paper negatives more often and longer than their Continental brethren. It was cheaper, weighed less and was not subject to breakage. It also was easier to use than wet-plate collodion in the hot, dry climate of desert areas. So even into the mid to late 1860’s, people like Henri Sauvaire and Louis Vignes still photographed in the Middle East with paper negatives. And photographers, like Paul Delondre, were known for using paper negatives into the 1870’s, just because they preferred the effect.

What are the main conservation issues with paper and early glass negatives?

– Breakage is the key concern with glass, but the normal issues of moderate humidity and cool temperature applies. Since most have not been exhibited or shown in ways that the positives have, they tend to be in better tonality, but they have the same light sensitivity that the positives have. Creasing is common in waxed paper negatives, but there are conservators who can repair this and other typical photography issues. Obviously, you want to use a top conservator for any such work. Gary E. Albright, Juan-Juan Chen and Kate Jennings wrote an excellent paper on “Treatment Options for Paper Negatives in 2003 for Topics in Photographic Preservation, Volume 10, published by the Photographic Materials Group (PMG) of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC).



Fortune-Joseph Petiot-Groffier or Edouard Baldus. *Chalon-sur-Saône with Buildings and Paddle Wheel Steamboat*, 1854. Paper negative.

Is there much institutional research into early negatives today? And what's your impression institutional purchasing policy towards early negatives?

– Unfortunately there is little serious research being done to my knowledge. There are a few papers on early techniques, but little else. I am largely unimpressed with most institutions and their antiquated attitudes toward early negatives. They seem to think that one or two examples are sufficient for their collection to be complete. I wonder if they would say that one or two silver prints are enough.

Where are the best collections of early negatives in your opinion?

– There are about four top institutional collections: the Victoria & Albert Museum, now that they have consolidated all the UK photo collections there; the Bibliothèque nationale de France; The George Eastman House, which has about 600 paper negatives and the Société Française de Photographie. I once spent a week at the latter going through its fine collection of just paper negatives. The problem was all the missing ones. Security in the past has not been a priority there, and even today, it's not the best.





Eugène Nicolas. *Studies of Ships and Views of Tréport, France, 1850-1855*. Paper negative and mask.

There are some good examples in other museum collections, of course, but really nothing as comprehensive as what I've tried to build with my collection. There are three other 19th century collectors who have given the area more respect than the institutions. Besides myself, James Hyman, Thomas Walther and Michael Mattis have made the paper negative an important priority in their collection of 19th century work.

While Dr. John Murray's negatives can be seen and displayed without backlighting, most other negatives require some kind of lighting system. What are your thoughts on the available systems? I have noted that some dealers and collectors have conservation concerns about them? Do you use display systems yourself?

– Negatives require the same care as other photographic material. Heat and light should always be kept to a minimum. I once saw some very important glass plate negatives being shown at AIPAD that

literally had the emulsion buckling away from the surface of the glass due to the intense heat of the lamps below them lighting them. There are plenty of cold systems today that with proper attention to normal museum glazing would do perfectly well. I have often just framed a negative like a positive. Some "read" that well. The rest I keep in archival materials, just as I would for any other photograph.

In May 2012, Christie's London offered two glass negatives by Frantisek Drtikol for sale, nude studies 1925-1928, both estimated at £6 000-8 000.

I know of at least one other auction house that turned them down, thinking they wouldn't sell. Well, they did. One went for £13 750, the other for £16 250. There is also a certain amount of trade in 35 mm and medium format negatives, some of it illicit I suspect. Can you see a more coherent market emerging for 20th century negatives?

– Only for the most significant images and photographers. Personally I have no interest in the later work,



but I could see the possibilities. Part of the problem is that much of it is rather small, such as 35 mm film.

You have collected negatives for a long time. Do you have particular favourites in your collection?

– It's a bit like asking a father which is his favorite child? Of course there are more "important" pieces than others, although what I consider important might not be what someone else does. For instance, I think the printing masks in the Eugene Nicholas collection are extremely important. They are the only examples outside of the Bibliothèque Nationale that I am aware of. They show how the photographer would be able to print difficult negatives in a very sophisticated fashion. It truly is fascinating.

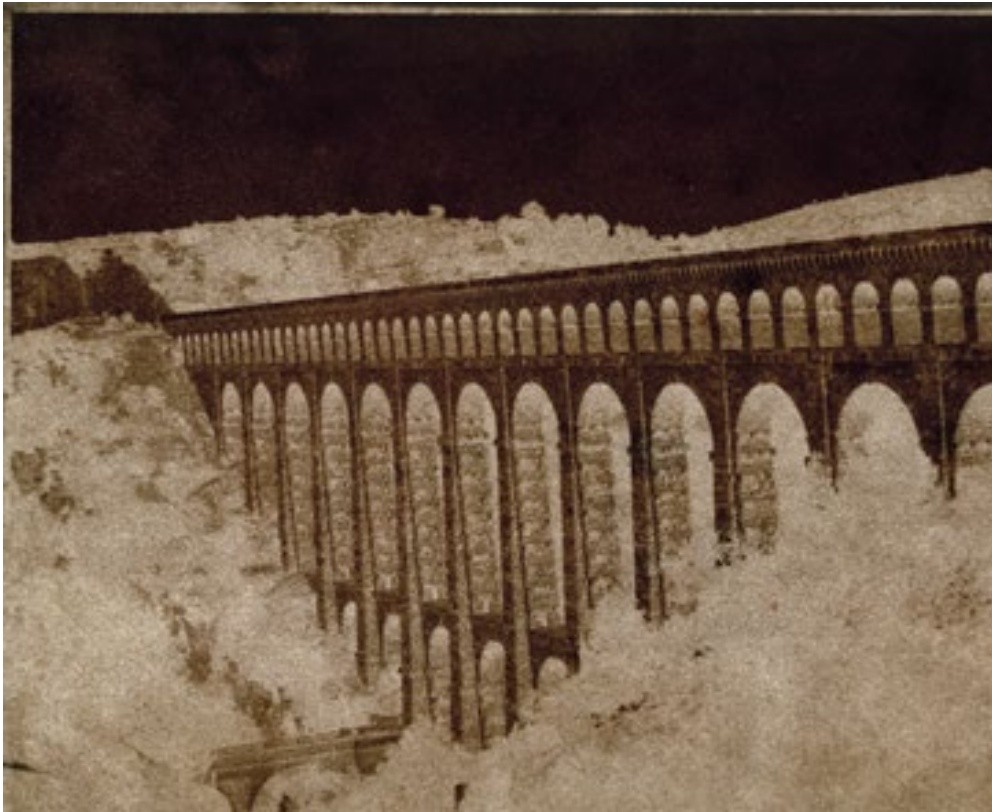
Every collector has painful memories of "the ones that got away". Are there particular negatives that come to mind?

– Yes, especially since I was there first. At Paris Photo a few years ago, Hans Kraus had a paper negative of a bridge by Captain Linnaeus Tripe, the

one on the cover of the Tripe book. He actually had two negatives by Tripe, but this one of the bridge was the killer. I had never seen a Tripe negative on the market before, let alone one of such an important image. I didn't have the cash at that particular moment, but offered to pay for it the following April, after the AIPAD show. It was a consignment piece and he didn't feel that he could make the consignor wait that long. He told me he'd sell it to me that way, but only if it didn't sell at the show. Of course, it sold in the first 15 minutes after the show opened. There are others that I couldn't afford at the time. There always are.

What do you plan to do with the collection? Are you still adding to it and are there gaps you need to fill?

– Eventually I would like to sell it, preferably to a strong institution. It was almost sold in 2017, but the finances for the person fell through. Yes, I am still adding to the collection when I see a piece or photographer that would add something. ●



Octave de Bermond de Vaulx (attributed to). *Aqueduc du Roquefavour*, 1854. Paper negative.



Baron Louis-Adolphe Humbert de Molard. *The Hunters*, 1848. Paper negative.



Julien Vallou de Villeneuve. *Standing Female Nude*, 1852. Paper negative.

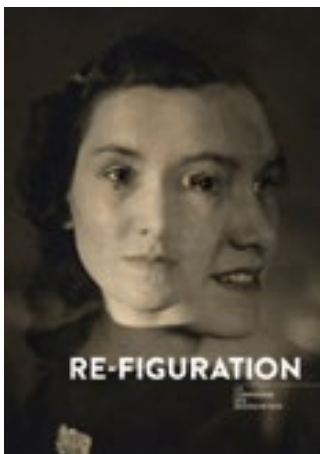
LA COMPAGNIE DES SNAPSHOTTERS

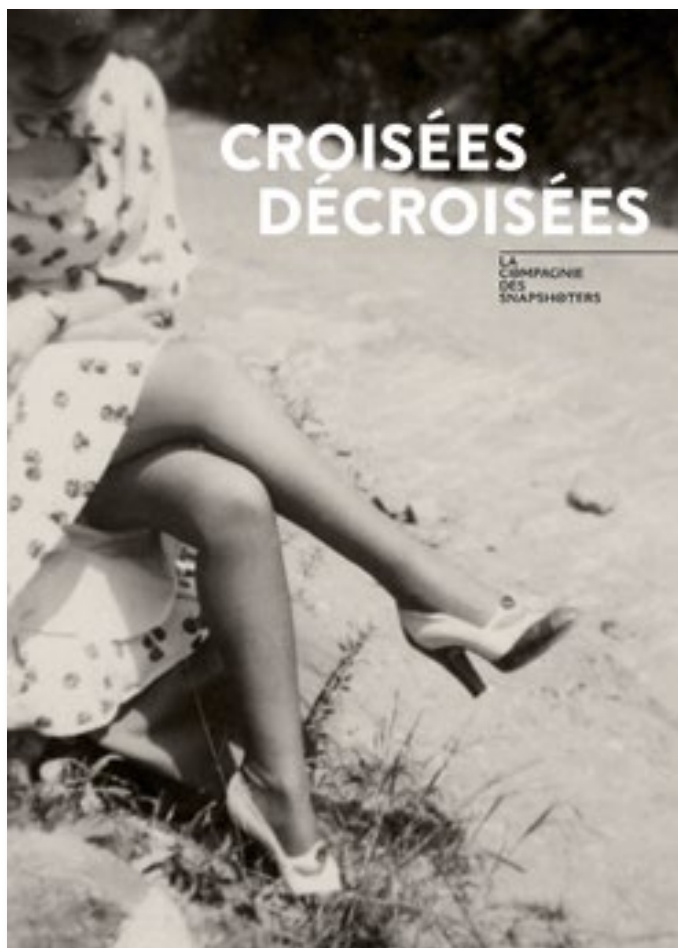
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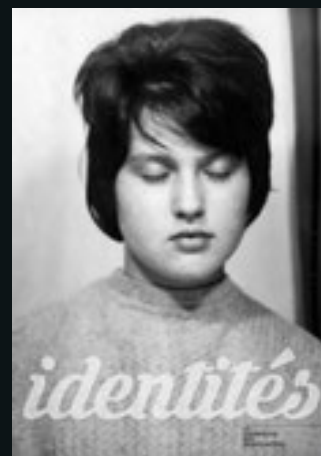
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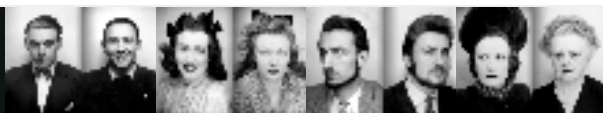


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CHRISTOPHE GOEURY

INTERVIEW BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

An independent French expert in collectible photography working with several auction houses since 1993, Christophe Goeury has been with the Millon auction house since 2003.

Goeury is well known and highly respected throughout the photography world for his knowledge and skill. He has sold some very important collections over the years, including the Brassai estate, the Blanc et Demilly archive and the Gérard Lévy collection.

Christophe Goeury talked to *The Classic* about his career and his work as an auction expert.

Séeberger Frères.

Mode 1909-1919 : La Mode aux Courses, Éléantes à Auteuil, Bagatelle, Longchamp, Chantilly et la Mode au Bois de Boulogne. Important lot of approx. 1 800 vintage prints by studio Séeberger, Approx. 170 x 120 mm.

Sale 8 November 2016

Result: 25 000 €, Record at auction (Estimation: 8 000 - 10 000 €)

INDEPENDENT FRENCH EXPERT IN PHOTOGRAPHY



© Natalia Rachiborski

How would you describe your approach to preparing an auction?

– My goal is to offer sales that attract major collectors and institutions in France and internationally. I organise on average 8 to 12 auctions per year and develop sales consisting mainly of photographic archives and collections, cinema photography, and photography that is for “everyone”. The first step for me is to find and sell photographic archives, major collections and successions, historically fascinating ensembles such as the Brassai estate, Ilse Bing, the Gérard Lévy collection, the frères Séeberger, all sold through the Millon auction house in Paris. For others, I give myself the objective to highlight works like those of Edouard de Campigneulles, Cami and Sasha Stone, Frédéric Barzilay, Blanc et Demilly or more recently Claude Dityvon.

I “construct” an event based on and around the photographer’s story by highlighting the singularity of his work and the particularity of his style. My goal is reached when, after weeks or even months of work, the interest in the sale is such that it becomes essential for the big collectors and institutions to acquire these prints. These images join major collections and departments of museums, adding value to their cultural heritage.

It’s obvious that a lot of work goes into the design of the catalogues.

– The catalogues are very important. For each auction, I design a unique catalogue that represents the singular work of each photographer. I manage every aspect of the design, from start to finish, because to me it reflects the high expectation of an expert’s work for the benefit of the collection or archive presented. These catalogues are close to a monograph and have a place in a collector’s library. I add value to each auction catalogue through innovation in their function. From being a simple tool for an interested buyer, they have now become collector’s items. For monographic sales, the catalogues are published in a luxurious and limited edition, and are enriched with an original print, like the Blanc et Demilly sale at Millon in 2008.

In addition, facsimiles of all the artist’s signatures and wetstamps are printed in the catalogue, as was seen for the first time at the Brassai estate auction at Millon in 2006.

There are many elements that need to come together to make a successful auction?

– Yes, the team that surrounds me offers personalised communication with the press, collectors and institutions in order to have positive results at the auction. With our methods of communication, for example, we obtained surprising results during the Claude Dityvon sale at Millon in 2018, which resulted in a publication every day for 15 days in a national newspaper. This team is very present also during the scenography that I put in place to present the sale. Scenography is essential to me. I choose to move away from a linear presentation with the intention of giving the viewers an original visual rhythm. Each new archive or collection to which I am committed is a challenge. First is to listen, understand and interact with my interlocutors, whether they are private collectors or descendants of the photographer’s family. Trust is essential. What do I offer a family, or a collector who owns a photographic collection? An exposure of the value of their archive on an international level that can reach



Mécanisme de la Physionomie Humaine de Dr. Duchenne de Boulogne, Edition de luxe in-quatro, 1862, 72 prints.

Sale 8 November 2004. Result: 210 000 € (Estimation: 80 000 - 100 000 €)



Charles Leander Weed. *Yosemite Valley*, 1865. Albumen print, 395 x 515 mm.
Sale 16 June 2017, *Photographies Collections & Propositions*. Result: 19 000 € (Estimation: 8 000 - 10 000 €)



Gustave de Beaucorps. *Perspective vers les moulins de Montmartre*, Paris, ca. 1856. Waxed paper negative.

any interested institution or significant collectors. How is this achieved? Through different proposals, including the design of a catalogue and organising a sale in order to bring the photographer into the history of photography and collections.

When did you first become interested in photography?

– My father was an amateur photographer and when I was six years old he began teaching me printing techniques in his darkroom. I graduated from the European Business School and I started a career as a senior manager in a service company. At the age of 30, I left my job to travel the world as an independent photographer in countries like Mauritania, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, and around Europe. I did photographic stories for Figaro, VSD and Life and my photographs were distributed by the Gamma agency.

Are you a collector as well?

– I have always been a collector, since childhood. I was interested in Vallauris ceramics because of the influence of Picasso who made wonderful ceramics there in the 1950's. I got to know the ceramicists in Vallauris and this led me to working on a book. Sadly, it was never published. I was ahead of the 1950's trend that emerged in the 1990's. I also began to build a collection of photomontages made from the 19th century and up until 1910, which I call "surrealism in the 19th century before Dadaism". They are photographs made using various techniques, photomontage, collage, multiple exposure, superimposition, techniques that were taken up by the Dadaist then

the Surrealist movement in the 20th century. Museum curators often ask me to loan works from my collection for their research work or when conceiving their exhibitions. I also collect photographs that in my opinion have not yet found their true place on the market: cinematic photography. My main focus is German Expressionist and the French avant-garde.

When did you enter the auction business?

– I was always passionate about the art world and I started collaborating with artists and auction houses in the early '90s. In 1993, I took photographs for an auctioneer in Argenteuil, the Parisian suburb. It was for the estate of the French decorator Amable Petit, best known for his work in theater and opera at the end of the 19th century. During a shoot, with the help of another employee, we had to move a gigantic painting called "*Une odalisque fumant de l'opium*". That's when we discovered an important ensemble of 19th century photographs which Amable Petit had used as documentation for his set designs. My interest and curiosity for this group of photographs convinced the auctioneer to entrust me with the organisation of the sale. There were 2,800 photographs consisting of salt paper and albumen prints. It took me several weeks of research to identify and attribute the photographers, Gustave Le Gray, Charles Clifford, Alphonse Delaunay, Bisson Frères among others. The sale was a tremendous success with institutions, museums, with French and mainly American collectors present. Among them was the great collector Roger Thérond, the director of Paris Match. At that time,



Sale 13 May 2015
Result: 9 000 € (Estimation: 6 000 - 8 000 €)



Camille Dolard. *Autoportrait en Fumeur de Narguilé dans un Décor Oriental*, 1845. Full plate daguerreotype 165 x 213 mm. Sale 20 December 2016, *Photographies de Collection L'Excellence d'un Regard*
Result: 152 000 €, *Record at auction* (Estimation: 40 000 - 60 000 €)

the French photography market as we know it today was almost non-existent. The craze emanating mostly from across the Atlantic gave me the intuition that the French market was in its infancy and that it had a very bright future.

Is it getting harder and harder to find strong material? While 19th century material is becoming more and more scarce in most countries, it seems there's always material in France?

– I am convinced that there are still important collections of photographs to discover in France. The calotypes of Edouard de Campigneulle on his trip to Egypt, which were thought to be lost, were found and entrusted to me. The sale was organized at Millon in 2016 and generated a lot of success. Once again, French and international buyers were present. This example gives hope for some nice surprises to come.

I suspect there is a lot of competition between Millon and the other auction houses in Paris. As an expert, do you find that the consignors mostly look for the highest estimates?

– There is a growing number of auction houses and experts wishing to organize sales of photographs and it does lead to many outbidding each other with regards to estimates in order to obtain the mandate of the seller. Many photographs already have an established market value. Others wait for future “recognition”. Anticipating this is part of my expertise.

When did you start “Photographies Pour Tous”, “Photographs For Everyone”, and what was the idea behind it?

– I created “Photographies Pour Tous” in 2012, a new and innovative auction concept because I felt the collectible photography market needed to be rejuvenated, and we needed to rekindle the interest of the collectors. Fairs such as “Paris Photo” are full of visitors. However, a number of them are “visual consumers” but they do not collect photographs in the true sense of the word. We needed to increase the desire to collect in this young public who are in love with photography.

The concept of these auctions is to present a significant number of prints consisting of more than 500 lots, instead of the usual 250 to 300, at attractive prices. I select prints in a very wide range of subjects, themes, periods and very different photographers. I choose them for their visual and graphic quality, or their historical interest. Organising a sale of such high volumes requires a lot curatorial work to keep a consistent level of quality. Each print is carefully selected. Some would not have been considered “presentable” in a conventional catalogued sale due their lower value recognition. These sales are presented without a printed version, only through an online “e-catalogue”. It turned out that a younger audience was quickly receptive to this new concept, just as I had hoped. The bidders of the first edition came back for the second. They developed a deeper interest, and some were able to return to bid with a higher budget. New collectors have appeared due to the wide range of subjects being sold. Over time, some



Bisson Frères. *Savoie 43, Le Passage des Échelles*, 1861. Albumen print, 217 x 358 mm.

Sale 7 November 2017, *Photographies Collections & Propositions*. Result: 9 500 € (Estimation: 10 000 - 15 000 €)

have become true collectors with higher value acquisitions. These are new and young collectors who I hope will become great collectors in the future.

I enjoy those auctions myself and I'm particularly interested in the silent film material.

– That's another of area of photography that I like and I have promoted it since 1996. I worked on sales of major collections in that area, including the collection of Nelly Kaplan, partner of Abel Gance, the director of the masterpiece of silent film, *Napoléon* (1927) as well as auctions of other collections of recognized celebrities. Here again the buyers are institutions, museums and big collectors, and we try to organize cinematic auctions every other month.

Attracting new, young collectors to the market is a much-discussed topic among dealers and galleries in classic photography. What are your thoughts on this and do you have strategies to suggest?

– “Photographies Pour Tous” is just one strategy. The combination of an “educational” approach and cohesion in the choice of images works perfectly in this context. Other strategies are events and presentations. For example, before the sale dedicated to a collection of Chinese photographs in 2016, we organised a conference given by Alain Sayag, former Curator of photography of the Pompidou Center and the Museum of Modern Art in

Paris. Another example is the monographic sale of Claude Dityvon last May. After a traveling exhibition in different cities, I gave a lecture about the photographer's work.

Do you have anything exciting in the pipeline?

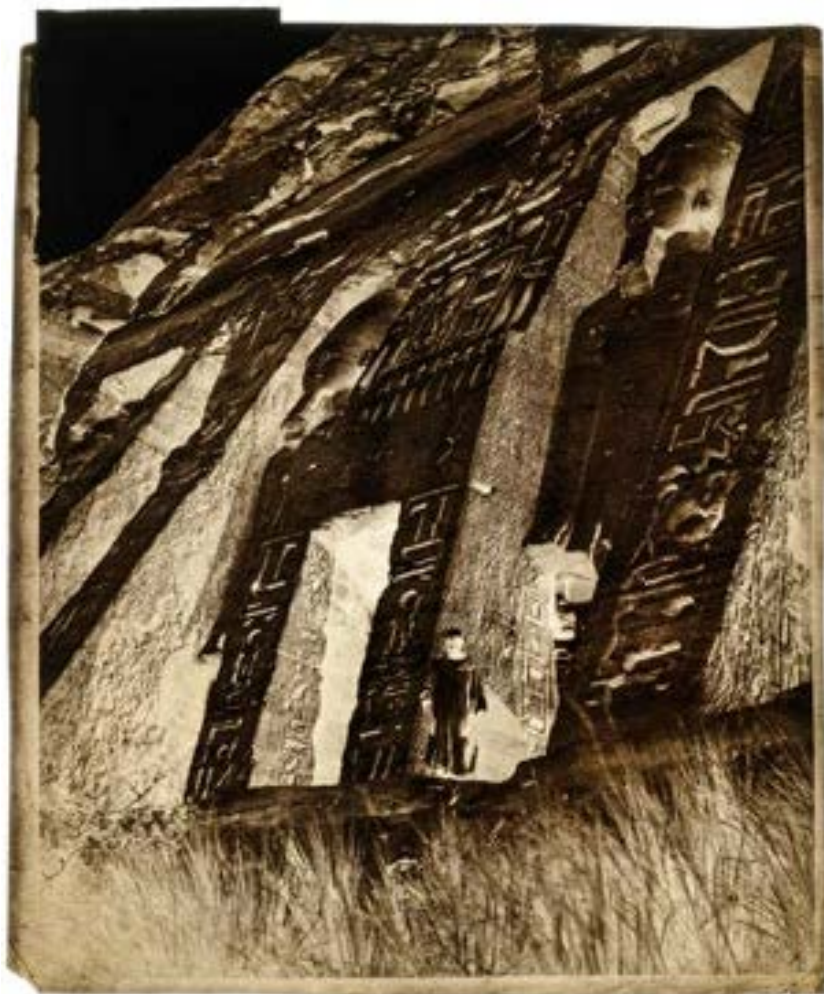
– I can't give too much away at this stage but there are two auctions that should cause a lot of international interest, an important collection of French primitive regional photography and the archive of a French photographer. And investigating archives gives me such pleasure but it can be daunting at first. I think back to some “challenges” that seemed colossal when I found myself, from the basement to the attic, in front of hundreds, sometimes even thousands of photographs gathered. Some preserved with care, others abruptly stored. My primary mission is to sort, select, organize, exhibit and reveal the essence of a photographer's work as a coherent whole. That is a challenge I like to take on! ●

Expert
Christophe Goeury
+33 (0)6 16 02 64 91
chgoeury@gmail.com

Millon photo dept.
Natalia Raciborski
+33 (0)7 88 09 91 86
photographie@millon.com



Thiebault, Pierre Petit. *Spiritisme Henri Robin : Théâtre et Spectres*, ca. 1863. 7 cartes de visite.
Sale 24 October 2016, *Photographies Pour Tous*
Result: 6 800 € (Estimation: 3 000 - 3 500 €)



François Joseph Édouard de Campigneulles. *Entrée du Petit Spéos d'Hator, Ibsamboul, Nubie*, 1858. Waxed paper negative, 327 x 275 mm.
Sale 8 November 2016, *Photographies Collections et Propositions*
Result: 18 500 €, *Record at auction* (Estimation: 4 000 - 6 000 €)



Eugène Atget. *Pommier*, ca. 1923.
Albumen print, 216 x 180 mm.
Sale 6 June 2007
Result: 37 000 € (Estimation: 1 000 - 1 500 €)



Émile Gsell and others. Album on Indochina, Siam, Indonesia, Japan, Egypt, ca.1865-1870. Approx. 200 albumen prints "carte de visite" to 250 x 350 mm, and 3 panoramas.
Sale 18 November 2010, *Photographies Collections et Propositions*
Result: 37 000 €, *Record at auction* (Estimation: 8 000 - 10 000 €)

FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

Coveting the Countess

By Robert Flynn Johnson

The first time I laid eyes on the divine Countess de Castiglione was in 1968 on the cover of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's appointment calendar for that year, *Four Victorian Photographers*. It pictured the most famous photograph of the Countess, *Scherzo di Follia*, 1863-1866, arguably for its beauty and mystery, the Mona Lisa of 19th century photography. At the time it was thought that the photographer was Adolphe Braun. Only later did scholarship assign the photographs that the Countess commissioned to Pierre-Louis Pierson.

The Countess de Castiglione (1837-1899) was a notorious Italian beauty of the Second Empire, a "Grand Horizontal" who was rumored to have been the mistress to Napoleon III. Her ostentatious narcissism has obscured the recognition of her originality and artistic creativity. For too long, she has been thought of as merely the subject of the over four hundred photographs that exist. In fact, through her inventive choice of costume, pose, and attitude, she should rightfully be credited as the creator of them as self-portraiture... the Cindy Sherman of the 19th century.

For the next thirty years the Countess faded from my memory, until she appeared again on the cover of Michel Frizot's landmark book, *A New History of Photography* (1998). This was shortly followed by Pierre Apraxine's authoritative exhibition and catalogue, *La Divine Comtesse: Photographs of the Countess de Castiglione* (2000) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Apraxine's presentation of the Countess had me riveted, and I vowed to acquire a photograph of her... but where?

I quickly realized that vintage photographs of the Countess were virtually unobtainable. The Metropolitan Museum had the greatest collection followed by the Musée d'Orsay. Pierre Apraxine with the aid of the legendary Parisian dealers Hugues Autexier and François Braunschweig of the Galerie Texbraun had swept up all the Countess photographs they could find for the Gilman Paper Collection. My only hope was to locate some of the fine posthumous prints made in the 1930's from the Pierson negatives held in the Braun archive in Colmar, France.



Pierre-Louis Pierson. *Scherzo di Follia*, 1863-1866. Gelatin silver print, ca. 1930.
Collection of Robert Flynn Johnson

My first opportunity was at a minor photography auction in Paris at Drouot, where a photograph of the Countess was offered. I was elated in securing it, and even more by the fact that Chuck Issacs who arrived late had said that he would have gone after it if he had been there.

There is a saying, "it is better to be lucky than smart." It can't be underestimated how much luck – not money, knowledge, or taste – plays in the acquisitions of a collector. This was borne out when I visited the Bièvres Photo Fair in France about eight years ago. I stopped by to see a dealer friend, Denis Canguilhem, who has a refined and astute eye. He proudly showed me not one but a whole cache of Countess photographs. Amazed, I asked where he had come up with such a haul, he smiled at me like the cat who ate the canary! He had recently found them at the Antiquarian Book Fair, at the Armory in New York with an American book dealer, who had no interest in the Countess, nor their value.



Pierre-Louis Pierson *Portrait of the Mother of the Countess de Castiglione*, ca. 1860.
Vintage albumen print, hand-coloured by the Countess de Castiglione.
Collection of Robert Flynn Johnson

After acquiring the best three or four, I wandered off, and then quickly rushed back to buy the rest, realizing a unique collecting opportunity was slipping away from me. Delighted with the good fortune of my growing collection of Countess photographs, I had no thought to exhibit them.

This was to change in the Summer of 2016. I was invited to curate the exhibition, *Henri Guérard and the Phenomenon of the Artist's Fan in France 1875-1900*, at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens Museum in Memphis. While walking through the museum's permanent collection with their curator, Julie Pierotti, we came upon the ravishing life size plaster bust of the Countess de Castiglione (1864) by the French artist Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse (1824-1887). At that moment, we conceived an exhibition that has now become a reality.

I knew the magnificent exhibition that Pierre Apraxine had mounted could not be surpassed. Instead, I thought to combine the Dixon's sculpture with photographs of the Countess, and continue the idea of creative self-absorption through the work of twentieth and twenty-first century women photographers. Unable to secure examples of work by Claude Cahun, I was able to get loans of works by Francesca Woodman, Cindy Sherman, Nikki S. Lee, and Gillian Wearing for my exhibition.

With my upcoming exhibition, I set out to find more Countess images. It was in Paris, through my friendships with dealers, that discoveries were made. Philippe Jacquier of Galerie Lumière des Roses provided an imposing photograph of the Countess. However, it was the ever-industrious Serge Plantureux, who was to come through with five large Countess prints direct from the Braun family. He followed this up in November of 2018, by securing a bizarre photograph of the Countess's mother, expressively decorated with watercolor by the Countess herself. Its provenance was through the Galerie Texbraun, from the collection of the notorious Robert de Montesquiou, most of whose extensive collection of the Countess photographs now resides in the Metropolitan Museum. Additional important photographs of the Countess were loaned through the generosity of The Metropolitan Museum by Jeff Rosenheim, and Vintage Works Ltd. by Alex Novak.

Scholarship and connoisseurship have their rightful place in the acquisition of art, and the organizing of exhibitions but fortuitousness, experience, and longstanding friendships have played a critical role in my collecting journey in search of the elusive Countess de Castiglione.

The exhibition, "Countess de Castiglione: The Allure of Creative Self-Absorption", will be on view at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, Tennessee from April 28 to July 8, 2019, and accompanied by a hardcover, fully illustrated catalogue.

Robert Flynn Johnson
Curator Emeritus
Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco



Eugene Atget. Église de Sarcelles St-Brice, ca. 1900.
Vintage albumen print from a glass negative

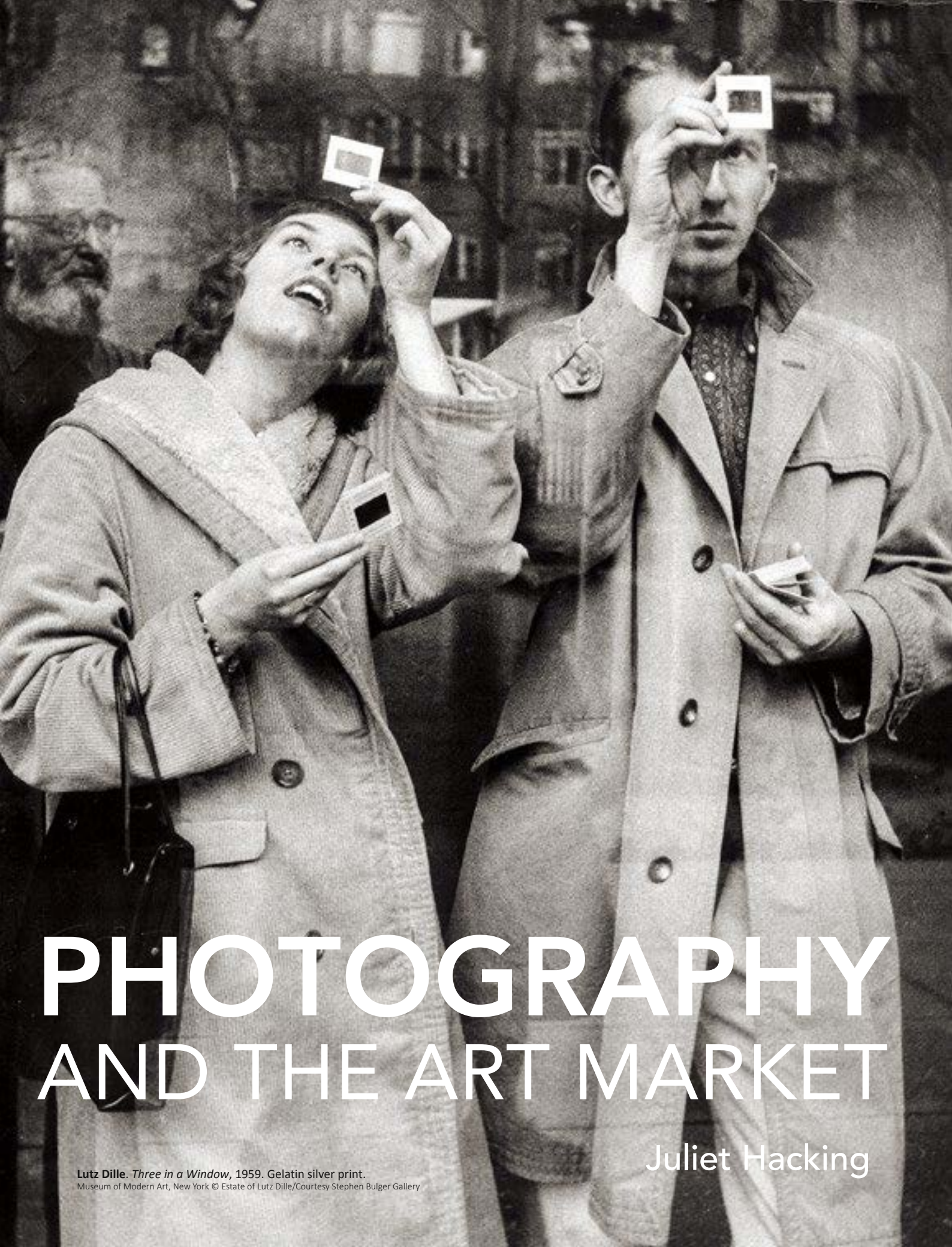
GALERIE ADNAN SEZER

VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS

The gallery was founded in 2011 in Paris by owner and certified expert Adnan Sezer, focusing on vintage photography.

For the past eighteen years, Adnan Sezer has worked with cultural institutions and private collectors from around the world, building their collections or adding value to existing ones.

Located in a historical neighbourhood in the heart of Paris, Galerie Adnan Sezer is host to a curated selection of vintage prints that explore the past through the subjects of travel, humanism, violence, or eroticism.



PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE ART MARKET

Juliet Hacking

Lutz Dille. *Three in a Window*, 1959. Gelatin silver print.
Museum of Modern Art, New York © Estate of Lutz Dille/Courtesy Stephen Bulger Gallery

By Sebastian Dobson

As a former head of the Photographs Department at Sotheby's London and current Subject Leader in Photography at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London (where she administered the highly successful Master of Arts in Photography course), Dr. Juliet Hacking is well qualified to introduce us to photography and its relation to the art market. Published by Lund Humphries in association with Sotheby's Institute of Art as part of the series *Handbooks in International Art Business*, this book will doubtless be recommended reading for MA students at Sotheby's Institute, but it will also serve as a useful guide for scholars, curators, dealers, collectors and arts professionals generally.

The main contention of this book is its rejection of the myth that art (not just art photography) exists independently of the market. Art and economics exist not as polarities but as partners in a dialogue and Hacking ably illustrates the symbiotic nature of this relationship across the 160-year canvas of the history of photography. Myths are gently but firmly shattered, as the author herself summarises:

'Photography was not shunned by the art world prior to the 1970's. There were collectors of art photography as early as the 1850's, and probably earlier. In the 1930's photography was a chic art object on the metropolitan art scene'. (p.219)

For those seeking more practical information, there are equally persistent misconceptions to be dispelled:

'Photographs need only the care and attention that we would give to any collectible. It is important to do your research when considering purchasing an art photograph but only in the same way that you would learn about a company in which you were planning to buy shares. And, in the case of investing in photography, "research" means finding out more about the art you like.' (p.219)

In the first part of this handbook, 'Navigating the Market for Art Photography', Hacking offers an expert guidance to the practicalities of the present-day market. With sections headed 'Buyer Beware', 'Authenticity and Ethics', 'Buying', 'Keeping and Selling', 'Analysing the Market', and 'Investing, Monetising, Speculating', a detailed analysis is provided of the art-business of photography. This 76-page navigation is well-plotted, and quickly fulfils the promise of this book as a useful *vade mecum* for both the general reader and the specialist.

Particularly instructive is the section 'Adding value' in the chapter 'Keeping and Selling', which offers the fascinating case study of the photography collectors André and Marie-Thérèse Jammes. Aware that there was no educated audience for what they had to offer, the Jammes spent the 1960's and 1970's creating one. With a background in antiquarian bookselling, André Jammes assiduously cultivated an interest in French 19th century photography both at home and further afield through publications, lectures and strategic loans to exhibitions in the United States, both anticipating and generating an appetite on the other side of the Atlantic for French primitive photography which has never gone away. Having cornered the market in connoisseurship and expertise, the Jammes then began to sell portions of a collection which, after two decades of hard work, was of museum-quality. A high-profile acquisition by the J. Paul Getty Museum took place in 1984, followed by more discreet sales elsewhere (if the presence of at one least album with a Jammes provenance in a Japanese museum in anything to go by). In 1999, another portion of the Jammes collection went under the hammer at Sotheby's, setting new auction records with a staggering sell-through rate of 99.2% by value. When negotiations with the Musée d'Orsay for the purchase of Jammes' archive of work by the photographer Charles Nègre broke down in 2000, Sotheby's Paris came to the rescue and in the course of a two-day sale in March 2001 achieved similar results. The aura that André Jammes had created for his brand had paid off. It is hard to imagine the Jammes' approach to increasing value being replicated today, but it is a reminder to any would-be collector that, at the very least, a medium-term strategy is required.

The lion's share of the book, however, is taken up by the second part, 'How Photography became Art', and this is where Hacking offers her most penetrating insights. Effortlessly combining the role of guide she plays thus far with that of companion, Hacking presents the reader with a new history of art photography in which the commercial aspects of this 'New Way to Make Pictures' are examined. Whereas the economics of art photography have tended to be 'off camera' in much previous historical writing on the subject, here they are restored to centre stage. As Hacking reminds us, 'some of the most celebrated works of photography were made not only to be seen but also to be sold' (p.104).

The otherwise familiar story of the evolution of photography after Daguerre's and Talbot's parallel inventions of 'daguerreotype' and the 'photogenic drawing' in the late 1830's quickly takes an invigorating turn as Hacking not only guides us through the development of photography into a recognised art form but also firmly positions art photography in the art market. Notwithstanding the efforts of early practitioners to underline their claims to artistry by distancing themselves from any connection with the marketplace (something in which later art historians have been complicit), the commercial aspects of photography were quick to emerge.

While Talbot discretely marketed the images he created with his calotype process (an 1841 improvement on his earlier paper-based method) through an established network of printsellers, the Scottish partnership of Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill explored the possibilities of issuing calotypes in highly-priced albums in what seems to have been one of the first manifestations on the photographic scene of the so-called 'Veblen effect', by which high economic value was equated with high artistic worth. Hacking presents other fascinating case studies from the nineteenth century, such as Gustave Le Gray's 1856 *Le Brick (The Brig)*, an early masterpiece created by the wet collodion process and widely regarded today as 'the first successful art photograph' (p.112). It retailed in London for fifteen shillings (approximately £70 today), or, according to Hacking, the equivalent of a week's wages for a sailor.

It is fascinating to see how many big names in the first century of photography grappled with the complexities of marketing themselves and their work. Nadar's capacity for self-invention and self-promotion is well known (the persistence of his reputation even today as an artist-photographer rather than a savvy commercial portraitist is testimony to the former). Less well known is Julia Margaret Cameron's deft navigation of the art world through a combination of well-aimed gifting, judicious lobbying and astute marketing of the 'high art' she created with her camera (the forerunner of the Victoria and Albert Museum was an early customer). A commercial agreement with the photographic publisher Colnaghi's in 1865 generated a regular flow of sales into the following decade, while Cameron took frequent advantage of the recent Copyright Law of 1862, which had extended legal protection to photography, to secure her authorship of several hundred of her works. Less comfortable with the position of photography in the marketplace was

Alfred Stieglitz, the presiding genius of photography in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Applying Veblen's high "price = high art" equation to his own work in the late 1890's and early 1900's, Stieglitz priced his work appropriately, asking for US\$75 (US\$ 2,240 in today's money) for his pictorialist masterpiece *Winter - Fifth Avenue* of 1893 at a time when the highest price quoted by his British counterpart George Davison for his work was a more modest five guineas, or less than half this amount. As a New York gallery operator from 1905 until 1946 Stieglitz was more fastidious, gradually dispensing with a commission on any sales he made from the Photo-Secessionist works he exhibited, and resisting the commercialism of art photography. Would-be buyers at Stieglitz's galleries would frequently be frustrating by his inconsistent pricing policy, whereby, according to the gallerist Daniel Levy, 'he would begin by saying that if you loved art enough you should pay more. At other times he would say that if you really loved it, you deserved it at a discount, and he would forever alter this mix' (p.125). Ironically, Stieglitz's efforts to distance art photography from commerce had the effect not only of enhancing its artistic worth but also its symbolic, and ultimately economic, value. As Hacking pithily observes, his legacy is a mixed one: 'Alfred Stieglitz did many important things for photography, the best and worst of which was to take to view that in order to have it recognised as art, one should never mention money' (p.139).

As photography approached its centennial year on the eve of the Second World War, the market for art photography was uneven. Efforts by Julien Levy to promote modernist photography in 1930's New York were, by his own estimation, unsuccessful, and the archive of work that he and Berenice Abbott had acquired from Eugène Atget in 1928 remained unsold for another 40 years. Levy's lament in May 1930 that 'everyone admires [Atget's photographs] but nobody seems willing to pay a price for one' (p.132) will strike a chord with anyone involved in the photographic trade today. Curiously, the market for historical photography was more buoyant and Hacking gives deserved credit to the efforts of the London antiquarian booksellers Maggs Brothers and E.P. Goldschmidt in 1939 to promote early photographically illustrated books, albums and individual images by names such as Hill and Adamson, Cameron and Le Gray.

The 1930's also saw the emergence of aspects of 'an art-world ecosystem' that we would recognise today.



Gustave Le Gray. *The Brig*, 1856. Albumen print from a wet collodion on glass negative. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The creation of photographic agencies, such as DePhot (Berlin, 1928) and Black Star (New York, 1935) indicated a growing professionalism among photographers while the growing number of illustrated magazines as varied as *Verve* and *Vogue*, gave photographers a remunerative opportunity to showcase their work and, in the cases of Margaret Bourke-White, Brassai and Bill Brandt, gain status as 'star' photojournalists. The process of the 'art historicisation' of photography also began with the publication in 1930 of Heinrich Schwarz's monograph on David Octavius Hill, in which the critical tools of art-historical analysis were first applied to art photography (and in which the invention of photography was claimed on behalf of the history of ideas). Schwarz's example would inspire two more works that quickly entered the canon of photographic literature, Walter Benjamin's 1931 essay 'A Short History of Photography' and Beaumont Newhall's *History of Photography*, which began as a catalogue to accompany an exhibition at MoMA in 1937.

Survey exhibitions were also held to mark photography's centenaries. The first, in Paris in 1925, simultaneously honoured the inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niépce and sought to claim the invention of photography for France (one wonders how Niépce's bicentenary will be marked six years hence). The French monopoly on photography was contested in the run-up to Daguerre's centennial year of 1939 by survey exhibitions in London at the V&A and the Science and New York's MoMA. This reflected a growing institutional interest in art photography, beginning in 1928 with the inauguration by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York of a permanent collection. The Met's lead in collecting was followed, both actively by acquisition and passively through donation, by other American art institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago and the National Gallery of Washington. Museum interest, or 'museumification', would prove to be one of the most decisive factors in conferring cultural status on photography which, in turn, proved seminal in the emergence of a market.



Peter Henry Emerson. *Gathering Water-Lilies*, 1886. Platinum print. Courtesy of The J. Paul Getty Museum.

The Second World War gave photojournalism a boost, leading in 1947 to the founding of the Magnum agency, and New York began to supplant Paris as the centre of the art world. The next two decades saw temporary photographic exhibitions held with increasing frequency, especially after MoMA's 1955 blockbuster exhibition *The Family of Man*, as well as the rise of both a new generation of galleries in New York devoted to photography, starting with Helen Gee's *Limelight* in 1954, and a growing audience for photography among collectors such as Helmut and Alison Gernsheim. A landmark of sorts was reached in 1968 when MoMA, now with a dedicated photography department under the energetic curatorship of John Szarkowski, acquired Abbott and Levy's *Atget* archive which it had rejected four decades earlier. The foundations were laid for an explosion of cultural and economic activity around photography during the years 1969 to 1980 that became known among cognoscenti as 'the photo boom'. 'Museumification' entered a new phase in which existing institutions such as London's National Portrait Gallery, London (1972), the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (1975) and the Museum Ludwig, Cologne (1977) established their own photographic collections and departments, while between 1969 and 1973 three museums

dedicated solely to photography were established in Finland, France and the United States. Cultural value was quickly translated into economic value. In 1971, through the initiative of Howard Ricketts, Sotheby's held the world's first photographic auction (of the twentieth century at least) in London, though, as the establishment of photographic departments at the New York offices of Sotheby's and Christie's in 1977 indicates, the market was driven by American money.

As photography approached its 150th year in 1989, cultural and economic activity in the field of art photography showed no signs of slowing. Photographic culture benefitted from public spending in Britain, France and elsewhere, but the general trend was for private funding to play a more dominant role, either on its own or as a supplement to increasingly precarious government subsidies. The future lay less with ventures such as the Musée d'Orsay's taxpayer-funded acquisition in 1986 of a new photography collection and more with initiatives such as the establishment in 1984 of a department of photographs at the privately supported Getty Museum in Malibu, whose acquisitions included a significant part of the Jammes Collection. For public institutions

such as the V&A a hybrid solution to funding shortfalls was available in the form of private sponsorship and with assistance from the camera manufacturers Canon a dedicated gallery space for photography was finally established there in 1998. New world records for photography were set in 1999, the first through the private sale of Man Ray's *Glass Tears* (1932) for US\$1,300,000 and the second at auction when Le Gray's *Great Wave, Sete* (1856-59) sold at Sotheby's London for £507,500 (having been estimated at £40,000-£60,000).

Photography entered the twenty-first century securely embedded in the art world, with both historical and modern photography enjoying a strong market. However, nineteenth-century material soon lost its allure in the wake of a scandal centering on the late Sheikh Saud bin Muhammad Al-Thani of Qatar which emerged in 2005. The scale of Al-Thani's misappropriation of Qatari state funds to finance his spending spree at auction houses in Paris and London was mind-boggling, but it also raised questions about whether the records set for nineteenth-century photography (Al-Thani was rumoured to have been the purchaser of the Le Gray seascape in 1999) were less an accurate reflection of the state of the market than the result of whimsical interventions by a rogue operator. The first victim of this loss of confidence was Le Gray himself, whose iconic *The Brig* could now pass through auction without attracting a single bid, but nineteenth-century photography generally suffered a decline. The financial crash of 2008 hit the market for photography across the board, but as it recovered, the world records were now being set in the contemporary sector. Hacking gives an informed analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by the contemporary photography market and, while astutely avoiding any predictions, notes recent shifts which suggest more change is on the way, such as the respective marketing strategies of Sotheby's and Christie's at their New York premises (an important testing ground for the trade) and ArtTactic's adoption last year of valuation and appraisal methodologies which no longer take account of auction records.

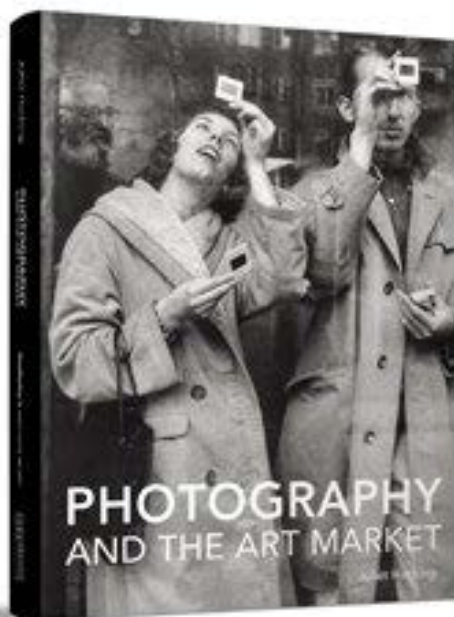
This emphasis on the second part of Hacking's book should not obscure the merit of the more practical first part, and regardless of whether the reader's preference is for market analysis or art history, neither part should be read in isolation.

As is inevitable with any pioneering survey of a multifaceted market, especially when the author has an editorial brief to compress their findings into a handbook, some strokes in Hacking's panorama are painted with slightly too broad a brush.

For example, after the poor showing of *The Brig* at auctions post-Al-Thani, the reader might be left with the impression that Gustave Le Gray is now a busted flush. However, recent indications are that Le Gray's pulling power remains strong, as indicated by the record-breaking price of €917,000 (£790,000) realised at a French provincial auction house in 2011 for his 1856-1857 work *Bateaux Quittant le Port du Havre* (*Boats Leaving the Port of Le Havre*).

This does not, however, detract from a book that serves its reader well as both guide and companion. The author's intention has been to combine the best aspects of two very different approaches, the qualitative, based on art history, which has largely ignored the influence of the market on the creation of art, and the quantitative, guided by business models, which has sought to generate empirical data from the performance of objects on the market, and in this she has been successful.

Juliet Hacking: *Photography and the Art Market*, London: Lund Humphries, 2018.
ISBN: 978-1-84822-148-2. Hardcover, £30.00



Sebastian Dobson is an independent scholar of the early history of photography in Japan and East Asia. He has lectured widely in Europe, the United States, Australia and Japan and his publications include catalogue essays for exhibitions hosted in Boston, Singapore and Tokyo, encyclopaedia entries and numerous articles.



Girault de Prangey. *Dome, Khayrbak Mosque, Cairo, 1843.*
Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

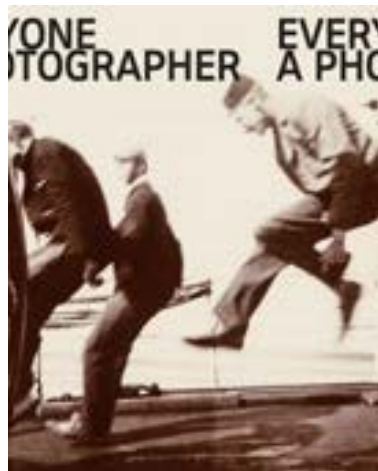
MONUMENTAL JOURNEY

The Daguerreotypes of Girault de Prangey

A long-awaited survey of the work of the pioneering French photographer Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey (1804-1892), who undertook an ambitious photographic expedition to the eastern Mediterranean during the years 1842-1845. The resulting daguerreotypes he took in Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon are among the earliest surviving photographic images of these places.

This accompanies the exhibition of the same name which is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art until 12 May 2019.

Edited by Stephen C. Pinson, published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York / Yale University Press, 2019. With contributions by Sylvie Aubenas, Olivier Caumont, Silvia A. Centeno, Thomas Galifot, Nora W. Kennedy, Grant B. Romer, Martina Rugiadi, Andrea E. Schlachter, Lindsey S. Stewart, Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, and Ariadna Cervera Xicotencatl. ISBN: 978-1-58839-663-1. Hardcover, £35.00



EVERYONE A PHOTOGRAPHER

The Rise of Amateur Photography in the Netherlands, 1880-1940

Taking its title from the advertising slogan of an Amsterdam photographic dealer in 1900 (*Iedereen fotografeert*) and based on the author's PhD thesis, this work examines the role played by early amateur photographers (among them Queen Wilhelmina) in the history of photography in the Netherlands.

This accompanies the exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam until 10 June 2019.

By Mattie Boom. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 2019. ISBN 978-94-6208-477-3 Hardcover €39.95



Advertisement for amateur cameras, 1912.

Processes

By Nicholas Burnett

In 2010 the inexpensive purchase of a group of ten small printed images started me on a fascinating research journey. The prints were early, with hand-written titles, but were small and anonymous. Excitingly, spotting a view of Saint-Sulpice in Paris (illustration 1) made me wonder; were they prints from etched daguerreotype plates? Hippolyte Fizeau had lived and worked near the church, (illustration 2).



2. One of Hippolyte Fizeau's views of *Saint-Sulpice* printed from an etched daguerreotype plate.

This delightful thought faded as one of the subsequent images was titled *4090 Vue sur le lac de Thoune (Suisse)* in the printed image; this was typical of French glass stereoscopic transparencies, and *not* of daguerreotypes. See illustrations 3a and b.

Sometime later, Russell Lord, who was just completing his thesis on early photomechanical printing processes saw the prints. He briefly commented, that *Saint-Sulpice* might be from an etched daguerreotype, but then remarked that W. H. F. Talbot often used stereoscopic transparencies for his photoglyphic engraving process! A swiftly arranged day trip to the National Media Museum in Bradford to see examples of Talbot's work quickly revealed that they were indeed by Talbot. Even better, Talbot had written the title on each one.

Where do they fit into Talbot's oeuvre? In the late 1840's Talbot largely turned from images in silver to printing ink, to avoid the problems with fading he experienced with the *Pencil of Nature* (1844) and the *Art Journal* (1846). His first printing patent of 1852 worked for simple images but had serious drawbacks. In this process a suitable metal plate was coated with gelatine rendered light sensitive with potassium bichromate. A suitable object was sandwiched



1. The Photoglyphic engraving of *Saint-Sulpice* in Paris.



3a and b. Photoglyphic engraving titled by Talbot as *Thun* and the corresponding transparency by Clouzard and Soulier.





4. The problem of mid-tones when using bichromated gelatine for photographic image formation.



5. Detail of the Photoglyphic engraving of *Toledo* showing the lack of mid tones. In contrast, the British Library version (Talbot Photo 5(6)) (not illustrated) has a very good range of tones.

1. The fine grain is visible on the printing plates but is often not visible on the final prints. One of Talbot's notes in the British Library (ADD MS 28713) dated November 1860 reveals he later further modified the process 'omitting the resin altogether' and this was 'suffic[ien]t for a new P[atent]'. He called this the Gel Process.

between this and a glass sheet and the assemblage exposed to light. After exposure the plate was washed in warm water to dissolve the unexposed, and thus unhardened, gelatine. Talbot then etched the plate with platinum bichloride (platinum (II) chloride). After etching the remaining gelatine was removed and the plate could be printed. This was Talbot's "Photographic Engraving" process. As to the serious drawbacks, simply put, it is the problem of mid-tones. The gelatine hardens to a depth dependent upon the amount of light received. In the mid tones, the upper gelatine is hardened but unhardened gelatine remains below next to the plate. Washing away this softer gelatine layer therefore largely removes the now unanchored hardened gelatine above it. This results in a very contrasty image, (see illustrations 4 and 5). Even worse, large solid areas of black don't retain the ink well; the edges print true but not the rest, giving a solarised appearance.

Talbot created various techniques to overcome these problems. First he invented the regular screen, which later became so fundamental for half tone printing and other commercial processes. The screen broke up the solid areas of tone, helping retain the ink in the shadow areas and gelatine in the mid tones. Dissatisfied with the regular screen, Talbot replaced it with an irregular one; a random distribution of fine resin grains on the exposed gelatine, heated to hold them in place¹. Secondly, Talbot retained the mid tones by *not* washing the exposed plate. He exploited the different absorption rates of unhardened and hardened gelatine; the etching solution passing through the unhardened gelatine more easily. These developments were sufficient for a new patent (number 875 of 1858).

Even more ingeniously, Talbot discovered that using three strengths of etching solution gave greater control. Counter-intuitively, the weakest solution acted most quickly as the greater percentage of water softened the gelatine and thereby allowed the reactive chemical to reach the plate surface more easily. This discovery, which Talbot made on March 2 1858, is still in use today for hand gravures as is the etching solution pioneered by Talbot at this time, ferric chloride. These developments were covered in Talbot's 1858 patent for Photoglyphic Engraving. This patent reveals a work in progress, pointing out that operator experience was important for controlling the coating thickness, judging exposure and in applying solution number 3 to bring out pale areas.

Where do my ten printed images fit into this? Prints from Talbot's first patent tend to be simple images such as lace and botanical specimens. Between the

two patent dates the plates are very experimental with multiple image fragments and small areas of etched screens. By early 1858, Talbot switched to using just one image from stereoscopic glass transparencies. From March 24 1858 he started numbering the plates and listing the subjects. Looking at his notes, the first of my ten images to appear is Notre Dame on 24/5/1858. During the next sixteen months all the other images appear (several times) until the last, the 'Amphitheatre of Pozzuoli', which was used just once on 8/3/1860. This may have been because detail in the large dark area in the foreground was difficult to etch successfully. Not only was the subject used just once but very few specimens were printed - there is just one copy in Bradford and one in the British Library, all from the same plate, (see Illustrations 6 a and b).

Clearly the ten images cannot have been sent out before March 1860. Searching the Talbot letters from March onwards reveals possible recipients in April as: Jane H. Nicholl, née Talbot², William Frederick Pollock³, David Brewster⁴ and Philip Kelland⁵ in early May. There are no more instances of prints sent out until mid October^{6 & 7} by which time Talbot had etched a further 50+ plates and very probably had better examples than Pozzuoli to include. Although the Talbot correspondence project is not exhaustive, it is likely that one of these was the recipient of this group. The provenance, a scrap album which originated in a South London charitable institution, may shed some light on this. As Jane Nicholl lived in Torquay, Brewster and Kelland in Scotland, the most probable recipient of this group of prints is Pollock, who lived in London.

2. Letter 8082 / 3. Letter 3083 / 4. Letter 8087

5. Letter 8095 / 6. Letter 8217

7. During this time Talbot made a visit to the Pyrenées and produced no new plates between 1/4/1860 and 21/9/1860.

Nicholas Burnett trained in conservation at Camberwell School of Art and Crafts before working in the Western Pictorial Art Conservation Section in the British Museum. Following the BM he ran the paper conservation studio based in the Fitzwilliam Museum for the South Eastern Museums Service. In 1995 he both moved the studio to the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, privatising and renaming it Museum Conservation Services Ltd. To more fully understand the conservation of photographic processes and materials he has put together an extensive reference collection.



6 a and b. Photoglyphic engraving of Pozzuoli by Talbot and the corresponding transparency by Clouzard and Soulier.



Photographic destroyers: framing and mounting materials!

By Nicholas Burnett

It is a fact, not widely enough known, that the poor quality materials commonly used in commercial mounting and framing can seriously damage photographs, especially gelatine silver prints. Such prints are particularly vulnerable as the finely divided silver, which forms the image, has a huge surface area so is chemically very reactive. Fortunately the silver is encased in a protective layer of gelatine which is a wonderful photographic material. When wet it swells so that the developer, stop bath and fixer can reach the silver salts within and water can finally wash out the processing chemicals. When dry it contracts and becomes much more resistant to chemical penetration. The reactive silver image is encased and protected by the surrounding gelatine. Nevertheless, harmful chemicals will slowly penetrate. Fingerprints can appear years after a photograph is handled.

Over the past ten years I have been seeing fantastic and valuable photographs framed in the 1990's and early 2000 coming in for conservation treatment showing fading and discolouration. Usually this takes the form of orange-brown spots on the lighter mid tones and silvering on the shadow areas (illustration 1). The photographs have all been physically protected by glass and stout frame backboards. Since the time of Daguerre framing has successfully been used to protect vulnerable photographs, so what is going on, what is different now?

These symptoms immediately made me suspicious of the mounting and framing materials. Mostly the mounts were cut from acid-free board (clearly a low-risk, stable material) however, the frame backboards were all commercial, non-conservation quality materials, either hardboard, medium density fibreboard (a.k.a. MDF or SBS) or thin plywood. As they age these unsuitable boards release highly-damaging gaseous organic acids, peroxides, aldehydes and other reactive chemical compounds. Chemicals such as these can attack image silver, initiating a series of reactions that result in the silvering, fading and the orange-brown spots.

Image decay can of course be linked to a number of other causes ranging from poor darkroom practice (exhausted fixer, insufficient washing), through inherent problems with the photographic paper (resin

coating and titanium dioxide instead of baryta) to pollutant gasses from outside the frame assemblage. So why do I focus on the commercial backboards?

The 'smoking gun' that gave unmistakable proof was the presence of a square removed from a frame backboard and filled with Perspex to allow the photographer's stamp on the back of the photo to be seen. The only areas of photographic image unaffected by signs of decay were those aligned with this 'window' at the back. Further confirmation came with another photograph where a sticky label had been adhered to the back of the photograph. The label acted as a partial barrier to the reactive compounds being released by the backboard providing protection to the image immediately opposite (illustrations 2 and 3).

The aging of the frame backboards, and hence the release of the reactive gasses, is speeded up by displaying the photographs. Some of the light passes through the photograph and causes photo-oxidation of the poor quality backboard, triggering the release of yet more damaging chemicals.

The aggressive compounds emanating from unsuitable frame backboards do not immediately react with the image, first they have to penetrate through the gelatine to the image particles. This usually takes years and has an unfortunate side effect. At any point in time there will be reactive chemicals in the gelatine that haven't yet reached the silver. Dampening or humidifying the gelatine to flatten out cockles or creases allows the accumulated chemicals to swiftly penetrate through to the silver where they will cause very rapid silvering/decay (in as little as 20 minutes!). Unwary/non specialist conservators and framers have found this out to their dismay.

Why do we not see the same problems with older frame backboards? The answer to this question lies in how the boards are produced. Older backboards are often simply cut from wood or various types of cardboard whereas MDF is made from ground up wood fibres mixed with urea-formaldehyde resin glue and plywood is held together with the same glue (or the similar phenol-formaldehyde glue). Large-scale production of MDF began in the 1980's and it is no coincidence that it is photographs framed after the widespread introduction of MDF into the framing world that show this relatively rapid image decay.

How is such damage avoided? The best way to keep your framed photographic images in good condition is of course to use good quality materials such as acid-free board which has passed the Photographic Activity Test (ISO 18916). For frame backboards I use 'Meridian' high density board which has passed the PAT. A price comparison between 2.5 mm MDF and 2.8 mm Meridian board show that MDF costs £1.99 per m² and Meridian board £6.76 per m². A few pounds per frame/photograph.

Glazing with a good quality Ultra Violet (UV) filtering glass or acrylic will also help by cutting out most of this wavelength of light (UV is the most energetic wavelength and so initiates more chemical reactions). Not all UV-filtering glazing is equally efficient (despite manufacturer's claims) so it is wise to be aware of this.



1. Damage caused by a poor quality frame backboard. Orange-brown redox spots accompanied by silvering.

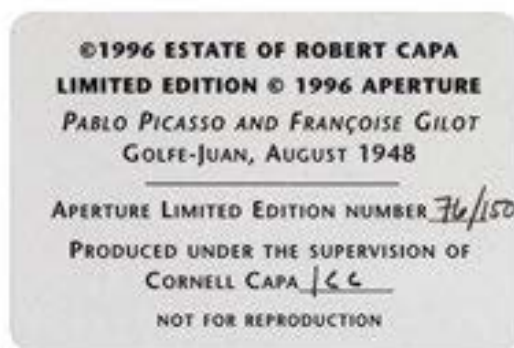
How about wooden frames themselves? These are a minor source of these destructive gasses. Firstly they are mostly plain wood, not modified wood products, and secondly the photographs are edge-on to the wooden frame so the area of exposure is tiny compared to frame backboards. However, over longer periods of time this will still lead to silvering around the image edges. One preventive measure is to use metal frames, however barriers such as lining wooden frame rebates with a suitable material can



2. Redox spots surrounding an unchanged area of image. Detail of Pablo Picasso and Françoise Gilot, Golfe-Juan.

© Robert Capa/International Center of Photography/Magnum Photos.

3. The label opposite the unchanged area. The label has acted as a partial barrier to the reactive compounds being released by the frame backboard.



also work well. To be effective the lining or barrier needs to be continuous, with overlaps at the corners and not the slightest gap. Even pin holes will massively reduce the efficiency of the barrier.

To sum up: remember that your silver images are only temporarily frozen in time. They remain susceptible to change and decay from the contaminating gasses related to commercial framing practices, and, to a lesser extent, from the environment around us.

Photographs

The Photography auction at Phillips will showcase many of the key moments in the history of photography, and bring to the fore leading contemporary artists of today. The "Photographs" sale is highlighted by exceptional works by Man Ray and Annie Leibovitz, among others.



Annie Leibovitz. *Queen Elizabeth II, The White Drawing Room*, Buckingham Palace, London, 2007.

16 May 2019

Phillips

30 Berkeley Square, Mayfair, London

The Sotheby's photography auction will compromise of approximately 100 carefully selected works primarily from the mid-20th century to contemporary eras. Featured artists include Irving Penn, Robert Mapplethorpe, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Peter Lindbergh, Daido Moriyama, Nobuyoshi Araki, Helmut Newton, Thomas Struth and Alex Prager amongst others.

16 May 2019

Sotheby's

34-35 New Bond Street, Mayfair, London



Herb Ritts. *Versace Dress, Back View*, El Mirage, 1990. Gelatin silver print. 137 x 109 cm.

This work is from an edition of 12 (Estimation: 80 000-120 000 €) ©Herb Ritts / Trunk Archive

Icons of Glamour & Style

Christie's will present an exhibition of a selection of works from its Paris auction on 19 June at King Street St. James's. "Icons of Glamour & Style" is a special owner sale, with works from the collection of one of the most important fashion photography collectors, Leon Constantiner. Altogether there are 92 iconic photographs from the second half of the 20th century which celebrate fashion, elegance and glamour, by Helmut Newton, Irving Penn, Richard Avedon, Herb Ritts, Peter Lindbergh and others.

Viewing 11 - 16 May 2019
Christie's
8 King Street, St. James's, London

Viewing 15 - 18 June
Sale 19 June, 4 pm
Christie's, 9 Avenue Matignon, Paris

PHOTOS DISCOVERY *THE FAIR*



On the 9th of November, Photos Discovery returns to Pavillon Wagram. The fair, which coincides with Paris Photo, features over 60 dealers from both sides of the Atlantic. The first edition was held in 2017. It was a great success and the promoter, Bruno Tartarin, also the publisher of *The Classic*, showed the international photo world just how good and exciting these smaller fairs can be, that is, if thought and effort are applied, not least with regards to promotion.

For those who have attended the fair, the upcoming edition will no doubt be as much of a draw as Paris Photo and the auctions, if not more. Because Photos Discovery really does live up to its name. Last year, I met some very experienced collectors, clutching their newly acquired treasures with a smile, as well first-time buyers who were clearly fascinated by the images they saw.

And there was a great range of material on offer, from family snapshots from the 1970's to museum quality salt and albumen prints. I noted some great images with Daniella Dangoor, Serge Plantureux, Roland Belgrave, Vintage Works, Arnaud Delas, Richard Meara to name a few. The exhibitors and visitors I talked to felt that the fair was getting better and better. Word had spread and there were more important collectors as well as curators in attendance. Tartarin had made some changes and told me:

– It was a great fair. I think that we had better exhibitors and many of them promoted themselves, not only with newsletters but also with flyers. Promotion is key to a successful fair. Our own team sent information to everyone on our mailing list and every customer who made a purchase on the internet. In addition, we were outside Paris Photo everyday with flyers and had also handed them out at previous fairs in Bièvres and New York.

UK-based dealer Roland Belgrave was more than pleased with the fair:

– There was superb institutional presence and a host of private collectors from around the globe. It was nice and short and very vibrant. I brought along strong material by Linnaeus Tripe, Mammoth prints by Francis Frith, a beautiful Julia Margaret Cameron and some other gems. I sold well and the larger items are now on hold. It was great fair for buying as well and I purchased some wonderful Central Asian material. Paris-based dealer Serge Plantureux had also enjoyed the fair:

– The Wagram circle fair is getting strong, busy with more visitors. It was amusing to watch upper class French museum curators trying to learn how to walk with their own legs on the ground. I was full of empathy for some of them having direct hand contact with authentic prints. Some American curators are probably more familiar with visiting table-top fairs. With regards to my own material, I invited an artist friend of mine, Zaven Paré, to make a selection of hundred prints in my office, and we brought them and it was a great success as far as sales were concerned. I bought several groups of photographs at the fair, plus a handful of single nice prints, but I decided not to keep all and I sold five of my fresh finds to enthusiastic collectors. Photos Discovery is very exciting so I'm very much looking forward to the next edition in November.

Photos Discovery The Fair
Saturday November 9, 2019
9:00 am to 9:00 pm, Cocktail at 6:00 pm
47 avenue Wagram, 75017 Paris
fair.photos-discovery.fr



Photos Discovery

THE FAIR

Saturday November 9 in Paris

47 avenue Wagram, 75017

See Tay (Liang Shitai)

Portrait of Li Hongzhang

Albumen silver print. 1870s



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