

Editorial

175 Years of Photography in Spain

Due to the country's unique geopolitical situation, the history of Spanish photography from 1839 to our days has a very special development different to that of the normal evolution of the medium in the rest of the countries in West Europe. Spain did not take part in any of the two World Wars (WWI and WWII), but it suffered a Civil War (1936–1939), which left the country with an almost 40 year dictatorship under the regime of Francisco Franco Bahamonde (1892–1975).



Figure 1
Juan José Barrera, *Dona amb ventall*,
daguerreotype, c. 1848.
Díaz Prósper Collection,
Valencia, Spain.

In this special issue devoted to Spanish photography and Spanish photohistory, several detailed articles present in-depth research into different fundamental periods and topics in these fields with the aim of throwing light onto their specific characteristics and development within the context of European photohistory. The topics dealt with in this number are based on the most recent research carried out by the individual authors with their varied approaches to the manifold variety of forms and applications of photography. Writing a history of photography in the Spanish context, or as a global phenomenon within a regional, European framework, was not the aim of this issue of *PhotoResearcher*.

The importance and resonance of the invention of the daguerreotype process was so deep that, only nineteen days after Francois Aragó (1786–1853), Permanent Secretary of the Academy of Sciences in Paris had presented it in the Academy on 19 August 1839, *El Diario de Barcelona* published a note about this extraordinary event.¹ A correspondent of the Academy of Sciences and Arts in Barcelona, Pedro Monlau Roca, held the first public demonstration of the daguerreotype process in November 1839, a 22 minutes exposition, which has been, regretfully, lost and never found.²

1. Publio López Mondejar, *Historia de la Fotografía en España*, 4th edition, 2. López 1999 [reference 1], 16. Barcelona: Lumwerg editores 1999, 15.

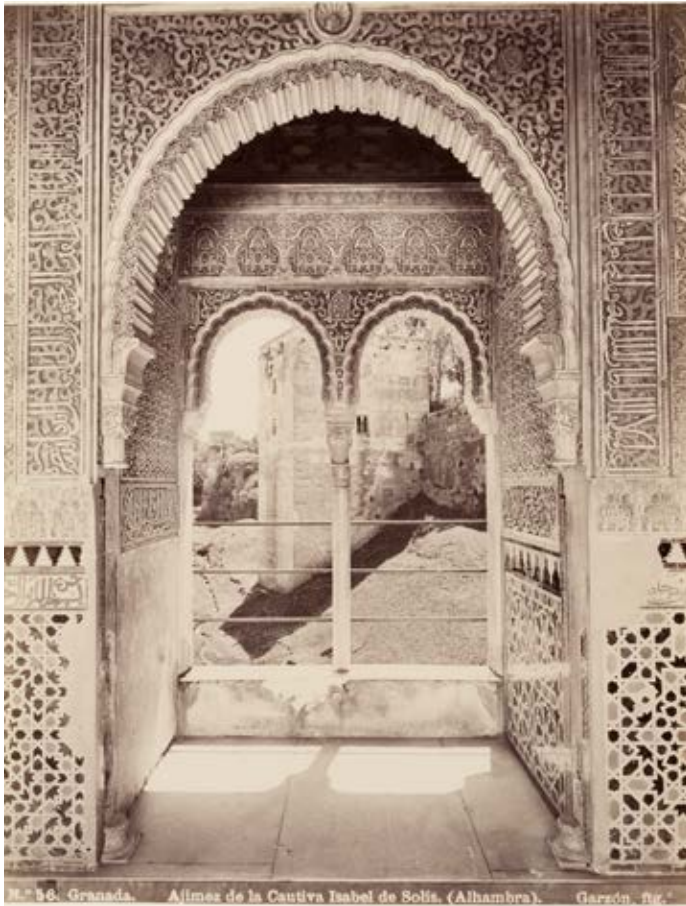


Figure 2
Rafael Garzón, *Ajimez de la Cautiva Isabel de Solís, Alhambra, Granada*, albumen print, c. 1870. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

The nineteenth century

The first two photographic processes, the daguerreotype (in use between 1840 and 1851) and the calotype (in use between 1850 and 1860) coexisted from 1853 onwards in Spain. At the time, they had already started to experience a decline in their use and production due to the introduction of the wet collodion process by Frederick Scott Archer (1813–1857) in 1851. In fact, the calotype was also invented and presented in 1839 by William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), but it became a minority – and almost elitist – process when compared with the daguerreotype. Even if the reception of photography in Spain was very enthusiastic, there was nothing remarkable in the development of the production of daguerreotypes and calotypes there, when compared to other European countries. The main production was portraiture of a commercial nature (fig. 1), of low aesthetic value, produced from mostly local, anonymous, daguerreotypists. In fact, the massive production of images in this early period was clearly in foreign hands.

Spain had developed into one of the favourite destinations of French and English travellers by the time the process of the daguerreotype became available to the public. By 1840 the image of Spain was full of clichés and fantasies, created and projected by the romantic travellers and painters through their admiration and cult for ruins and the primitive. Photographers continued producing and reproducing this stereotyped image of the country as well.³

The first travellers with a camera of whom we have any record were Théophile Gautier (1811–1872) and Eugène Piot (1812–1890) who, as narrated by the former, came to Spain in 1840. The French optician Nicolas Marie Paymal Lerebous (1807–1873) began to work as a publisher with the *Excursions Daguerriennes*. His novel idea was to signify a definitive change in the use of photographs for the purposes of publishing. The publication of the 114 plates, comprising views of cities and world famous monuments, was carried out between 1842 and 1844. Lerebours commissioned daguerreotypes to be taken in various parts of the world – and Spain was not to be left out, being represented by Granada (specifically the Alhambra) and Seville. Granada was, for many travellers, the gateway to the East. The Alhambra, the most emblematic of all Arab monuments in Spain, was also the most photographed site in Spain in

3. For a detailed research on early traveller photographers in Spain, see: Francisco Alonso Martínez, *Daguerreotypistas y Calotipistas y su imagen de España del siglo XIX*, Biblioteca de la Imagen, Girona, 2002.

Figure 3
Rafael Señán y González, *Granada, Alhambra, Patio de los Leones, Ángulo izquierdo*, hand-colored albumen print, c. 1880. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

Figure 4
Rafael Señán y González, *Granada, Alhambra, Sala de los Abecerrajes y Patio de los Leones*, hand-colored albumen print, c. 1880. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.



the 19th century starting in the first years after the invention of the new medium. According to the Spanish photo historian Francisco Alonso Martínez, the Alhambra was photographed 73 times by 9 photographers using the technique of daguerreotype and calotype.⁴ This fascination with the Alhambra remained unbroken until the end of the century but, by the 1860s,

local studios had started to lead the main production of photography made in this remarkable building. The two most famous local photographers had their studio near the Alhambra: Rafael Garzón (1836-1923) (fig. 2) and Rafael Señán y González (figs. 3 & 4). Another very popular local photographer was José García Ayola (1836-1900), whose studio was the only one announced in Richard Ford's *A Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain* (ed. 1890); one section of this book is devoted to introducing photographers in this city: "Photographer: Ayola, 14, Calle Gomez, on the ascent from town."⁵

As stated by photo historians Rafael Lavenfeld and Valentín Valhonrat, three illustrious characters were responsible for stimulating photography among some of the most famous travelling photographers, who produced some of the most remarkable images of the history of photography in Spain in the 19th century:⁶

* Isabel II (1830-1904): in 1852 she hired one of the most important figures of early photography in Spain, Charles Clifford (1819-1863), to make an album of calotypes of the most important monuments in the country.⁷ Further, many works by J. Laurent (1820-1863),⁸ José Spreafico (1831-1878), and André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri (1819-1899) were made under the auspices of Isabel II. Next to the production commissioned by Isabel II, these foreign photographers produced their own personal work, in which they usually provided the most exotic view of Spain (figs. 5 & 6).

* Antonio de Orleáns, duque de Montpensier (married to María Luisa de Borbón), who became one of the most important collectors of photography in Spain (based in Seville), with an extensive selection of images by the most famous Robert Peter Napper (1862-1863) and Francis Frith (1822-1898),⁹ Laurent and Clifford.

4. Martínez 2002 (reference 3), 107.

5. Richard Ford, *A Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain*, London: John Murray, 7th ed. 1890.

6. Rafael Lavenfeld, Valentín Valhonrat, 'De París a Cádiz', in *De París a Cádiz. Calotipia y Colodión*, exhibition catalogue, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (12 marzo - 23 mayo de 2004), Fondo fotográfico de la Universidad de Navarra 2004, 18-33.

7. For an in-depth research into the work of this photographer, see: Lee

Fontanella, Gerardo F. Kurtz, *Charles Clifford: Fotógrafo de la España de Isabel II*, Madrid: El Viso 1996.

8. For a good selection of Laurent's photographs, see: Rafael Garófano Sánchez, *La Andalucía del Siglo XIX en las Fotografías de J. Laurent y C^{ia}*, exhibition catalogue, Centro Andaluz de la Fotografía 1998.

9. For a good insight into the work of these two photographers, see: Lee Fontanella, *Napper i Fritz. Un viatge fotogràfic per la Ibèria del segle XIX*, exhibition catalogue (16 November 2007 - 10 February 2008), Museu Nacional D'Art de Catalunya, 2008.



Figure 5
R.P.Napper, *Group of gypsies*, c. 1863,
albumen print 19 x 23,2 cm.
Museo Universidad de Navarra,
Inv. Nr. 005700.



Figure 6
J. Laurent, *Group of gypsies*, c. 1865,
albumen print. Díaz Prósper Collection,
Valencia, Spain.

Figure 7
Charles Clifford,
Canal de Isabel II. Puente-acueducto de la Sima,
c. 1855, albumen print from wet collodion
negative. Museo Universidad de Navarra,
Inv. Nr. 000933.

* Lucio del Valle (1815-1874), engineer and architect based in Madrid; he used photographers to thoroughly document his works even before 1850. Especially important is his construction of the Canal of Isabel II, which was extensively documented by Clifford during the mid-1850s (fig. 7). Later, he also hired Laurent and the Spanish photographer José Martínez Sánchez (1808-1874) (fig. 8).

Around 1860, many Spanish photographers, who had been students of well-established foreign photographers such as Laurent, took the leading position in terms of photographic production. Among them, it is worth mentioning José Martínez Sánchez, José Spreafico, José García Ayola (1863-1898), Rafael Garzón (1863-1923), Pau Audouard (1857-1918), Antonio Esplugas Puig (1852-1929) and Juan José Muñoz (1845-1915). The 1870s and 1880s witnessed a huge increase in the number of photographic studios. As stated by photo-historian Publio López Mondejar: “if in 1862 the official statistics showed the existence of 17 studios in Madrid, in 1897 this quantity went up to 58, and in Barcelona 57.”¹⁰



The 19th century is well represented in this special issue of PhotoResearcher devoted to the history of Spanish photography, through four contributions:

Lee Fontanella's essay *José Albiñana and the Royal Court*, presents completely novel research on the Spanish court photographer José Albiñana, which reveals his relationship to the court – and how the court administration dealt financially with him – to us.

Carmelo Vega's article, *A Model-less Model. Re-thinking the History of Photography in Spain*, presents an in-depth reflection on Spanish historiography about photography, which characterizes itself by a number of peculiarities determined by the specific and contrasting nature of some of the methodologies used.

Luis Estepa Pinilla's *Delight and Disaster: The First*

10. López 1999 [reference 1].

Photographic Treatise Written in Spanish for the American Continent, introduces the book “*Teoría y Práctica del Arte de la Fotografía*” (1862), a book of capital importance for the history of Spanish scientific literature and one that has remained unknown to this day.

Jürg Schneider and Miquel Vilaró I Güell’s article, *Fourteen Views of Fernando Po to Save the Colony*, which introduces a story that took place in 1873 when the Spanish governor on Fernando Po, Ignacio García Tudela y Prieto, drafted a lengthy report in which he advised the Spanish Government to completely withdraw from all its possessions in the Gulf of Guinea.



Figure 8
José Martínez Sánchez,
Puerto del Grao de Valencia, c. 1867,
albumen print from wet collodion negative
23,3 x 66 cm.
Museo Universidad de Navarra,
Inv. Nr. 000863.

On the contrary, Tudela’s successor Diego Santisteban, stressed the great benefit Spain could gain from its neglected and practically unknown colony. In order to support his argument he sent fourteen photographs from Fernando Po to Madrid.

Beginning of the 20th century to the end of the Spanish Civil War

From the 1880s onwards, an incipient Pictorialism, a countercurrent movement to the conventional frozen studio photography, arrived and developed quite speedily in Spain. The most important protagonists of the Pictorialism movement, such as Joaquim Pla Janini (1879–1970), Goicoechea, Antoni Campanà and, the most prolific, José Ortiz Echagüe (1886–1980) (fig. 9), were found in Madrid and Barcelona. The third photographic current of those years was pure photojournalism practised by photographers with no artistic intention who aimed at exhaustively documenting the daily life and customs of Spanish villages. These photographers included Luis Escobar, Felipe Monterola, Pacheco, etc. They also documented important events in the history of Spain, such as the Moroccan campaign (1859–60) and the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). The decline of Pictorialism gave birth to other photographic currents, such as



Figure 9
 José Ortíz Echagüe,
Lagarteranas (Confidencias) 2, 1920-1923,
 albumen print from wet collodion negative
 33,8 x 22,9 cm. Museo Universidad de Navarra,
 Inv. Nr. OE-0146.

the so-called *avant-garde* photography, represented by photographers like Nicolás de Leucona, Pere Català Pic (1889–1971) and Josep Renau. An article in this special edition presents an in-depth overview of this period.

The Spanish Civil War was one the first big battles to gain full attention from newspapers worldwide,¹¹ and the graphic information that was generated in those years gave birth to a new method of visual communication. In this sense, the Civil War was, not only in terms of photographic production but also as the first example of photography of a civil war, a pioneering example of modern photojournalism.

The list of photographers active during this campaign is rather long, and includes local photographers like Pere Català, Francesc Català-Roca (1922–1998), Agustí Centelles (1909–1985), as well as foreigners such as Robert Capa (1913–1954), Kati Horna (1912–2000), David Seymour, who was known as “Chim” (1911–1956), and Gerda Taro (1910–1937) who died while working, during the war. All of these foreign photographers, who were very deeply engaged in photographing this war, received worldwide recognition and their names have become engraved in the history of photojournalism.

The years between 1920 and 1945 are represented in this issue by the following contributions:

Juan Naranjo’s article, *From the Easel to the Printer. Avant-garde Photography in Spain, 1920-1945*, introduces the topic of avant-garde photography in Spain, stressing that, as was the case in all other European countries, photography had scant visibility within the field of avant-garde art, for which painting, drawing and sculpture still remained the media of choice.

PhotoResearcher’s interview with **Marie-Loup Sougez** about Spanish Civil War photography and the French photographer Albert-Louis Deschamps and his visual contribution to the history of Spanish Civil War photography.

Another fascinating contribution is **Cynthia Young’s** article, *Spanish Civil War Photography and the Mexican Suitcase*. On 19 December 2007, three battered, commonplace cardboard boxes arrived at the International Center of Photography in New York. Inside these boxes – the so-called Mexican Suitcase – was a treasure trove of photographic history believed lost since World War II: the legendary Spanish Civil War negatives of Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and David Seymour.

Franquism period (1939-1975)

The aftermath of the Spanish Civil War affected all ambits in the daily life of all civilians in the country – and that, for many years to come. The effects of the devastating years of

11. The work produced by photographers during WWI was the first example of war photojournalism in the history of photography. For further information on this topic see, for example, the work of the Austrian photo-historian Anton Holzer: Anton Holzer (text by Karl Kraus), *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Der*

Erste Weltkrieg in Bildern, Darmstadt: Primus Verlag 2013; Anton Holzer, *Die andere Front. Fotografie und Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Darmstadt: Primus Verlag 2012.



Figure 10
 Martín Santos Yubero,
Children looking at a toy shop window,
 3rd January 1959.
 Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid,
 Inv. Nr. 16.529.7.

regime) and became professionals, not because of their talent, but because of their faithfulness to the regime. A photographer whose legacy deserves to be mentioned was Martín Santos Yubero (1903–1994), who became a photojournalist in Madrid before the Spanish Civil War, and whose lens was more concerned with documenting the daily life of civilians than the war itself.¹² He was more a social documental photojournalist than a war photographer. Once the war finished, he continued working from a social-documentary approach, focusing on the economic precariousness and hard life imposed to civilians in the aftermath of the war (fig. 10).

Contemporary photography in Spain since 1975

In the early 1970s, photography started getting closer to contemporary art in certain European countries and the United States. In Spain, this renewal of photographic language was poor, slow and discontinuous. The socio-political conditions of the Spanish state did not nourish change in any way: the transformation was only strengthened by the effort and willingness of those involved.

Immediately after Franco's death, a young generation of photographers took the lead standing in abrupt opposition to the aesthetic values practiced by photographers in the previous years. Only a small group of young documental photographers followed the aesthetic canon inherited from their predecessors: Koldo Chamorro (1949–2009), Cristóbal Hara (*1946), Fernando Herráez (*1948), Ramón Zabalza (*1938) and Cristina García Rodero (*1949). These photographers travelled through the whole country on their search to document popular festivals, ancient traditions, etc. In the 1980s, this group of photographers brought back memories of a rural image of Spain to the political class – an image that the elite of the country was trying to forget and bury.

12. Pilar Huertas, *Santos Yubero: Madrid, medio siglo de historia*, Creaciones Vincent Gabrielle 2011.

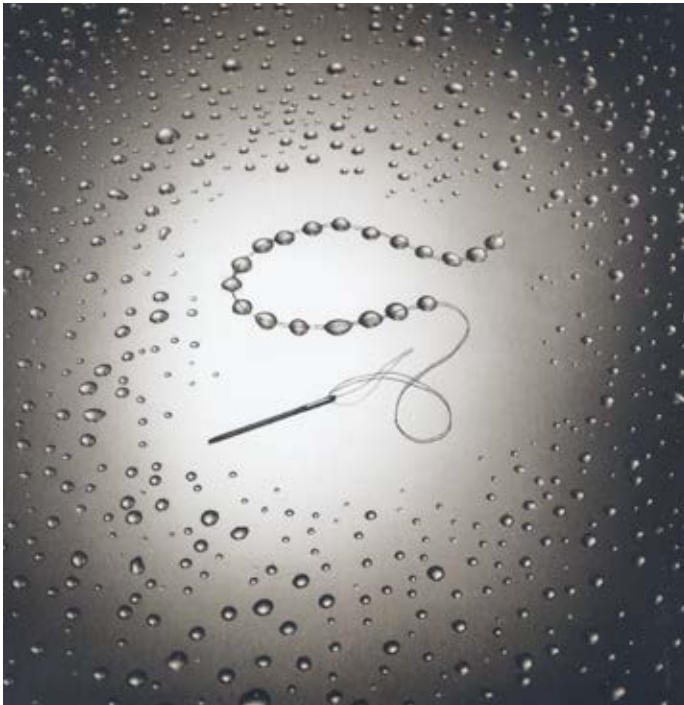


Figure 11
Chema Madoz, *A necklace of tears*, 1998.
VEGAP/Chema Madoz.

With the end of the dictatorship, photojournalism took the leading role within the field of photography and a young generation of photographers, completely committed to showing the changing society and its contradictory realities in those years, was born. The 1980s were a sort of transitory period, full of utopia and painful disillusionments, both in the sociological and liberal arena. But it was also a period impregnated with an euphoric hope, which led many young photographers to experiment freely the possibilities of photography. Among the main protagonists were a group of young photographers, including Joan Fontcuberta (*1955), Pere Formiguera (*1952), Grupo El Yeti (Mendo, Lafuente y Lorrio), etc, under the influence of the magazine *Nueva Lente*, Catalan artists such as Eugenia Balcells (*1943), Antoni Muntadas (*1942) and Francesc Torres (*1948), and finally authors who consolidated the most serious and rigorous alternative in Spain, like Isidoro Valcárcel Medina (*1937), Esther Ferrer (*1937) and Juan Hidalgo (*1927). The work of Chema Madoz (*1958),¹³ with his intelligent and poetic approach, is especially remarkable (fig. 11).

The fascinating topic of photobooks in Spain and its history is treated by **Moritz Neumüller's** contribution *From Fotografía Pública to the Afnonauts: Spanish Photobooks and Magazines*. This article is about the intersection between the research on Spanish photography and the relatively recent effort of writing a history of the photobook. The article is followed by an interview with the Spanish photographer **Cristina de Middle**, who created the acclaimed photobook *The Afnonauts*, carried out by this author and **Alejandro Castellote**.

To close this special issue on the history of photography in Spain, **Pep Benlloch, Pedro Vicente and Miguel García**, introduce their project *dPhoto* (Universidad Politécnica of Valencia), born with the purpose of creating a directory of photo archives and collections which can be used as a tool for cataloguing and disseminating the Spanish photographic heritage, through a website that allows access to the information about the photographic collections that are scattered throughout the country.

Carmen Pérez González, Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, Uwe Schögl
Vienna, April 2014

13. For a rich selection of his work and in-deep research on his oeuvre, see: Olivia María Rubio et al, *Chema Madoz*, Madrid: La Fábrica Editorial 2009.