

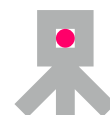
European Society for the History of
Photography



JUBILEE

30 YEARS ESHPh
Congress of Photography in Vienna

Editors Anna Auer and Uwe Schögl



European Society for the History of Photography
ESHP

30

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Fotohof *edition*



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Anna Auer and Uwe Schögl

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Opening Words from the Editors

More than 170 years ago, the medium of photography introduced a *Copernican change in perception* (Silvio Vietta, *Ästhetik der Moderne*, 2001) into our visual reality. Since that time, photography – more than any other innovation of the modern age – has propelled an uninterrupted development that has created a permanent change in our perception, investigation and understanding of reality. At the same time, the understanding of the world and the further development of this reality through photography is a history of the interaction between photography and science: The theoretical reflection on photography as a realization model has always been a component in the historical development of the imagination instrument known as photography.

The *European Society for the History of Photography (ESHPh)* considers itself an independent scientific forum devoted to the investigation, in an international context, of the historical developments in photography from its beginning to the present day. Today, the *ESHPh* is engaged in a close international exchange of information between renowned photographers, historians, art historians, philosophers, sociologists, media theoreticians, visual scientists and private collectors, and counts important institutions in Europe and abroad among its members.

This year, the *ESHPh* is celebrating the thirtieth year of its existence. This provides us with the opportunity of providing new impulses on fundamental aspects of photographic research in the form of a wide-ranging commemorative festschrift *Jubilee – 30 Years ESHPh* and a three-day Congress of Photography in Vienna, 2008.

This book provides a critical overview of the photographic understanding of the picture from a contemporary, trans-disciplinary, perspective. Within the context of the visual inundation of our globalized society, the concepts and effects of photographic images are analysed and

possible models for their interpretation investigated. Renowned photo historians and media theoreticians from Europe and abroad have agreed to deal with a wide range of subjects, ranging from historical photography of the 19th century to contemporary photography, in individual scientific contributions.

The book *Jubilee – 30 Years ESHPh* forms a triad between those matters that, today, can be regarded as being dynamic aspects in the scientific discourse on photographic history:

The first complex is devoted to *the Changeable Picture in our Society, the Use and Manipulation of Pictures, Inventors and Photographic Printing*.

Complex number two investigates the question of *Models, Concepts and Strategies in the Private and Public Collections of Photographs*. In interviews, the protagonists and initiators of three international private collections discuss the concepts and history of their collections. The *Marie-Thérèse and André Jammes Collection*, *Fotografis Collection* and *Collection FG Simak* are presented with a personal selection made by their moving spirits.

Photography as a holistic concept of fine arts and science is investigated in the third complex: *Interdisciplinary Photography – Photography and its Contextualization in the Fine Arts (Painting, Film, Video, Concept Art) and the Sciences*.

Today – and in the future – the vision of photographic images as a part of our experiencing and depicting reality when dealing physical, chemical and (photo) mechanical processes within social and artistic points of reference will remain the guiding principle of the *European Society for the History of Photography*.

Anna Auer
President *ESHPh*

Uwe Schögl
Vice-President *ESHPh*

I Prologue – How it All Began

Anna Auer in Conversation with Laurent Roosens and Rolf H. Krauss on the Foundation and First Years of the ESHPh



fig. 1 First Meeting at *Sterckshof Museum* in Deurne near Antwerp (Belgium) on 15 and 16 December 1977 to form an *European Society for the History of Photography*. (Photo: Jacques Souck)

At the end of 1977, nine personalities from six European countries came together to establish a new society dealing with the history of photography in a European context. Anna Auer, the current president of the European Society for the History of Photography, which was established at that time, questions two of the founders – the Belgian Dr. Laurent Roosens and DDr. Rolf H. Krauss from Germany – on this subject.

Auer: How did you become interested in the history of photography?

Roosens: My activities in this area are the result of a coincidence. I was on the staff of the scientific research centre of N.V. Gevaert Photo Producten in Mortsel, a suburb of Antwerp. While we were on a business trip in spring 1963, my colleague Dr. Karel Sano asked me if I would like to help him organize an exhibition on the history of photography, the Museum of Applied Arts of the Province of Antwerp was interested in it. Although, at the time, I only had a general idea of the history of photography, I agreed. The exhibition *125 jaar Fotografie*, which subsequently opened in the Sterckshof Museum in Deurne near Antwerp, was a great success and led to the establishment of the *Foto en Film department* which I have been closely associated with since that time. Donations and acquisitions, including the Michel Auer collection in 1973, formed the basis for the development of today's *Foto Museum Provincie Antwerpen* into one of the most important photo museums.

Krauss: There are family reasons for my close attachment to photography. My great-uncle Eugen Krauss founded an optical workshop in Paris in the 1880s that developed into one of the most important companies for the production of cameras, lenses, binoculars, etc. In 1895, my grandfather Adolf Krauss opened the first photo shop in Stuttgart; this was subsequently taken over by my father, Eugen Krauss and I, a member of the third generation, ran it until it was sold in 1991. By the way, we also produced cameras and darkroom equipment in the 1920s and 1930s. I started collecting all kinds of photographica in the early 1960s. Today, there are more than 21,000 titles in my photographic library. In 1977, I was chosen to be chairman of the History Section of *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie* – an office I was to hold for twenty years. As its freshly-elected section chairman, I took part in the founding meeting in Antwerp.

Auer: What were the reasons for international cooperation becoming so desirable at the time?

Roosens: Over the years, the contacts between the photo section of the *Sterckhof* and other European photo museums had become increasingly close. This led to common interests in areas such as methods for cataloguing, establishing prices and insurance values, conservation and restoration of pictures and apparatuses. You must not forget that, at the time, many things were still in their infancy. The intensifying connections between the individual organizations led to considering whether it was not time to expand the occasional contacts and give them a more tightly organized structure. The growing interest in photography – and the increasing complexity of photographic history research – led to the question of a more comprehensive form of coordination of the various efforts being asked more pressingly.

Krauss: Something like a photographic scene actually developed in the mid-seventies. There were the time-honoured photographic societies like the *Royal Photographic Society* in England, the *Société française de photographie* in France and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie* that all dealt with the history of photography to a greater or lesser extent. In addition, there were substantial photographic collections in institutions such as the *Science Museum* in London, the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris and the *Deutsches Museum* in Munich as well as significant private and company collections including the *Photomuseum Frank* in Austria, the *Agfa-Gevaert Foto-Historama* in Germany and the *Kodak Museum* in England, to name only a few. In addition, collector societies, like *Leica-Historica* or the *Club Daguerre*, had recently come into being and were, more or less, forced to deal with the history of photography as the basis of their collecting activities. However, it was absolutely new that academic science began to interest itself in the history of photography. The first monographs, exhibition catalogues and essays on the history and theory of photography – written by art historians – were published. There was a certain feeling in the air that all these European resources and activities should be integrated.

Auer: What was the immediate story behind the founding of the Society?

Roosens: In 1973, I was commissioned to make a survey, during a meeting on the history of photography, organized by *Europhot* – the Council of the *Professional Photographers of Europe* – and held in Chalon-sur-Saône, to determine the interest in establishing an organization for the exchange of information between befriended colleagues. This was followed by intensive

correspondence with the photo museums which existed at the time as well as with the curators of picture collections, archives and libraries. In the meantime, the Antwerp provincial authorities had accepted the responsibility for organizing the survey. In 1977, I was able to present them with a draft resolution which showed that those asked had shown great interest in a European society dealing with the history of photography – however, not under the auspices of Europhot but as an independent organization. The deputation from the Province of Antwerp then declared themselves prepared to organize a founding meeting. I worked out a draft for the statutes of the society we were to establish.

Auer: What was the outcome of that founding meeting?

Roosens: The participants in the meeting, held on 15 and 16 December 1977 in the rooms of the *Sterckshof Museum*, were Colin Ford from the *National Portrait Gallery*, London, Hans Frank from the *Photomuseum* Bad Ischl, Prof. Margaret Harker Farrand from the *Royal Photographic Society*, Rune Hassner, Stockholm, André Jammes as the representative of the *Société française de photographie*, Dr. Rolf H. Krauss from the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie*, Ingeborg Th. Leijerzapf of the *Print Collection of the Rijksuniversiteit Leiden*, Bernard Marbot from the *Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris and Dr. Laurent Roosens. Rosellina Burri Bischof from the *Stiftung Photographie*, Zurich and Klaus Op ten Höfel from *Agfa-Gevaert Foto-Historama*, Leverkusen were excused. Representatives of the Province of Antwerp, the Belgian Culture Ministry and the *Sterckshof* Committee also took part. It was intended that the society be led by a board of eleven persons who would choose from their ranks to form the Society's presidium for a four-year term. An interim presidium with Dr. Laurent Roosens as president, Prof. Margaret Harker Farrand, vice-president, Roger Coenen, curator of the Film and Photo Section of the *Sterckshof Museum*, secretary general and Ingeborg Th. Leijerzapf as treasurer, was elected. On the evening of 16 December 1977, the new Society was able to introduce itself to the press in the rooms of the Governor of the Province of Antwerp.

Krauss: Following a thorough discussion of the draft for the meeting, the purpose and goals of the Society were formulated. The Society was to be an organization on a voluntary basis with the goal of promoting cooperation between European societies and institutions, as well as individuals, entirely, or partially, concerned with the history of photography. The aims of the Society were summarized as follows:

1. To promote interest in the history of photography.
2. To expand knowledge in the field of the history of photography as well as to establish and maintain a system for the exchange of information and exhibitions.
3. To organize and hold international meetings devoted to the history of photography.
4. To organize international committees to deal with specific questions from the area of the history of photography.

Roosens: In a lecture I delivered at the meeting of the History Section of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie* on 20 and 21 May 1978 in Stuttgart – only a few months after the foundation meeting – I made suggestions for the possible duties of such internationally appointed committees. My special interest in this case was in the not-easily accessible “grey literature” – dissertations, internal company publications, conference proceedings, catalogues, bibliographies, etc. – which had only limited distribution, as well as essays in magazines and other compilations. At the time, I considered it a useful task to find the ways and means of becoming informed about these sources in a systematic manner. As a clear result of these activities, we published regular bibliographies of books, catalogues, auction catalogues, dissertations, etc. as a major section of the *Society’s information journal Photohistorica*, along with abstracts of essays in journals which dealt with the topic of the history of photography. Incidentally, these and other activities were made financially possible through the logistic and material support received from the authorities of the Province of Antwerp along with our membership fees.

Auer: *Photohistorica* was soon joined by the publications *Newsletter* and *SB* (Selective Bibliography). The first provided general information and was published twice a year. The second dealt with bibliographies – in this case, books dealing with specific aspects of the history of photography – and was published at irregular intervals. All the publications were principally aimed at the Society's members. It was intended to address a broader audience through the planned international conferences. How did this project develop?

Krauss: On 19 November 1978, not even one year after the foundation, the society's first symposium was held in cooperation with the *Agfa-Gevaert Foto-Historama* on its premises in Leverkusen. It was dedicated to the memory of Erich Stenger on the occasion of his 100th birthday in the same year. The first general assembly was held on the following day. The main decisions reached were on the confirmation of the previous, interim presidium and the adoption of the statutes. The second symposium was held from 9 to 12 April 1981 at the, then new, seat of the *Royal Photographic Society* in Bath. The 58 participants from 8 European countries dealt with topics such as 'The dating of photographs by provenance and visual content', 'The documentation of photo-historical information' and 'Problems encountered in teaching the history of photography'. The second general assembly of the Society took place during the meeting. By that time, more than 50 institutions from throughout Europe had become members.

I

The Changeable Picture in our Society **The Use and Manipulation of Pictures,** **Inventors and Photographic Printing**

R. Derek Wood

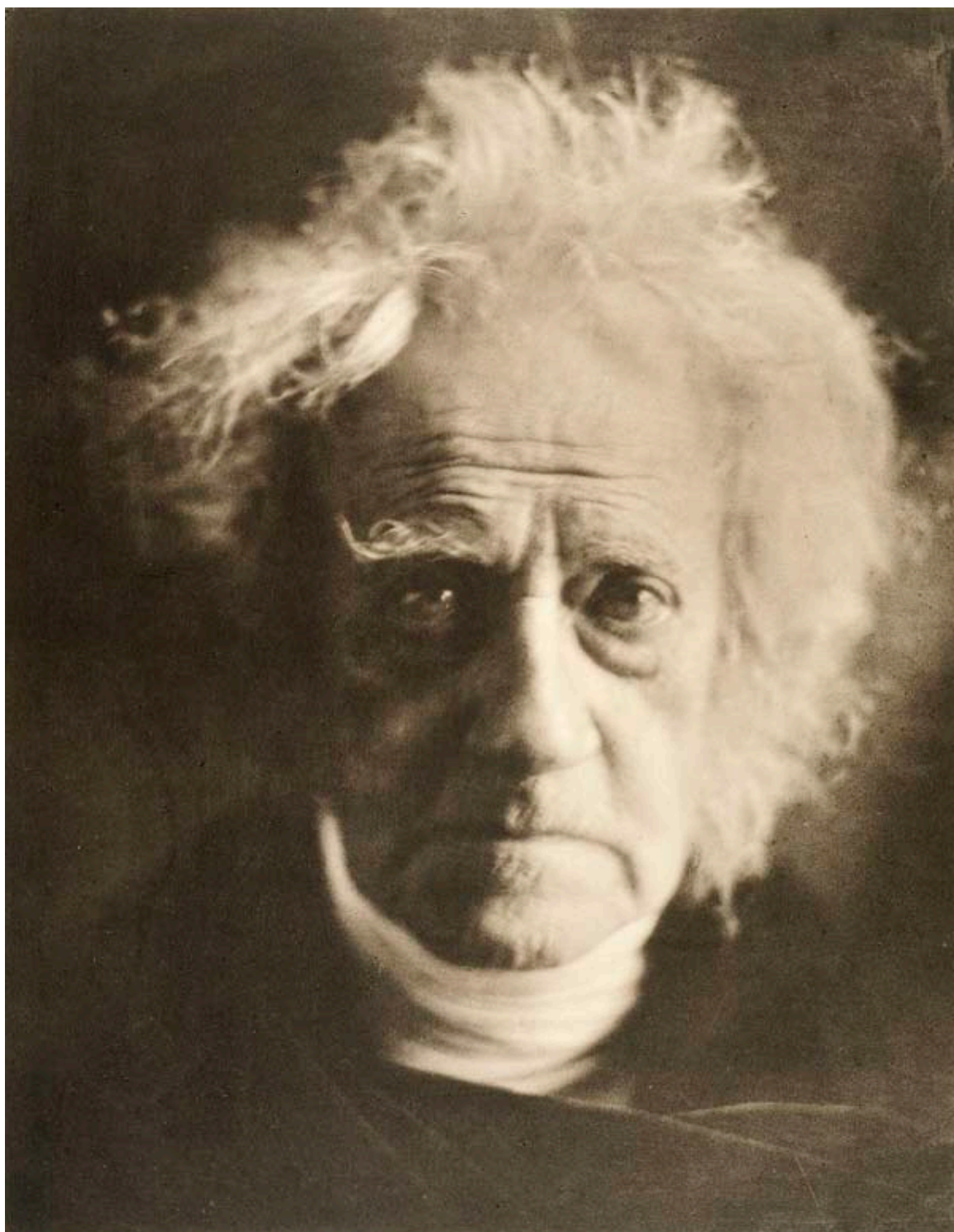
2 Fourteenth March 1839, Herschel's Key to Photography, the Way the Moment is Preserved for the Future

Introduction

The author holds that the Fourteenth of March 1839 is the most significant date for the beginning of photography.

Typesetting of the printed book has been readily accepted as a technology of incalculable significance, yet, in what must be called the world of learning, photography has strangely not received the same recognition. Directly a camera shutter is operated it captures a moment that is already the past. All photographs involve a sense of the moment and a sense of the past. History is integral to the ethos of photographs. Yet the study of the early history of photography has been of low quality, the historians of the subject themselves have not captured the first moments well. The subject is beset by a tangle of historiographically created problems and confusions. Popular works about the discovery of photography have absorbed fourth generation journalistic accounts derived from earlier third and second generation books in which the authors have made little attempt to go to contemporary prime sources to attempt to verify or adjust the received version. In many aspects of general history a comparatively wide stream of information can become incorporated into the received wisdom of the text books, but in a narrower subject like the discovery of photography there is greater danger that one source might capture the stage. What can be termed the 'Talbo-centric' version has become widely accepted as the early history of photography. It requires more space than is available here to discuss fully the historiographic route by which this version of history came about, but one reason why such popular accounts of the beginnings of photography have been resistant to adjustment is the inherent and unfortunate chance that the events of the first months after the announcement in Paris in January 1839 about Daguerre's creations were not straightforward. Photography got off awkwardly on a wrong foot and the historian is presented with a difficult task of technical explanation that does not make easy reading at the very opening of his account. Consequently that task is avoided and an easy route is taken which irretrievably spoils the history, and in its turn creates further historiographic problems. If this were not so then 14 March 1839 would be a date significant to a far greater number people than it is. For it is due only to the chance way that history has been written that has obscured the supreme importance of Sir John Herschel's 14th March *Note on the Art of Photography, or the application of the Chemical Rays of Light to the purposes of Pictorial Representation*.

fig. 1 Julia Margaret Cameron, *Sir John F. W. Herschel*, 1867.
Albumen print, 26.7 x 33.6 cm. City Museum Munich.



March 14. – J.W. Lubbock, Esq. V.P. and Treas, in the chair

...

2. 'Note on the Art of Photography, or the application of the Chemical Rays of Light to the purposes of Pictorial Representation,' by Sir John F. W. Herschel, Bart.

The author states, that his attention was first called to the subject of M. Daguerre's concealed photographic processes, by a note from Capt. Beaufort, dated the 22nd of January last, at which time he was ignorant that it had been considered by Mr. Talbot, or any one in this country. As an enigma to be solved, a variety of processes at once presented themselves, of which the most promising are the following: – First, the so-called de-oxidizing power of the chemical rays in their action on recently-precipitated chloride of silver; secondly, the instant and copious precipitation of a mixture of a solution of muriate of platina and lime-water, by solar light, forming an insoluble compound, which might afterwards be blackened by a variety of agents; thirdly, the reduction of gold in contact with de-oxidizing agents: and fourthly, the decomposition of an argentine compound, soluble in water exposed to light, in an atmosphere of peroxide of chlorine, either pure or diluted. Confining his attention, in the present notice, to the employment of chloride of silver. the author inquires into the methods by which the blackened traces can be preserved, which may be effected, he observes, by the application of any liquid capable of dissolving and washing off the unchanged chloride, but of leaving the reduced, or oxide of silver, untouched. These conditions are best fulfilled by the liquid hyposulphites. Pure water will fix the photograph, by washing out the nitrate of silver, but the tint of the picture resulting is brick-red; but the black colour may be restored, by washing it over with a weak solution of hyposulphite of ammonia. The author found that paper impregnated with the chloride of silver was only slightly susceptible to the influence of light; but an accidental observation led him to the discovery of other salts of silver, in which the acid, being more volatile, adheres to the base by a weak affinity, and which impart much greater sensibility to the paper on which they are applied – such as the carbonate, the nitrate, and the acetate. The nitrate requires to be perfectly neutral; for the least excess of acid lowers, in a remarkable degree, its susceptibility. In the application of photographic processes to the copying of engravings or drawings, many precautions, and minute attention to a number of apparently trivial, but really important circumstances, are required to insure success. In the first transfers, both light and shadow, as well as right and left, are the reverse of the original; and to operate a second transfer, or by a double inversion to reproduce the original effect, is a matter of infinitely greater difficulty, and in which the author has only recently ascertained the cause of former failures, and the remedy to be applied. It was during the prosecution of these experiments that the author was led to notice some remarkable facts relating to the action the chemical rays. He ascertained the contrary to the prevailing opinion: the chemical action of light is by no means proportional to the quantity of violet rays transmitted, or even to the general tendency of the tint to the violet end of the spectrum; and his experiments lead to the conclusion, that, in the same manner as media have been ascertained to have relations sui generis to the calorific rays, not regulated by their relations to the rays of illumination and of colour, they have also specific relations, to the chemical spectrum, different from those they bear to the other kinds of spectra. For the successful prosecution of this curious investigation, the first step must consist in the minute examination of the chemical actions of all the parts of a pure spectrum, not formed by material prisms, and he points out, for that purpose, one formed in Fraunhofer's method, by the interference of the rays of light themselves in passing through gratings, and fixed by the heliostat. He notices a curious phenomenon respecting the action of light on nitrated paper; namely, its great increase of intensity under a certain kind of glass strongly pressed in contact with it – an effect which cannot be explained either by the reflection of light, or the presence of moisture, but which may possibly be dependent on the evolution of heat. Twenty-three specimens of photographs made by Sir John Herschel accompany this paper; one a sketch of his telescope at Slough, fixed from its image in a lens, and the rest copies of engravings and drawings, some reverse, or first transfers, and others second transfers, or re-reversed pictures.

J.W.F. Herschel's paper suggesting hyposulphites ('Hypo') for fixing photographic images was read at the meeting of the Royal Society at Somerset House, London, on Thursday 14 March 1839. At the end of the following week it was published in the weekly *Athenaum* of 23 March¹. This use of Hypo (as it has been known to photographers since²) was immediately taken up in practice. For indeed how else would photography have been possible then and since! Herschel's paper was also printed in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*³ (the Issue in which it appeared covered the meetings of 14 February – 21 March 1839 and was probably sent out to Fellows during April), and in the May issue of *Philosophical Magazine* (published by Taylor and Francis).⁴ It was also translated into German in the June issue of *Neue Notizen aus dem Gebiete der Natur – und Heilkunde*.⁵ In France, Herschel's solution to the problem of preserving light sensitive silver-salt images by use of hypo had surprisingly become known even earlier than his communication to the Royal Society in London. With Herschel's permission, Talbot had written on 1 March to J.B. Biot in Paris briefly describing Herschel's use of sodium hyposulphite. The letter quickly reached Paris, was read by Biot at the Académie des Sciences meeting of 4 March 1839. The full text of the letter was published in the Académie's *Comptes – rendus*,⁶ but was absent from reports of the meeting that appeared in the general newspapers and intellectual journals of Paris.

Yet the version of the history of photography propagated in the standard histories lost sight of the obvious fact that Hypo was immediately used in England in 1839. For example, C.T. Downing comments on his own experience of its use in a letter dated 8 April 1839 published in the London Literary Gazette, as does also Alfred Smee five weeks later in the same journal of 18 May 1839. Both these examples were published within a few weeks of Herschel's paper, but it could be argued that Herschel is not specifically cited by Downing or Smee. The most significant example in 1839 that Herschel's paper of 14 March 1839 was responsible for the immediate introduction of hypo as a photographic fixer – and for the later situation of forgetfulness – is to examine the earliest photographic activities of the chemist J.T. Cooper, (junior), especially as a few years later Cooper was pretending (there was an ulterior motive) that the events of 1839 had not happened!

Cooper's venture

John Thomas Cooper⁷ was 'Resident Chemist' at the Polytechnic Institution in Regent Street where he gave public lectures and demonstrations. When details of the daguerreotype technique became known later in 1839 he also demonstrated that process to the public at the Polytechnic,⁸ and indeed was afterwards particularly associated with the daguerreotype in the early 1840s by operating with J.F. Goddard the important Daguerreotype studio set up there by Richard Beard. In March 1839 Cooper began to produce 'Photogenic Drawing Paper' for sale to the public. Packets of twelve octavo sheets were sold for five shillings along with 'directions for use'. They were sold through three optical and instrument shops in London and advertised in the weekly *Athenaum*.⁹ In the first three advertisements of 16 March; 30 March, and 13 April,

no mention was made of the chemicals used, but on the fourth and last appearance on 20 April 1839 of the advertisement he specifically mentioned 'Cooper's Preserving liquid for fixing the drawings in bottles $\frac{3}{6}$ each'. The following month Cooper was presented with a medal by the Society of Arts, 'for his Method of preparing Paper for Photographic Drawings'. The way he prepared the sensitised paper on a large commercial scale was published in his communication dated 19 May to the Society of Art in their Transactions.¹⁰ He stated with regard to 'Fixing':

The only method of rendering the photogenic drawings permanent is, I am convinced, by removing the whole of the silver (with the exception of the oxide that forms the picture) from the paper. This is effected by what Sir John Herschel proposes for the purpose, viz. a solution of the hyposulphite of soda.

From the account given above, it would seem difficult to comprehend how anyone could deny that Herschel's early work was not published in 1839 and in particular to deny that his most important advice to use hypo as a fixing agent was not of immediate consequence. Even so, it is somewhat surprising that six years later even Cooper himself was not too embarrassed to pretend otherwise. This happened at an early stage of a long legal action taken by Richard Beard, the owner of the British daguerreotype patent, to stop John Egerton using the technique at his studio in Temple Street, off Fleet Street, London.¹¹ John Thomas Cooper and his father (of the same name and a chemist of high reputation through the 1820s and 1830s), combined on 21 May 1845 to swear a 3-page affidavit¹² in support of Beard's case. After first making some general remarks about the daguerreotype process and the patent they stated

John Thomas Cooper of N^o 82 Blackfriars Road in the county of Surrey Consulting Chemist and John Thomas Cooper the younger of the same place Chemist make oath and saith ... that the solution of hyposulphite of soda for the purpose mentioned in the said specification was new and unknown in this country for that purpose^[13] prior to the date of the said Letters Patent and that hyposulphite of soda is very useful and valuable for that particular purpose.

The crux of the matter can be highlighted by posing what for the present writer is still a despairing question: are we really going to continue to incorporate into the standard histories of photography a version of the introduction of Hypo which accords more with Cooper's statement of 21 May 1845 rather than the actual events and his own actions and words of 19 May 1839?

There is no certain evidence as to how or when exactly Cooper first heard of Herschel's use of Hypo. It was not a practice at the Royal Society to list the names of all the Fellows who attended the general meetings except for a requirement to record any 'stranger' brought to the meeting by Fellows. On 14 March 1839 there were twelve such non-fellows.¹⁴ There is evidence that 'Mr Cooper' was present at the important meetings of the Royal Society held on 31 January, 14 February (indeed two Mr Coopers on this occasion), perhaps on 21 February (not listed as a stranger but at this meeting, as well as Talbot's paper, a second paper by J.T. Cooper [Senior?] concerning a water barometer was read), and on 28 February, but not indeed on 14 March.¹⁵ It would appear therefore that J.T. Cooper had acquired his knowledge about hypo not from being amongst the privileged persons at the reading at the Royal Society, but from the publication of Herschel's paper as available to a wide public. For Herschel's research during the first weeks of 1839 did indeed become immediately available to the public.

In 1864 Alfred Brothers of Manchester, who was researching on the early years of Photography, wrote to Sir John Herschel asking if he could clarify his part in the discovery of the use of hyposulphite for fixing. In his reply dated 29 October 1864, Herschel drew attention to his work on the chemical properties of hyposulphites published in 1819, to his first use of hypo to fix photographs as recorded in his notebook in January 1839 and quoted briefly from the passage about hyposulphites 'printed in the notices of the proceedings of the Royal Society of March 14, 1839'. It is quite common to find that reminiscences looking back over a quarter of a century provide inaccurate and untrustworthy sources for later historians. However, even in this situation, Herschel demonstrates his exceptional qualities, for he does not provide a reminiscence, but quotes from his notebooks of 1839. As Alfred Brothers took care to publish Herschel's account not long after in the *British Journal of Photography*¹⁶ it is a text that, like the report of Herschel's paper published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society* and *Athenaeum* in 1839, can be counted as a classic in the writing of photographic history.

It is one of the oddities of past writing of photographic history that entirely for historiographic reasons the influence of Sir John Herschel in 1839 has been misrepresented. In recent decades a better balance has been reached, but it is still not unknown for an old idea that Sir John's simple mastery of both the chemistry of the photosensitivity of silver salts, and the properties of 'hyposulphite', as expressed at the Royal Society in London on 14 March 1839, was not published at the time to have some credence. This historiographic situation has been responsible (particularly in a context of uncritical acceptance of a story derived from Talbot's self publicity) for a lack of widespread recognition of Herschel's supreme contribution to the creation of photography. Therefore it is necessary here in a second part of the article to discuss some of the central aspects of this historiographic misrepresentation.

Note on Historiography

A paradox exists in the historiography of subject: when many historians point to a first use of the word Photography it is to Herschel's 14 March paper at the Royal Society, yet the same paper does not exist when the first use of hypo is discussed!

Probably the idea in historical writings that Herschel's work was not published in 1839 first obtained currency from some words of Sir David Brewster published in an unsigned article on 'Photography' in *The North British Review* in August 1847. Brewster mistakenly spoke of the fixing of photographs by the Rev. J.B. Reade in 1839 with Hyposulphite of soda, 'which', said Brewster, 'has since been universally used as the best, and was afterwards suggested in 1840 by Sir John Herschel'.¹⁷ A thoughtless passage by Brewster, which was passed on again by himself in the following decade in an influential eighth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This in its turn was immediately a source of facts dispensed by writers such as John Timbs in his *Stories of Inventors and Discoverers of Science and the useful arts* of 1860. A typical reappearance in the late twentieth century of such statements can be found in a popular account of the history of photography when the *Sunday Times* of London in September and October 1978 published a very copiously illustrated series on 19th century photography under a title of 'Photodiscovery'.¹⁸ In the text was the following: 'After Daguerre published his process in August 1839, Sir John Herschel suggested a fixing solution of hyposulphate [*sic*']'.¹⁹ No matter who amongst the panel of advisors for the *Sunday Times* series in 1978 was responsible for this nonsense that Herschel did not publish until after August 1839 and after Daguerre (!), they were inheritors and propagators of a typically incorrect line of the history of photography found in popular accounts, derived from previous historical writings without making any attempt to look at prime contemporary sources.

How is it these mistakes were not subject to more revision in the late 19th and early 20th centuries? Sad to say, a great deal of writing on the early history of photography has obviously been done in photographic libraries from photographic literature of a date later than the actual events. There are ample signs of events prior to the 1850s being characterised by repeating accounts and reminiscences that had appeared in photographic journals later in the century indexed under 'history'. The year of 1839 has, in spite of its importance, been generally treated in that way, and applies to Herschel's paper of 14 March 1839. It was published, as we have already seen, only nine days later in the influential weekly *Athenaeum* of 23 March. Not only has that appearance of Herschel's paper been generally ignored,²⁰ but the report of the 14 March meeting in the Proceedings of the Royal Society has gained a special significance in regard to the growth of an idea that Herschel's paper was withdrawn from publication or only an "abstract" ever appeared.

The tenacity of the ideas of abstract and withdrawal in the 20th century can be exemplified from the writing in 1979 of Professor Larry Schaaf after he found the manuscript of Herschel's paper had survived at St. John's College, Cambridge.²¹ Schaaf has done some excellent work on primary source material, and thus it might be supposed that he was in a good position to produce the required definitive study of that paper. But that was not exactly realised, as becomes apparent, for example, from the way his article raised some correspondence from H. Mark Gosser.²² The correspondent in effect pointed out that just as Talbot's paper on Photogenic Drawing was published in the *Abstracts* of the Royal Society (a fact accepted by everyone, including Schaaf) then so too was Herschel's paper. Dr Schaaf's reply²³ produced nothing but confusion about the identify of the *Abstracts* being the *Proceedings* of the Royal Society by oddly saying 'I did not cite the publication in the Abstracts because this is word-for-word the same as was published in the Royal Society's *Proceedings* (cited) which was printed three years earlier' (!). He then went on to his central justification for saying that Herschel's paper of 14 March 1839 had not been published by pointing out that he had found that the text of the original manuscript was longer (and published only by himself in *History of Photography*), so it 'was not printed in the *Abstracts*... only an abbreviated version of it appeared'.

Obviously Larry Schaaf first came into contact with what might be called the received wisdom that Herschel's paper had not been published – Helmut Gernsheim's article in *Image* of 1959 obviously played its part here (see below), as well as a misunderstanding of Herschel's own words in 1840 – but even though he then during his research enlarged the scope of sources available Schaaf still continued to confine conceptual understanding within those original bounds. As his writing cites sources not considered by earlier historians it might seem to gain an apparent authority, yet he himself merely repeats the same story as the earlier writers without adjustment from the contents of the additional source material. That said, it should be noted that when incorporating parts of his 1979 paper into his later book of 1992,²⁴ Schaaf does provide a re-assessment that "Herschel withdrew his paper because he felt he was making such regular breakthroughs that the information contained in the paper was already obsolete." A very reasonable and sensible assumption. For after all not only was the "withdrawal" merely relating to the immediate fuller treatment of the subject in the next *Philosophical Transactions*, but Herschel did indeed have his detailed and ground-breaking work published in the next-but-one issue of the *Philosophical Transactions* at the beginning of 1840.

Clearly what is required here (after reminding ourselves that the article truly was published in London on 23 March 1839!) is to re-examine some of the historiographic confusion that has accumulated about its contemporary publication or lack of publication! A detailed examination of the publications of the Royal Society is essential.

Royal Society and Abstracts

In 1832 the council of the Royal Society decided to compile and print short abstracts of papers that had been published in their renowned *Philosophical Transactions* going back to 1800. Two volumes were printed (*Abstracts of...*) covering 1800 to 1814 and 1815 to 1830. From then on proceedings of each meeting (minutes and text of papers read) were to be produced and published as the *Proceedings of The Royal Society*. The first volume, instead of being numbered Vol. 1 as being a separate series, the subsequent proceedings were counted as Vol. 3 in continuation of the abstracts for 1800 to 1830 that had only just been printed. To help clarify the situation, it is worth quoting from an account of 'The publications of the Royal Society' in the authoritative *Record of the Royal Society of London*:²⁵

The principal scientific publications of the Society of a serial character are the 'Philosophical Transactions' (4to) and the 'Proceedings' (8v) ...

'THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY': At a meeting of the Council on 10 May 1832 it was 'Resolved – That the printing of the Abstracts of such papers as have been printed in the "Philosophical Transactions" from the year 1800 inclusive be proceeded in; and that the Treasurer and Secretaries be requested to superintend the printing of the Abstracts.' The first volume of these Abstracts, comprising the years 1800 to 1814, was published in the same year, and the Abstracts for the years 1813 to 1830 in the year [1832] following. Up to this point the series presents merely a collection of abstracts arranged in the order of the full papers as they had been issued in the 'Philosophical Transactions'; but with the third volume a new system was adopted, the Abstracts being arranged under meetings and following the order in which the papers were read, the report of each meeting being headed by a brief account of the business which preceded the reading of the papers. The title-page was still 'Abstracts of the Papers printed in the Philosophical Transactions,' a description which was not strictly accurate, since, even so early in the series as the third volume [starting in 1830/1832], many Abstracts were published of papers which never appeared in the 'Philosophical Transactions.' With the seventh volume (1854–1855) a further change began. Many papers were published in full.

The first appearance under the title of *Proceedings* is the first issue part number beginning volume 3 on 18 November 1830.²⁶ But obviously the meetings over about one interim year from that date were not printed shortly after the actual meeting as applied after 1832 when the decision to proceed had been made. That particular situation for those meetings printed in the first pages of the *Proceedings* is that they retained some of the characteristics of the true abstracts of 1800 to 1830 and probably accounts for a persistence for a while of the term *abstracts*. Each issue Number (clearly printed as *Proceedings*) in the mid-1830s covered from

between four to six weekly meetings of the Royal Society, although indeed a descriptive title of 'Abstracts' of the Royal Society was still printed on the volume title page supplied by the printers for the assembled volumes 3 and 4. Herschel's paper read on 14 March appeared in *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, 1839, No. 37. This issue contained the six meetings from 14 February to 21 March 1839.²⁷ When a paper was read at the Royal Society it was thus sometimes published only in the *Proceedings* (the papers of W.H.F. Talbot and of Rev J.B. Reade read at the Royal Society appeared in this way), and, as was routine, in the *Philosophical Magazine*, an independent journal published by Taylor who also printed the *Proceedings* for the Royal Society. However, for work judged of higher status the submitted paper would be first printed in the *Proceedings* with a more detailed article on the subject produced later for the prestigious *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. Obviously researchers would want their work to be accepted for the long-established *Transactions*, but this would not necessarily give it more public notice: for papers in the *Proceedings* were first published immediately by the publisher / printers, Taylor and Francis in their other journal, the monthly *Philosophical Magazine* that had a much wider public readership. The supposed withdrawal²⁸ of Herschel's paper would obviously have applied rather to the further production of a more detailed article for the *Philosophical Transactions*. It needs, of course, to be pointed out that in the event the photographic experiments carried out in 1839 by Herschel were indeed published in more detail in *Philosophical Transactions* in 1840!

Indeed, at the beginning of that 1840 paper Herschel's own comment about his March 1839 communication was very open to later misunderstanding to contribute eventually to the idea that it was never published! What he said was "withdrawn from the farther immediate notice" – this (it is necessary to point out) is not the same as saying 'withdrawn from *publication*'!²⁹

An interesting example exists of the way the word 'Abstract' should not be interpreted in a narrow way. One of the most famous books published in the 19th century was considered to be 'an abstract'. The famous author introduced it as 'This abstract which I now publish', yet it consists of 191,000 words. 'T' is Charles Darwin, and 'this abstract' is *The Origin of Species*.³⁰ Surely few people would consider that Darwin never published his work on evolution because only 'an Abstract' appeared!

Next generation and Sir James Murray

It seems to have been the next generation of the Herschel family who fell prey to the supposed non-publication of John Herschel's communication of 14 March, with a belief that it had only appeared as an 'abstract'. Perhaps a correct description of the publication as the *Proceedings* would not have led to a misconception liable with the alternative anachronistic use of abstract,

which from a common use of the term could be taken to mean a very short paragraph, but which could have been seen as a fuller report if the actual publication had been examined. The idea of non-publication held by some of the family later in the century also entered public consciousness when Sir James Murray, at the time he was seeking help on defining the word 'Photography' for the *Oxford English Dictionary*, wrote to *Notes and Queries* in 1905.³¹

"Photography." – It is very remarkable that the origin of this well known term should be involved in obscurity. Can any reader of 'N. & Q.' help us bring it to light, and to discover its inventor or introducer?... The earliest instances of its use we have yet come upon occur in the paper read by Sir John Herschel before the Royal Society on 14 March, 1839, entitled, in the *Proceedings*, 'Note on the Art of Photography; or, the Application of the Chemical Rays of Light to the Purpose of Pictorial Representation.' Unfortunately, this very important paper was not published in the *Transactions*, and was subsequently withdrawn, and all attempts to find the original ms. have failed. In the report of the paper in the *Proceedings* the author uses *photography*, *photograph*, *photographic*, as freely as they are used today, without any comment upon them as words, so that the inference is that they were already in general use. ... It is possible that research in journals, newspapers, or ephemeral literature before 1839 would show photography and its derivatives already in more or less common use, and might perhaps enable us to track them to the inventor, or at least to their first known appearance in print.

Of course, Murray was not a historian of photography, but what he wrote (unfortunately) has indeed had consequences in later writings on the subject.

When the Herschel family library was sold at Sothebys in London in 1958 Helmut Gernsheim reported on some of the hitherto private material on sale in an article published in the George Eastman House journal *Image*.³²

The Herschel family had preserved copies of Sir John Herschel's correspondence and Gernsheim picks out 3 letters written to Talbot in 1839 to form the central concern of his article. But the family had also kept letters from the next generation, one being of 1908 to John Herschel's son

William from Sir James Murray. This formed the conclusion of Helmut Gernsheim's article in *Image*, and is significant enough to quote in full:

A letter dated 16 September 1908 from Sir James Murray, editor of the *Oxford Dictionary*, to Sir William Herschel, son of Sir John Herschel, forms an interesting pendant to this correspondence.

Dear Sir William,

I am glad to return to you the two precious documents [not stated]. My conclusion, after reading all the contemporary literature, was that Sir John Herschel, after getting to know what Talbot had done, generously with-drew his own paper from the Royal Society (& probably destroyed it) in order not to depreciate Talbot's work. He was a great man with a great reputation already secured and Talbot had his to make, & also to protect himself against the claims of Daguerre. And I feel sure that your father generously withdrew the account of his own contemporary discoveries in Talbot's interest ...

This letter confirms our assumption, put forward on p. 82 of our *History of Photography* that Herschel withdrew his communication to the Royal Society on 14 March 1839 for Talbot's sake. Herschel's paper was in consequence not published *in extenso* in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society, but only in a shortened version in the far less important *Proceedings*. The text of the full paper has never become known.

In such ways the idea of non-publication goes round and round.

All the author can suggest is for the reader to go back to the beginning of this present article to see how the conclusions about non-publication made by Murray and by Gernsheim do not fit with a study of the contemporary situation of 1839. However they happen to be right to consider Sir John Herschel a great (and modest) man.

- 1 Sir John F. W. Herschel, 'Note on the Art of Photography, or the application of the Chemical Rays of Light to the purposes of Pictorial Representation', *The Athenæum*, no. 595, 23 March 1839, 223.
- 2 Sodium Hyposulphite (and Ammonium Hyposulphite) was the chemical nomenclature used in the 19th century and thus 'Hypo' became the familiar photographic term. The compound is $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$, the 19th century term revised to a now long established chemical usage of Sodium *Thiosulphate*.
- 3 *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, vol. 4, no. 37, 14 February 1839–1821 March 1839, 131–133.
- 4 *Philosophical Magazine* 3rd series, vol. 14, no. 90, May 1839, 365–367.
- 5 'Über die Photographie, von Sir John F.W. Herschel', *Neue Notizen aus dem Gebiete der Natur- und Heilkunde*, 2nd series, vol. 10: 17 (Nr. 215), Juni 1839, 260–261. The London and Edinburgh *Philosophical Magazine* was cited as the source and the complete text was translated into German.
- 6 'M. Biot communique l'extrait suivant d'une lettre que M. Talbot vient de lui adresser. Londres, 1er mars 1839', *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Sciences Paris*, vol. 8, Seance du Lundi 4 mars 1839, 341. Talbot asked Herschel if he could pass on this private information to Biot and Herschel had given his permission in a letter to Talbot on 28 February 1839. *Moniteur Universel* and *Le Consirutionnel* did not report the meeting of 4 March, while *La Quotidienne* and Dr. Donné in *Journal des Débats* did report on some aspects of the meeting but not on Talbot's letter referring to Herschel's fixation with hyposulphites.
- 7 John Thomas Cooper, Jnr., was born in 1815 but date of death and obituaries have not been found. However, for his father John Thomas Cooper [Senior] (1790–1854) there is an obituary in *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 42, November 1854, 521, and for his younger brother Daniel Cooper (1816–1842) naturalist and editor of *Microscopical Journal and Structural Record*, see Dictionary of National Biography, vol. xii, 1887, 141. Especially because of the long chemical expertise of J.T. Cooper senior, it seems reasonable to assume that both father and son could have been involved in the production of the 'Photogenic Drawing paper' and Hypo ('Cooper's Preserving liquid') in 1839.
- 8 An anonymous description of one of Cooper's public demonstrations of the Daguerreotype technique at the Polytechnic in October 1839 appeared in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, [vol. 35?] No. 973, 19 October 1839, 257–258. There is no historical work that specifically deals with Cooper's daguerreotype experiments in the autumn of 1839 but is touched on by R. Derek Wood, 'Ste Croix in London', *History of Photography*, vol. 17, no. 1, Spring 1993, 101–107.
- 9 *The Athenæum*, 16 March 1839, 193; 30 March, 233; 13 April, 265; 20 April 1839, 289.
- 10 J.T. Cooper, 'Preparation of Photogenic Paper', *Transactions of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers, and Commerce*, vol. 52, 1839, 193–196.
- 11 R. Derek Wood, 'Daguerreotype Shopping in London in February 1845', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 126, no. 45, 9 November 1979, 1094–1095.
- 12 Affidavit of John Thomas Cooper and John Thomas Cooper the younger, sworn and filed 21 May 1845 in the case of Beard v. Egerton in the Court of Chancery. National Archives [PRO]: Chancery Affidavits C 31/691 part 1.
- 13 There must have been a careful and cynical adjustment of the phrase 'that particular purpose' to justify if necessary (although as evidence in Chancery was given by affidavit, Cooper could not be directly questioned) the statement as meaning fixation specifically of daguerreotype plates rather than fixation as a general principle.
- 14 'Journal Book of the Royal Society', vol. XLVIII, 1836–1843, meeting of 14 March 1839 on 482–486, manuscript volume at Royal Society, London. Twelve 'strangers' are listed, with nine Fellows who invited them. Includes Lord Albert Conyningham brought to the meeting by Dr Lee, and Mr Smythe brought by Mr Walker. Rev J. B. Reade introduced strangers at several meetings of the Royal Society during 1839 (for example on 21 February), but not on 14 March. However at this meeting was read, as well as Herschel's paper, another paper by Robert Rigg 'communicated by the Rev. J. B. Reade.: 'An Experimental Inquiry into the Formation of Alkaline and Earthy Bodies, with reference to their presence in Plants ...', *The Athenæum*, No. 595, 23 March 1839, 223, and *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, vol. 4, no. 37, 14 February to 21 March 1839, 130–131.
- 15 'Journal Book of the Royal Society', vol. XLVIII, 1836–1843, 462 (31 January), 469 (14 February), 476 (28 February).
- 16 A. Brothers, 'Note on the first use of Hyposulphite of Soda in Photography' [text of letter from J.F.W. Herschel dated 29 October 1864], *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 13, 18 May 1866, 236.
- 17 'Photography', *The North British Review*, vol. 7, August 1847, 465–504.
- 18 Bruce Bernard (Sunday Times Picture Editor), 'Photodiscovery', *The Sunday Times, Magazine*, 17 Sept. 1978, 56–9; 24 Sept, 47–68; 1 October, 60–74; 8 October, 51–61; 15 October, 60–73; 22 October, 52–61; 29 October 1978, 62–73. The advisers were Brian Coe, Sue Davies, Robert Gordon, Valerie Lloyd, and Ann Turner (of BBC television series *Pioneers of Photography*, 1975).

- 19 *Sunday Times* (London), 1 October 1978, Magazine, 60.
- 20 A typical example is a paper devoted to 'Herschel and Talbot: Photographic Research' in the *Journal of Photographic Science*, 1979, where Eugene Ostroff never mentions Herschel's paper read on 14 March 1839.
- 21 L. Schaaf, 'Sir John Herschel's 1839 Royal Society Paper on Photography', *History of Photography*, vol. 3, no.: 1, January 1979, 47–60. Regarding "withdrawal" of the paper, it is well worth noting that Schaaf does comment (on 53–54) that "The action of withdrawing a paper was actually not all that unusual or catastrophic. In fact four papers by various authors were withdrawn from publication by the Royal Society in 1839 alone."
- 22 'Correspondence from H. Mark Gosser', *History of Photography*, vol. 5, no. 3 (July 1981), 269.
- 23 'Correspondence from Larry Schaaf', *History of Photography*, vol. 5, no. 3, July 1981, 269–270.
As Larry Schaaf speaks of "three years earlier" it seems to indicate he thought the 'Abstracts' were different from the Proceedings. Maybe such a misconception could have been due to fact that when the separate numbers of the Proceedings were published together as vol. 4, 1837–1843, in 1843 this volume had wrongly printed on the title page "ABSTRACTS OF THE PAPERS PRINTED IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS ..." a description that had only been true for volumes I and II of the evolving series. That said, the publication in *The Athenæum* of 23 March 1839 and the current No. 37 (14 February to 21 March 1839) issue of *Proceedings of the Royal Society* had not indeed been considered by Schaaf.
- 24 Larry Schaaf, *Out of the Shadows: Herschel, Talbot and the invention of photography*, Yale University press 1992, Chapter III: 'Herschel & Talbot in the Spring of 1839', 71.
- 25 Royal Society, *The Record of the Royal Society of London*, London: 4th edition 1940, 178–179.
Also Alan J. Clark in Notes and Records of the Royal Society, vol. 46, 1992, 335–345, clarifies the confusing volume title pages of vols 1–6 of the Proceedings: "The change from abstracts to proceedings actually takes effect in vol. 3 (from 18 November 1830), 1 being headed 'Proceedings of the Royal Society, 1830–1831. No. 1'."
- 26 On page 18 of Issue No. 2 (23 December 1830 to 27 January 1831) of *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, vol. 4 shelved in the library of the Royal Society is a note in pencil by an unidentified hand. It is against a paper by W.A. Cadell read at the meeting of 23 December 1830: "This appears to be the first abstract of a paper that was not printed in the transactions."
- 27 'PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY. 1839. No. 37' appears as the title on the unpaginated page 123 of the issue covering 14 February – 21 March 1839 (pp. 123–134 of volume 4), and for the following issue of 'PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY. 1839. No. 38' the title appears on the unpaginated page 135 covering the meetings of 11 April–16 May 1839, 135–146. The gap in meetings between 21 March and 11 April was due to the 'Easter Recess'. Exact date of publication of issue No. 37 is not known, but was most likely in mid April.
- 28 Royal Society, 'Minutes of the Committee of Papers', vol. 2, 1828–1852, 183 (11 April 1839), 185 (25 April 1839). At the 11 April meeting of the Committee of Papers, Herschel's paper was listed as 'Referred' and at the meeting of 25 April listed as 'Withdrawn'. See also comments about the routine proceedings of the Committee of Papers in H.G. Lyons, 'One Hundred Years Ago – 1839', *Notes & Records of the Royal Society*, vol. 2, 1939, 92–107.
- 29 *Philosophical Transactions*, 1840, vol. 130, 1–59 (and MS at Royal Society, London, PT23.1): section 2 on page 1, "In a communication to this society, which was read on the 14th of March, 1839, and of which an abstract will be found in the notices of its proceedings for that sitting ... As that paper was (at my own request) withdrawn from the farther immediate notice of the Society [*i.e.* withdrawn from further *immediate* notice in the *Phil.Trans.*], and as the abstract alluded to may not fall into the hands of those who may read the present communication, a brief recapitulation of its contents will be necessary to preserve the connexion by which my inquires have been linked together."
- 30 Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, London: Murray 1859, 'Introduction'. Darwin had wanted the title to be 'An Abstract of an Essay on the Origin of Species and Varieties through Natural Selection', and he wrote to Charles Lyell on 30 March 1859, 'I am sorry about Murray objecting to the term Abstract, as I look at it as the only possible excuse for not giving references and facts in full, but I will defer to him and you.', *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, 1887, vol. 2, 153.
- 31 J.A.H. Murray, [origin of the word] 'Photography', *Notes & Queries 10th series*, vol. IV, 4 November 1905, 367.
- 32 Helmut Gernsheim, 'Talbot's and Herschel's Photographic Experiments in 1839', *Image* (George Eastman House, Rochester, NY, USA), September 1959, vol. 8, 133–137. The article focuses on three letters written by Sir John Herschel to Talbot in 1839. First drawing particular attention to Herschel's letter to Talbot of 12 February 1839, providing its full text. He then quotes most of the two later letters of 24 June and 10 September 1839. The article concludes with what Helmut Gernsheim calls "an interesting pendant", being the letter of Sir James Murray of 16 September 1908 to John Herschel's son, and with Gernsheim's comment, is given in full above.

Alistair Crawford

3 Robert Macpherson 1814–1872 The Final Proof

While the Rome of Pius IX descended into revolutions and poverty, and the artists abandoned Neo-Classicism and began to make their way to the new art capital of Paris, Robert Macpherson, the nearest male relative of the poet James Macpherson (1736–1796) of Ossian fame¹ whose Gaelic Celtic poetry, much favoured by Napoleon and Goethe, was still a major cultural influence throughout Europe, arrived in Rome as an artist around 1840. From 1851 onwards, he successfully transferred the past images of Rome and the Campagna to the new technological invention of photography. Using as his model the printmaker Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), Macpherson produced a new *Vedute di Roma* in a last bright burning of the Age that was the Grand Tour. For a period of 8 years, around 1856–1863, he achieved much critical and financial success and was described as the ‘foremost photographer of Rome’.² Given the limitations of photography to produce the ideal rather than the real, it was no mean achievement. Contemporary interest continues to rank his contribution very highly. I would maintain that he was one of the founders of the genre of architectural photography, especially in the use of architecture for personal expression.

In 1999 I published: *Robert Macpherson 1814–72, the foremost photographer of Rome* (fig. 1 and 2) in *The British School at Rome Papers*³. Since my visit there in 1982 as a Sir Winston Churchill Fellow in Photography I worked on and off until 2000, on their uncatalogued holdings of photography, largely unpacked since the Second World War. Why Macpherson? Because out of all the hundreds of uncatalogued 19th century photographs I waded through there were only a *few* that I picked out as being exceptional, and most of them were by an ‘R.M.’ I have been intrigued with him ever since. My 1999 article, the most extensive published to date,⁴ traced his biography, from Edinburgh to Rome, including his many social connections and various occupations (artist, inventor, art dealer, photographer) and placed it into the context of the beginnings of commercial photography, set in the Bohemian artists’ quarter of 19th century Rome, centred around the Antico Caffè Greco with the earliest group of photographers in Italy, now known as the *Scuola Romana di fotografia*. The article dealt with Macpherson’s means of production, his market, his attempt to ‘invent’ photolithography, his interest in sculpture; it

fig. 1 Robert Macpherson, *The Falls of Terni* (139).
Albumen print. 27.5 x 37.5 cm oval. Courtesy of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, Gernsheim Collection.



analysed his subject matter, output and processes, and how he was able to create his images; the *why*, as well as the *how*. It placed him firmly within Scottish Romanticism. His grand romantic images *mask* the turbulent life of revolutionary Rome that he lived through: mask the disintegration of the Papal States; the increasing, grinding poverty of its people who lived under the yoke of occupied territories without political, democratic or social freedom. In his day Rome was a city of cheating, stealing, bartering and stark poverty, beset with beggars and illness. I sought to demonstrate, however, that his photography did not mask his life's story.

Robert Macpherson commenced his new career in photography in 1851 using the albumen on glass negative, taught to him by his friend from Edinburgh, the visiting Dr Clark⁵. By 1856 he decided to change from the albumen negative to Dr J.M. Taupenot's new collodio-albumen on glass negative, invented in 1855, but never popular, even though it was the first dry plate system. Macpherson's specific use of process, which also included much doctoring of the negative, allowed him to create his grand Baroque effects of heightened emotional drama. He worked essentially like a painter and was a precursor to that since celebrated genius of the equally out-of-focus, smudged, cracked, finger-printed photograph, the eccentric Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–79). He flew high but fell not long afterwards for a variety of reasons, both personal and cultural. Photography moved very rapidly post-1850 from that of the pursuit of gentlemen, and even poor painters, to become a money-making commercial trade. These early photographers of the Age of the Albumen print, such as Macpherson and his compatriots in Rome: James Anderson (1813–77), Count Frédéric Flachéron (1813–83), Eugène Constant, (active Rome 1848–55), Alfred-Nicolas Normand (1822–1909), Ludovico Tuminello (1824–1907) and perhaps the finest of them all, Giacomo Caneva (1813–65), all managed to communicate their distinct *personalities*, their feelings, embed their images with layers of meaning, but once the one-time artists' studios became photography businesses that produced cheap images by their thousands for a tourist market, it was really all over, and certainly after the Unification of Italy in 1870. The interest by such men in photography as art, who made images that were difficult, different, expensive, largely evaporated. At his height Macpherson was so good (and expensive) he was forged. He was not different from many an artist before him who used external subject matter as an excuse for internal expression, indeed, he views Italy essentially as a romantic Celtic landscape⁶. A poor business man, he would often allow his interest in photography as an art to take precedence over the accepted saleable motif of the Grand Tour. No doubt the audience for such personal acts was painfully small.

Once the commercial studios got going many employed several photographers to take similar material and their images became indistinguishable one from one another; they were bought solely for their subject matter, and while some studios were obviously able to produce better quality than their neighbour, such as Fratelli Alinari, it became impossible to distinguish the work of one hand from another within a company's output, indeed that was the formula for their success. It is significant (and still is today) that museums who acquired such material only catalogued them under 'subject matter' not 'photographer'.

Of course there were many reasons for Macpherson's demise, not least that he lived amongst the growing turbulence and poverty of Rome where the revolutions from 1848 onwards drove away the artists and their patrons who had made the obligatory pilgrimage to the centre of European culture, to Italy and to Rome, for hundreds of years. Macpherson's use of the new invention of photography was fundamentally to extol the virtues of an art in its dying embers and it had little influence but that is not to say it had little value.

It must have pained someone of Macpherson's skill to see the new medium, that was within his grasp of providing a substantial income; and to have seen how he was regarded as an important artist, both in Italy and back home (what he had failed to achieve as a painter), become an ordinary commodity produced by anyone. Once the camera could interrupt movement successfully, it immediately interrupted the action on the street, instead of avoiding it as much as possible. When that short, yet highly distinctive age of peopleless, deserted cities with their magnificent architecture made serene, poetic; as contemplative as a Claude Lorrain, ended, photography quickly began to mirror the raw encounter. The 'empty view' became an anachronism to the mass market and photographers accepted 'the street' as a fundamental part of the subject. Macpherson realised that the photograph remained stubbornly expensive to produce and that the photolithograph would be cheaper, that the future lay in reproductions of photographs, yet he failed to develop it.

When I began my search for this enigmatic man I expected to discover a quiet intellectual, a fastidious photographer. It took me by surprise to discover that Macpherson led a much more interesting, ambiguous, and racy life than I could ever have imagined and the more I discovered about his life the more his photographs revealed.

The first British woman art historian, Mrs Anna Brownell Jameson embarked on a trip to Italy in 1846 accompanied by her sixteen year old niece, Louisa Gerardine Bate (1830–78), called Gerardine or 'Geddie'. Anna was amazed to be joined in Paris by her new friend, the poet Elizabeth Barrett in elopement with the poet Robert Browning. They all travelled together as far as Pisa, and Anna and Gerardine continued their journey to Rome in 1847 where the giddy, spoiled, childish teenager fell immediately for a most unsuitable, loud, thirty three years and far too old, and a converted Roman Catholic with no prospects: it was the stuff of romance novels.

Macpherson was a loud Bohemian story-teller of tall tales; well known for impish practical jokes; a fun loving, party goer, and giver; a fantasist; romantic, a melancholic Scot given to black moods; argumentative and stubborn; a sometimes depressive with a poor business sense who let emotion rule his head; a headstrong character, a lover of intrigue, masking his real life's story; open, yet simultaneously secretive; intelligent, knowledgeable, a linguist; socially at ease, very well connected, mysteriously so; liked in every circle, class, race; kind and generous to a fault; brilliant photographer, brilliant artist. Macpherson's photographs do reveal who he really

was; *all* photographs are also *desired* realities. Macpherson's photography tells his tale; the grand passionate gesture, the exuberance of his drama created by the blackened, up-front, compressed image that mirrors a melancholic, romantic Celt. All was to end in debt and in failure. From contemporary quotes Robert Macpherson is partially revealed:

'Mac made his appearance among us wearing the costume of his clan⁷. Even in Rome, which at that period struck strangers as being in a perpetual state of masquerade, his dress was a very unusual and novel one. But it became him admirably. His figure was of a good height; his limbs were well-formed, elastic, and graceful. He had abundant auburn hair, which he wore long. His eyes were blue, his features fine, and his complexion was fresh and clear; and apart from these personal attractions he was gifted with that rare endowment, the art of pleasing. He was a remarkable observer of character, and possessed a wonderful memory, great powers of description, and a natural ready wit. With all these attractive qualities it may well be supposed that he was a delightful social companion ... Being a Catholic, he also found entrance into the most exclusive Roman society, where neither wealth nor title could always procure an introduction. This social success would have turned the heads of many young men; but it had no such effect on Mac, though it certainly was not advantageous to his progress in his studies. It consumed too much of the precious time which should have been given to his art, and I sincerely believe barred his way to a fair success in his profession.'⁸

'So good and generous! and handsome too! and likely to be a good artist *when he tries* (draws very well already!) ... likely *to turn back again* from being a Roman Catholic – left off smoking just to please aunt Nina...' ⁹

'There was very little that was like a fortune-hunter in his careless, hot-headed, humorous, noisy Bohemian ways ... He was full of generousities and kindness, full of humour and whim and fun – quarrelling hotly and making up again; a big, bearded, vehement, noisy man, a combination of Highlander and Lowlander, Scotsman and Italian, with the habits of Rome and Edinburgh all rubbed together, and a great knowledge of the world in general and a large acquaintance with individuals in particular to give force to the mixture, and to increase his own interest and largeness as a man. I could not bear him at first, poor Robert, – we used to quarrel upon almost every subject; but in the end I got to be almost fond of him ...' ¹⁰

'He had been a long time in Rome, had been there during the bombardment, and I suppose had rendered some services to the papal side, for he was always patronised more or less by the priests, and was *nero* to the heart, standing by all the old institutions with the stout prejudices of an old Tory quite inaccessible to reason. Indeed reason had nothing to do with him.'¹¹

'There, many people of all classes will remember the pair in their early prosperity and happiness. ... a man of marked and headstrong character, with all the qualities, both good and evil, of his race; little likely to get peaceably or easily through the world, but always warm-hearted, full of kindness and good offices as long as they were in his power, and with much charm of manner and social aptitude.'¹²

On Macpherson the art dealer:

'When the valuable collection of Cardinal Fesch was, after his death, sold by auction, about a dozen pictures which were looked upon as rubbish were put in a lot and bought by a dealer in Rome. Mac had been present at the sale, and had carefully observed among these paintings a large panel, over which dust, smoke, and varnish had accumulated to such a degree as to make it difficult to distinguish what it represented. There was, however, something in its obscured outlines which made an impression on him, and haunted his recollections of it. Knowing the dealer who had bought the pictures, he went a few weeks later to his shop, and, while looking at some other things, asked carelessly, "What is that old dark panel there?" '

fig. 2 Robert Macpherson, *The Pyramid of Caius Cestius, and the English burying ground* (128). Albumen print. 26.9 x 37.9 cm. The British School at Rome collection.



‘Oh, that,’ replied the dealer, ‘is good for nothing, beyond the wood on which the daub is painted. I am going to sell it to a cabinet-maker who wants to make tables out of it.’¹³

‘... it made him [Macpherson] think what steps should now be taken, knowing it would reach headquarters that a valuable work of Art had been found ... and could not be taken out of Rome. Sure enough two gendarmes came the next morning and put four great seals of the Papal Government on the back of it ... We very soon made the picture look dirtier than it perhaps ever was before ... An old packing case was got; we then put the picture in, screwed and nailed up in such a way as certainly not to enhance its value, and at once sent off to Signor Fiore, the official to examine all works of Art leaving Rome, and to fix a duty to be paid according to the value he (Fiore) put on it, which was fifty *scudi* ... There was no time to lose; the officials at the custom-house were tipped, who gave it in charge of the captain of the steamer on its way to England. All this was so quickly done that Fiore had not received information of the Pope’s seals being put on the picture, and he never thought of unpacking it, especially when fastened with so many rusty screws and nails.

... Macpherson ... disappeared from Rome that night, and kept incog. for some time. ...

Mac turned up again and was called upon by the authorities to explain. However, poor

Fiore came in for all the blame for not taking the painting out of the case ...’¹⁴

Of his wife Gerardine:

‘His wife, Gerardine Bate, was of a very different quality, spoiled, untidy, disorderly, fond of gaiety but pretty, witty and vivacious. She helped him with his photography, and the marriage would have been fairly happy had not her mother lived with them and encouraged her in all her youthful follies and love of gaiety, and admiration, taking her part too in her quarrels with Robert.’¹⁵

‘... working like a slave – nay, as no slave ever worked – at the common trade, the photographing, at which she did quite as much as, if not, people said, more than, he did.’¹⁶

‘Mac left no provision for his wife and family. His social habits and generous hospitality had consumed all he made by his profession ...’¹⁷

And in his own words:

‘I remain a photographer to this day, without any feeling that by so doing I have abandoned art, or have in any way forfeited my claim to the title of artist.’¹⁸

Silvio Negro, the first historian of photography in Rome, dismissed Macpherson’s contribution in two lines and pointed out that he was ‘well known in Rome for his parties and for being drunk,’ but since he also indicated erroneously that he ‘went to die in England’¹⁹ I had not paid too much attention to it, but it did rest in my mind. Mrs Oliphant was even more savage in her comments on his character: what did she mean when she wrote that he had ‘all the qualities, both *good and evil of his race*.’²⁰ Why did she want to record this for his children to read, for posterity? I had already begun to feel that the true reasons for Macpherson’s economic failure (as distinct from aesthetic or economic) could lie in his patterns of behaviour, his lack of business acumen, given the potential that he created and which surrounded him for unlike many photographic establishments in Rome which developed into family dynasties that lasted for several generations, Macpherson’s enterprise ended with his death in spite of his move post 1863 into reproductive photography. The evidence duly arrived.

The historian Helmut Gernsheim (1913–95) who had first extolled the virtues of Robert Macpherson in his *History of Photography* in 1955, substantiated the rumours and the ambiguity of Mrs Oliphant's caustic comments. He wrote me:

'Apparently Mac. was very fond of the bottle, for Alessandro Anderson, grandson of James, his one-time competitor in Rome, sent me in January 1951 this amusing side-light; "Macpherson, so my father said, was a very extravagant and profligate sort of man. He was making heaps of money, but regularly squandered it with big parties of friends who now and then were invited for wild nights at his home. His servants were often recovering him at dawn from under the table, stone drunk, and undressed him for bed" ' ²¹

So, while his wife was at home bringing up four children and running the business, the ever hospitable 'Mac' would be found down the pub, squandering the money, until he brought all his cronies and the new impressionable arrivals home again to be wine and dine and entertained. The fun-loving Gerardine probably approved.

Macpherson was a complex artist but he was a man continually in search of the *company* of others; a *bon viveur* without the means; what money he made he lost; a reputed drunk, dogged by ill health for much of his life as a constant sufferer from 'Roman fever' (malaria). He died in debt and poverty in the malaria outbreak of 1872, leaving his wife and four surviving children to fend for themselves.

In my 1999 article I tried to establish who exactly Robert Macpherson was and I felt I had got very near to the truth but it remained without sufficient proof. His death certificate in Rome gives evidence of his parents²²: '... e morto lo Macpherson Roberto figlio dei furoni Giovanni ed Alisa MacKintos residente in Roma di condizione fotografo nato Edimburgo (Scozia) di ann. 57 (atto di nascita n.--p.--s.--anno--del Comune di--) di stato civile egt. con Gerardina Bati'. His descendents in USA had sent me the results of their searches:

'No other Robert Macpherson is recorded to have been born anywhere in Scotland to a John Macpherson and Alice/Alison Macintosh at this or any plausibly near period of time: from the *Old Parochial Registers of Scotland*: 'Anno 1814 ... John Mc.pherson fifer Dumfries Militia and Alison Mc.intosh his Spouse had a Son born 27 Febry. and bapt'd. the 6 March by the name of Robert Turnbull Witnness Robt. Turnbull and Johnshon [sic] Robert Turnbull Mcpherson (Dalkeith Parish, Midlothian, Scotland, Birth Register, 1796–1819, p.333' ²³

Robert Macpherson was reputed to have been a doctor, trained in Edinburgh, stopped off in Rome on his way to India. Mrs Oliphant thought he had left Scotland under a cloud because of a love affair and 'intercepted letters.' His descendents recount the family tale that a 'girl died under his care', hence the giving up of the medical practice, but the only records to date of a Robert Macpherson (from Forfar) as a student of medicine in Edinburgh is from 1831 to 1835 who did not finish his training.²⁴

There are a couple of references of visits to his 'artist's studio' in Rome and he claimed to have attended the Royal Scottish Academy.²⁵ There was an artist by the name of Robert Turnbull

Macpherson who exhibited portraits at the RSA in Edinburgh, often using crayons, generally of people with their pets, every year between 1835–39, such as: *William Stewart of Glenmoriston with favourite dogs* (1837), *Charles Erskine, Esq. and a favourite horse* (1838), *Samjie Bana, a native of Surat, Bombay* (1838), *Dr William Erskine HEICS* (1838), *John Menzies Esq. of Pitfodles* (1839), *The Children of Macpherson of Cluny* (1839) ²⁶ (to whom R. M. was related). After 1839 Robert Turnbull Macpherson never reappears in Edinburgh as an artist, while a ‘Robert Macpherson’ turns up in Rome around 1840. The only painting to date to surface, ²⁷ *A View of the Campagna* was published as by Robert J Macpherson ²⁸ without any evidence of attribution to R.M. The proof finally did arrive in the form of three letters all in his customary handwriting and literary style, that ‘our’ R.M. was indeed Robert T Macpherson (and sure enough the *T* was written with a similarity to a *J*):

Letter from R.T. Macpherson to 12.08.1847 Dr Grant, Rector,
Pontificio Collegio Scozzese di Roma, Rome [18/28] ²⁹

[To] The Very Revd. Dr. Grant Scotch College Marino

My dear Dr Grant

I do not believe I am over sanguine in thinking that you will rejoice with me when I tell you that I have now the prospect of being happy. I have had a beautiful letter from my, to be, Mother in Law. saying that she has informed herself regarding my character & prospects and therefore in compliance with my wishes allows Gerardine to correspond with me I shall at length be able to do something Can I do anything for you at Civitavecchio? I intend making a race [?] down to see Lowe for a couple of days by way of shaking off, as far as I can, the effects of past annoyances & present too exciting good news. Young Beaumont (Dr Wisemans Bear) is to accompany me so far on his way to England I shall send out this ‘Daily News’ to Donaldson to day so if you like to send to Frascati for it you will see Prout’s ³⁰ account of the conspiracy with a first rate translation of the Carabinerie’s paper. Pray let me know how you like the book I lent you

Believe me

My dear Dr Grant

Very sincerely yours

Robert T Macpherson

6 Croce

12 August

1847

P.S. I may as well tell you that I have reasons for not wishing to make known to the world just yet, my future prospects. I mention them to you, in confidence.

Macpherson was to have a life-long interest in sculpture and by 1860 he indicated how well advanced was his project to photograph every important work in the Vatican and in every major collection in Rome. In 1863, three years later, he published *Vatican Sculptures, Selected and Arranged*. ³¹ In the introduction to the book he acknowledged the hierarchy of Johann Winckelmann (1717–68) and Ennio Quirino Visconti (1757–1818), but especially the English sculptor John Flaxman (1755–1826), ‘who possibly more thoroughly appreciated and was better acquainted with art than any man of that or any subsequent period.’ In the end Macpherson was to offer 513 sculpture titles (Vatican and the Capitoline accounting for 421, but only 23

from the others). His particular interest in sculpture probably stemmed from his training as an artist in Edinburgh long before he took up photography for life drawing commenced with a prior study of the antique, particularly using plaster casts. Indeed, in addition to drawing and painting, he was also adept at sculpture for in the collection of the Scottish Portrait Gallery is a replica of a medallion in plaster by Macpherson which portrays *Mrs Mary Fairfax Somerville* (1780–1872), the Scottish writer on science³² (fig. 3). In style it pays homage to Flaxman.

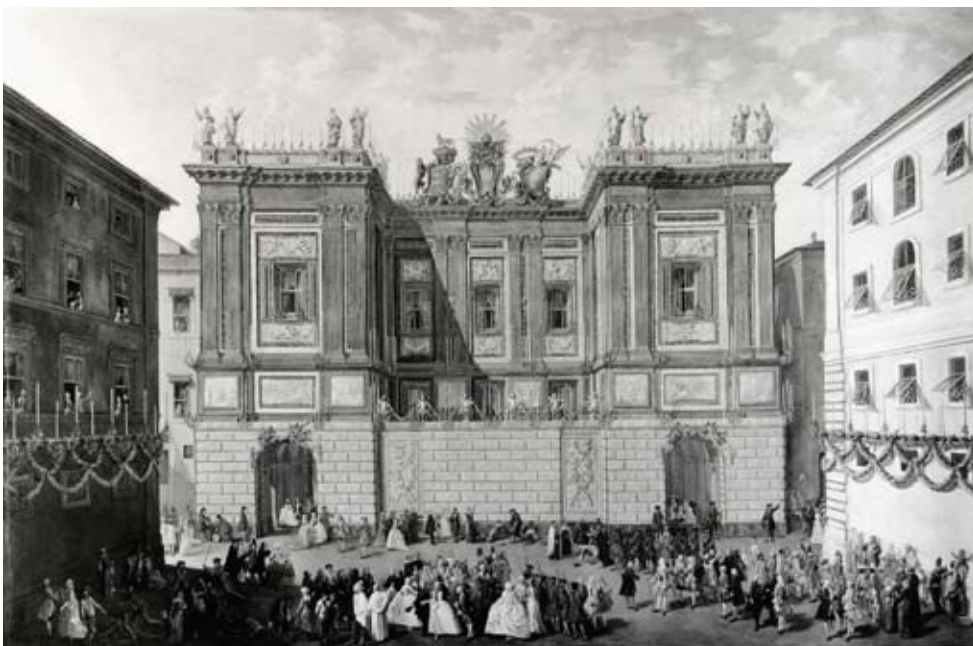
Macpherson never lost sight of his homeland and in Rome looked after many visiting artists, especially the Scottish contingent. He was a rare champion of American artists and friendly with the German painter Peter von Cornelius (1783–1867), and the Nazarene painters, Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789–1869) and Tommaso Minardi (1787–1871) and he bought and sold antiques on behalf of many influential visitors. In my 1999 article I gave details of Macpherson acting as a significant art dealer with his purchase in 1846 and subsequent sale in 1868 of Michelangelo's unfinished *Entombment of Christ* which he referred to as 'Gerardine's fortune' but was forced to sell at £2000, well below its value to the National Gallery, London, and also his significant formation of a collection of 39 paintings to form the nucleus of the new National Gallery of Ireland, (founded 1854). Macpherson did well for Ireland and his attributions were as sound as any other in his day.³³ A recent and significant discovery of his role as a dealer is contained in a letter which also records the *T.* in his name. It also provides to date the most informative insight into his character derived from his own words.

In 2000 the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, purchased the painting by an unknown artist: *James III and his Court in Front of the Palazzo Muti During the Celebrations of the Appointment of Prince Henry as a Cardinal, July 1747*³⁴ (fig. 4). In gathering the provenance for its sale a letter was discovered in the Hamilton Archives³⁵ concerning its purchase by



fig. 3 After Robert Macpherson: *Mrs Mary Fairfax Somerville* (1780–1872), 1889. Plaster medallion, 10.8 cm. Courtesy of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

fig. 4 Artist unknown: *James III and his Court in Front of the Palazzo Muti During the Celebrations of the Appointment of Prince Henry as a Cardinal, July 1747*. Oil on canvas, 195.5 x 297 cm. Courtesy of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.



William (1811–1863), the future 11th Duke of Hamilton, in 1852³⁶ and a collector of Jacobite treasures and memorabilia, from a dealer in Rome, signed, Mr R.T. Macpherson 1845:

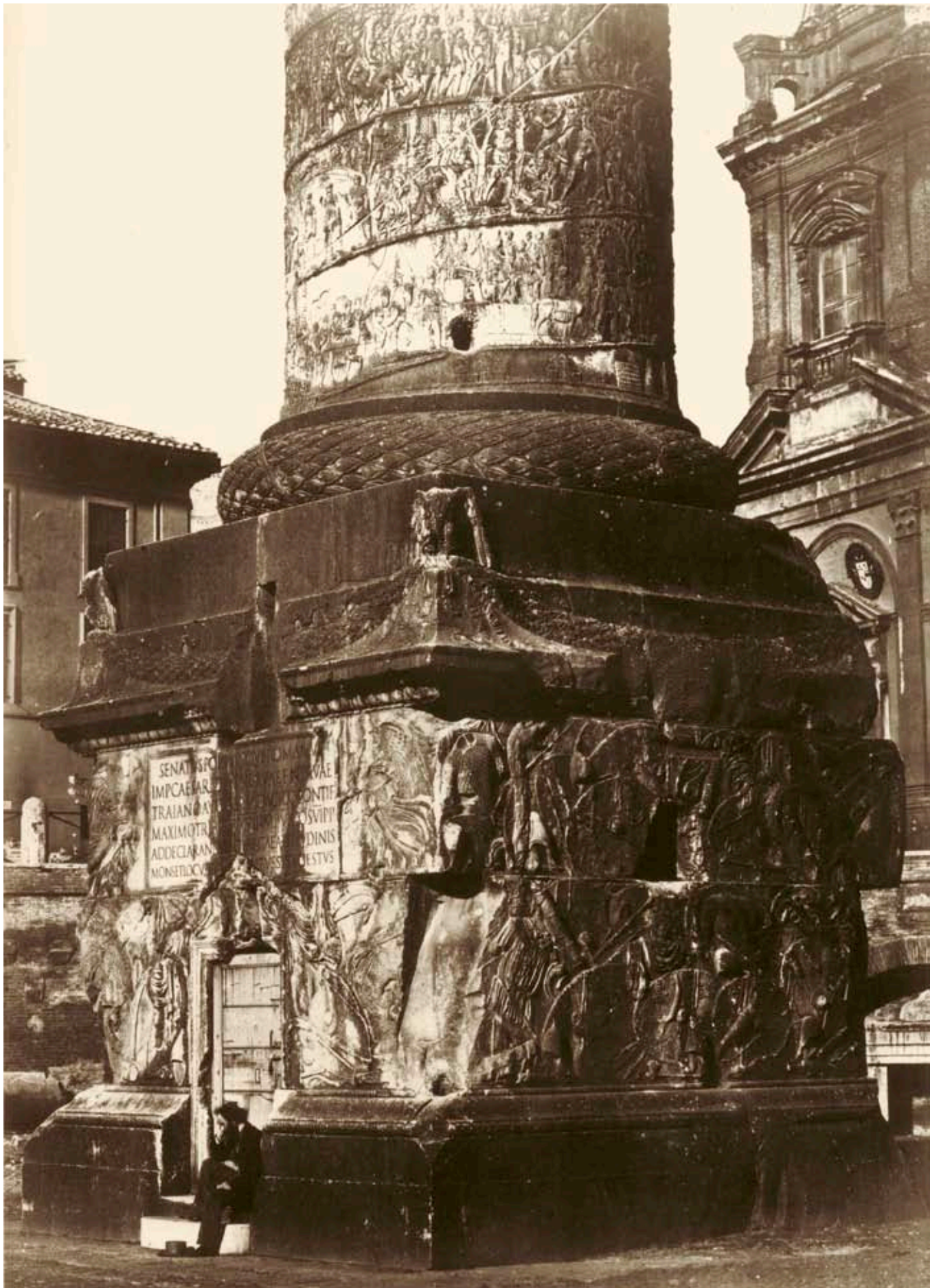
Letter from R.T. Macpherson to the Marquis of Douglas and Clydesdale
from Rome 29 August 1845

To The Most Noble The Marquis of Douglas and Clydesdale, 12 Portman Square, London (letter marked
'In Haste')
Rome 29th August 1845
"Caffè Greco"

Dear Douglas

I have for some time past expected to hear from you as I should have written to you before to tell you of my doings, but hearing from one person that you were in Scotland, from another that you were in Germany and from others that you were in London, I was at a loss where to address my letter; your picture from the Palatine should have been finished long ago, for I worked upon it all last winter, but as it was not succeeding equal to my expectations, I laid it aside to give it a rest and took up other things. I am now however at it again and hope soon to have it finished. I have purchased for you at different times an immense [?] number of odds & ends, of such various kinds and characters that I am beginning to suspect that you will find my taste for such "odd things" much too universal and undecided for such a trust as you reposed in me. I have got all kinds of old copper, brass, glass, iron, wood etc, etc but before sending them home, I wish you would let me know if there is any chance of your being here soon in Rome, as in such a case you might pick out only the things you liked best – My chief motive in writing to you now is to tell you of a picture which was too expensive for me to buy altho' I had a decided feeling that it was the very thing for you, still I had no authority to purchase so expensively, or should have bought it for you, right off at once; I have however, done the next thing to it, for I got Nasbeau, the bankers in Rome to advance me some money and by that means secured a share in the picture, the price of it is £150 Sterling, in case I may wish to possess it altogether and now I beg you will write to me immediately and instruct me what I am to do, as I must either secure it definitely for you at once, or allow the other party to dispose of it in his turn. The Picture is ten feet long, by six and a half feet high, without the frame, so that if you choose to measure off this size on the wall of a room you will be able to form some idea of the size of the picture at the same time, it does not possess the objection common to large pictures for it contains so much highly finished detail that you can stand as close to it as you like and admire any individual part of it; of the subject I am promised more particulars soon, but as far as I can make it out as yet, it represents a Fiesta given in honour of King James the third (called by some "The Pretender"). The scene is in the piazza in front of their Palace (now "Palazzo Savorelli" where little C-Hamilton lives) in Rome, and the Facade of the Palace, is done up in the most magnificent manner for the occasion, bearing on the top the royal arms of England, Scotland, France & Ireland, united, and alongside of those of Pope Benedict XIV and the S.P.Q.R. of Rome. The Figures, upwards of 200 in number, are exquisitely finished, indeed I have never seen anything finer, they seem all Portraits, and spirited ones too, of the distinguished persons who composed his little Court in Rome, and I am sure that one acquainted with the King's friends or their portraits would be able to discover among them, many of our Loyal Country men who attached themselves with such fidelity and steadfastness to the "Good Old [^] but unfortunate [^] Cause" of the House of Stuart. The drapes are very amusing being "Rocco Co." of the purest time of Louis XIV but beautifully painted, indeed the whole picture is much too fine for me to describe and I have only said so much from an anxious wish that as you should Order me to secure it for you, for it is a thing only to be met with once. – I was poking about after "Stuart property" with Lord Walpole when I first heard of this picture, and he had arranged that we should go together and see it in the country but his Lordship's unhappy weakness of Procrastination made him defer doing so from time to time untill it was too late and he then decided that we should go when he returned – but in the meantime, that is to say about a month ago I heard that others were looking after it, so I took a Carriage and drove out to Frascati where the picture was, and saw it in the Villa Mutti hanging up on the walls of the Chamber where the King himself had placed it, and I should have had some reluctance in touching it, but that the Villa being now in other hands; and there being so many others (little Hamilton among

fig. 5 Robert Macpherson, *Base of the Column in the Forum of Trajan (14)*. Albumen print, 37.2 x 26.6 cm. The British School at Rome collection.



the rest) who would only have been too glad to have it, that I stepped in and to the disgust of more than one person in Rome secured the picture by buying it in my own name and then made the arrangements about the money which I have told you of. I was obliged to do so from not having authority from you to buy such an amount. – My room has been a regular Exhibition room since the picture has been brought here, so many persons have come to see it and I have several [^] times [^] been asked if the picture was for sale but I answered in the Negative, so I pray you will forgive me for once more reminding you of the necessity of answering my letter in this instance at least for I write and write, letter after letter and you very rarely ever deign to reply to them or notice their contents; I am aware that there is much responsibility in recommending a thing, that cost so much money – at the same time I feel that you would never have forgiven me if I had allowed such a thing to be bought before my very face, and carried off by any of the jaunting Rabble, the small “would be” greats, or Mushroom Gentry that infest Rome; when I get your letter I shall then write you another and tell you particulars about my other [?] prospects etc etc. I beg to send my humble and best Compliments to Lady Douglas and request you will as ever allow me to subscribe myself.

Very sincerely yours Dear Douglas
R T Macpherson

P.S, Poor Pietro [^] of the Caffè [^] is in Prison and sentenced to the galleys for five years for having in his possession certain prints and pictures which are prohibited here as immoral, perhaps you may remember a young swell Pacino called “Galetti” who used to stick a glass in his Eye and drive about a very pretty wife in a handsome Phaeton – he has just been furnished with rooms in the Castle S. Angelo for having been detected buying at large prices from old women, young Girls.

This letter demonstrates that his activities as an art dealer were knowledgeable, intelligent and substantial. It also demonstrates many aspects of his character: that he did undertake painting commissions but had problems completing them; that he did not have sufficient collateral to operate successfully as a dealer; he was a risk taker; a good salesman, good at camouflaging his true intentions: *‘I was poking about after “Stuart property” with Lord Walpole’*; loved gossip, was indiscreet: *‘his Lordship’s unhappy weakness of Procrastination made him defer doing so from time to time’*; had a scathing wit and did not suffer fools: *‘if I had allowed such a thing to be bought before my very face, and carried off by any of the jaunting Rabble, the small “would be” greats, or Mushroom Gentry that infest Rome’*; was not impressed by a person’s wealth or status; could even harangue his own client: *‘for I write and write, letter after letter and you very rarely ever deign to reply to them or notice their contents’*; that he loved hearing a ‘story’ and loved retelling it, the more outrageous the better, including pornography and paedophilia.

Macpherson converted to Roman Catholicism³⁷. His descendents today still see him as the ‘black sheep’ of the family, they carry the family tale that his father rejected him as a result and there was no further contact between them. There was even hope in some quarters that he would convert ‘back’ before his marriage to Gerardine but it was Gerardine who converted to Roman Catholicism in 1850 before the birth of her first child.³⁸ By making play of his lineage to ‘Ossian’ Macpherson, he thus attached himself to Scottish Celtic Romanticism. No doubt these were astute moves for living in Rome. He did have close and influential Catholic friends, including priests. He was the first photographer allowed to photograph inside the Vatican (together with its collections) and sell the results and there is no doubt that such favours would be called upon in return by the church, not least in a city awash with papal spies and intrigue. To many British travellers he would not have been regarded as completely trustworthy, indeed

fig. 6 Photographer unknown, *Robert Macpherson*
1814–72. Albumen print. Courtesy of Mr. and
Mrs. John F. McGuigan Jr.

fig. 7 Photographer unknown, *Mrs Gerardine Macpherson*
1830–78. Albumen print. Courtesy of Mr. and
Mrs. John F. McGuigan Jr.

he was not universally liked: Robert Browning described him as a ‘grub’, William Thackeray described meeting Macpherson again in Rome as one who ‘disgusted me as of old.’ Of significance is his declaration in the above letter of his Jacobite sympathies. Of course he knows well that Hamilton desires to purchase such Jacobite items, yet while he is subtle in registering his allegiance, he is also careful not to go too far: [my emphasis] *‘a Fiesta given in honour of King James the third (called by some “The Pretender”) and, ‘the royal arms of England, Scotland, France & Ireland, united, and alongside of those of Pope Benedict XIV and the S.P.Q.R. of Rome.’*, and, *‘many of our Loyal Country men who attached themselves with such fidelity and steadfastness to the “Good Old [^] but unfortunate [^] Cause” of the House of Stuart.’* where *‘but unfortunate’* is an after-thought inserted into the line, just in case!

In my obsession to find Macpherson and probably because of the difficulties in putting together his life from tiny scraps of information found over many years and, not least, since my subject is ‘photography’ and he was a photographer, I found myself looking at every face in every Roman photograph of the period, especially if it indicated any artists; willing him to recognise me. The photograph, even of the deceased, gives a tangibility, an evidence of life that words can never achieve. I walked the cemeteries in Rome, just in case he might appear in a little image attached to his gravestone, only to discover that his grave is no more.³⁹ I spent days and days looking for any man in a kilt in a 19th century Italian photograph. When I wrote the article in



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1999 I had not succeeded. To my knowledge Macpherson only twice used a figure prominently: one depicts a man sitting, rather desolate, nay, even depressed (rather than contemplative) with long flowing hair, sitting at the *Base of the Column in the Forum of Trajan (14)* (fig. 5). I felt it was him, I wanted it to be him, so I published the possibility in the 1999 article – maybe if he ever did turn up in a photograph I might well turn out to have been right! Imagine then my recent surprise when his image, and that of Gerardine, (fig. 6 and 7) was found in an album

- 1 M.O.W. Oliphant Postscript in Gerardine Macpherson, *Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson*, London: Longman Green & Co, 1878, XIII. Italian authors indicated nipote, meaning a nephew or a grandson. Mrs Margaret Oliphant (1828–1897), Scottish novelist and family friend in addition described him as a close relative of the Clan Chief, Ewen Macpherson of Cluny (d. 1756), the much lamented Jacobite of the '45 Rebellion. See Alistair Crawford, 'Robert Macpherson 1814–1872, the foremost photographer of Rome' in *British School at Rome Papers* Vol. LXVII, London: 1999, 353–403, (a full bibliography is also included) on my speculation on how R.M. could have been an illegitimate grandson, for 'Ossian' had no recorded brothers. All Ossian's recorded children were illegitimate.
- 2 My analyses reveals that his fame rests on only 52 images of Rome and 31 from outside the city. 71.9% of his output was 'reproductive' photography (mainly sculpture) which became his entire output from c.1863 onwards.
- 3 Reference given in Alistair Crawford, 1999 (note 1). In the event of any difficulty in obtaining see: www.alistaircrawford.co.uk
- 4 Main publications to date, prior to Crawford, 1999 (note 1) are: Margorie Munsterberg, 'A Biographical Sketch of Robert Macpherson', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. LXVIII, number 1, March 1986, 142–153; Piero Becchetti and Carlo Pietrangeli, *Un Inglese Fotografo a Roma Robert Macpherson Edizioni Quasar*, Roma, 1987, 213. Macpherson's photographs in good condition in their rich, dark, sooty colour are rare (including those in public collections). No publication or exhibition to date has done them justice.
- 5 My speculation is that this could be the same person as Dr. D. George Sidney Smith Clark (1819–1868) who was the founder and proprietor of the Quisisana Hotel on Capri. Dr Clark started a hospital for tuberculosis there and may be a relative. (Ossian's sister was Mrs Janet Clark who had sons). The earliest recorded photographer on Capri turns out to be Robert Macpherson in 1857. One image of Capri (352) is cited in his catalogues and I have attributed others not found in his catalogues to Sorrento and Posillipo. Although often cited, no evidence has been presented to support the assertion that two *calotypes* in Edinburgh City Library marked much later than their production 'R.M.' are by Macpherson.
- 6 A good comparison to make is with Giacomo Caneva, the most similar in style, viewpoint and subject, yet entirely different in character.
- 7 The Scottish kilt.
- 8 James E. Freeman, *Gatherings from an Artist's Portfolio*, New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1877 and expanded 2nd edition: Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883, 201–202.
Freeman (1808–1884) was a friend and an American artist living in Rome.
- 9 Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1809–1861) mocking Gerardine's enthusiasm. Leonard Huxley (ed.), *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Letters to Her Sister 1846–1859*, London: John Murray, 1929, 63.
- 10 Mrs Harry Coghill (ed.), *Autobiography and Letters of Mrs M.O.W. Oliphant*, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh & London, 1899, reprinted as: Mrs Harry Coghill (ed.), *Autobiography and Letters of Mrs Margaret Oliphant*, Leicester: The Victorian Library, Leicester University Press, 1974, 59.
- 11 Oliphant in: Coghill, 1974 (note 10) 59.
- 12 Oliphant, 1878 (note 1) XIII–XIV.
- 13 Freeman, 1883 (note 8) 206–207. The 'old dark panel', purchased 1846, he recognised as by Michelangelo which he hid out of Rome until its sale in 1868. (See text following).
- 14 Visiting artist Clement Burlison *The Early Life of Clement Burlison Artist being his own record of the years 1810 to 1847*. Written about 1897, Durham: J H Veitch & Sons, 1914, 93–96 records the packing of the Michelangelo's painting.
- 15 Isabel C. Clarke, 'Margaret Wilson Oliphant 1828–1897' in: *Six Portraits*, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1967, (reprint of first edition 1935), 204–205.
- 16 Oliphant in: Coghill, 1974 (note 10) 60.
- 17 Freeman, 1883 (note 8) 232.

devoted to artists in Rome, compiled by Mr & Mrs James H. Weeks of Philadelphia who spent the winters of 1864–1867 in Rome. Fellow historian and authority on American artists in 19th Century Rome, John F. McGuigan, sent the two images in an e-mail: I cannot thank him enough! Macpherson did, after all, turn out to be the Edinburgh artist Robert *Turnbull* Macpherson, born 1814, in Dalkeith, proof positive, and here he now is, as alive as life itself, least to me, just as he was sitting at the base of the column in the Forum of Trajan on that day.

- 18 Robert Macpherson, *Vatican Sculptures, Selected and Arranged in the order in which they are found in the galleries, briefly explained*, London: Chapman & Hall, 1863. 2nd edition E Calzone, Roma, 1873.
- 19 Silvio Negro, *Nuovo album romano fotografie di un secolo*, Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1965, 22, (my translation).
- 20 Oliphant, 1878 (note 1) XIII–XIV.
- 21 Letter to the author 27.01.87.
- 22 I am grateful to the descendents of Macpherson's daughter, Mrs Ada Birdsey Booth, (1862–1941) who emigrated to the United States, for sharing their searches with regard to the birth of both Robert Macpherson and his father, John, and Macpherson's death in Rome. Letters to the author December 1998 from which are taken the details.
- 23 This makes him born in Dalkeith, near Edinburgh and not 'Forfar' or 'Inverness' as is commonly cited.
- 24 Frequently cited but there is no evidence that this is the same R.M. He could have attended medical school elsewhere.
- 25 RSA School was not formed until 1840 but he probably attended the distinguished Drawing Academy, known as the Trustee's Academy, Edinburgh, the forerunner of the RSA School.
With few pupils this was quite an achievement.
- 26 None have turned up so far.
- 27 There is a good description of another easel painting, c.1847, described in Rome as '*the subject was St Peter meeting the vision of our Saviour on the Appian Way*' *St Mary's, Inverness in: William Simpson /Inverness Artist 1925*, 47, indicated that the painting by Robert Macpherson of Rome was presented to the Catholic Church c.1848/49 and that it was now hanging in the baptistery but unfortunately seriously damaged through damp: '*The subject of the picture was Domine Quo Vadis, and showed St Peter fleeing from Rome by night and meeting our Lord: a milestone placed in the centre of the picture, with Romulus and Remus at the base, indicated the spot where the meeting took place, and the gate of Rome was shown in the distance.*' No record of it exists now in Inverness.
- 28 Munsterberg, 1986 (note 4) 144. See also comments Crawford, 1999 (note 1).
I felt it was easy to mistake a painted J for a T, and that it could well be a T for Turnbull.
- 29 Courtesy of Rev. Monsignor John McIntyre, former rector of the Scottish College in Rome, found in their archive two letters in Macpherson's hand, both signed Robert T. Macpherson. Letter to the author 6.04.1999.
- 30 He was also a friend of the 'shady' writer and poet, the ex-Jesuit and priest, Francis Sylvester Mahoney (Father Prout) author of the famous song *The Shandon Bells*. Prout passed on to Macpherson his reporting from Italy for the *Daily News* when he left to live in Paris. R.M. also wrote for *The Times* and *The Athenaeum*.
- 31 With 125 wood engravings by his wife based on his photographs.
It was also issued separately as a bound volume of 126 photographs priced at £10.10s.
- 32 Replica after Robert Macpherson 1889, plaster, ht. 10.8 cm (3907/PG 354),
Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.
- 33 Details of the acquisition of the collection for the National Gallery of Ireland see: Crawford, 1999 (note 1) *et al.*
- 34 See: Edward Corp, *The King Over the Water. Portraits of the Stuarts in Exile after 1689*, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, 2001. No details of provenance given .
- 35 Found by John H. Mutch in the Hamilton Archives, Bundle 772. See: National Register of Archives (Scotland) 2177 catalogue inventory of the Hamilton Archives. Letter to the author 7.08.2002.
- 36 Macpherson was also very friendly with his father, the 10th Duke of Hamilton who was also a collector and with whom he had stayed.
- 37 Whether he converted to Roman Catholicism *before* he left for Rome or after he arrived is not yet known.
- 38 Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Anna Jameson, March 17 1853, The English Poetry Collection, Wellesley College Library, and also, *Photographic Notes*, 11, 1857, 164–165 quoted in Munsterberg, 1986 (note 4) 146. Macpherson's daughter Ada, Mrs Ada Birdsey Booth (1862–1941) converted to Protestantism after she emigrated to the USA.
- 39 A wall beside Macpherson's plot in the Campo Verano cemetery in Rome gave way at some stage and the adjacent graves were transferred without being marked.

4 André Jammes: The most modern Collector of Photographs. Interview between André Jammes and Anna Auer¹

Auer: In 1984, you were described as being, perhaps, the most modern collector of photographs and it was written that: “His research and collecting led to the rediscovering and preservation of what remained of the studios of Blanquart-Evrard, Charles Nègre, and Nadar. Despite his historical focus, however, Jammes views photography as an art form.”² Is it true that you began collecting photography, along with your wife Marie-Thérèse, in 1955? What was the decisive moment for this?

Jammes: A lecture on Nadar by Michel-Francois Braive.

Auer: What are your criteria for collecting?

Jammes: Incunabula of photography and early evidence of new techniques.

Auer: Was there any kind of exchange with similar antiquarian bookshops at the time?

Jammes: No, in those days, not a single bookshop was interested in photography.

Auer: Did you have a friendly relationship with other internationally renowned collectors?

Jammes: Yes. With Michel and Michèle Auer in Geneva, Arnold Crane in Chicago and Samuel Wagstaff in New York, for example.

Auer: In 1967, you translated Beaumont Newhall’s standard work *The History of Photography* from English into French. Was the book successful in France?

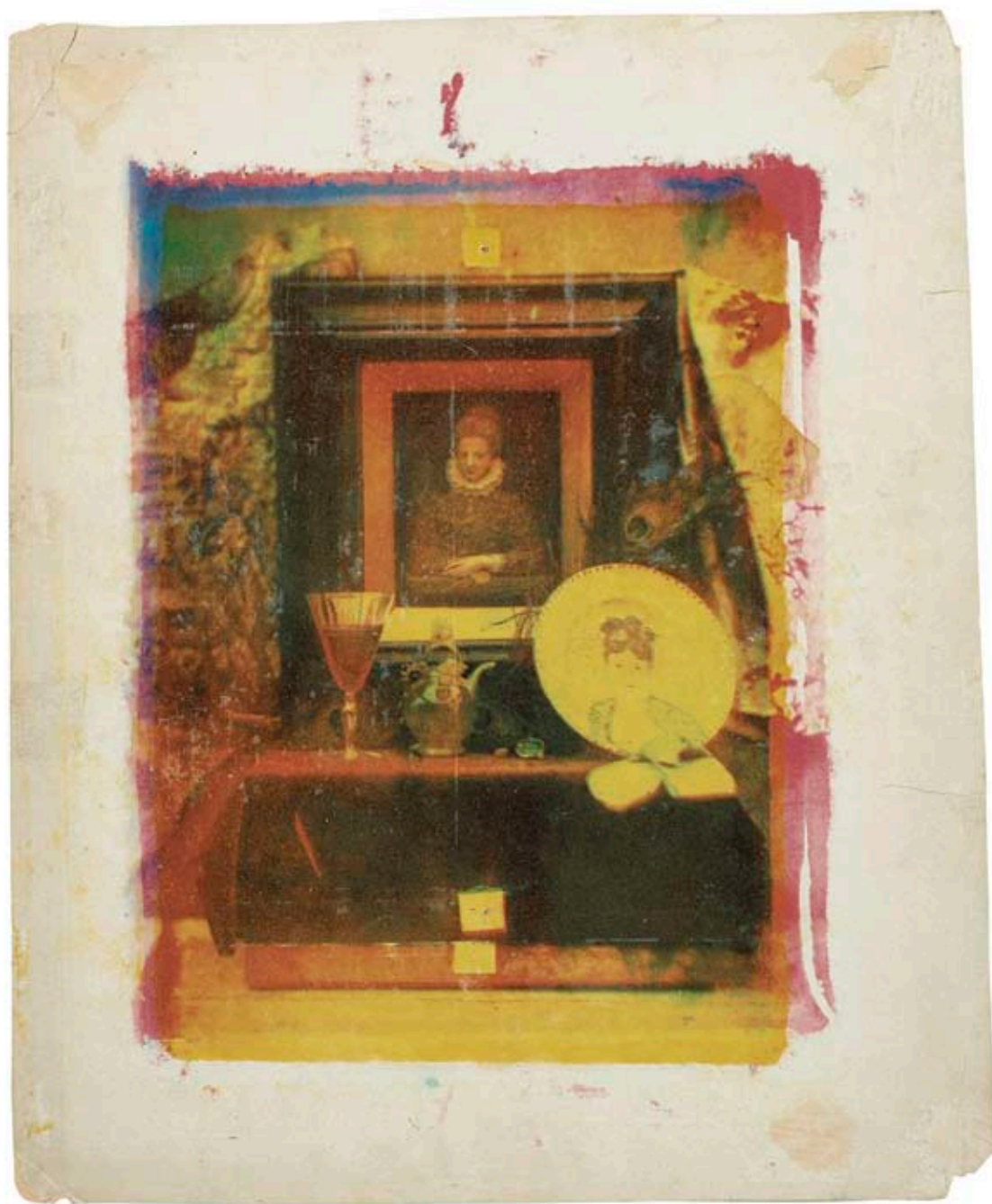
Jammes: The sales amount next to nothing and the book was remaindered.

Auer: Did you know Beaumont Newhall personally?

fig. 1 Charles Cros, *The Table – still life*, 1869.

Three-colour print, 27.9 x 22.8 cm. Courtesy Sotheby’s Paris, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes.

The first colour photography experiments using Cros’ process are extremely rare. This picture was clearly made for test purposes and consists of a master of three matrixes coated with gelatine and coloured in yellow, blue and red. A second example of this picture can be found in the library of the *Musée d’Histoire Naturelle*. It is signed and bears a dedication in Cros’ handwriting: “First edition of my photochrome process, dedicated to Victor Meunier, my scientific father, Charles Cros”.



Jammes: Yes, we had a very amicable relationship with each other.

Auer: Did you also know Alison and Helmut Gernsheim? Van Deren Coke?

Jammes: Yes, I did.

Auer: Starting in the early 1960s, you presented several landmark exhibitions in Paris including: *A Century of Photography from Niépce to Man Ray* (1965), *French Primitive Photography* (1969), *Niépce to Atget* (1977), *From Niépce to Stieglitz* (1982), and *The Art of French Calotype* (1983). How did the major French museums react to these exhibitions?

Jammes: None of the exhibitions received any special recognition from the museums of France.

Auer: The *Cabinet des Estampes of the Bibliothèque nationale (Bn)* took an interest in collecting photographs at an early stage. A collection has been in existence there since 1850.

Jammes: Jean Adhèmar from the *Bibliothèque nationale* was the first person in a public institution in France to become enthusiastic about photography. We have been friends since the 1950s and his useful advice subsequently led to a close collaboration and the realisation of several exhibitions, as well as jointly-organized congresses and other activities.

Auer: In your opinion, why do you think that the major museums in Paris waited so long before they began to develop their own photo departments?

Jammes: Everything was stuck in tradition. The decisive breakthrough was generated in America.

Auer: Were there also collegial contacts between you and Harry Lunn jr.? What did you value about him?

Jammes: He was a kind of permanent bridge between Europe and America.

Auer: The *Musée d'Orsay* also only set up a photo department at a later stage. Why was there this great caution – or even mistrust – *vis-à-vis* photography on the part of the museums?

Jammes: Yes, the department of photography was not established until after the museum had been opened. The *Musée d'Orsay* was originally a part of the *Louvre*. Photography was accepted because it was impossible to develop a museum dedicated to 19th century without including photographic images.

Auer: How was the artistic education for photography in the late 1960s in France? I remember that Jean-Pierre Sudre organized a course for *Experimental Photographic Training* in Paris in 1968 and that he led his often-mentioned *Research Center in Lacoste* (Vaucluse) from 1974 until his death in 1997. At the end of the 1960s, Sudre exhibited Bayard, Hill and Adamson, Talbot and Atget in the Galerie *La Demeure* in Paris. This makes my next question quite obvious: Did you know Jean-Pierre Sudre personally? What did you particularly admire about him?

Jammes: He was an unselfish apostle. I was involved in his activities in Paris.

Auer: You were in Vienna on 22 June 1980. I had invited you to the Fifth International Symposium of the *Fotografis* Collection *Criticism and Photography, Part 1*. You dealt with French nineteenth-century photography in your speech and ascertained that photography had only gained recognition over the “artistic path” of the “pictorialism” of this period? Do you still feel that way?

Jammes: It is that way.

Auer: You also participated in the noteworthy meeting that took place in the rooms of the Sterckshof Museum in Deurne near Antwerp on 15 and 16 December 1977. On that occasion, the decision was taken to establish the *European Society for the History of Photography* (ESHPh). You came as the representative of the *Société française de photographie* (SFP) and Bernard Marbot was present on behalf of the *Cabinet des Estampes* of the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris. The Belgian, Dr Laurent Roosens, was elected first president of our Society at that time. Why did you decide to join the Society?

Jammes: Because I had been asked to and, quite simply, because I felt it was necessary then.

Auer: You have had a close association with the *Société française de photographie* in Paris for many decades; it was founded in 1854 and is the oldest photographic society in the world. I assume that is not merely coincidental that you have dealt with the founding members of that society – including Eduard Denis Baldus, Henri Le Secq, Gustave Le Gray and Charles Nègre – in your research and collecting activities. What particularly attracted you to their pictures?

Jammes: The fact that they were unknown masterpieces.

Auer: In 1991 – following a serious financial crisis – the SFP developed a new structure which appears to have been very successful. Its elegant half-yearly journal on photographic science *Etudes photographiques*, which is produced so meticulously, has an international network of researchers on its *comité scientifique*. You are one of them. What has “Etudes” achieved for photographic research as a whole?

Jammes: The study of photography at universities.

Auer: When the photo department of the *J. Paul Getty Museum* (Chief Curator: Weston Naef) was established in Malibu near Los Angeles in 1984, you sold a part of your collection to it. Why did you do that?

Jammes: It was an age-related decision.

Auer: Did you know Weston Naef from the time when he was working as the photo curator the *Metropolitan Museum* in New York?

Jammes: Yes.

Auer: The 1985 Getty acquisitions catalogue includes a comment you made in 1977 when an exhibition of works from your collection was shown at the *Art Institute of Chicago* that must have sounded quite revolutionary at the time. You stated: “A collection is often the result of the activity of the one who has realized that a certain form of artistic creation might fall into oblivion unless he, personally, were to save it from perishing. Thus, an accumulation of objects is both rescue and creation. The endangered work of art is temporarily honored and magnified, and passes to posterity favorably situated to defy time.”³

What do you think about this matter today?

Jammes: I feel that the position I took then has now become generally accepted.

Auer: A kind of gentle earthquake could be felt in the international collecting community in March 2002 when two gigantic sections of your collection, including the works of Charles Nègre along with other important classics of photography, found new owners in a spectacular auction held by *Sotheby's* in Paris. After that, was photography exhausted for you as an area of collection?

Jammes: No.

Auer: Or, was it more that you want to put an end to your collecting activities once and for all?

Jammes: That's what it was.

Auer: You have written a number of important works. Today, your books on W.H.F. Talbot, Hippolyte Bayard and Charles Nègre belong to the standard works of photographic literature. Are you dealing with a new area at the moment? What is the subject?

Jammes: The history of the book (*bibliophilia*).

Auer: Photo collecting managed to establish itself in Europe after the late 1970s. What do you think: Is it still possible to make important discoveries or is that time really over? At the moment, the prices are rather excessive. The European market is still dictated by American and worldwide demand.

Jammes: Photography is the only artistic field where new discoveries are made every day, with new classifications which repeatedly result in a shift of values.

Auer: What would you recommend for a museum that suddenly discovered photography as an area of collection in 2008? Does it still make any sense to collect early photography or classic modern works? Or would you rather advise such a museum to limit itself to contemporary photography?

Jammes: Contemporary photography makes it possible to interpret early photography because the photographers of our time are now part of an ever-expanding photographic culture. There is justification for both!

¹ The interview on 15 June 2008 was made in preparation for the 30 Year Jubilee of the ESHPh; André Jammes was one of the founding members of our Society in 1977. Three sections of the Jammes Collection were auctioned by Sotheby's Paris in 1999 and 2002: Sotheby's Catalogue, *La Photographie, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes, 19th and 20th Century Photographs*, Paris 27 October 1999; Sotheby's Catalogue, *La Photographie II, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes*, Paris 21 March 2002; Sotheby's Catalogue, *La Photographie III, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes, L'oeuvre de Charles Nègre*, Paris 22 March 2002.

Sotheby's has announced that the final instalment of the Marie-Thérèse & André Jammes Collection, which is one of the most important private collections of photographs of the 19th century ever assembled, will be auctioned in Paris on 15 November 2008: Sotheby's Catalogue, *La Photographie IV, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes*, Paris: 15 November 2008. After that the collection of Marie-Thérèse and André Jammes will not exist anymore.

² The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal, *Acquisitions 1984*, vol. 13, Los Angeles 1985, 215.

³ Getty Museum, 1985 (note 2).

fig. 2 Baron Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gros, *View of the salon of Baron Gros*, 1850-1857. Full-plate daguerreotype, 17.8 x 12.7 cm, 'Christofle' mark on the plate. Courtesy Sotheby's Paris, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes.





fig. 3 Benjamin Brecknell Turner, *Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, Transept*, 1852. Waxed calotype negative 30.2 x 40.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gilman Collection, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 2005.

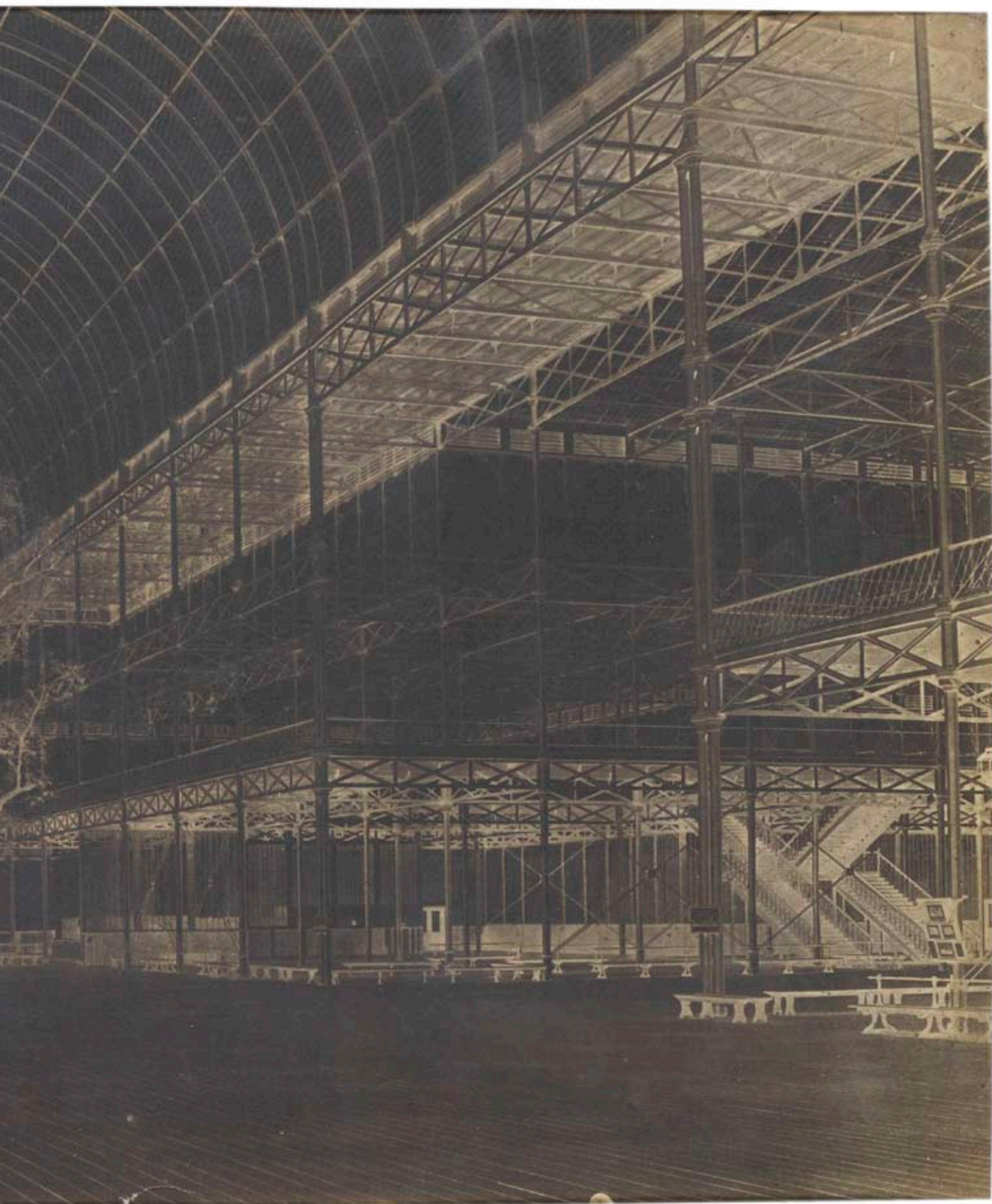


fig. 4 Gustave Le Gray, *Oak in the Forest of Fontainebleau*, c.1849. Salt print from a paper negative, mounted on album page; annotations by André Jammes in pencil on the reverse, 27.9 x 38.1 cm. Courtesy Sotheby's Paris, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes.



fig. 5 Nadar (Adrian Tournachon), *Portrait of Paul Legrand*, c.1855.
Salt print, inscribed in pencil on reverse: “Paul Legrand/mime/
funambule”, and by A.J. “Epr. de 1er tirage probablemet unique
(U.K) [according to Ulrich Keller]”, 22.8 x 15.8 cm.
Sotheby’s, La Photographie, Paris 1999, lot 123, 89.



fig. 6 Charles Nègre, *The Mills in Grasse*, 1852.

Salt print from a paper negative, 32.6 x 23.6 cm.

Sotheby's, La Photographie III, Paris 2002, lot 524, 176.



fig. 7 Charles Nègre, *Barrel-organ player with two children listening*, before of May 1853. Salt print from a waxed negative, 20.6 x 15.6 cm. Sotheby's, La Photographie III, Paris 2002, lot 328, 38.

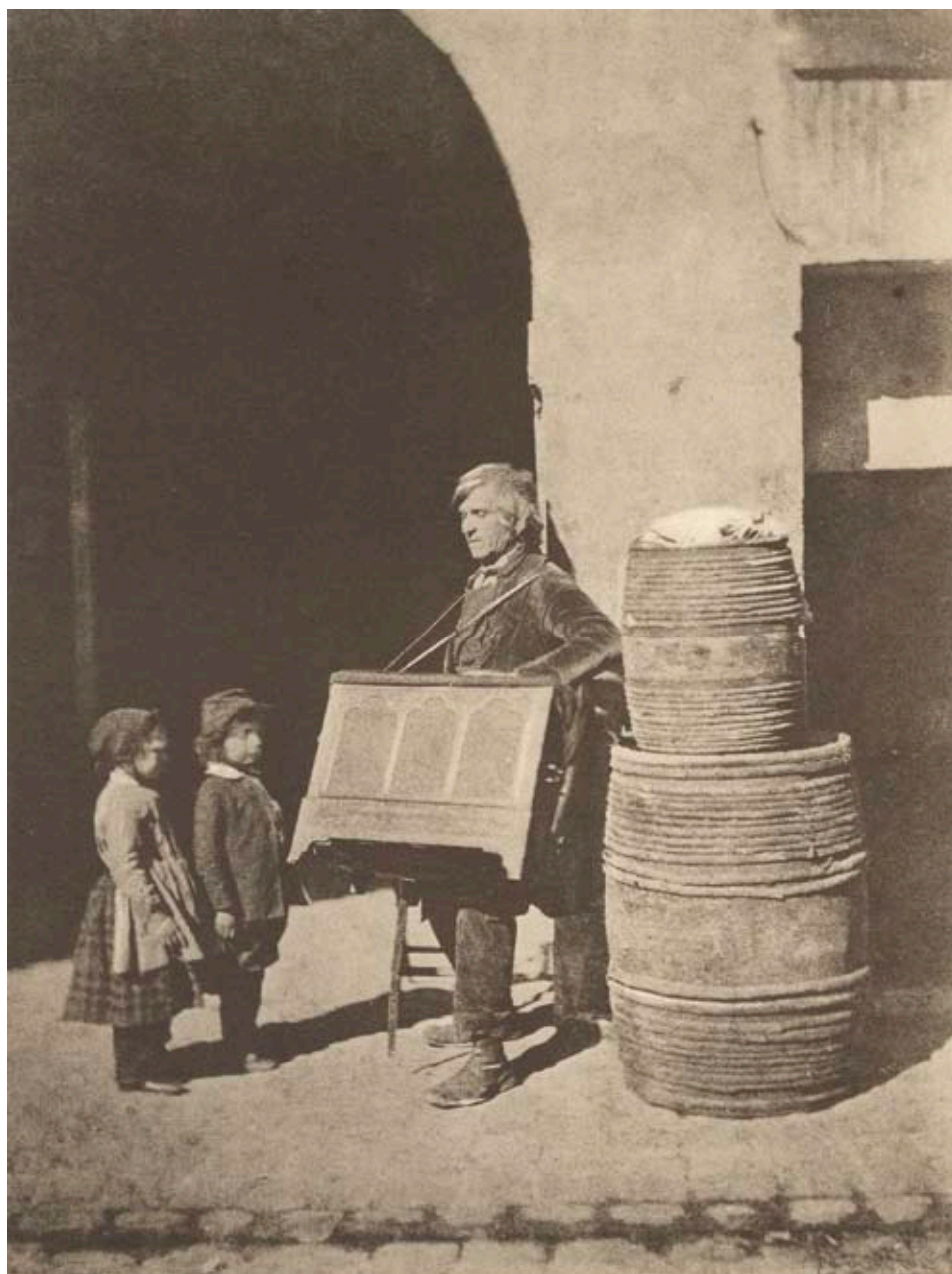


fig. 8 Charles Nègre, *Portrait of a man with a top hat in the court yard of 21, Quai Bourbon*, 1851. Salt print from a paper negative, 14.4 x 10.5 cm. Sotheby's, La Photographie III, Paris 2002, lot 363, 60.

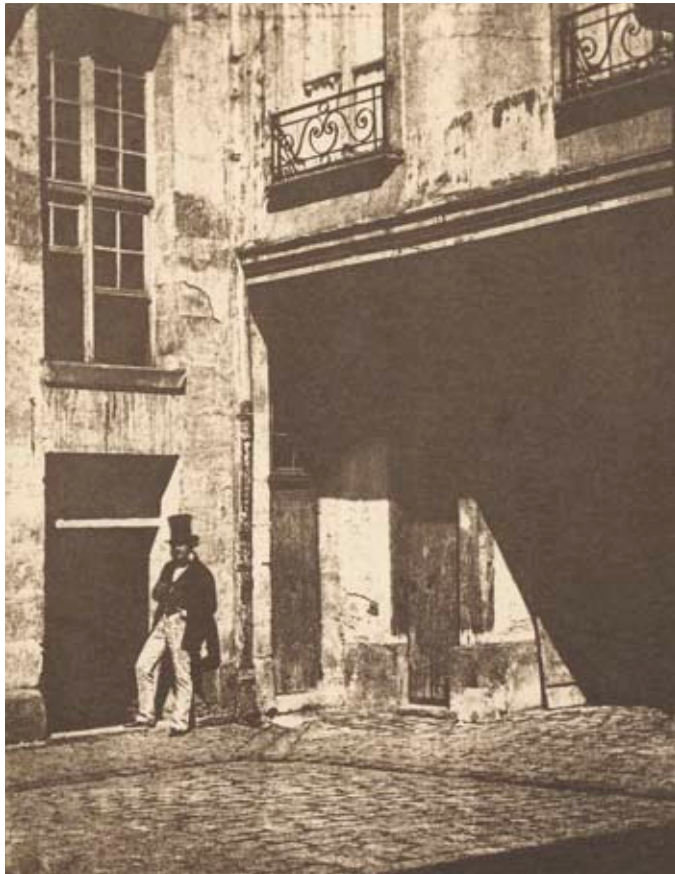


fig. 9 Henri le Secq, *Beauvais, gothic gate*, 1851.

Photolithographs on paper, one signed, titled and dated in the negative, the paper of the other printed with title, and names of photographer and printers, 30.5 x 22.8 cm.

Courtesy Sotheby's Paris, Collection Marie-Thérèse et André Jammes.



Régis par Loug

Photographie sur pierre par R.N. Lecomte, Lezennes, 1900, n. 10000

Imp. Lecomte, 1 de Dole, 12 Rue

Simon Weber-Unger



A Camera Obscura by Voigtländer & Son Vienna

This article treats a camera obscura that, by its provenance, maker and date, can be placed in a direct connection to the early period of Austrian photography and its development.

Description of the camera obscura

Figure 1: Made in Vienna, c. 1848, signed on lens “Voigtländer & Sohn / in Wien.” Mahogany veneer wood corpus, mirror and ground glass (not original), lacquered brass lens with lens hood and brass cap, focussing screw, brass fitted screw-on magnifier glass (fig. 4). Dimensions: wood box c.25.3 x 36.4 x 30.7 cm, total length c.49 cm, lens diameter c.65 mm, focusing screen up to c.22 x 27 cm.

Detailed description of the camera obscura's lens by Dr. Milos Mladek, Vienna

The lens of the camera obscura is an optical system of three glasses in two groups with a fixed intermediate diaphragm, mounted in a beautifully-made, sturdy brass barrel engraved „Voigtländer & Sohn in Wien“. It has rack-and-pinion focusing and renders a sharp image with good contrast and no apparent distortion.

As for the optical design: The heart of the system seems to be a positive meniscus in the rear, with a focal length of 12 cm and a fixed diaphragm before it. There is a strongly negative cemented meniscus (consisting of a biconvex lens in front and a biconcave lens behind) in front of these two. The focal length of the whole system is about 25 cm, with an approximate lens register of about 35 cm, the relative aperture is probably about $f/9$. A suggested cross section of the whole system can be seen in figure 2.

The optical design is uncommon and could not be found in the photographic literature. At best, it may be regarded as a Wollaston Meniscus with an added negative group in front. There is no resemblance to any of the three optical doublets Professor Petzval designed in 1840 (of which, both the portrait lens and the landscape lens were created by combining two of them), and no similar photographic lens was even forthcoming in the following hundred years. Please note that this is only a preliminary description of the lens as, under the given circumstances, some of the data are estimations.

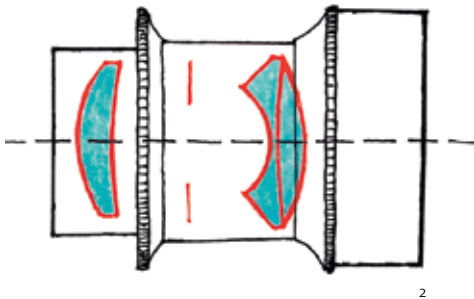


fig. 1 Camera Obscura, Voigtländer & Sohn / in Wien, c.1848. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 2 Lens cross section, drawing: Milos Mladek.





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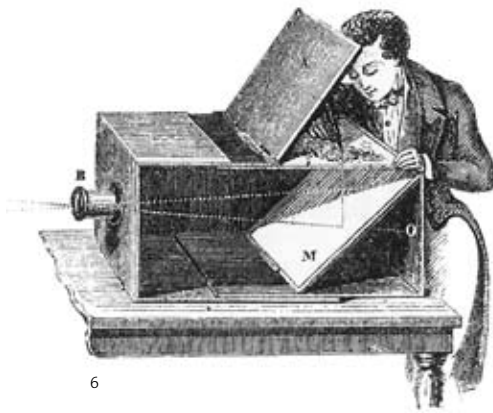
Provenance

The camera obscura originates from the estate of Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria, the later Emperor Maximilian of Mexico. After the death of his widow Charlotte of Belgium in 1927 it was integrated, together with other items from the estate of Miramar, into the collections of the Picture Archive of the Austrian National Library (fig. 5).

A short history of development of the camera obscura

Since the 15th century, optical drawing aids, so-called *machines à dessiner* have been used by artists including Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer who employed glass plates with grids, and similar instruments to achieve a good perspective. More complicated devices, such as perspectographs, were developed in the 17th century. Nicolas Bion described such an instrument in his important mathematical book *Traite de la construction et des principaux usages des instrument de mathematique* (1709). The third edition in German (1726) describes the instrument as follows: “Instrument vermittelt dessen man allerhand Objecta gar leicht Perspektivisch zu Papier bringen kann”¹ (instrument making it easy to reproduce all kinds of objects, in perspective, on paper). Still in the second half of the 18th century, such a perspectograph, possibly made after Bion’s instructions, was produced by the Mechanikus Johann Friedrich Voigtländer (1732–1797) in Vienna.²

The principle of the camera obscura was already described by Aristotle (c.300 BC) and, before him, by Mzi (lat. Micius 470–c.391 BC). Later, the Arab mathematician, astronomer and optician Abu Ali al-Hasan Ibn Al-Haitham (lat. Alhazen c.965–1039 or 1040) gave the correct analysis of the camera obscura.³ Alhazen’s book *Kitab al-Manazir* (The book of optics – de



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fig. 3 Camera Obscura, Voigtländer & Sohn / in Wien.
Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 4 Camera obscura with attached magnifier.
Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 5 Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, Villa Lazarovich,
Triest 1852. Daguerreotype half plate.
Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 6 From: Lardner D., *The museum of science and art*,
London: Walton & Maberly, 1855.



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Aspectibus oder Opticae Thesaurus), translated into Latin, influenced European philosophers including Roger Bacon (1214–1292 or 1294), who also gave a description of a camera obscura for the observation of a solar eclipse. Until the 15th century, whole rooms or other large constructions with only a hole for the incoming image were used as a camera obscura. Such a walk-in chamber was described in Athanasius Kircher's book *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae*⁴ in 1646; however, this camera obscura already used a glass lens.

The camera obscura's shape, structure and size as pictured in figure 6 appeared around the 17th century and remained until the 19th century. A lens gave a better picture and the mirror turned the inverted image on the focusing screen.

One of the most famous painters who supposedly used a camera obscura is Jan Vermeer (before 1632–1675). Among his most significant paintings are “Officer and a Laughing Girl” (1657–1659), “The Little Street” (1657 / 58), and “View of Delft” (1660–1661); the last two mentioned are discussed precisely in Heinrich Schwarz's article “Vermeer and the Camera Obscura”.⁵ Vermeer might have used a *camera immobilis* for his two surviving landscape/town-paintings. An interesting example of an artist's portable camera obscura, Sir Joshua Reynold's (1732–1792), is still in the Science Museum in London – when folded it looks like a large leather-bound book. A camera obscura with the inscription “A. Canal” is in the Museo Correr in Venice and can be associated with Giovanni Antonio Canal (1697–1768). His nephew Bernardo Bellotto used the camera obscura as well. In Austria, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1793–1865) was one of the last users of optical drawing aids just before 1839. In his landscape paintings of the Salzkammergut, he used the camera obscura, the Claude Lorrain-Mirror (a black, slightly

convex, mirror), or the camera lucida.⁶ In his famous lecture *Before 1839*, Heinrich Schwarz concludes that the will for photography was given at the moment when the focal point became a part of the aesthetic credo and that the basic idea of this technique can be seen in the fact that *machines à dessiner*, the camera obscura and the mirror, were integrated into the artists' equipment.

The interests and voyages of Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria

Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph was born in 1832 as a younger brother of Archduke Franz Joseph Karl, the later Emperor Franz Joseph I. of Austria. He, as well as his brother, was taught by Count Heinrich Franz Bombelles, had drawing-lessons from Ignaz Dullinger and, later, from the painter Peter Johann Nepomuk Geiger.⁷ In 1860 the archduke is described as a “geistvoller Kenner und Förderer der Wissenschaften und Künste” (a brilliant connoisseur and patron of the arts and sciences).⁸ A reason for this reputation definitely lies in the voyages he made – partly related to his training and function in the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Navy.

In 1850, he travelled to Smyrna in Asia Minor (today's Izmir in Turkey) which was Greek at the time, accompanied by Geiger. He travelled to Italy and Spain in 1851, to Sicily, Spain, Portugal, Madeira, Morocco (Tangier), Algeria, Medeah, and Malta in 1853 and, as commander of the ship S.M. Corvette Minerva, to Albania and Dalmatia. In 1854, as a 22-year old, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial and Royal Navy and soon accomplished many important reforms. In 1855, he commanded a squadron comprising 17 ships on a naval exercise to Italy, Greece, Lebanon, Palestine (where he went to Jerusalem) and Egypt to inspect the Suez Canal project that was planned by the Austrian engineer Alois Negrelli (1799–1858). Negrelli became technical director of the Suez Canal Company in 1857. The 1855 voyage was documented by the young photographer Franz Mai and 38 impressive photographs have survived.⁹

After marrying Princess Charlotte of Belgium in Brussels in 1857, he was named Governor-General of Lombardo-Venetia and moved his court to Milan.

He supported the circumnavigation of the globe by the S.M. Frigate Novara (1857–1859) although he was unable to participate due to illness. On Ferdinand Maximilian's orders, the number of arms on board was reduced to create more space for the expedition and collected objects. The scientific commission, headed by Karl Scherzer, comprised Ferdinand Hochstetter, Anton Jellinek, Georg Fraunfeld, Johann Zelebor, Eduard Schwarz, and the painter Joseph Selleny. In almost two-and-a-half years, they collected about 23,700 individual natural specimens, including animals (or parts), minerals and ethnographic objects.

Lombardo-Venetia was lost after the battle of Solferino in 1859. In 1860, the Archduke travelled on board the steamer S.M.S. Elisabeth to Brazil, where he made an expedition to the jungle (Cachoeira) in mid-January. He later visited his cousin Dom Pedro II., Emperor of Brazil – the son of Dom Pedro I. and Maria Leopoldina of Austria, Maximilian's aunt. The voyage was



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fig. 7 A. Jellinek, *Erzherzog Ferdinand Maximilian in Tropenadjustierung während seiner Brasilienreise 1859/60* (Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian in his tropical outfit during his Brazil trip 1859/60). Albumen print, 18 cm oval. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

accompanied by Wilhelm v. Tegetthoff, as well as navy surgeon Heinrich Wawra von Fernsee and the gardener Franz Maly. On their field trip, they collected seed and rootstocks for the Imperial and Royal Garden in Schönbrunn, Vienna.¹⁰ Botanical research results were published in 1866.¹¹

Ferdinand Maximilian's interest in architecture was first shown in his "Chalet Maxing" which was built after he received his first allowance in 1848. Later he played an important role in the construction and design of the Votive Church in Vienna 1856–1879 and the castle of Miramar near Trieste 1856–1860.¹²

The Archduke was proclaimed Emperor of Mexico in 1864 and crossed the ocean to his new realm on the S.M. Frigate Novara. The local photographer M. Rizo made photographs of the Emperor's inauguration in Puebla and Maximilian sent seven copies to his brother Emperor Franz Joseph I. in Vienna.¹³

In 1867 Emperor Maximilian of Mexico was executed after his capture by Republican forces led by Benito Juárez.

The optical instrument makers Johann Friedrich and Peter Wilhelm Friedrich Voigtländer in Vienna

In 1756, Johann Christoph Voigtländer (1732–1797) founded a company for scientific instruments in Vienna. He produced miners', surveying, and drawing instruments. After his death, his third son Johann Friedrich (1779–1857) travelled to Germany and England. He was first taught by Mechanicus Siebrecht in Berlin (1800) and, then, Mechanicus Baumann in Stuttgart (1802/03), before staying in London in 1805/06. He established his company for optical and mechanical instruments in 1807 and married Amalie Franziska Tiedemann, the daughter of the famous Stuttgart Optikus and Mechanikus Johann H. Tiedemann.¹⁴ During his stay in Stuttgart in 1802/03, Tiedemann and his daughter might have had an important influence on Voigtländer's optical interests.

The company was named "Friedrich Voigtländer Optikus und Mechanikus" until Johann Friedrich Voigtländer's son Peter Wilhelm Friedrich took it over in 1837 and it was renamed "Voigtländer & Sohn in Wien". Peter Wilhelm had studied at the *K.k. Polytechnisches Institut* in Vienna and guided the company towards photography and photographic instruments. As a result of the March Revolution in Vienna and the increasing export-market, Voigtländer opened production facilities in Braunschweig in 1849. After that, all instruments were signed "Voigtländer & Sohn in Wien und Braunschweig". In 1868, the remaining branch in Vienna was closed and Voigtländer continued producing cameras in Braunschweig.

Sources

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Voigtländer: *200 Jahre 1756–1956*, Sonderdruck aus: *der Photohändler* 1956.

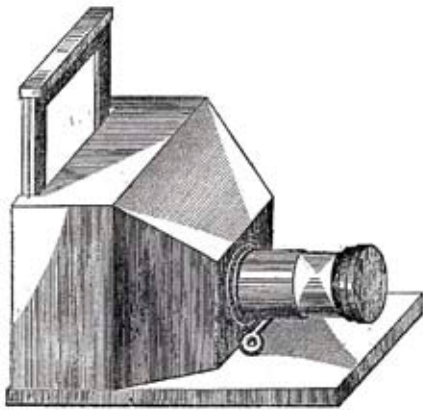


fig. 8 Voigtländers neue große Camera Obscura, from: Anton Martin, *Handbuch der gesamten Photographie*, 1852.

fig. 9 Voigtländers neue große Camera Obscura, from: Dingler (ed.), *Polytechnisches Journal*, October 1842, 128ff.

fig. 10 Peter Britt (Jacksonville, USA) with his first Voigtländer & Sohn camera, 1865. Southern Oregon Historical Society.

The first photo cameras in Vienna

After Louis Jacques M. Daguerre had sent two of his first Daguerreotypes to Emperor Ferdinand I. of Austria and Count Klemens Wenzel Metternich, Andreas v. Ettingshausen travelled to Paris to study this new invention and buy a Daguerre camera.¹⁵

In summer 1839, Anton Martin had already studied the new technique and was using a camera built by Simon G. Ploessl (lost). Simon G. Ploessl (1794–1868) worked from 1812–1823 as an assistant to Johann Friedrich Voigtländer and he still offered “Daguerreotyp-Linsen” of 3 Paris inch diameter¹⁶ in his 1856 catalogue.

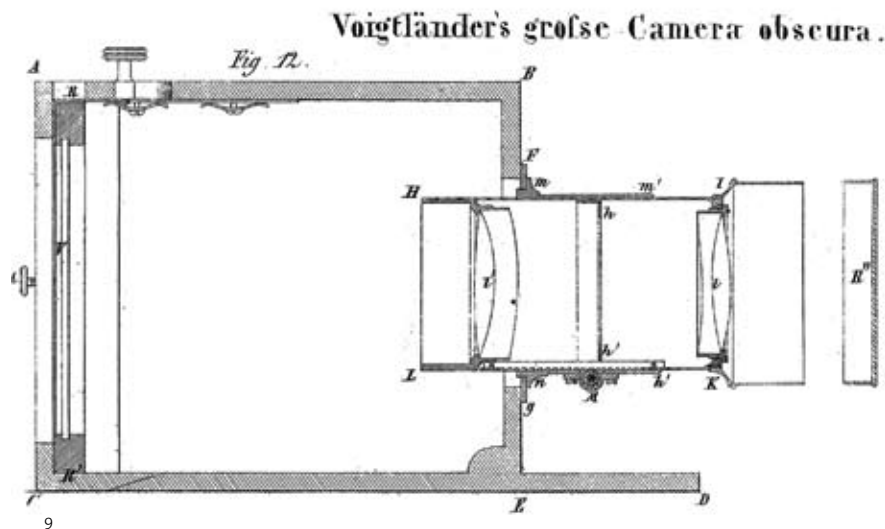
An article in the *Österreichischer Zuschauer*¹⁷ (16.12.1839) says that the instrument makers Eckling and the university supplier Hanaczek were constructing cameras. Johann Michael Eckling and Hanaczek (or Hanacek) mainly made philosophical demonstration apparatus. At Ettingshausen’s suggestion, Joseph Petzval mathematically developed a portrait lens, which was produced by Voigtländer & Sohn. Two corporals (“Oberfeuerwerker”) and eight bombardiers from the Imperial and Royal Bombardiers Corps assisted in the calculations (on the orders of Archduke Ludwig).

The brightness of this “Porträtobjektiv” was much higher than the Daguerre (Chevalier) lens. In 1840, Anton Martin was still being asked to make portrait-daguerreotypes with this lens that was fixed to a simple, square-conical cardboard back with a “baumschraube” mounting screw (usually used for telescopes).¹⁸ Today, this prototype camera is in the Vienna Technical Museum.

At the end of 1840, Voigtländer produced the first all-metal camera and published an extensive description in the “Verhandlungen des Niederöstr. Gewerbevereins”¹⁹ in 1841. A portrait-camera had already been described in an interesting article by Dr. Joseph Berres,²⁰ who made daguerreotype studies himself.²¹

Voigtländer’s early wooden cameras compared to Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian’s camera obscura

The first detailed and illustrated description of a wooden camera by “Voigtländer & Sohn” can be seen in Dingler’s *Polytechnical Journal*²² from October 1842; this camera “Voigtländers neue große Camera obscura” (Voigtländers big new camera obscura)²³ was obviously double the size of the one previously available (“... bei welchem die Dimensionen der Hauptbestandteile noch einmal so groß sind wie bei dem früheren”) and could make pictures of up to 5 ½ x 4 ¼ inches – that is c.14.9 x 11.5 cm, assuming the Paris inch is meant. The box-shaped corpus is made of walnut-wood and there is the slot for the focussing screen or the plates in the upper back. This slot can be closed using a brass plate supported by clips. The diameter of the Petzval portrait-lens is 35 ½ Paris lines – that is c.80.08 mm (fig. 9). Another illustration of a wooden “Voigtländer & Sohn” camera can be seen in Anton Martins *Handbuch der gesamten Photographie*, 1852²⁴ as part of the catalogue *III. Beschreibung und Preistarif der neuesten Voigtländer’schen photographischen Apparate* and is described as the “neueste Form” (newest shape) with the “gewöhnlichen übrigen Einrichtung” (other standard equipment) (fig. 8).



According to an article on the Voigtländer Company,²⁵ a similar camera was rediscovered in Jacksonville (Oregon, USA) in 1956 and has been identified as the first camera of the famous Swiss emigrant Peter Britt, who ordered it directly from Voigtländer in the 1840s. The Petzval portrait lens on the camera is signed “No. 2115 / Voigtländer & Sohn / in Wien”. After crossing the plains, Peter Britt opened his photographic studio in Jacksonville in 1852 and became one of the most important photographers in Oregon. One of the reasons for this career – particularly for him – might have been his first Voigtländer camera. This could be why Britt portrayed himself with it as late as in 1865 (fig. 10). The camera is in the collection of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

The front of the box and type of wood of this “newest shape” remind us of the Archduke’s camera obscura and make it possible to date it. Knowing that the signature on Voigtländer’s instruments changed in 1849, we can assume that year as being the latest one possible for the production of Britt’s camera and the Archduke’s camera obscura

Voigtländer and Simon Stampfer

It appears likely that Prof. Simon Stampfer (1792–1864) might have had an important scientific influence on W. Fr. Voigtländer’s mathematical calculations. During his studies at the *K.k. Polytechnisches Institut* in Vienna, W. Fr. Voigtländer was taught by Stampfer²⁶ who already had scientific relations with his father Johann Friedrich Voigtländer.

Stampfer invented various instruments such as the Stroboskop or Fantaskop (built by Johann Friedrich Voigtländer²⁷ and, still in 1851, by Wenzel Prokesch²⁸), an Optometer, (built by Simon Plössl²⁹), an improved surveying level developed together with Starke and, in collaboration with Miller, a Polar-Planimeter³⁰ (both built by Christoph Starke in the workshops of the *K.k. Polytechnisches Institut* and, after 1866, by Starke & Kammerer) and seems to have been a



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kind of a mathematical brain for many Viennese instrument makers and opticians. Harting³¹ published a drawing including calculations for a dialytic telescope lens that Stampfer sent to W. Fr. Voigtländer in 1839 and describes other calculations made for Voigtländer, including those for telescope lenses in 1844 and 1855 and an undated microscope lens.

It is possible that Stampfer made the calculations for the lens of this camera obscura not only because of his long-time scientific relationship with the Voigtländer family but also because Petzval had stopped his collaboration with Voigtländer in 1844/45.

Epilogue

After getting his first allowance in 1848, Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian possibly used part of it to purchase a range of scientific instruments for his own interests and as equipment for his future voyages. In the collections of the Picture Archive of the Austrian National Library, there is another special instrument from his estate which was made at about the same time by Simon G. Ploessl – a projection-microscope. Such a microscope can be used to project specimens in microscope slides onto the wall. He could have used this for his botanical interests. In addition, there are two early telescopes³² and an 18th century electrostatic demonstration box.

- 1 Nicolas Bion, *Mathematische Werck=Schule, oder gründliche Anweisung wie die Mathematischen Instrumenten... auf die beste und accurateste Manier zu verfertigen...*, 3rd ed., translated from French, 1726, ill. plate VIII.
- 2 Auction, *Historische wissenschaftliche Instrumente*, Lot #67, Dorotheum Vienna, 29.04.2008.
- 3 N.J. Wade & s. Finger, 'The Eye as an Optical Instrument: From Camera Obscura to Helmholtz' in: *Perspective* 30, Pion, London 2001.
- 4 A. Kircher, *Ars magna lucis et umbrae in decem libros digesta*, Ludovico Grignani for Hermann Scheus, Rome 1646.
- 5 Heinrich Schwarz, 'Vermeer und die Camera obscura' in: Anselm Wagner (ed.), *Heinrich Schwarz, Techniken des Sehens – vor und nach der Fotografie, Ausgewählte Schriften 1929–1966*, Salzburg: Fotohof edition 2006, 239.
- 6 Schwarz, 2006 (note 5).
- 7 Wladimir Aichelburg, *Maximilian, Erzherzog von Österreich, Kaiser von Mexiko in zeitgenössischen Photographien*, Vienna: Orac 1987.
- 8 Constantin v. Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich*, vol. 6, Vienna: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei v. L.C. Zamarski 1860.
- 9 Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, *Photography and its role at the court*, manuscript, Vienna 2008 and Aichelburg, 1987 (note 7).
- 10 Karl Vocolka, *Kultur und Geistesgeschichte der Gärten am Beispiel der Habsburgermonarchie*, lecture, Institute of History, University of Vienna, March 2003.
- 11 Heinrich Wawra von Fernsee, *Botanische Ergebnisse der Reise Seiner Majestät des Kaisers von Mexico Maximilian I. nach Brasilien (1859.1860). Auf allerhöchst dessen Anordnung beschrieben und hrsg. von Heinrich Wawra*, Vienna: C. Gerold's Sohn 1866.
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- 13 Gerda Mraz, 'Sammeln aus historischem Interesse? Fotografien im Kaiserhaus' in: Uwe Schögl, *Im Blickpunkt., Die Fotosammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Innsbruck: Haymon 2002.
- 14 Johann Heinrich Tiedemann (1742–1811) produced microscopes and achromatic telescopes in Stuttgart; Tiedemann, *Beschreibung der von ihm verfertigten achromatischen Fernröhren, zusammengesetzten Vergrößerungsgläser, und anderer zur Mathematik und Physik gehörigen Werkzeuge: nebst zwey Kupfertafeln*, Stuttgart 1785.
- 15 Monika Faber, 'Das erste Jahrzehnt eines neuen Mediums 1839–1850' in: Monika Faber, Klaus Albrecht Schröder, *Das Auge und der Apparat, eine Geschichte der Fotografie aus den Sammlungen der Albertina*, exh. cat., Vienna: 2003, 62.

In the 1840s, Voigtländer & Sohn was very famous – not only in the scientific community but also at court – for their photographic cameras and especially their Petzval portrait lens. Emperor Franz II. (I.) granted Johann Friedrich Voigtländer an “imperial charter” on periscopic glasses in 1815 and, in 1823, on the “Theater-Doppelperspektiv” binocular or opera-glasses. It would not be surprising if Voigtländer was commissioned to construct a camera obscura for an archduke who, by the way, was an admirer of Canaletto.³³

At that time, the common term for a camera was still *camera obscura* (see fig. 8) and it must have seemed all the stranger when the archduke ordered a *real* camera obscura. This meant that Voigtländer was not allowed to demonstrate his special capabilities as one of the leading camera makers in the world but had to *rewind* camera history and build the ancestor of the photo-camera. He created a technically and optically extraordinary instrument with the skilful combination of the *newest camera* (see figs. 8 and 9) and a completely new and ingenious lens in the brass tube of a classical photo objective (see fig. 2).

We can say that, with this camera obscura, Peter Wilhelm Friedrich Voigtländer, one of the most productive revolutionaries in photography, set an outstanding monument to this kind of drawing device that was indeed the basis of the photographic camera as we know it today.

- 16 *Verzeichnis der optischen Apparate welche von Simon Plössl, Optiker und Mechaniker in Wien (...) verfertigt werden*, Juli 1856. (Plössl was especially famous for his dialytic telescopes and achromatic microscopes).
- 17 J.S. Ebersberg (ed.), *Der Österreichischer Zuschauer. Zeitblatt für Kunst, Wissenschaft und geistiges Leben*, 16.12.1839.
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- 19 F. Voigtländer, ‘Beschreibung des Voigtländerschen Apparates zur Darstellung photographischer Porträte, nach der Berechnung des Herrn Professor Dr. Petzval’ in: *Verhandlungen des niederöstrerr. Gewerb-Vereins*, Heft 5, Vienna: Gerold 1841.
- 20 Dr. Berres, ‘Über die Verbesserung der Camera obscura und die Fortschritte in der Erzeugung der Lichtbilder’ in: J. & E. Dingler (eds.), *Polytechnisches Journal*, vol. 79, no. 2, Stuttgart, Augsburg: J.G. Gotha’sche Buchhandlung 1841, 156f.
- 21 Faber, Schröder, 2003 (note 15).
- 22 Reindl, ‘Über Daguerreotypie und Voigtländer’s neue große Camera obscura’ in: J. & E. Dingler (eds.), *Polytechnisches Journal*, vol. 86, no. 2, Stuttgart, Augsburg: J.G. Gotha’sche Buchhandlung 1842, 128ff., plate IV.
- 23 Till the late 1850s, it was common to call a photo camera a *camera obscura*.
- 24 Anton Martin, *Handbuch der gesamten Photographie*, 3rd. ed., Vienna: Gerold 1852.
- 25 Voigtländer, ‘200 Jahre: 1756–1956’, Sonderdruck aus *Der Photohändler*, 1956, 8: “Schon die Pioniere im goldenen Westen haben photographiert”.
- 26 Dr. Peter M. Schuster, ‘Simon Stampfer, der Vater der österr. Feinoptik’ from: R. & A. Rost (eds.), *Festschrift zum Simon Stampfer Symposium*, Vienna: GeoInfo Series Vienna 2004.
- 27 Voigtländer, ‘200 Jahre: 1756–1956’, special-print from: *Der Photohändler*, 1956
- 28 V.F. Gottfried, *Adressen-Buch der Handels-Gremien, Fabriken u. Gewerbe der k.k. Residenz- u. Reichs-Hauptstadt Wien*, 1851.
- 29 One specimen is at the University Innsbruck Inv.No: VII – 37 [0 – 88] (c.1839).
- 30 Prof. J. Simon Stampfer, *Eine Lebensskizze*, Vienna: K.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei 1865.
- 31 Dr. H. Harting, *Zur Geschichte der Familie Voigtländer, ihrer Werkstätten und ihrer Mitarbeiter*, Braunschweig: Voigtländer & Sohn 1924/25.
- 32 One of the telescopes has a special lacquer and light wood case for expeditions.
- 33 Information by Gabriele Praschl-Pichler; see also the chapter ‘A short history of development of the camera obscura’ in this essay and note the resemblance of Maximilian’s camera obscura to the one which is inscribed “A. Canal” in the Museo Correr in Venice.

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu

6 Szathmari: from a War Photographer to a Ruling Prince's Court Painter and Photographer

Carol Pop de Szathmari was born in Cluj (Klausenburg or Kolozsvár), Transylvania, on 11 January 1812. He was of noble descent and one can still find his ancestors' coat-of-arms preserved at the Reformed Church in Cluj. He read law at the Reformed College in his hometown, Cluj. His talent for painting shone out from an early age; this artistic calling proved stronger and he was soon to give up his law career and devote himself to painting. For a short time Szathmari attended the Fine Arts Academy in Vienna; he then turned to a bohemian lifestyle, gaining more knowledge from travel exploits than from his professors.

Being a passionate traveller, Szathmari journeyed through Europe and often crossed the Carpathian Mountains to visit Wallachia and its capital Bucharest, where he eventually settled in 1843. A leading artist in a country with few, if any, gifted local painters, Szathmari was flooded with commissions in the 1840s and 1850s. An accomplished landscape and portrait painter, at ease with both watercolours and oil paints, Szathmari obtained commissions from the wealthy Wallachian boyars (noblemen). A dashing young man, elegantly dressed, fluent in Romanian, German, French and Italian, the painter became valued company in the high-society circles of Bucharest. The self-portrait he took a few years later, showing the artist standing in front of his easel, palette and brushes in hand, surrounded by his art collections, gives a clear indication of his success (fig. 1).

Szathmari kept up constant, good relations with the successive ruling princes of Wallachia for whom he painted portraits and various other compositions. One of his first patrons was Gheorghe Bibescu, Ruling Prince of Wallachia (1842–1848) and his charming wife, Maritzica. They were both portrayed many times by Szathmari. A miniature portrait of Princess Maritzica Bibescu wearing a rich peasant costume is preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest. When Bibescu's brother, Barbu Știrbei, followed on the throne in 1849, he commissioned Szathmari to make three large paintings of his coronation; but somehow the artist never got around to completing them. Years later, the artist was summoned by the

officials of the Ministry of Public Education to either produce the commissioned paintings or return the money he had received in advance.

By 1848, Szathmari began to experiment with photography. His first success was a calotype with an armless gesso Cupid. The inscription is in the photographer's own handwriting and reads: *'Die aller erste Photographie die ich gemacht habe im Jahre 1848 November'*.¹ He soon turned to the more accurate and rewarding medium of the wet collodion process and opened a photographic studio.

The outbreak of the Russian-Ottoman War in late June 1853 saw the Romanian principalities occupied by the Russian army. Szathmari's photographic studio was often visited by generals and other high ranking officers, all posing for eternity. He made acquaintance with everybody who was anybody. Later, these friendships would be instrumental in his activities as a war historian with a camera always at hand. In April 1854, he filled a van with his cameras and glass plates and went to the border of the Danube to document the fighting between the Russian and Turkish armies. He took pictures of both front lines at Oltenitza. He roamed about the opposing front lines and took photographs of the strongholds, the trenches and military camps. One of the pictures he took is of a troop of Turkish cavalymen, as seen in figure 2. It shows two mounted troopers, rifles in hand, while the other two are dismounted and stand beside their saddled horses. They wear dark blue tunics with thirteen rows of silk worsted cord on the front. All their accoutrements are white. The bugler on the left rests his brass instrument on his hip while the dismounted cavalryman on the right, with his elbow on the saddle, appears to be an officer. Another picture depicts the *Oltenitza Quarantine Station*. Some Russian officers, observing the enemy's lines through their spyglasses, stand in front of it.

It was probably at that very spot that Szathmari was taken for a Russian spy by the Turkish garrison and fired at. His van offered the perfect target for the Turkish gunners. Fortunately,



fig. 1 C. Szathmari, *Self-portrait*. Albumen print, 17,5 x 10 cm. Courtesy Library of the Romanian Academy.

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the artillerymen were not skilled marksmen and missed the artist who was able to take his picture safely (fig. 3). A few years later, Ernest Lacan described those moments in his book *Esquisses photographiques. À propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient*:

“It is not without danger that Mr de Szathmari did his job. He was near Oltenitza in the first days of April 1854 when the Russians were besieging the town. He wanted to take a picture with the quarantine station. Consequently, he approached the town with the van he used as his laboratory; he then prepared his camera and began his work. He was surprised by a hard blow and, at almost the same time, the sound of a gunshot was heard from the town. Mr. de Szathmari thought that he had chosen a bad place and that it would be better to move out of the Turkish garrison's line of fire. But he bravely remained there. A second blow vibrated in the air and the same detonation followed an instant later. It was obvious for the artist that he had the honour of being the target and that the fire was becoming more and more menacing and accurate. But the view he was taking was so interesting, the light and shadow so appropriate, that it was impossible for him to make up his mind to leave the spot. And, in addition, his work would be completed in just a few more moments. He waited till everything was ready. It was time to leave. A third canon ball, aimed better than the others, ploughed up the ground a few paces in front of him, covering him with sand. But the picture was magnificent!”²

The result of Szathmari's bravery and hard work was a photographic album that he produced and which revealed such vivid images of the war that it could not but be acclaimed as a valuable work by all those who saw it. His album, containing some two hundred images, became famous due to its presentation at the 1855 Paris World Exhibition and Szathmari was awarded the Second Class Medal for his work.

fig. 2 C. Szathmari, *Turkish cavalrymen*, 1854.
Salt print, 13.3 x 22 cm. Author's collection.

As described by Ernest Lacan, the album opens with portraits of Russian and Turkish commanders, General Prince Michail Dimitrievitch Gortschakoff, General Baron Dimitri Erofeevitch Osten-Sacken, Field Marshal Prince Ivan Feodorovitch Paskevitch, Commissioner Alexander Ivanovitch Budberg, General Pavel Eustatievitch Kotzebue, General Alexandr Nicolaevitch Lüders and two commanders who fell on the battlefield – Generals Selvan, killed at Silistra, and Soimonoff, killed at Inkerman. Following these portraits, there is one of Omer Pasha, the Turkish commander-in-chief, Iskender Bey (the Muslim name of the Polish Count Ilinski who volunteered in the Turkish army and distinguished himself in battle), young Tevfik Pasha killed at Balaklava, Dervish Pasha and two officers from the British and French allied armies, Colonels Simmons and Dieu. There are also various kinds of soldiers and local people, infantrymen and Cossacks from the Russian forces, Turkish bashibouzouks (irregular cavalrymen) and nizamyie (regular infantrymen), Austrian lancers, dragoons and infantrymen, a few gypsies and Romanian merchants and artisans.

The press praised this work which was presented to Napoleon III in a private audience. The French Photographic Society's publication *La Lumière* of 9 June 1855 enthusiastically reported:

"M. de Szathmari, the skilled photographer from Bucharest, whose arrival we already announced, had the honour to be received by the Emperor on Wednesday evening. His Majesty wanted to see all the pictures bound in his magnificent album; he was quite interested by the Russian and Turkish generals' portraits. As an eye-witness of so many events connected with the Oriental War, and being on close terms with most of those who distinguished themselves in that great fight, Mr. de Szathmari was able to give interesting details to His Majesty. While accepting his homage, the Emperor congratulated the author of this interesting collection."³

Szathmari was well-received by Queen Victoria at Osborne Castle on the Isle of Wight on 19 July 1855. The audience lasted a couple of hours because the Queen, Prince Albert and their guest, King Leopold of the Belgians, took a deep interest in those war photographs. *La Lumière*, the same French photographic magazine mentioned above, stated: "The portraits of British, French, Turkish and Russian generals interested them most. The Queen graciously congratulated Mr de Szathmari on his beautiful work and graciously accepting his homage, Her Majesty announced him that a gold medal was to be bestowed upon him as a token of appreciation."⁴

Along with the photographic album exhibited in Paris at the World Exhibition, and those offered to Napoleon III and Queen Victoria, other copies were given to the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I, Tsar Alexander II, the King of Württemberg and Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach who, in appreciation of his work, awarded the author various medals.⁵



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fig. 3 C. Szathmari, *The Oltenitza Quarantine*, 1854.
Salt print, 13,7 x 19,1 cm. Courtesy Library of the
Romanian Academy.

fig. 4 C. Szathmari, *Dâmbovitza*, n.d.
Albumen print, 18,5 x 24,5 cm. Courtesy
Library of the Romanian Academy.



Some of the photographs provided the inspiration for the coloured lithographs which Szathmari commissioned to be printed in Vienna in 1855. Two are preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy: Arabian Bashibouzouks and Bashibouzouk and Arnaout. The captions are in German: *Nach einer von Szathmari vor Oltenitza verfertigten und colorirten Photographie.*⁶

From that time on, photography, painting and lithography were always closely connected in Szathmari's career. He frequently used photography for lithographic prints. However, he was not the only one to do so. Marie-Alexandre Alophe (1812–1883), combined photography with lithography. The great Nadar (1820–1910) prepared his Panthéon by photographing those he portrayed in his successful cartoons. Enthusiastic crowds flocked in front of the shops' windows where his large lithograph, printed by Lemercier, was on display.⁷ Etienne Carjat (1828–1906), Nadar's close friend, followed this example of using photography as the starting point for his cartoons.

In 1860, Szathmari edited the first illustrated magazine in Bucharest, *Illustrațiunea. Jurnal Universal* (*The Illustration. Universal Journal*). Besides woodcuts brought directly from Paris, which were already used in *L'Illustration*, he also printed his own drawings. Lacking good engravers, he had to give up this enterprise after around a year. He also contributed written material to the Viennese periodical *Photographische Correspondenz* where his column was entitled "Photographie Parisienne".⁸

In 1863, Szathmari took the official portraits of the Ruling Prince Alexandru Ioan I. and of his wife, Princess Helene that were later lithographed in Paris by Lemercier. The same year he received the title of Ruling Prince's Court Painter and Photographer. He offered Princess Helene a tiny album with carte-de-visite pictures of folk types and Bucharest images, two of them birds-eye-views taken from the hills surrounding the city. Elegantly bound, the album has the following hand written title and dedication on the front page: *Souvenir de la Roumanie, dédié a son Altesse Sérénissime Hélène, Princesse Régnante de la Roumanie, par Charles Pap de Szathmari, Peintre et Photographe de la Cour de Son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince Régnant.*⁹

Szathmari had long been attracted by folk types and produced a large series of pictures with peasants, gypsies, postillions, merchants and artisans. He toured the fairs and the crowded streets of the town in search of picturesque types. Like a postillion, clad in his fully embroidered costume, posed proudly besides a fence in the artist's studio. He also brought in his studio two gypsy comedians with their bear which they made dance for the audience in public places or markets. Szathmari was his own set designer for this kind of staged pictures: logs, wooden fences, rocks, bushes, fir branches and even blocks of ice were brought inside in order to suggest an outdoor pose. Some of his pictures were used as models for lithographs which he drew himself on stone and printed in his own workshop.



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In 1860 and 1864 he was in the ruling prince's entourage when Alexandru Ioan I. paid his homage to the sultan in Constantinople. Szathmari made sketches at receptions and official meetings that were later published in illustrated magazines such as *Illustrațiunea*, *Jurnal Universal*,¹⁰ *L'Illustration*¹¹ and *Le Monde Illustré*.¹² The sultan awarded Szathmari the Medgidie Order for the works of art he presented.

After Alexandru Ioan's abdication, the new ruling prince, Carol I. of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, kept Szathmari in his service and appreciated his skill. The painter accompanied the young prince on his trips throughout the country and sketched all the important events he witnessed. Szathmari might have also acted as a guide seeing that he knew almost every spot of historic and cultural interest. He painted many landscapes for his new patron, but also continued to take pictures with his camera. Landscapes, churches, monasteries and peasants were his favourite subjects.

In 1869, Szathmari completed a large album of photographs called *România* containing landscapes and historic monuments he pictured beginning with 1867.¹³ The plates measured 29.5 x 35.8 cm. Another large album was the one in which he depicted the *Curtea de Argeș Metropolitan Church*. His albums were displayed – with great success – at both the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris and the 1873 Weltausstellung in Vienna. His pictures of peasants in traditional costumes, Romanian images and the large album dedicated to *Curtea de Argeș metropolitan church* received an honorary mention in Paris and were awarded a medal in Vienna.

Szathmari published a chromolithographic portfolio called *România. Albumul Înălțimei Sale Domnitorului CAROL I. Peisaje frumoase și costume grațioase ce avem în țară* (Romania. His Highness the Ruling Prince Carol I's Album. Beautiful landscapes and nice costumes from our country) in 1868.¹⁴ He based most of his sketches on his own photographs of folk types and the album was printed in his own workshop.

fig. 5 C. Szathmari and Andreas D. Reiser, *Actors' cart parading on the coronation ceremony*, 1881. Albumen print, 18.6 x 26 cm. Courtesy Library of the Romanian Academy.

fig. 5 C. Szathmari, *Actors' cart*, n.d. Chromolithograph, 30 x 50.6 cm. Courtesy Library of the Romanian Academy.



fig. 7 C. Szathmari, *Queen Elizabeth and royal guests going to pageant*, 1881. Chromolithograph, 30 x 50.6 cm. Courtesy Library of the Romanian Academy.

In 1870 Szathmari became a member of the Vienna Photographic Society.

At the outbreak of the 1877 Oriental War he followed his Prince onto the battlefield. He took pictures of his patron surrounded by his staff and foreign military attachés, the general headquarters, military camps, troops waiting to be reviewed, military hospitals, batteries and captured ships on the Danube. Another picture is showing a mass held on the field which was attended by the ruling prince Carol I. and his generals and aides-de-camp. A rough wooden structure covered with a white table cloth stands for an open air altar; there is a cross and a Bible between two candles on it. Four priests in full regalia are ready to perform the Greek orthodox service.

After the war, Szathmari's pictures were bound in the album *Souvenir din Resbelul 1877–78* (Souvenir of the War 1877–78). The album circulated either with leather or velvet covers. Each picture had a handwritten caption by the author.¹⁵ Although expensive, it was a much cherished album. Some of his photographs provided the inspiration for the large watercolours commissioned by the ruling prince for his private collection. Others were published in illustrated magazines such as *L'Illustration*, *The Illustrated London News*, *Illustrirte Zeitung* and *Resboiul*.¹⁶

- 1 Constantin Săvulescu, EFIAP, *Cronologia ilustrată a fotografiei din România, perioada 1834–1916*, București: Asociația Artiștilor Fotografi 1985, 14.
- 2 Ernest Lacan, *Esquisses photographiques. À propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient*, Paris 1856, 161–162.
- 3 La Lumière, 9 June 1855.
- 4 La Lumière, 29 July 1855.
- 5 The following authors wrote about Szathmari as a war photographer: C. Săvulescu, 'The First War Photographic Reportage', *Image*, no. 1, 1973, 13–16; C. Săvulescu, 'Carol Popp de Szathmari, primul fotoreporter de război?', *Magazin Istoric*, no. 12, December 1973; C. Săvulescu, 'Early Photography in Eastern Europe – Romania', *History of Photography. An International Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1977, 63–77; C. Săvulescu, 'The First War Correspondent – Carol Szathmari', *Interpressgrafik*, no. 1, 1978, 25–29; C. Săvulescu, 'Carol Szathmari, primul reporter fotograf de război', *Fotografia*, no. 190, July–August 1989, 2–3; C. Săvulescu, '140 de ani de la primul fotoreportaj de război', *Cotidianul*, no. 53 (791), 5–6 March 1994; Constantin Săvulescu, EFIAP, 1985 (note 1) 16–27; Pat Hodgson, *Early War Photographs*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing 1974, 14–15; Lawrence James, *Crimea 1854–1856. The war with Russia from contemporary photographs*, Oxford: Heyes Kennedy 1981, 9, 10, 15, 16; Petre Costinescu, Emanoil Bădescu, 'Imagini inedite din Războiul Crimeii', *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor – Muzeu*, no. 1, 1986; Karin Schuller-Procopovici, 'Ein Land aus dem Bilderbuch. Das Rumänienalbum des Carol Szathmari (1812–1887)' in: Bodo von Dewitz (ed.), *Silber und Salz. Zur Frühzeit der Photographie im deutschen Sprachraum 1839–1860*, exh. cat., Cologne and Heidelberg 1989, 452–453; Barbu Brezianu, 'Szathmari, primul fotograf de război', *Arta*, no. 3, 1992, 2–5; Kincses Károly, 'A Fotográfus' in: Kincses Károly (ed.), *Uralkodók festője, fényképésze: Szathmári Pap Károly*, exh. cat., Keskemet 2001, 75–85; Quentin Bajac, *L'image révélée. L'invention de la photographie*, Paris: Gallimard/Réunion des musées nationaux 2001, 77; Bahattin Öztuncay, 'Fotoğraflarla Belgelenen İlk Savaş / The First War Documented Through Photography' in: Bahattin Öztuncay, *Kırım Savaşı'nın 150nci Yılı / 150th Anniversary of the Crimean War*, exh. cat., Istanbul 2006, 38, 46;

In his official capacity Szathmari captured the ruling prince's likeness many times. One of the first portraits was made 1866, soon after the young Prince's arrival in Romania. The artist watercoloured the salt-paper print in order to turn it into a work ready to be framed. Unlike that one, the 1881 portrait was entirely painted even though it was inspired by a previously taken photograph.

In 1881, when Prince Carol I. became the first King of Romania, Szathmari, in partnership with another photographer, Andreas D. Reiser, took pictures at the coronation ceremonies. However, the inclement weather made it impossible for them to get good pictures. Consequently, Szathmari made drawings after the faded photographs and completed an imposing chromolithographic album. In figure 7, we can see Queen Elizabeth and her brother-in-law with his two sons going to a parade in the court carriage. That album was his last major work.

The Royal Court painter and photographer Carol Pop de Szathmari died in Bucharest on 3 June 1887.

Enterprising and industrious, a master of a multitude of artistic expressions, genres and techniques including miniatures, lithography, watercolour, portraits in oil and landscape painting, a passionate traveller with specific interests in ethnography and architectural themes, Szathmari understood the great advantages of photography in capturing evanescent moments faster and better than other artistic media. His legacy is one of enduring interest.

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 'Early Portrait and Genre Photography in Romania', *History of Photography*.

An International Quarterly, vol. 13, no. 4, October–December 1989, 285; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 'Fotografii de Carol Szathmari din Războiul Crimeii în colecții americane și britanice', *Muzeul Național*, vol. x, 1998, 71–82; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Cruce și semilună*, București: Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor 2001, 159–174.

- 6 Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 'Szathmari, War Photographer' in: Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (ed.), *Războiul Crimeii, 150 de ani de la încheiere*, Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei – Editura Istros 2006, 220.
- 7 Benoît Peeters, *Les Métamorphoses de Nadar*, Aubry-sur-Semois: Marot 1994, 27–32; Jean-François Bory (ed.), *Nadar. Dessins et écrits*, Paris: Bookking International 1994, 891–892; Claude Malécot, *Le monde de Victor Hugo vu par les Nadar*, Paris: Centre des monuments nationaux / Monum, Éditions du patrimoine 2003, 12–13, 31, 35, 64, 84–85.
- 8 C. v. Szathmari, 'Photographie Parisienne', *Photographische Correspondenz*, vol. 2, no. 7–8, January–December 1865, 1–10.
- 9 Theodor Enescu, 'Un album de fotografii al lui Carol Popp de Szathmari cu vederi din București', *Studii și Cercetări de Bibliologie* 1, 1955, 291–299.
- 10 *Ilustrațiunea. Jurnal Universal*, no. 9, 20 November 1860.
- 11 *L'Illustration*, no. 1118, 30 July 1864.
- 12 *Le Monde Illustré*, no. 380, 23 July 1864.
- 13 Karin Schuller-Procopovici, 1989 (note 5) 455–457.
- 14 Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Artă și document. Arta documentaristă în România secolului al XIX-lea*, București: Editura Meridiane 1990, 205–206.
- 15 Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Penel și sabie. Artiști documentariști și corespondenți de front în Războiul de Independență (1877–1878)*, București: Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor 2002, 124–126.
- 16 Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 2002 (note 15) 118–122.

Luke Gartlan

7 Wilhelm Willmann An Austrian Photographer in Nineteenth-Century Japan 1866–1874

Among scholars of nineteenth-century photography in Japan, Wilhelm Willmann usually receives passing mention as an early studio assistant of the Austrian photographer Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz (1839–1911). While research over recent decades has outlined the activities of three major Austrian photographers active in the early years of the Meiji period (1868–1912) – namely Wilhelm Burger, Michael Moser and von Stillfried – several of their lesser-known compatriots have yet to receive adequate attention.¹ Wilhelm Willmann is a salutary case study of a behind-the-scenes operator essential to the rise of the studio that bore his partner's name.² Although the Austrian aristocrat Josef von Doblhoff referred to him as a compatriot, Willmann is curiously absent from the standard national biographical sources.³ This article therefore aims to outline the current, admittedly fragmentary state of research on his career in an effort to promote his historical recuperation. While such fundamental details as his place of birth and death, indeed his entire career outside of Japan, remain undocumented, this outline will hopefully promote recognition of his significance and the incremental advances that characterise so much photographic research.

Willmann's early years in Yokohama appear typical of the business pursuits of many expatriate residents of the mercantile port. He first appears in Yokohama entering into partnership with the general merchants Ladage, Oelke & Company on September 1, 1866.⁴ Shortly thereafter, he bought out the firm with an associate to form the merchant store of Rothmund, Willmann & Company.⁵ An advertisement of the firm, bearing engraved adjacent portraits of the two business partners, survives in the Yokohama Archives of History (*Yokohama kaikō shiryōkan*).⁶ According to passenger shipping records, Willmann travelled to Shanghai and Hyogo respectively in March and September 1868.⁷ He continued his travels to Guam in search

fig. 1 Baron Raimund von Stillfried (Studio of Willmann & Company), *Hohe Würdenträger Japan* (High Dignitaries, Japan), March–April 1874. Hand tinted albumen print from collodion glass negative, 23.6 x 18.5 cm. Doblhoff Collection, Rollett Museum, Baden, Austria.



of an errant chartered vessel sent to sell goods in the Marianas Islands.⁸ Such records testify to the firm's expanded business in the Pacific Ocean. By March 1, 1870, the establishment of Willmann & Company, located at the prominent business address of No. 61, Main Street, Yokohama, signalled the proprietor's success as an independent businessman.⁹ As a general storekeeper and commission agent, specialising in the importation of wines and liquors, the manager prospered supplying the foreign community with various home requisites and luxuries.

In the summer of 1871, Baron Raimund von Stillfried established his studio in the premises of his new associate Wilhelm Willmann.¹⁰ Far from a mere assistant, the latter appears to have been the key financial supporter in the formation of the new studio. Willmann not only had the ideal address for the new venture, but also the business experience and financial clout necessary to launch a photographic studio. As scholars have long recognised, photographic studios were expensive schemes that required considerable financial backing. Their success relied no less on financial support and sound management than the skills of the photographer. Despite his aristocratic background, von Stillfried had little financial capital of his own.¹¹ He had all but alienated his family after abandoning a promising military career to pursue his wanderlust. His commitment to the ill-fated cause of Emperor Maximilian in Mexico had perhaps helped mend bridges with his father, but had hardly provided much financial recompense. In the immediate years before the establishment of the studio, he had been employed as a secretary for the North German Legation in Tokyo. This was a respectable position but certainly did not provide the necessary income for the new venture. Without the financial support of his business partner, von Stillfried would not have been able to launch the new studio in Yokohama.

Had von Stillfried not gained such support it is conceivable that the funds would eventually have been found elsewhere, however the timing of the studio's establishment was crucial to its ultimate success. The early 1870s witnessed the rapid transformation in the economy of Yokohama, instigated by the advent of an international tourist industry. With the completion of international rail and steamship networks and the relative political stability of the new government, foreign tourists arrived in search of the authentic cultural experience of Japan. Stillfried & Company was well positioned to cater for this lucrative new class of travellers. Willmann's decision to finance the new studio acknowledged this rapidly changing business environment. To finance an inexperienced, unproven compatriot in an already competitive marketplace was risky, but the financial incentives appeared to outweigh the perils.

In the studio's first years von Stillfried produced some of the finest photographic portfolios of nineteenth-century Japan. However, the managerial enterprise of his business partner was also crucial to the studio's prosperity. On September 16, 1872, Willmann addressed a letter to Zusho Hirotake, head of the Tokyo branch of the Hokkaidō Colonisation Office (*Kaitakushi*). The letter outlined the terms of contract under which the firm's photographer would travel to the northern frontier island of Hokkaidō and document the recent works of the department.¹² Willmann's correspondence with the government official suggests his central role in negotiating

the commission, especially given his business partner's compromised position in government circles after his involvement in a serious diplomatic scandal earlier in the year.¹³ Von Stillfried's subsequent portfolio of the region and its indigenous inhabitants were exhibited as part of the official Japanese section at the Vienna World Exhibition. This event was an indispensable opportunity for the photographer to acquaint his audience at home with his work.

During von Stillfried's thirteen-month absence overseas to attend the Vienna exhibition, the studio reverted to his business partner's management.¹⁴ However, Willmann proved to be no mere caretaker awaiting the master's return. His tenure in charge witnessed the instigation of two key innovations in the studio's operations. Firstly, the studio opened a subscription library consisting of four thousand volumes in German, English, French and Dutch. Announced in a local newspaper on May 1, 1873, the so-called Yokohama Library made available otherwise difficult to obtain texts to both foreign and indigenous readers for a small fee.¹⁵ Secondly, Willmann advertised the sale of photographic equipment in the Japanese-language press, actively seeking to supply the latest imported goods to indigenous practitioners and thus promote the profession among the Japanese. Although Stillfried & Company had advertised on previous occasions in the Japanese press, these notices offered an extensive range of goods for sale, including portable darkrooms (*shashinbako*), cameras (*shashinkyô*), first-rate collodion (*gokujô korurodiyôn*), silver nitrate (*nitorikku gin*), gold chloride (*kuroroido kin*) and albumen paper (*ranekigami*).¹⁶ In a period of tremendous growth in the Japanese photographic industry, this advertisement emphasises the studio's role as a key supplier of imported materials to the local market.

Although von Stillfried probably encouraged these initiatives, his prolonged absence and the failure of his overseas venture severely weakened his business position. Vienna had proven a financial disaster. A seven-room teahouse, shipped at his expense, had been likened to a brothel in the Viennese press, resulting in its rejection from the official exhibition grounds. The teahouse was caste out into a less salubrious corner of the Prater, resulting in its failure to realise the envisaged clientele.¹⁷ The proprietor returned to Yokohama all but bankrupt to face a new business reality. One valuable indication of the altered nature of the firm's "partnership" can be discerned in the travel diary of the Austrian globetrotter Josef von Doblhoff (1844–1928). En route around the world, Doblhoff arrived in Yokohama only a few weeks after von Stillfried's return from Vienna:

We also visited Baron Stillfried, photographer and business partner of the firm "Willmann" (also an Austrian)... [Stillfried's] associate has already experienced much misfortune and presents himself with the most mistrusting eyes; he carries the expression of great weariness written on his face, which I had never before seen on a man.

[Auch Baron Stillfried, Photograph als Compagnon der Firma „Willmann“ (auch eines Oesterreichers) ... besuchten wir... sein Genosse hat schon viel Unglück erlebt und hat sich in Folge dessen die misstrauischsten Augen angeschafft; er trägt den Ausdruck grösster Uebersättigung auf das Gesicht geschrieben, wie ich es bisher noch niemals bei einem Manne gesehen hatte.]¹⁸

Aside from the intriguing personal descriptions, Doblhoff suggests that von Stillfried remained a colleague of a studio renamed in honour of his business partner. His distinction between the photographer and studio proprietor is further evoked in his archive of photographs collected during his travels. In a few cases such as *Hohe Würdenträger Japan* (high dignitaries, Japan), Doblhoff scribbled in his hand on the mount “Stillfried phot. (Yokohama Willmann & Co)” (fig. 1). Such notation identifies the photographer as the employee of the studio Willmann & Co. The photograph of two dignitaries is therefore a work of von Stillfried, but one produced under the auspices of Willmann & Company.

Further evidence of the new company’s activities can be found in several rare *cartes-de-visite* printed with the studio name and address on the verso side. In general, these cartes divide into two groups. Several extant cartes, such as the fine portrait of a fashionable young woman, catered to the foreign market of local residents and itinerant visitors to Yokohama (fig. 2). As the everyday business of the studio, such commissions had to be undertaken regardless of the principal photographer’s absence in Vienna. Willmann may well have been responsible therefore for many of these portraits. In addition, the studio also produced a number of Japanese genre scenes in the established tradition of *Yokohama shashin* (fig. 3 and 4). Hand tinted by skilled colourists of the studio, these photographs were typical of the industry’s carefully arranged depictions of traditional subjects. They included both indoor and outdoor group scenes of figures often portrayed in some activity or profession. In the arrangement of the subjects before the camera, their physical relation to one another in space, and the use of certain props and settings, these cartes are strongly reminiscent of von Stillfried’s photographic practice. The *kakemono* or hanging scroll painting on the back wall of figure 3, for example, often appears in his large format studio work. Given Doblhoff’s distinction between photographer and proprietor, the actual photographer responsible for such cartes cannot be conclusively determined.

fig. 2 Willmann & Co., *Untitled [Portrait of a Foreign Woman]*. Carte de visite, recto and verso, 1873–74. Christian Polak Collection, Tokyo.

fig. 3 Willmann & Co., *Untitled [Interior of Five Women]*. Carte de visite, 1873–74. Royal Anthropological Institute Photographic Collection, London.

fig. 4 Willmann & Co., *Untitled [Jinrikisha Scene]*. Carte de visite, 1873–74. Royal Anthropological Institute Photographic Collection, London.



Yet Willmann’s business activities extended beyond the market for souvenir photographs. His practices demonstrate that foreign-run studios in Yokohama did not merely produce nostalgic tourist images for export, but were actively engaged in the political and cultural transformations of Japanese society. On June 2, 1874, Willmann sent an invoice to the Finance Department of the Hokkaidō Colonization Office in Tokyo (fig. 5). He requested the payment of fifty-two dollars for work undertaken at the instigation of E.S. Boynton, an American lithographer and printer of Shinagawa, Tokyo, for the photographic duplication of charts. While this document testifies to the studio’s ongoing commercial activities for the Japanese government, the attached invoice also provides an invaluable summary of the studio’s diverse specialisations (fig. 6). These include not only an impressive



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fig. 5 Wilhelm Willmann to the Finance Department of the Hokkaidō Colonization Office, Tokyo Branch, 2 June 1874. Kaitakushi gaikokujin kankei shokan, letter 4157, Northern Studies Collection, Hokkaidō University, Sapporo.

fig. 6 Willmann & Company Invoice to the Finance Department of the Hokkaidō Colonization Office, Tokyo Branch, 1 June 1874. Kaitakushi gaikokujin kankei shokan, letter 4157, Northern Studies Collection, Hokkaidō University, Sapporo.

assortment of photographic skills and imported equipment for sale, but also a claim to offer “photography at night by artificial light.” The advertisement testifies to the cutting edge status of the studio. Since the Austrian photographer Michael Moser is known to have received lessons on night view photography from the Venetian photographer Carlo Naya, this advertisement implies that he may have offered the speciality as a casual employee of the studio.¹⁹ Willmann & Company was the first studio to offer the speciality in Japan.

In further correspondence, Boynton wrote to the secretary of the Hokkaidō Colonization Office in Tokyo, Noguchi Gennosuke, regarding payment to the studio in Yokohama:

Sinagawa [Shinagawa], June 19th 1874.

G Noguchi, Esq.

Dear Sir,
In reply to your note regarding the charts at Messrs Willmann & Co. Photographers, Yokohama, I would say, I am at present intending to go to Yokohama tomorrow and will show them (Messrs Willmann & Co.) your note.
I have no doubt that they will readily return the charts as soon as their bill is arranged for settlement.
Yours truly,
E S Boynton²⁰

Apparently the photographic studio had refused to return the department’s precious charts until payment had been settled. Boynton’s intervention on behalf of the department typifies the mediatory role of many foreign employees of the Japanese government. The Hokkaidō Colonisation Office employed numerous foreign experts and companies in an effort to “modernize” the northern island of Japan. The use of foreign photographers and lithographers

to reproduce cartographic surveys of the region exemplifies the drive to geographical knowledge that would facilitate its integration into the collective consciousness of the modern state of Japan. The increasing government use of such introduced reprographic technologies prompted the establishment of an official printing bureau (*Ôkurashô shiheikyoku*).

Willmann, however, would never receive payment for his work. On June 16, 1874, three consecutive notices appeared in the Japan Gazette announcing his departure from the studio:

NOTICE

The undersigned has, from this date,
transferred his business to the
JAPAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATION.
All debts owing by, or due to, the firm of W.
Willmann will be paid and received by the
Manager of the above-named Association.
W. WILLMANN.

NOTICE.

With Reference to the above,
the JAPAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATION
beg to inform the Community that they have
purchased the business of W. WILLMANN.
BARON R. STILLFRIED will act as Manager.

NOTICE.

The undersigned respectfully beg to invite
the attention of Residents and
Travellers to the East to their immense
assortment of views and
COSTUMES OF THIS COUNTRY
And particularly to their Novel
Mammoth-Sized Landscapes
to which was awarded the
First Prize at the Vienna Exhibition, 1873.
JAPAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATION
No. 59, Main Street.
Baron R. Stillfried.
Manager.
Yokohama, June 16th, 1874.²¹

These notices furnish conclusive evidence that von Stillfried's grandly styled Japan Photographic Association was the direct successor of the studio of Willmann & Company. The latter was not a minor satellite atelier formed in the shadow of von Stillfried's enterprise. However short lived its operation, Willmann & Company was the successor of Stillfried & Company and the forebear of the Japan Photographic Association, accounting for the common address of all three studios. These shifts in name reflect the changing business fortunes of the studios' principal two protagonists. By announcing his recent prize in Vienna, von Stillfried

emphasises the future prospects for the Japan Photographic Association. Yet the most telling statement was not the proclamation of international credentials as his repeated self-designation as studio *manager*. The notice thus publicised von Stillfried's final attainment of an elusive combination of artistic and financial control of the studio. Perhaps due to the 'great weariness' described by Doblhoff, Willmann had finally ceded to the ambitions of his business partner. Four days later on June 20, 1874, he finally departed Yokohama aboard a steamer en route for San Francisco.²² His subsequent whereabouts and activities remain unclear, but he appears never to have returned to Japan.

- 1 I would like to thank Sebastian Dobson, Takahashi Norihide, and Hans Schreiber for their various contributions in the preparation of this essay. Unless otherwise indicated all translations are those of the author. Japanese names are given in the traditional order of family name first.
On Austrian photographers in nineteenth-century Japan, see Gert Rosenberg: *Wilhelm Burger: Ein Welt- und Forschungsreisender mit der Kamera 1844–1920*, Vienna, Christian Brandstätter, 1984; and Luke Gartlan, 'A Chronology of Baron Raimund von Stillfried (1839–1911)', in John Clark: *Japanese Exchanges in Art, 1850s to 1930s*, Sydney: Power Publications 2001, 121–188.
- 2 Although named William Willmann in a Yokohama business directory, I refer throughout this paper to his presumed birth name of Wilhelm Willmann. *The "Japan Gazette" Hong List and Directory for 1872*, Yokohama, Japan Gazette, 1872, 23. German-speaking merchants often anglicised their names in nineteenth-century Japan.
- 3 For example, he is mentioned neither in Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich*, Vienna: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei 1856–1891, nor Timm Starl's *Lexikon zur Fotografie in Österreich 1839 bis 1945*, Vienna: Albumverlag 2005.
- 4 *The Daily Japan Herald* 2, no. 902 (1 October 1866), 1846.
- 5 *The Daily Japan Herald* 2, no. 980 (1 January 1867), 2158, cited in Terry Bennett: *Photography in Japan, 1853–1912*, Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing 2006, 158.
- 6 For a reproduction, see Yokohama kaikō shiryōkan (ed.): *Yokohama mono no hajimeshi* (History of the Origins of Yokohama Things), Yokohama: Yokohama kaikō shiryōkan 1988 [2003], 143.
- 7 'W. Willmann' departed Shanghai aboard the *Cadiz* on March 29 and arrived at Yokohama on April 2, 1868. *North China Herald* II, no. 50 (1 April 1868), 156; *The Japan Times' Overland Mail* V, no. 63 (9 April 1868), 98. He departed Yokohama en route for Hiogo on September 13, 1868. *The Japan Times' Overland Mail* V, no. 75 (19 September 1868), 240.
- 8 *Japan Weekly Mail* II, no. 5 (4 February 1871), 62.
- 9 *Japan Herald Directory and Hong List, for Yokohama*, Yokohama, Japan Herald, 1 March 1870, advertisement section.

Willmann has recently been characterised as an “amateur enthusiast,”²³ but the evidence presented here argues for a fundamental reconsideration of his career in Japan. Whatever his abilities as a photographer, he was much more than a mere assistant to his famous associate. At first financier and manager, he expanded the business operations of the studio, offering imported materials and equipment to the Japanese market and fulfilling contracts with the Meiji government. In these respects he was crucial to the commercial success of his associated studios and their broader significance in the dissemination of photography in Japan. His career therefore adds another name to an influential list of Austrian photographers active in nineteenth-century Japan.

- 10 *The Chronicle & Directory for China, Japan, the Philippines, & c., Hongkong*, ‘Daily Press’ Office, 1872, and *The “Japan Gazette” Hong List and Directory for 1872*, Yokohama, Japan Gazette, January 1872, 23.
- 11 For the subsequent biographical details, see Gartlan, 2001 (note 1) 124–130.
- 12 Hokkaidō kōbunroku, hakusho, registration no. 647, subject no. 77, Hokkaidō Prefectural Archives (Hokkaidō-ritsu monjokan), Sapporo, cited in Shibuya Shirō, *Hokkaidō shashinshi* (History of Hokkaidō Photography), Tokyo; Heibonsha 1983, 147–151.
- 13 On this affair, see Gartlan, 2001 (note 1) 130–134.
- 14 ‘Baron Stillfried’ embarked from Yokohama on January 14, 1873, and returned thirteen months later on February 13, 1874. *Hong Kong Daily Press*, no. 4742 (22 January 1873), 1; and *The Japan Weekly Mail* 5, no. 7 (14 February 1874), 134.
- 15 *The Japan Weekly Mail* IV, no. 18 (3 May 1873), 299.
- 16 *Yokohama mainichi shinbun*, no. 909 (9 December 1873), 4, cited in Kamei Takeshi: *Nihon shashinshi no ochibo hiroi* (Gleanings from the History of Japanese Photography), Tokyo: Nihon shashin kyōkai 1991, 171–172.
- 17 ‘Das japanische Theehaus im Vauxhallgarten des Praters’, *Illustrierte Zeitung* (Leipzig), no. 1581 (18 October 1873), 287–290.
- 18 J[osef] D[oblhoff]: *Tagebuchblätter von einer Reise nach Ostasien*, 1873–1874, vol. 3, Vienna: Wilhelm Köhler 1875, 60–61.
- 19 Gert Rosenberg, ‘Die steirische Heimat war doch stärker. Der Fotograf Michael Moser, 1853–1912’, *Camera Austria*, no. 17 (1985), 34.
- 20 E.S. Boynton to Noguchi Gennosuke, letter no. 0605, Kaitakushi gaikokujin kankei shokan, Northern Studies Collection, Hokkaidō University, Sapporo.
- 21 *The Japan Gazette*, no. 1961 (16 June 1874), 2.
- 22 *The Japan Gazette*, no. 1965 (20 June 1874), 2.
- 23 Bennett, 2006 (note 5) 158.

Carmen Pérez González



Hand Coloured Photography in the 19th Century in Asia: Japan, India and Iran

In this paper, the author analyzes how three different pictorial traditions influenced nineteenth century hand-coloured photography in their respective countries: Japanese *ukiyo-e*, Indian miniature painting, and Qajar portraiture in Iran.

Shortly after Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre announced the development of the daguerreotype in 1839, the public clamoured for the possibility of capturing the natural colours of the real world and disappointment set in as a result of lack of lifelike colour images. While people were waiting for the discovery of natural colour photography, an alternative was established in the form of the use of pigments on hand-coloured photographs. Only three years after Daguerre's announcement, the first American patent for hand-colouring daguerreotypes was granted to Benjamin R. Stevens and Lemuel Morse¹ and a second American patent for colouring daguerreotypes was granted later that same year.² A special method for hand-colouring was developed for each photographic medium. Photographs were coloured in one of three ways: hand tinting, hand colouring or over-painting. Tinted photographs are made with dyed printing papers in which a single colour underlines the image and is more pronounced in the highlights and mid-tones. From the 1870s, albumen printing papers were available in pale pink and blue and gelatine-silver printing-out papers in pale mauve or pink became available from the 1890s. Hand colouring refers to a lightly painted image that is still distinguishable as a photograph and was normally made using watercolours which were more permanent than dyes; however, they were less transparent and, therefore, more likely to obscure details. Over-painting refers to an image that has been heavily painted and whose photographic origins may have been completely obscured.³ Over-painted images mainly served as modern portraiture or as a way for an artist to pawn off an image as a freehand work of art, and often involved altering undesirable aspects of the original photograph. The cost of a painted photograph depended largely on the amount of paint applied to the print.⁴ Having a hand-coloured photographic portrait became a status symbol, although most lower class people could only afford a rosy tint on the cheeks and gold paint on the jewelry.⁵

fig. 1 Kusakabe Kimbei, *Three Samurai*, c.1890.
Hand-colored albumen print.
Ludwig Museum, Cologne.



Colour was not always a simple or realistic addition to a photograph. Sometimes the photograph would be wash-painted to achieve a symbolic quality. This is especially true in the case of Indian domestic hand-painted photography, as we shall see later in some examples in this article. The American curator and art critic Peter Galasi states that photography in the West echoed the proto-photographic syntax of earlier European painting⁶ and the same is valid for non-European countries, including the three particular countries that this paper is concerned with.

Hand-coloured photography in Japan

Photography arrived in Japan before the great wave of Westernization that marked the Meiji period (1868–1912). As happened in India and Iran, the Japanese adopted the photographic process after an initial period of hesitation and moulded the aesthetics of photography to their own pictorial traditions. Though the hand-colouring of photographs was introduced in Europe, it was never as popular as in Japan, where the practice became a respected and refined art form during the 1860s. Who initiated the painting of photographs in Japan is unknown, although most photo and art historians, including Stanley B. Burns and Claudia Delank, state that the first to consistently employ hand-colouring in the country may well have been Felice Beato (1825–1904). But there is no doubt that it was Beato who recognized the commercial potential of painted images and became its leading proponent. In his studio, the refined skills of Japanese watercolourists and woodblock printmakers were successfully applied to European photography; this became a widespread practice in the studios of Japanese photographers. The painted photographs of these commercial photographers imitated *ukiyo-e* artworks. The art historian Claudia Delank points out that the Yokohama photographs⁷ were not only a continuation of the commercial print medium of the *ukiyo-e*, but also of the special form of colour woodblock prints, the *surinomo*, which were largely commissioned for private use by poets' circles and were printed with great care and elaboration.⁸ The term *ukiyo-e*, or “pictures of the floating world”, refers to a style of genre painting and woodblock printing that appeared in Japan in the seventeenth century and was practiced until the nineteenth century; more precisely, throughout the Edo Era (1603–1868). As the Japanese art historian Tadashi Kobayashi states: originally associated with a Buddhist world view and alluding to the ephemerality of man's existence, the phrase “floating world” subsequently came to suggest a hedonistic preoccupation with the present moment, with the latest fashions, pursuits and lifestyle of urban culture, and implied a certain chicness.⁹

In the words of the photo historian and collector Stanley B. Burns, the *ukiyo-e* and the painted photographs offered tourists and foreign residents a realistic compendium of Japanese life.¹⁰ The three most recurrent and important themes of the *ukiyo-e* painting tradition are beautiful women (*bijin*) and their world in the tea house and at home, the samurais and landscapes.



2



3

A wonderful woodblock print that depicts a female prostitute in a summer kimono is a fine example of a typical *ukiyo-e* (fig. 2). It was painted by Kitagawa Utamaro (c.1754–1806). The *ukiyo-e* images of the women of the pleasure quarters were perhaps the most popular of these Japanese artworks. As Burns states, by the first decade of the twentieth century in the West, the painted photograph would come to represent Japan, as these woodblocks previously had done.¹¹ Photographers hired artists to paint the images and they not only adopted the aesthetics of the *ukiyo-e*, but also the themes depicted in them. In photography, portraits of geisha were popular among the Japanese as well as foreigners. However, as photo historian Margarita Winkel states, while foreigners apparently wanted images of anonymous “Japanese women” as idealized in Western imagination, the Japanese seem to have been interested in the portrayals of specific women they admired and, in this respect, *bijin* photos were entirely in line with the woodblock print tradition. She states further that the photographic trend of depicting *bijin* is linked to the revival of the genre in woodblock prints by artists such as Toyohara Chikanobu, Ogata Gekko (1859–1920) and Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847–1915) in the late nineteenth century. The style of portraiture is virtually identical in composition and atmosphere.¹² As Delank states, the hand-colouring of photographs required a great deal of intensive work and was achieved with perfection. A good hand-colourist could only finish 3 photographs in a 12 hour working day.¹³

fig. 2 Kitagawa Utamaro, *Kashi* (refers to the canals in Yoshiwara), 1795. Ukiyo-e, 37.3 x 25.5 cm. Collection Otto Riese, Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne.

fig. 3 Anonymous, *Sleeping Women at Home*, 1890. Hand-colored albumen print, 26.5 x 20.3 cm. Ludwig Museum, Cologne.

In *Japanese Sleeping Women* (fig. 3), two Japanese women are depicted in a staged scene with an elaborate arrangement of every detail from furniture to clothing. Both women are shown wearing traditional kimonos and their heads are resting on a traditional Japanese wood object, all of them iconographical elements borrowed from *ukiyo-e* paintings. Kusakabe Kimbei (1841–1934) was a well-known and very interesting Japanese photographer who became a real master of this technique. Kimbei worked with Western photographers and understood their techniques but developed his own personal style. He was Beato's assistant and colourist and then became independent and ran his own studio. His models' poses were more at ease than those in his contemporaries' photos. *Three Samurai* (fig. 1) is an interesting and magnetic image taken by this photographer that clearly resembles the aesthetic and iconography of the *ukiyo-e* of samurais. There are, to be sure, also some particularly unique examples that come from the artistic soul of the photographer, such as the collage by the Japanese photographer Tamamura K. in which 87 faces of babies have been placed together and then individually hand-coloured resulting in a very interesting and unusual image. And all the babies' faces have been placed in a very small photograph, exactly 134 x 91 mm. To produce this kind of collage the photographer would assemble a selection of individual likenesses on a single print; this technique became popular in the 1890s. As American photo historian Naomi Rosenblum points out, they were produced by pasting together and re-photographing heads and portions of the torso from individual carte portraits. These composites paid scant attention to the congruencies of size and lighting and the representation of real-looking space.¹⁴ The fact that the previous image has been meticulously hand-painted makes it even more interesting. Nevertheless, this image is quite an exception and the majority of hand-coloured photographs were all very uniform in style, iconography and composition.

Hand-coloured photography in India

A less known, but extremely interesting and unique, world is the one of hand-coloured photographs produced by Indian photographers and painters. The art-historian and critic Judith Mara Gutman was the first scholar to make a visual analysis of 19th century Indian hand-coloured photographs. As she states in her controversial book, *Through Indian Eyes. 19th and Early 20th Century Photography from India*,¹⁵ a new generation of Indian artists, living from the 1880s into the early decades of the twentieth century, introduced a new aesthetic, inherited from the canons of Indian miniatures, into the painted photographs. Hands, face and feet, all occupying specific places in the canons of beauty established over the ages, were left photographic, while the adornments, like jewellery, carpets, chairs, clothes and backgrounds were richly painted with colour to fill in the space. Colour and space were used differently in the painted photographs than they had been in the paintings, although their use was built on traditional approaches.¹⁶

When faced with 19th century hand-coloured Indian photographs, we realize that they present elements inherited from the Indian miniature painting tradition, such as the understanding of space (flatness, two-dimensionality) and the use of colours. The case of India is especially interesting for this paper since the hand-painted photograph assumes regional manifestations and different pictorial styles can be observed, such as in the Nathdwara School of painting in Rajasthan.¹⁷ Painted photography is especially present in Rajasthan and this is probably the state where one can find the most examples. Painted photography reached the peak of its development in Northern India and was most common in Rajasthan (Nathdwara, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur), Maharashtra and Gujarat. It is, by contrast, interesting to compare Japanese hand-coloured photographs with their realistic approach, the use of soft colours and uniformity in style with Indian hand-coloured photographs and their idealist approach, the use of bright colours and the richness and variety of their presentation.

India is a country of colours. Colour being such an important part of Indian culture, it is easy to understand the presence of bright colours in 19th century Indian photography and for Indians, as Judith Mara Gutman states, photographs, in their “pure” form, were never as important as the “picture” that finally resulted. Actually, it may have been difficult for Indian people to accept the black-and-white world of 19th century photography. Indians definitely do feel a certain horror towards a lack of colours in daily life and artistic creation. The colour white represents tranquillity and purity in India. In contrast, black is not a happy colour, and Indians do not like it; black is about evil and death. Indians did not accept black-and-white images easily and painted them over with life-like colours to make them more enjoyable and acceptable to their artistic taste. A skilled watercolour artist, coming right out of the traditions which produced Indian miniature paintings, was hired to paint those unattractive black-and-white photographs. The combination of opaque watercolours with a photographic likeness creates, in the words of Mara Gutman, an explosive and glorious new range of tones, shaping a kind of imagery unknown in India prior to this period.¹⁸ In his extremely interesting book *Camera Indica*, the scholar Christopher Pinney makes a deeper and more balanced analysis of this kind of image and states that the question in this matter is one of degree: European photographers also used paint, both to retouch negatives and to enhance colour on the final print. However, he continues, numerous Indian examples dating from the 1860s deploy paint as much more than a supplement to the photographic image; rather, the overlay of paint completely replaces the photographic image in such a way that all, or most, of it is “obscured”. Some painted photographs also reflect the interpolation of this new technology into long-established painters’ workshops.¹⁹

The *Alkazi Collection* in New Delhi is probably the best collection of this kind of hand-coloured Indian photographs in the world. The owner of the collection, the renowned Indian theatre director Ebrahim Alkazi, has been collecting these images for the last forty years and



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fig. 4 Unknown photographer, painter: Ghasiram Hardev Sharma (1868–1930), *Tilakayat Govardhanlalji* (1862–1934), *Head Priest of the Srinathaji Temple*, Nathdwara, 1890s–1900s. Gelatin silver print and watercolor. Alkazi Collection of Photography.

fig. 5 Abdullah Qajar, *Naser od-Din Shah*. Lithography hand-over-painted. Palace Golestan, Tehran, Iran.

the whole collection of Indian and South-Asian photographs contains more than 80,000 pieces of which some hundreds are Indian hand-coloured photographs. The photographs selected for this section have all been chosen from this collection.²⁰ There is something especially fascinating about “anonymity” and, in the case of Indian hand-coloured photographs, this is especially true since most of the painted photographs have no attribution to the artist and/or photographer. As Gutman states, this is partially due to the fact that many artists’ hands worked on a painted photograph. But the more likely reason is that many painted photographs were completed after a person died or even twenty years after the photograph had been made. The Indian art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy, for instance, tell us that ancestral portraits in Indian life were made after a person died, from memory, and as a means of classifying the person’s character and behavior.²¹ In the words of the American photo-historian Geoffrey Batchen, not much is known about the function of these painted photographs, whether they were meant for the pages of an album, for a frame on a wall, or for private or public space. He also states that this form of portrait would seem to be an affectation adopted by the Indian ruling classes (similar pictures of Europeans living in India are unknown), and they usually, but not exclusively, feature men. The emphasis on the depiction of dress suggests that these photographs were, at least partly, a statement of wealth and social status, much like European portraits.²²

Tilakayat Govardhanlalji, High Priest of Nathdwara (Rajasthan) (fig. 4), is a gelatine silver print hand painted with watercolour in which all the aesthetic elements of the Nathdwara Rajasthani painting style are present: bold drawing, the use of strong and vibrating colours such as light pink, saffron, blue and gold, the vertical plane of the carpet in order to achieve two-dimensionality and flatness, and the tray with the tea set in low plane of the foreground. The hand of the person depicted is concealed in a gaumukhis, a rosary bag, which holds his prayer beads. Interestingly, this author has seen this same photograph painted in three different styles. The gathered curtain beside the seated figure is a convention of European portrait photography and is very often present in this kind of photograph, giving them a hybrid feeling. The photographer is unknown but the painter is Ghasiram Hardev Sharma (1868–1930), the main figure of the Nathdwara School of painting. Note that the backdrop of the photograph is painted in black as in the painting, something not usual in Indian hand-coloured photography.²³

Hand-coloured photography in Iran

Unfortunately, when dealing with Iran, I have not been able to find many examples of the kind of hand-coloured photography that is directly linked with the Qajar painting tradition (fig. 5). In contrast, I have found many in the line of European hand-coloured post-cards, but those are not relevant to the subject of this paper. The first Western photographer to use the hand-colouring technique in Iran was the Italian Luigi Montabone (d.1877).²⁴ Its use created a school of typical hand-coloured post-cards not especially remarkable for us since they were in the typical Western style.²⁵



During a conversation with the Iranian photographer and researcher Rana Javadi,²⁶ she pointed out that, already in the 19th century, the watercolour and oil hand-painting technique was used in Iran. She stated further that, as in other countries in Asia, the photograph was painted by skilled artists who had become specialists in these techniques, and she mentioned that two of them – Mr Masoudi and Mr Mashahadi (their first names are unknown) – were still remembered by old photographers in Teheran. At the moment of writing this paper, the author is still engaged in research that may bring forth new images and information on this topic.

Conclusion

The different pictorial traditions had an influence on the hand-coloured photographs in the 19th century in several Asian countries. Japanese hand-coloured images were meant to be enjoyed mainly by European customers and their aesthetics and subjects were very uniform. At

- 1 H.K. & B.A. Henisch, *The Painted Photograph 1839–1914. Origins, Techniques and Aspirations*. PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press 1996, 10.
- 2 F. & M. Rinhart, *The American Tintype*, Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1981, 18.
- 3 Klaus B. Hendricks, *Fundamentals of Photograph Conservation: A Study Guide*, Toronto: Lugus Publications, 1991.
- 4 S.B. Burns, *Forgotten Marriage: The Painted Tintype & The Decorative Frame, 1860–1910: A Lost Chapter in American Portraiture*, Burns Collection Ltd. 1995, 12.
- 5 For further information on this topic see, for example: Burns, 1995 (note 4); Henisch, 1996 (note 1).
- 6 Peter Galassi, *Before Photography. Painting and the Invention of Photography*, exh. cat., New York: MOMA 1981, 8.
- 7 Felice Beato opened his studio in Yokohama. Several photographers followed him and opened studios in this city and Yokohama became the main centre for production of the hand-colored commercial Japanese photographs and they took the name of the city.
- 8 Claudia Delank, *The Adventure of Japanese Photography, 1860–1890*, Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag 2002, 20.
- 9 Tadashi Kobayashi, *Ukiyo-e. An Introduction to Japanese Woodblock Prints*, Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International 1992, 65.
- 10 S.B. & E.A. Burns, *Geisha. A Photographic History 1872–1912*, New York: Power House Books 2006, 17.
- 11 Burns, 2006 (note 10) 17.
- 12 Margarita Winkel, 'Photography and Japanese Woodblock Print Tradition' in: *Souvenirs from Japan. Japanese Photography at the Turn of the Century*, London: Bamboo Publishing Ltd. 1991, 36.
- 13 Claudia Delank, 'Samurai, Geisha und der Grosse Buddha. Japan in der Photographie 1860–1900' in: *Alles Wahrheit! Alles Lüge! Photographie und Wirklichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, exh. cat., Cologne: Verlag der Kunst 1997, 285.
- 14 Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography*, Third edition, New York, London, Paris: Abbeville Press Publishers 1997, 65.
- 15 This author has been criticized by different scholars for her ideas about an Indian way of seeing and representing in photography. Even though their critics are well based and I agree with them, there are also some interesting points in her work and one is about hand-colored photography. See: Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica. The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, London: Reaktion Books 1997, and Vidya Dehejia, *India Through the Lens. Photography 1840–1911*, Washington: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery 2000.
- 16 Mara J. Gutman, *Through Indian Eyes. 19th and Early 20th Century Photography from India*, New York: Oxford University Press 1981, 110.

the opposite end of the scale, Indian hand-coloured photographs were very varied in their aesthetics and intended, exclusively, for the pleasure of Indian customers. Japanese images were created and conceived both by Westerners and Japanese, even though the West used the Japanese painting tradition as an example, whereas the Indian images were created and conceived by Indians who took their own painting tradition as a model. It is not possible to extract any conclusion until further research is made into Iranian hand-coloured images. But it is definitely a field worthy of research.

- 17 There are many different Indian miniature painting schools and they can be grouped in Mughal painting, Deccani painting, Rajasthani painting, Pahari painting and Company painting and in each of these groups there are many schools. See: Anjan Chakraverty, *Indian Miniature Painting*, Delhi: Roli Books 1996 and Daljeet and Jain, *Indian Miniature Painting. Manifestation of a Creative Mind*, New Delhi: Brijbasi Art Press 2006. For further reading on the Nathdwara school of painting, see: Amit Ambalal, *Krishna As Shrinathji, Rajasthani Paintings From Nathdwara*, Ahmedabad: Mapin 1995.
- 18 Mara J. Gutman, 1981 (note 16) 108.
- 19 Christopher Pinney, 1997 (note 15).
- 20 For further information about this collection see: Sophie Gordon, 'The Alkazi Collection of Photography: Photographs of South Asia', in *The PhotoHistorian*, 1999, No. 127, 20–26.
- 21 Mara J. Gutman, 1981 (note 16) 112.
- 22 Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not, Photography and Remembrance*, New York and Amsterdam: Princeton Architectural Press and Van Gogh Museum 2004, 22.
- 23 This may have a symbolic meaning referring to the idol of Natdwara, Krishna as Shrinathji. The Indian art historian Amit Ambalal states that paintings of the late century and the twentieth century show that black was used both for the image and the steel- a more factual delineation in marked contrast to the earlier idealistic rendering, quoted from Amit Ambalal, 1995 (note 17) 84.
- 24 For information about life and work of this photographer see: M. Jansen, A. Vanzan, C.J.M. Vuurman and M.R. Tahmasbpour, *The Montabone Album. Ricordi del Viaggio in Persia della Missione Italiana 1862*, Rotterdam, Gronsveld, Santa Barbara and Tehran: IQSA Editors 2004.
- 25 To see some interesting hand-colored post-cards see: *Modern Persia*, National Geographic April 1921 and Ghasem Safi, *The Historical Persian Postcards*, Tehran: Gostaresh-e Honar Inc. 1999 (in Persian).
- 26 Rana Javadi was the first Iranian woman contemporary professional photographer and is currently the editor and director of the scholarly Iranian photo-magazine *Aksnameh* which is published in Tehran twice a year.

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Dainius Junevicius



Anton Rohrbach: Rediscovering a mid-19th Century Photographer of Railway Bridges

Abstract

The paper is the first to survey photographs by Anton Rohrbach, a little-known photographer of the 1850s and 1860s, made during railway bridge construction in Hungary (1857–1859) and Lithuania (1861) and shows their relationship to the *École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* and the *Ernest Gouin et Cie* construction company.

Introduction

Those who believe that discovering unknown 19th century photographs, or finding forgotten photographers, is no longer possible today are not right. As the Internet has eliminated borders between countries, the author is convinced that regional studies of the history of photography may produce larger or smaller sensations. Convincing historians of Lithuanian photography of that is fairly easy. For example, it was only the press of that period that revealed to us that, around 1861, a Vilnius photographer, Abdon Korzon, had made stereoscopic photographs of Vilnius; however, it was commonly believed that all had been lost. Last year, Lithuania received sensational news about the photography collections of the Polish Library in Paris containing the four oldest stereoscopic pictures taken in Lithuania by Korzon showing Vilnius and excavation work on the railway tunnel.¹

In the present paper, the author's intent is to save the works of the photographer Anton Rohrbach, who operated in the 1850s and 1860s, from oblivion and present them within a broader context. One of his photographs depicting the construction of the bridge over the Esztergom was printed in Frizot's *A New History of Photography*,² (fig. 4) and was displayed several times at industrial photography exhibitions in France.³ However, his significance for Hungarian, and primarily for Lithuanian and Latvian photography, was underrated. To tell the truth, the author was not familiar with Rohrbach's works in Lithuania before receiving a call from Bodo von Dewitz in 2002.

fig. 1 Anton Rohrbach, *Kaunas view from the left bank of the Nemunas*, 1861, signed and dated in the negative. Albumen print, 24 x 18 cm. Private collection.

The impressive and excellently composed photograph taken from Linksmakalnis Hill across the Nemunas shows the whole centre of Kaunas, the river full of vessels and the environs stretching in the distance that look completely different today.



Speaking of the origin of photography in Lithuania, which was incorporated into the Russian Empire at that time, the first travelling daguerreotypists appeared in Lithuania's capital of Vilnius in 1843. Most of them came from Warsaw or Königsberg. The year 1845 saw the opening of the first permanently operating daguerreotype studios. In 1861, Vilnius had several photo studios and two photographers – Abdon Korzon and Albert Swieykowski – with equipment for taking pictures in the open air. Various public and private collections in Lithuania, Poland and Russia presently contain between ten and thirty-two of the oldest photographs of Vilnius taken by Korzon and Swieykowski, respectively.⁴ For a long time, Lithuania's second largest city, Kaunas, only witnessed the establishment of portrait studios and the oldest known photo album of Kaunas views was not compiled until 1895 although several individual photographs had appeared earlier.⁵

Was it possible to imagine that, at the other end of Europe, in Madrid, there could be dozens of pictures taken in Lithuania and the neighbouring countries? Since Anton Rohrbach's photographs represent a vital complement to the Lithuanian photographic heritage of 1860, the author has devoted several years' effort to the search for Rohrbach's photographic heritage and would like to present the results of that search in this paper. Photographs made by Rohrbach are of significance for the history of Europe's railways, the history of bridge design and the history of one large bridge-construction company.

Rohrbach's Photographs from Hungary. 1857–1859

In the 19th century, the Austro-Hungarian railway network was one of the oldest and densest in Europe. In the beginning, quite a few lines were built with government funds but, in the 1850s, they were privatised due to financial difficulties. Most of them became the property of the French banker Rothschild. In the current territory of Hungary, the Rothschild-related company, *Gouin et Cie*, constructed metal railway bridges on the Szeged–Timisoara line across the Tisza at Szeged, on the Vienna–Pest line across the Danube's tributary the Ipel at Szob (fig. 2) and across the Danube at Esztergom in 1857–1859. Construction was headed by Vincent Maniel, director of the company, the engineer Cezanne and the designer Ernest Gouin.

Ernest Gouin et Cie, one of the most significant 19th century design firms, was set up in 1846 by the engineer Ernest Gouin (1815–1885). In 1836, Ernest Gouin graduated from the Paris *École polytechnique* and entered into the career of a military officer. Upon retirement, he finished external studies at the *École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* (ENPC). *Ernest Gouin et Cie* was the first company to implement the technology of metal bridge construction in Europe. In 1872, *Ernest Gouin et Cie* changed its name to that of the plc *Société de Construction des Batignolles*. Set up by Ernest Gouin, the company has operated, without interruption, until today, despite

changes in its shareholder structure, business trend and name. Its successor, Spie Batignolles, has successfully continued operations in the tough industrial construction market.⁶

The author has succeeded in identifying at least five collections containing photographs by Anton Rohrbach depicting these construction projects.

The historical collections of the ENPC library in Paris feature two almost identical albums.⁷ Both albums found their way into the collections back in the 19th century (PH 27 A was donated by *Ernest Gouin et Cie*'s Director Vincent Maniel in 1860 and PH 170 A arrived as a gift from Louis Lechatelier in 1882).

Established in 1747, ENPC, the world's oldest school of engineers, was the first institute to introduce photography into its training of civil engineers. Photography was launched as a discipline for its students in 1857, the year the school's collection of photographs was born. By 1907, the venture had grown into an impressive collection of more than 10,000 pictures of works and installations made by French and foreign engineers. The photographs show reconstruction in Paris, construction works in the province, building of railway lines and developments of hydraulic and port installations. The library's collection has also preserved views of old factories and mechanical gadgets for future generations. The collection contains materials that are important for the history of engineering structures in Poland, Russia, Spain, Italy and other countries.⁸

The album of Hungarian railway bridges has twenty-five pasteboard sheets – twelve single, 65 x 51.5 cm size, sheets and thirteen double, 130 x 51.5 cm size, folded sheets with salt paper photographs pasted on them. The double sheets feature panoramas of bridges that are composed of two, three, four and even five individual views. The longest panorama measures as much as 124 cm in length! One double sheet has six stereoscopic photographs pasted onto it. The earliest shot in the album dates back to 9 July 1857, while the latest picture is dated 15 March 1859. Some photographs of completed bridges have no dates. The photographs show various stages of construction of the three bridges, ranging from the first pier to bridges that span the whole river but are still enveloped in scaffolding. In some of those pictures the authors photographed separate elements of the bridges' trusses, which make up excellent designs of steel patterns. It is evident that the album was commissioned by the bridge builder *Ernest Gouin et Cie* and it is no accident that the first album made its way into the ENPC collections in 1862 from the hands of the company director himself.

Regrettably, the unmistakable identification of the authors of these photographs is not possible. Three single-size prints bear the stamp of Eduard Hoffmann (the author of the paper has failed to find any information about this photographer), and the six panoramic views composed of

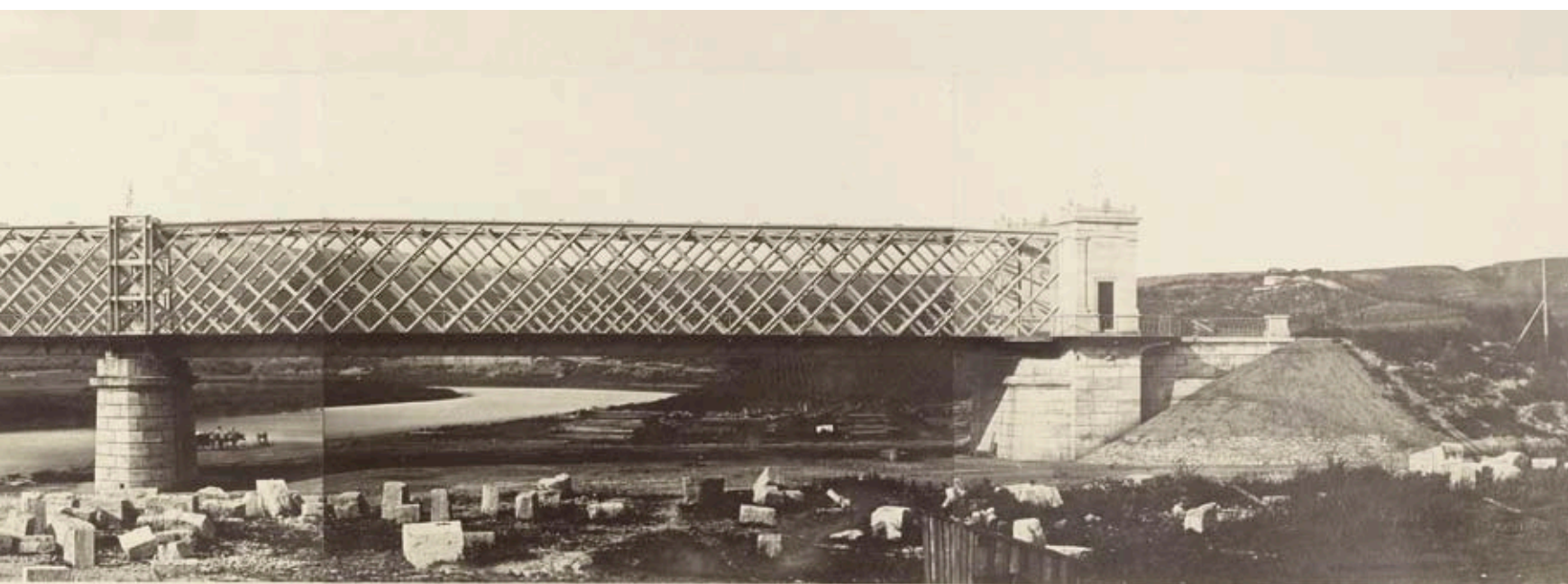
fig. 2 Anton Rohrbach, *Eypel brigde near Szobb – side view – completed bridge after removal of the temporary bridge*, Szobb, Hungary, n.d. Albumen print, 17.9 x 112.1 cm. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 3 Anton Rohrbach, *Theiss bridge near Szegedin. General view of the bridge with load*, Szegedin, Hungary, 27 November 1858. Albumen print, 18.5 x 67.2 cm. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

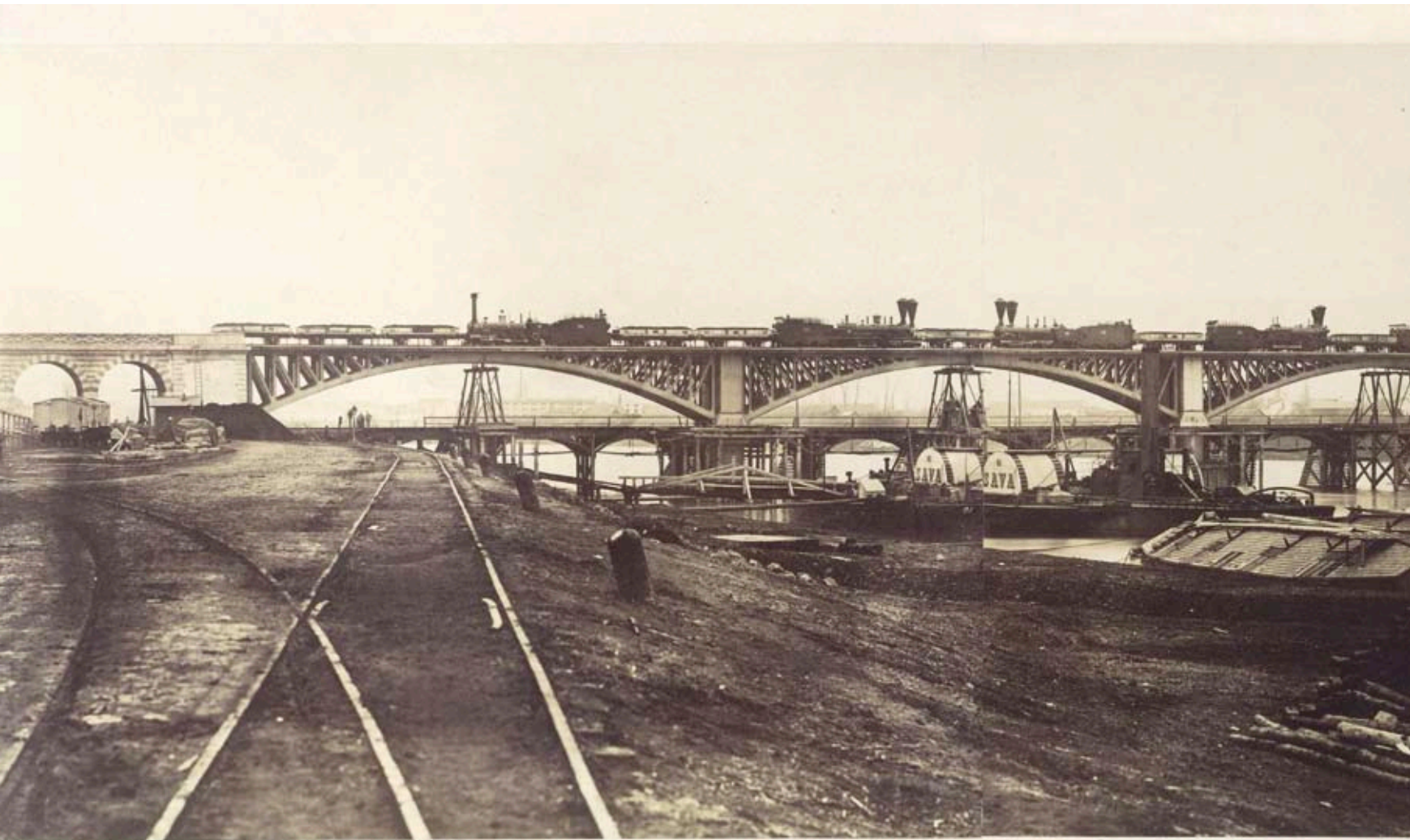
fig. 4 Anton Rohrbach, *Brigde across the Gran river. Main view towards west*, Gran, Hungary, 4 April 1869. Albumen print, 18 x 92 cm. Austrian National Library, Vienna.



BRUNNEN
VOLLENDETE BRÜCKE. SEITENANSICHT. NACH



BRÜCKE BEI STADT
BESSEITIGUNG DER PROVISORISCHEN BRÜCKE



THEISSBRÜCKE

Stand der Arbeit

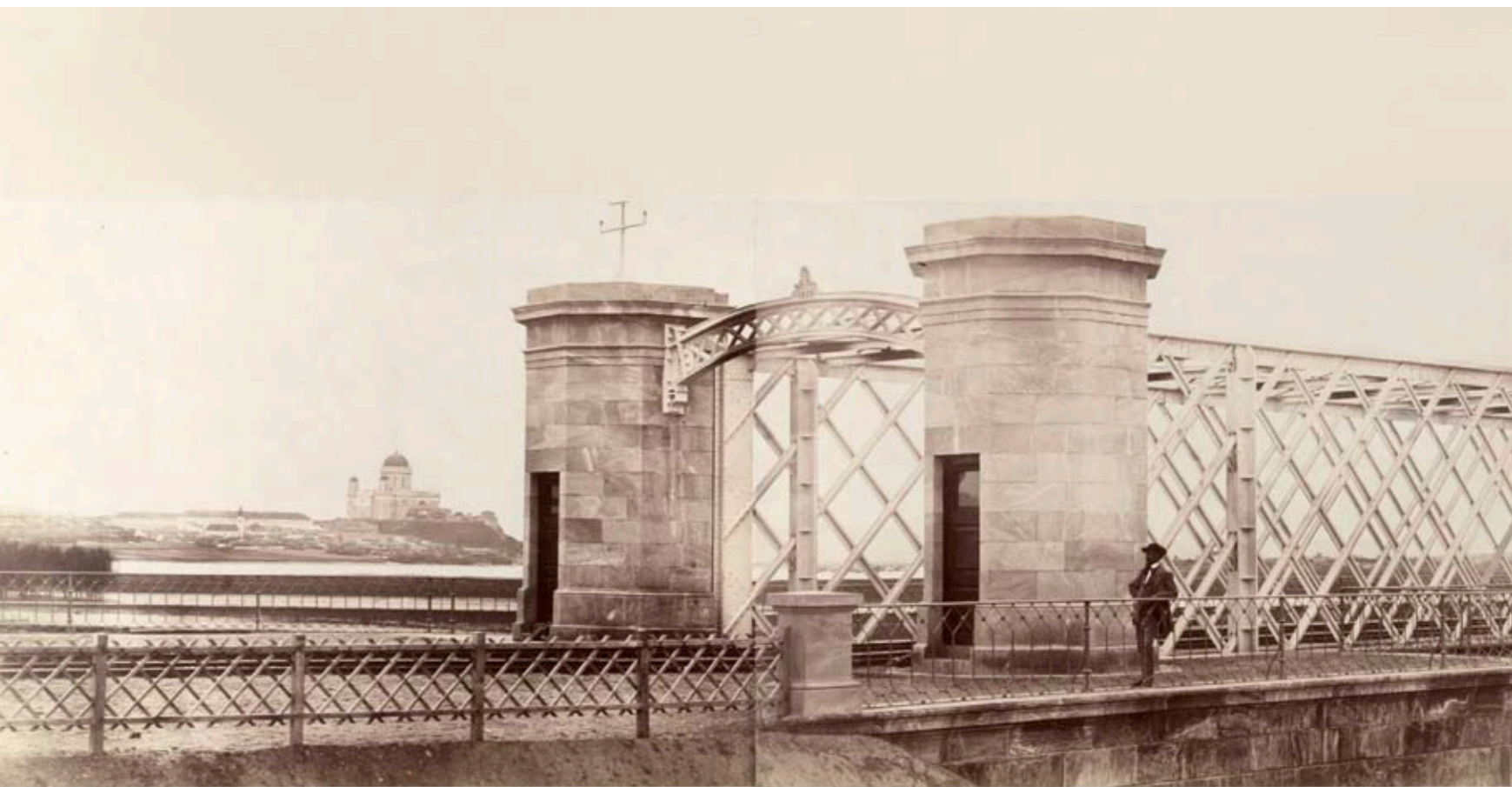
GENERALANSICHT DER



BEI SZEGEDIN

am 27. November 1858

BRÜCKE MIT BELASTUNG



BRÜCKE ÜBER
HAUPTANSICHT



DEN GRANFLUSS.
GEGEN WESTEN.

several pieces are stamped by the photographer Anton Rohrbach from Szeged. The remaining prints are anonymous: the stamps of their authors may have been removed when bleeding. Although all of Rohrbach's photographs are panoramic, the assumption that he also authored the remaining anonymous pictures would be overly bold. Judging by a record in the catalogue of the Austrian National Library, two very similar albums are stored in this Vienna-based library.⁹

In 1999, the Tajan auction in Paris saw an interesting album of photographs, *E.C.K.K. Priv. Österr. Staats. Eisenbahn Gesellschaft*, with more than forty plans of construction elements and tracings tinted in watercolour. The album and the tracings were the property of the heirs of the chief bridge construction engineer E. Cezanne.¹⁰ We are not aware of the current location of this album.

A similar collection, or part of one, appears to have been exhibited at the *Ton Peek Gallery* in the Netherlands in November 2004.¹¹

Rohrbach in Russia in 1861

Following a successful beginning, Anton Rohrbach's cooperation with *Gouin et Cie* continued in Russia a few years later. In the summer of 1861, Anton Rohrbach, an already acclaimed photographer of railway bridges in Hungary, arrived in Russia to take pictures of bridge construction on the St. Petersburg–Warsaw railway line.

The line, which connected Russia's capital with Warsaw, the capital of Poland, which was then a part of the Russian Empire, went across the territories of present-day Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and Poland. A section of the railway connected Vilnius with Königsberg. In January 1857, bankers from St. Petersburg, Warsaw, London, Amsterdam and Paris set up a private company, *Grande Société des Chemins de Fer Russes*, for this project. The engineers working on this project were faced with the difficult task of building the tracks in a rugged and hilly terrain traversed by rivers and streams, and erecting numerous bridges, tunnels and other engineering structures. Commissioned by the *Grande Société des Chemins de Fer Russes*, the firm *Ernest Gouin et Cie* built a bridge across the Vistula in Warsaw and all the metal bridges on the section between Warsaw and Ostrov in present-day Belarus.

In half a year, Rohrbach made several dozen photographs in the open air in which he preserved the metal railway bridges *Ernest Gouin et Cie* had erected across the country's largest rivers as well as the cities he visited, including Vilnius, Kaunas, Grodno, Rēzekne and Daugavpils.

Currently, three collections of Anton Rohrbach's photographs from the St. Petersburg–Warsaw railway are known to have survived. The album *Grand Russian Railway. Views of the Largest Iron Bridges on the St. Petersburg–Warsaw Line*, stored at the Spanish National Library, is in the

fig. 5 Anton Rohrbach, *The bridge over the Voke*, November 1861. Albumen print, 24 x 18 cm. Private collection.



5

best condition.¹² The album features a total of sixteen individual stories comprising twenty-six albumin prints with an approximate size of 18 x 24 cm. Similar to the Hungarian album, some of the pictures are combined to form panoramic views. There are three panoramas made of two views (with the long side of about 45 cm) and two panoramas containing four pictures each (the long side measuring some 90 cm). The height of all the photographs is 18 cm. Most of the prints bear the handwritten signature “Rohrbach 1861” on the negative plates.

A private collection in Madrid also features the second album of the St. Petersburg–Warsaw railway bridges. The album includes twenty-two photographs, of which two are quadruple and five are double. Different from the first album, this one contains views of Kaunas and Vilnius in addition to pictures of bridges.

It is no wonder that as many as two albums of prints of the St. Petersburg–Warsaw railway metal bridges ended up in Spain. In 1862, *Ernest Gouin et Cie*, along with the Spanish Northern Railway, received an order to build a railway line across the Pyrenees. The albums of bridges might have been necessary for applying for this commission in Spain, or they might have been brought there by the engineer Cezanne who had also headed the works in Russia.

Robert Koch, a dealer in photographs from San Francisco, had one more very similar album of prints by Rohrbach, showing the St. Petersburg–Warsaw railway line. Unfortunately, the album, which the owner had moved from San Francisco to Oakland for safety reasons, was destroyed in the great Oakland fire of 1991.¹³

The author of this paper has succeeded in finding the third batch of Anton Rohrbach's photographs from the Russian cycle in a private collection in Gdansk, Poland. These are loose albumen prints without a base, gone slightly yellow and, compared to the previous albums, not as well conserved. These pictures have been preserved by descendants of the engineer Stanisław Janicki who participated in the St. Petersburg–Warsaw railway development.

The Polish engineer Stanisław Janicki was born into an engineer's family in Warsaw in 1836. In 1854, he entered the Engineering Faculty of the Hanover Polytechnic and, in 1856, went to work for *Ernest Gouin et Cie*. When the firm launched the supply of metal bridges for the St. Petersburg–Warsaw railway line, he became an assistant to the engineer Cotard who headed the installation of trusses and metal cylinders of piers. From 1861 to 1864, he was also an assistant to the engineer Kierbiedz who had designed a bridge across the Vistula in Warsaw and headed its construction.¹⁴



fig. 6 Anton Rohrbach, *Construction of the bridge over the Nemunas river near Kaunas*, 17 October 1861, signed and dated in the negative. Albumen print, 24 x 18 cm. Private collection. The view spans all construction site including the railway station building and the tunnel in the background on the lefthand side of photograph.

Janicki later worked in different countries around the world, including Egypt, Russia and Croatia, carrying the collection of photographs with him everywhere he went. In addition to Rohrbach's works discussed here, Janicki's descendants, despite the various misfortunes that befell East European countries, have preserved pictures of construction of the Suez Canal taken by the photographer Justyn Kozłowski, Alphonse Liébert's views of cities destroyed in the 1870–1871 Prussian War and the Paris Commune, views of engineering works in the mountains of Poland, etc.

Janicki's collection is special in that most of its photographs are urban views. We would assume that Janicki acquired them as mementos of the places he visited, from the photographer himself with whom he might have been familiar. This may be the reason why his collection includes photographs not found in the albums. Different from the above albums, which were made on a commission from the company and were supposed to document and present its accomplished work, the photographs in the private collection were intended to remind the young engineer of the construction of the first bridges and places visited at the beginning of his professional career.

Let us take a closer look at these photographs by Anton Rohrbach. They show several sites in Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus on the railway section between Rēzekne in Latvia and Grodno in Belarus, railway bridges under construction or completed structures and views of their erection.

In Russia, Anton Rohrbach, once again, revealed himself as a master of broad panoramas with an excellent perception of the bridge construction technique and ability for documenting it. In his panoramas, composed of several individual pictures, he captured bridges across the Nemunas near Grodno and Kaunas (fig. 6) and across the Daugava by Daugavpils several times.

A distinct group of Rohrbach's photographs includes views of bridges across small rivers in Latvia and these are particularly important for both the history of Latvian photography and the history of technical monuments.

Apart from the bridge in Kaunas, whose construction Rohrbach shot several times, he photographed the bridges across the Vilnia and the Neris that were nearing completion in September 1861 and, in November, took pictures of a bridge across the Merkys and another bridge across the Baltoji Vokė (fig. 5) that was still under construction; all of these in Lithuania. Besides that, Rohrbach also went to take pictures of a bridge across the Jiesia on the Kaunas–Virbalis railway section in October.

Although the documentary photographs must have been made on a commission from the company that implemented this construction, Rohrbach nevertheless created attractive compositions from concrete pillars in deep river valleys, trestle-work designs, metal bridge spans and temporary small wooden bridges with human figures, reminding everyone of those at whose will and desire pristine landscapes undergo change.

Interestingly, the photographs of bridges capture a great deal of the surrounding scenery. The photographer seems to have felt the duty to picture a new landscape not so familiar to him with the utmost depth and width. He did not need that when shooting the familiar bridges of Hungary. Upon his arrival in Russia, Rohrbach also photographed urban views. These are of particular importance for the history of our countries' cities. Rohrbach was the author of the oldest photographic views of Kaunas, Daugavpils and Grodno. For example, Kaunas historians are particularly overjoyed by the fact that, in 1861, Rohrbach made as many as five pictures of Kaunas, Lithuania's second largest city (fig. 1). These, undoubtedly oldest, views of Kaunas are an essential complement to the relatively sparse mid-19th century iconography of Kaunas. A new album of Kaunas photographs was compiled in 1895!

Conclusion. Rohrbach's Secret

In the mid-19th century, the motif of a railway, road or bridge had an important place in photography and a special kind of mutual attraction manifested itself in France. Edouard-Denis Baldus authored a cycle of innovative photographs of the Paris-Lyons line. August-Hippolyte

Translated by Laima Junevičienė.

The author of this article is very grateful to Dr. Ulla Fischer-Westhauser for her encouragement to commence, her patience and the precious support he received throughout the whole process of preparation of the article.

- 1 Małgorzata Grąbczewska, personal communication, March 2007; Presentation by Małgorzata Grąbczewska delivered at the *Vilnius School of Photography* conference, 27 September 2007, Lithuanian Art Museum, Vilnius.
- 2 Anton Rohrbach. *Construction of the bridge over the Gran*, Hungary, 1859, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées, Paris, in: Michel Frizot (ed.), *A New History of Photography*, Cologne: Kinneman 1998, 206–207.
- 3 *Exposition Photo Génie*, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 14 September–23 October 1983; *Les grands chantiers du XIX^{ème} siècle*, Lausanne, Musée de l'Elysée, 2 April–31 May 1987; *Panorama des Panoramas. Centre National de la Photographie*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 16 January–27 May 1991.
- 4 Margarita Matulytė, *Photography of Vilnius 1858–1915*, Vilnius: National Museum of Lithuania 2001.
- 5 Dainius Junevičius, 'Seniausios Kauno nuotraukos' (in Lithuanian, 'The Earliest Photographs of Kaunas') *Archiforma*, vol. 2, 2007, 90.
- 6 Rang-Ri Park-Barjot, *La Société de construction des Batignolles: des origines à la première guerre mondiale*, 1846–1914, Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne 2005.
- 7 *Photographies des ponts en fer de la Theiss à Szégédin, de l'Eipel à Szob, de la Gran près de Gran*, call number PH 27 A and PH 170 A.

Collard took pride in calling himself “a photographer of bridges and major roads” and, starting in 1857, was engaged in taking pictures of the developments of France’s main bridges for nearly three decades.¹⁵

Judging by the surviving works, Anton Rohrbach can certainly be placed alongside the other outstanding photographers of his epoch. His works discussed here are proof of their authors’ superior training, excellent knowledge of the trade and distinctive quality of representation, characteristic of the most outstanding photographers of that time. We do not know where he mastered the art of photography. With the exception of a brief inscription included in the directory of photographers of German speaking countries and major European capitals,¹⁶ which presents Rohrbach as one of the three photographers in Szeged in 1866, the author of the current paper has failed to find any information on Anton Rohrbach’s life in the sources available to him. Hungarian archives and studies by historians of photography may contain such information. At the time of preparing this paper for publication, however, such sources were not accessible to the author. Although Anton Rohrbach was commissioned by *Gouin et Cie* to take pictures in both Hungary and Russia, the existing company archives also have no information on the photographer Anton Rohrbach.¹⁷

8 Elvire Perego, ‘The Conquest of knowledge and techniques. Photography at the École des Ponts et Chaussées’ in: Frizot, 1998 (note 2).

9 *Eiserne Brücken über den Theissfluss bei Szegedin, Eypelfluss bei Szob, Granfluss bei Gran auf der südöstlichen Linie der k.k. priv. österreichischen Staats-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft*, call numbers Pk 4300 and Pk 4584.

10 Tajan, *Photographies des XIXe et XXe siècle*,. Sale in Paris, Wednesday 14 April 1999, auction catalogue, Paris 1999, 8. <http://www.tonpeek.com> (05.01.2004)

12 Gerardo F. Kurtz, Isabel Ortega, *150 años de fotografía en la Biblioteca Nacional : guía-inventario de los fondos fotográficos de la Biblioteca Nacional / coordinada y dirigida por Gerardo F. Kurtz, Isabel Ortega*, Madrid: Dirección General del Libro y Bibliotecas, D.L. 1989.

13 Rosalind Williams, personal communication, August 2003.

14 Józef Ziemia, ‘Stanisław Janicki’ in: *Słownik biograficzny techników polskich*, Warsaw: NOT FSNT, 1989, vol. 7, 18.

15 Elvire Perego, ‘The Urban Machine/Architecture and Industry’ in: Frizot, 1998 (note 2).

16 *Allgemeines Adress-Handbuch ausübender Photographen von Deutschland, den österr. Kaiserstaaten, der Schweiz und den Hauptstädten der angrenzenden Länder*, Leipzig: Robert Schaefer’s Verlag [um 1865].

17 Rang-Ri Park-Barjot, personal communication to Małgorzata Grąbczewska, April 2007.

Michael Ponstingl

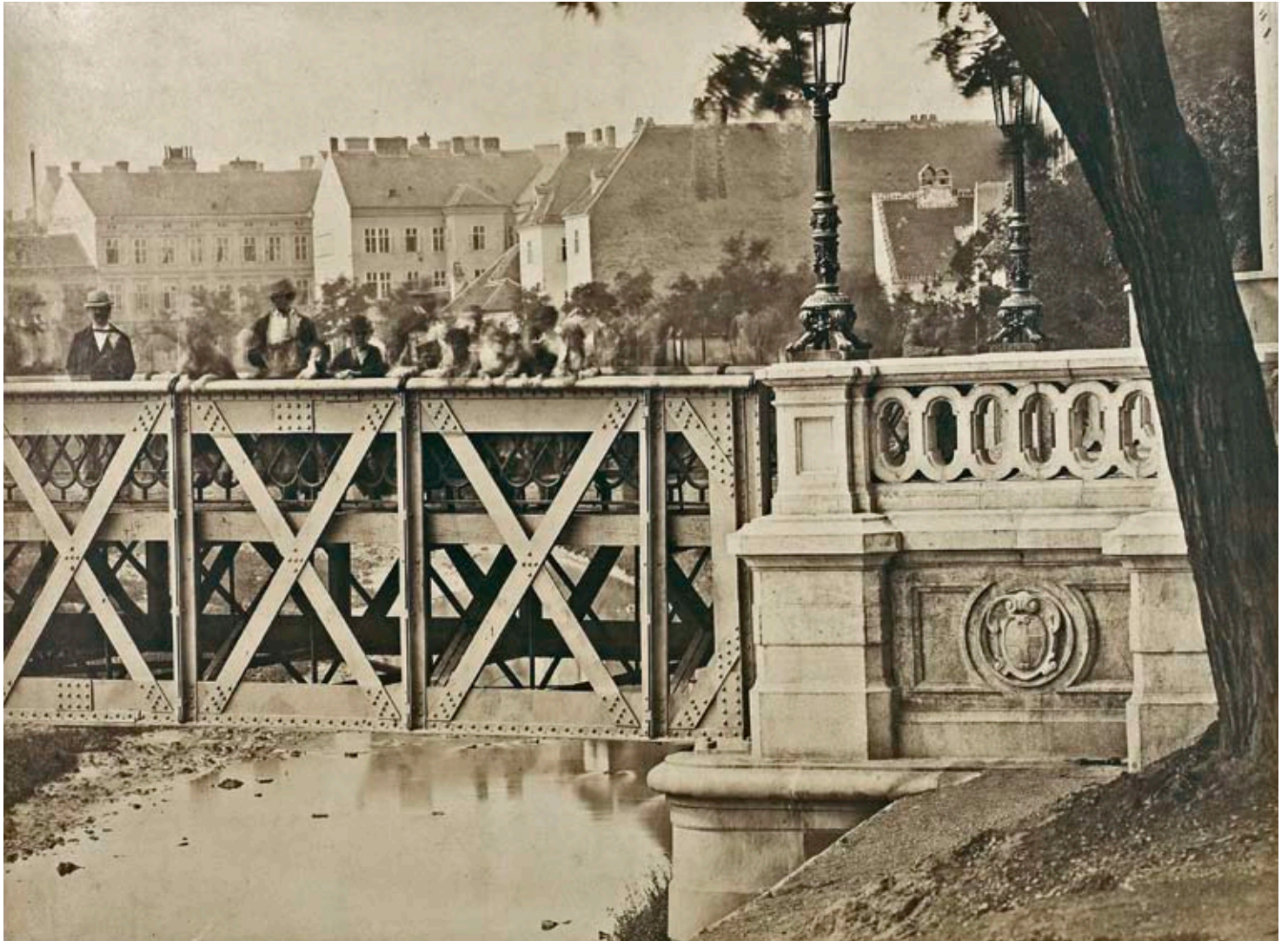
IO The Engineer, his Bridge, the Children and their Photographer. About Gustav Jägermayer's Pictures of the Magdalenen Bridge in Vienna of 1865

In 2005, the Vienna Albertina purchased two albumin prints; both show the, no longer existing, *Magdalenenbrücke* (Magdalena Bridge) which had been built for pedestrians over the Wien River. Both views are taken from the left bank looking upriver towards the bridge; however, from completely different positions resulting in a total view as well as a precise detail shot. When making research in preparation for an exhibition on Viennese city photography in the nineteenth century,¹ I came across these witnesses to a past industrial culture at a local photo dealer's. He had come into possession of the photographs at an auction held in the 1980s but it was not possible to trace the history of the pictures before this period. In order to make it possible to understand the photos as representations of complex social practices, I will review constructional aspects, as well as social, media and biographical conditions, along with a critical consideration of the sources in a micro-historical run-through.

1

It is clear that we are looking at the iron bridge, planned and erected between 1862 and 1865, which linked the two Viennese districts of Margareten and Mariahilf. Constructed as a girder bridge, the construction consists of a truss or, to be more precise, a series of Andrew's Crosses, separated by stanchions, between two parallel chords (fig. 3). Riveted flat iron belts connect the upper and lower chords at their meeting points. The bridge is one of the earliest of its type in Vienna. There is no guarantee that the principles of graphic statics – previously the only method for calculating the various stresses in the struts (pressure and strain) – were already known in Viennese engineering circles at the time as this process had only recently been developed by the structural engineer Karl Culmann. He included it in his lectures at the ETH in Zurich after 1859 and published it in book form as *Die graphische Statik* (Graphic Statics) in 1866. This publication led to the rapid spreading of truss bridges. As Culmann's work made clear, a frame, designed in keeping with static criteria, required a tension or compression strut,

fig. 1 Gustav Jägermayer, *Magdalenenbrücke II*, June / July 1865. Albumen paper, 31.3 x 42.3 cm on mounting cardboard. Albertina, Vienna.



in each field; crossed diagonal bars (Andrew's Cross) only made static sense in the middle of the bridge where the changes in the traffic load led to changes in the strain.² The way the *Magdalenenbrücke* was designed – with crossed bars of the same strength in the individual infill fields along the entire structure – made it possible for the constructor to not have to consider which of the rods were to be loaded with stress and tension. One possible reason for this could be the bridge builder's lack of knowledge of the Culmann technique which was only semi-official at the time. The plan simply took over the traditional wooden support structure, albeit with modern materials, where the infilling with Andrew's Crosses was the standard procedure – especially the case with early railroad bridges in the USA. As will be shown, an additional – but less likely – explanation for this style of construction could have its roots in the socialized self-image of those technically responsible as a result of their specific education. If architects were responsible for the work, they often selected a more expensive symmetrically consistent design of the supporting structure with Andrew's Crosses for aesthetic reasons, whereas engineers were more in favour of using only what was statically essential.³

2

The migration rate of labourers skyrocketed as a result of the (proto-) industrialisation which was taking place and rapidly increased the urbanisation of the outer districts into densely built-up areas. The process had been essentially completed in 1850 when the outer suburbs were united to form districts and incorporated into the city of Vienna. In order to satisfy the increased demands for the transportation of goods and people between the districts, the communal authorities stepped up bridge construction and this included the *Magdalenenbrücke*.⁴

To today, the bridged Wien River is notable for the enormous fluctuations in its water flow. As the river mainly flows through an impermeable flysch area, the ground can hardly absorb water during heavy rainfall causing an extreme rise in its water level within a few minutes. There was frequent flooding where garbage was washed ashore and serious damage done to the houses near the banks as well as the bridges. In particular, wooden bridges – the construction material of choice for centuries – were the least resistant to these weather stresses and, in the second half of the nineteenth century, an increasing number of iron bridges were constructed to replace the older ones.⁵ In addition to the increased traffic, that was probably the pragmatic reason for replacing the former construction with the new – iron – *Magdalenenbrücke*.

The repeated flooding had led to countless suggestions to regulate the course of the river – the earliest, from 1781. Throughout the nineteenth century, measures such as straightening, building quay walls, elevating the banks and plastering the embankments with ashlar to secure them, were frequently undertaken along individual sections of the river.⁶ One of the photographs gives a splendid depiction of the last mentioned. The fact that the stones near the bridge pillars are not overgrown with plants, as is normally the case, is evidence that the picture

must have been taken at around the time construction was completed as the underpinning of the piers made it necessary to demolish any existing paving and replace it later. This speculation is confirmed in the “construction contract” between the City of Vienna and Carl Hornbostel where the engineer responsible for the project committed himself to the regulation of the bank on both sides of the piers.⁷ All the aids used to restrain the forces of the river ultimately proved to be no more than half measures. Only the systematic regulation carried out between 1893 and 1906 finally put an end to the flooding. Until this epoch-making intervention in the urban environment, the Wien River remained extremely ambivalent in the way it was perceived. On the one hand, the watercourse had developed into an important location for trade and industry since the end of the eighteenth century. Numerous tradespersons and manufacturers, including tanners, dyers, bleachers, soap-makers and textile finishers, who needed water for their production settled here. In addition to the district of Neubau, the suburb of Gumpendorf – not far from the *Magdalenenbrücke* – was still one of the main centres of the chemical industry and cotton processing and finishing in Vienna after the middle of the nineteenth century. Rising housing costs increased the trend for business premises to move to sections along the river outside the city limits.⁸

On the other hand, this economic artery meant that the local residents were not only confronted with the previously mentioned flooding but also with the grave conditions which often were a direct result of this. The producers’ waste water caused the river to be notoriously polluted. This was aggravated by the sewers from the houses. Following the 1831/32 cholera epidemic – particularly rampant along the river – the city council decided to construct two collective ducts on both sides of the river which, however, only provided limited relief. First, their dimensions were too small so that they overflowed when there was heavy rain and faeces and waste water poured into the Wien River; second, waste from the districts outside the city flowed, unfiltered, into the river along with debris and garbage. As already mentioned, the irregular water flow led to flooding as well as low-water which was no less of a problem. The industrial use, connected with all the other pollution, turned the river into a stinking sewer. This was particularly disagreeably noticeable in summer when the river was reduced to a trickle. On the one hand, this caused grave difficulties for the businesses that relied on the water and, on the other, doctors repeatedly identified the river as a serious seat of disease (epidemic typhus, typhoid and cholera).⁹

At the beginning of August 1865, not even four weeks after the bridge had been opened to the public, an official commission went to the outlying districts along the river to study the “unfavourable sanitary situation” – and it will be shown that this was precisely the time when our pictures were taken. The delegation found something that was more like a “stagnant pool,” full of garbage and with a disgusting stench, than a river. They diagnosed there being an immediate danger for the city, especially due to the “epidemic character of this year”.¹⁰ Anybody who feels that they are seeing a summer idyll in the two photographs is drastically misinterpreting the situation.

One of the local names gives an idea of the formerly dubious hygienic conditions directly along the river: Before the *Magdalenenbrücke* was constructed, this was the site of a wooden footbridge called the *Magdalena* or *Ratzenstadl* (rat stable) Bridge built around 1750. The name came from the popular tag used to mock the tiny suburb of Magdalenengrund on the left bank of the river – right, in the pictures – next to the bridge. Abominable sanitary conditions, going far beyond (supposed) plagues of vermin and rats, were typical of this slum district with its cheaply built and crowded houses. It also happened that infected river swill seeped into the ground water and reached the local population by way of the many house wells that were still common at the time. The cholera epidemics in 1831/32 and 1855 raged particularly ferociously through Magdalenengrund at an early stage; the children suffered much more frequently from glandular illnesses.¹¹ As on the other side of the river, most of the people who lived here were day labourers and other poorly paid workers. The progress of industrialisation also led to other plights in these low-class quarters. It boosted a population explosion which, in turn, made the housing shortage for those on the fringes of society – up to the middle classes – unbearable. Astronomic rents, overcrowding, sub-letting and bed-renting lodgers, were the result.¹²

3

What prompted these photographs? What made the photographers go to an area which was not particularly attractive for the bourgeoisie? Who was encountered there and which values actualized? That is what we have to explain. First of all, I must make an observation about the connection between the two photographs. The fact that they were preserved together does not necessarily indicate that they were taken during one shooting session (by one photographer); however, a study of the sources proves precisely that. First of all, from the photographic technique: The photographic paper and mounting cardboard are similar in regard to their size, quality and style of the montage; and a long focal length lens was used in both cases. The large format, the immense depth of field and the blurring (trees, people, and even so-called “ghosts”) indicate an exposure time of between one and two minutes. The blurred tree branches show that it was not completely calm when the two photographs were shot. Secondly, the content of the pictures: As far as can be seen, the bridge, river landscape and surrounding buildings are unchanged. Also, a closer inspection of fleeting phenomena such as the water level, wind and light conditions provides no basis for assuming different photographing days. Using a magnifying glass, we discover two other correspondences: an opened window casement¹³ and a handful of earth below the Viennese coat of arms chiselled into the bridge pier – which, of course, could also be coincidental.

However, the pictures are not only different due to their varying perspectives, but also the inscriptions on the mounting carton. The photograph which shows a full shot of the bridge is marked twice – first, with a die stamp in the centre below the picture which verifies the photographer (“GUSTAV JÄGERMAYER / PHOTOGRAPH / WIEN”) and second, with a signature (“Carl Hornbostel”) to the right below the picture and a date (“2/8 [1]865.”) in the same ink

immediately underneath. Contrary to this, the other picture is unstamped and unsigned. The ceremonious style of writing shows that this is not just a simple mention of a name but a real signature. A comparison with other handwriting specimens¹⁴ makes this assumption more concrete. And, finally, knowing that the technical execution of the bridge was Hornbostel's responsibility makes the act of signing easily understandable. Just as the photographer made his authorship clear for copyright reasons, the engineer also confirmed the bridge as being his work by signing it – or to be more precise, this pictorial representative of it.

The double authorization of the picture simply makes it clear that it is the sum of a number of coordinated as well as undirected acts – something that is, in principle, the case for every picture. These include the overall circumstances, the social relationship between the protagonists, their individual social standing, ideas and ideologies. Let us begin with the date: Seeing that it was obviously written by Hornbostel, 2 August 1865 is probably not the date when the photograph was taken but when the engineer signed it – in this case, this means when he presented it to somebody. In addition, the weather was different on that day. In retrospect, a daily newspaper reported: “numerous clouds of all types, occasional rain, calm”¹⁵ at noon. It is clear that if clouds were drifting around during the exposure time, they would not be visible because the sky, as was usual in landscape photographs of the period, was overexposed. However, the clear contours of the shadows show that the sun was shining and there are no signs of previous rainfall. In addition, it appears questionable that a photographer would even think of venturing forth under such inclement conditions. The wet collodion process which was in use at the time was a complicated and protracted procedure, the glass photo plates could only be sensitized at the site and had to be developed immediately after exposure.

If the dedication date, 2 August 1865, can be considered as the *terminus ante quem*, the question of the earliest date for taking the picture must be asked. The river bed appears to be dried out, so it must have been summer; the open windows, the way the people are dressed and the vegetation would also not seem to contradict this. The day the bridge was opened to traffic is possible as a *terminus post quem*. The Lord Mayor Andreas Zelinka opened the festively decorated bridge at noon on Saturday 8 July 1865 in the presence of a great crowd of people.¹⁶ Jägermayer made his pictures at around 8.00 or 8.30 am to take the best advantage of the position of the sun and it is feasible that he did this before the official ceremony took place. However, I consider this unlikely. There would have been too little leeway; it would have been easy for the preparations for the ceremony, such as installing the festive decorations, to get in the way. It can also be assumed that there was an early hustle and bustle seeing that such social spectacles were not especially frequent in this area. The city council originally planned to open the bridge to traffic on 1 June and the endurance tests were scheduled for three weeks before that date.¹⁷ It appears that there was a slight delay in completion. We can, therefore, note the date when the two photographs were taken as being in June or July 1865 – that is, from around three weeks before the opening until the time of the dedication at the latest (although, it seems unlikely that the latter coincided with the photographic activity).

4

The pictures of the *Magdalenenbrücke* also tell us something about the two gentlemen Hornbostel and Jägermayer – and their meeting out in the suburbs. A newspaper report informs us that Carl Hornbostel (1825–1913) was present at the official opening ceremony.¹⁸ At this time, the construction engineer – related to the great Viennese silk manufacturing dynasty of the same name – could already look back on a sound professional career. Following his education in mechanics and diverse professional experience, Hornbostel entered the civil service. He was responsible for the railroads in the Ministry of Trade and, under the aegis of the internationally renowned transport engineer Carl Ritter von Ghenga, organized the construction of the first iron bridges in Austria in 1851/52. A short time after the privatization of the railroads, he accepted a position with the *Kaiserin-Elisabeth-Westbahn* (Empress Elisabeth West Railroad) as head of bridge construction and mechanical engineering in 1856.¹⁹

Several railroad bridges were erected under Hornbostel's planning leadership. The experience he had gathered predestined him to take part in the relevant competitions which the city put out to tender. His plans frequently convinced the responsible authorities. Between 1859 and 1874, he was able to build the remarkable number of four bridges over the Wien River and one over the Danube. None have remained standing to this day. But let us go back to the time these photographs were created. Hornbostel could consider himself satisfied – at least professionally – the year was obviously successful; his *Schwarzenbergbrücke* was inaugurated just four months after the *Magdalenenbrücke*.

In retrospect, the *Magdalenenbrücke* met with little interest if one takes constructional guides and specialist journals as the measure. This lack of importance can also be seen in the simple opening ceremony where, in addition to Mayor Zelinka, the official side was only represented by persons with a direct connection to bridge construction.²⁰ In view of the merely local importance of a pedestrian bridge, the newspaper virtually ignored the event. The professional photographers did the same; they would not have found any buyers for their work. They preferred to set up their cameras in the well-to-do first district of Vienna where Emperor Franz Joseph had opened up the first section of the Ringstrasse on 1 May of the same year. This was the social sphere – the nobility and liberal upper-class families, as well as architects and builders, resided in the stately buildings along the boulevard – where the professional photographers found their clients. This clientele used photographs (of construction sites and buildings) to cultivate their own cultural image, as indications of their self-assurance and self-assessment and, not least, to safeguard their power.

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It can therefore be assumed that the professional photographer Gustav Jägermayer (1834–1901) did not simply venture out into the suburbs which were not profitable from the perspective of making any money. Hornbostel, maybe carried away by his high spirits, commissioned

this service. He wanted to have a document of his latest engineering achievement. This was a not-untypical undertaking and also speaks for the quasi-coincidence of the opening and the photograph. It is possible that the two men knew each other, but it is just as likely that there were practical reasons for commissioning this photographer. He had his studio on nearby Wiedner Hauptstrasse and this would have made it easier to transport the substantial amount of cumbersome equipment (camera, tripod, darkroom tent, chemicals and glass plates). Jägermayer had been through difficult times. In March 1862, he acquired Eduard von Oberhausen's *Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir für Photographie & Stereoskopie* (Establishment for Artistic and Applied Photography and Stereoscopy) with its prime city location and changed the name slightly to *Kunst- & Industrie-Comptoir von Gustav Jägermayer & Comp.* He took over his predecessor's most important colleague, the co-founder and authorized signatory Oscar Reischel, who now proceeded to become an official partner. Jägermayer entrusted him with the sole management of the business, the photo publishing activities and the range of goods and services. Jägermayer devoted himself entirely to photography (principally art reproduction, landscape, industry and architecture). He had commission partners in Leipzig, Paris and London.²¹

Irregularities occurred in spring 1863 that damaged the company's reputation. The police carried out a search of the premises and confiscated *obscene* pictures made by the photographer Carl Josef Steuer. Reischel was confronted with legal proceedings (offences against public decency) for the under-the-counter sales of these *academies*. He was initially sentenced to four weeks in prison but the judge later commuted this to a fine. The business constellation changed in April 1864. Reischel withdrew from his position as partner but remained an authorized signatory. Three months later, at the end of July, he left the company once and for all.²² Finally, Jägermayer wound up his retail business in December 1864.²³

It is a matter of opinion as to whether there was a connection between Oscar Reischel's dubious business practices and his departure or whether there were general differences about how the business should be run. In any case, Jägermayer lost his commercial partner and – through lack of talent or inclination? – could not fill his place himself. At the time Reischel left, the company was already in great difficulties. The reason for their entrepreneurial failure can probably be found in a terribly bad investment. In 1864, Jägermayer published the comprehensive, large-scale portfolio *Österreichische Alpen* (Austrian Alps) under his own imprint. The book was based on an expedition to the Grossglockner area one year previously but turned out to be a non-seller and Jägermayer was forced to pulp the major portion of the edition. The fresh businessman had made the grave mistake of financing the risky enterprise out of his own pocket after all the prospective financiers had backed out.²⁴ There was a real boom in studio openings in the 1860s and art dealers who – either additionally or exclusively – sold photographs had also established themselves. These times intensified competition and increased the pressure placed on photographers to expand their dominating form of activity – producing for clients (portraits,

above all) – in the direction of producing for the market. This means that they produced, without commissions, for the expected demand of an anonymous market with the risk that they would be left sitting on their goods. Here, the question about profit-promising motifs, ultimately dictated by the tastes and values of the potential clients, formed the core of economic considerations. Jägermayer thought something would come of the Alps. This was not the case and might have been due to the motif itself or the high price of the publication. The poorly-considered capital commitment (goods produced in advance, storage) finally cost him his company. The closure of the *Kunst- & Industrie-Comptoir* led to the end of the businessman's photographic trade and publishing – which, in any case, he had always left to his partner. His lack of mercantile temperament, coupled with his absolute command of the photographic craft, forced him to work anonymously for others for several years.



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In all probability, Jägermayer was still struggling with the aftermath of his economic disaster when he set out for the *Magdalenenbrücke* early one morning in the June or July of 1865. When he arrived at his destination, he met Carl Hornbostel. I consider it highly likely that the client, Hornbostel, was there seeing that he had demanding wishes which made his presence necessary. In addition, this singular commission was a not especially cheap project. By and large, the construction engineer knew precisely what he wanted so that both men jointly determined the camera position. A location downriver from the bridge to the left of the bank was chosen for the full shot. If one compares similar pictures of the bridge – there are hardly any – it can be seen that, in their watercolours from 1888 and 1894 respectively, Johann Varrone and Alois Lahoda (fig. 2) chose more or less the same position.²⁵ The main difference being that the

fig. 2 Alois Lahoda, *Magdalenenbrücke*, 1894.
Watercolour, 22.7 x 30.9 cm.
Wien Museum Karlsplatz, Vienna.

fig. 3 Gustav Jägermayer, *Magdalenenbrücke*,
June / July 1865. Albumen paper, 27.2 x 44.3 cm
on mounting cardboard. Albertina, Vienna.

artists created vedute with the bridge as the central aspect surrounded by a large section of city landscape. Jägermayer's interest, on the other hand, was less aimed at embedding the bridge in a *harmonious* whole as to exclusively framing the bridge so that it takes up the entire breadth of the picture when seen from a slightly slanted angle. The camera must have been moved some distance into the embankment as the view is from ground level. The requirements of showing this detailed view determined everything else that appeared in the picture.

The photograph is not concerned with the picturesque as are the watercolours created 25 to 30 years later. As industrial photography – and the concrete context of its creation certainly justifies such a classification – it articulates the knowledge, the curiosity and the values of those who stood for technological and industrial progress. This is particularly true of the



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other picture with its restricted view (fig. 1). At first – as a technical layman – one believes to be confronted with an unconventional group portrait. However, it is precisely in this picture that the expert eye of the engineer becomes apparent. The picture actualizes the familiar schematic sectional elevation of construction drawings in the modern (and, therefore, suitable) medium (fig. 4 and 5). The constructional principals of a bridge were summarized: the type of the superstructure and substructure as well as their junction. In detail, we can see the specific trussed girder with its riveting, the form of the upper and lower chords, and the meandering iron safety guard to protect the pedestrians from falling off the bridge. The other half of the picture is taken up by the stone bridge pillar (pier), which has the central function of diverting the entire burden – the net weight of the support system and the variable weight of the traffic –

into the foundation. The truss closes with a u-shaped iron element with supporting diagonal rods. This component part can only be found on this side of the bridge and is used to divert the shear forces. The coat of arms on the pier is an indication that the City of Vienna was the builder.

To close, let us take a look at the figures in the pictures. A form of staffage adopted from painting is one of the recurring set pieces in the photography of landscapes and technical constructions, especially in the nineteenth century. They were usually used to liven up the scenery, create a feeling of depth or provide a measure of scale. In the right frame of mind, one could speculate that the figure standing alone in the overall view is Hornbostel himself, making fun of the proceedings by posing leisurely. The bourgeois clothing, jacket, light-coloured trousers and bowler hat would not detract from that idea. Developing on this assumption, this cameo – having the idea of dedicating this photo to this or that person at the time he commissioned the photographer – would provide the gift with a completely personal touch. There was somewhat of a tradition among upper-class gentlemen for showing themselves off in such a manner. This would mean that we are holding a kind of bourgeois portrait in our hands; not in the physiognomic sense, but one objectifying Hornbostel's engineering ingenuity.

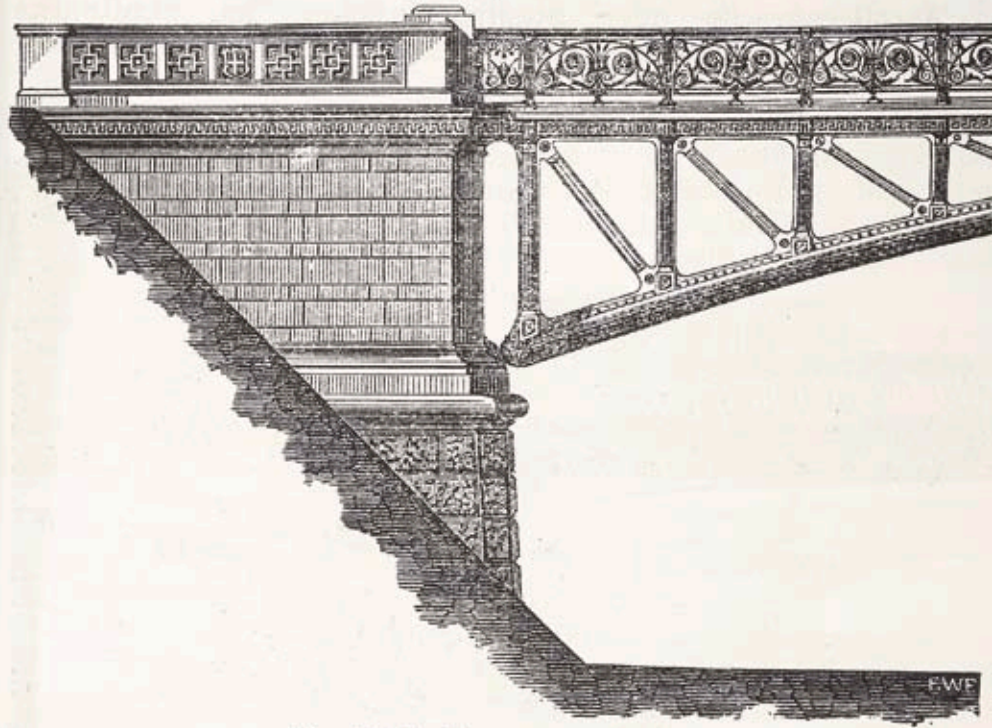
Let us now proceed to the group of people in the second picture. Straight away, we are delighted when we think we recognize our hypothetical engineer on the far left. However, the microscope shows that this is erroneous. Although there are striking similarities, I tend to the notion that we are not dealing with one and the same man. It appears that the colour of the band and form of the brim of the hats are different. Hornbostel: yes or no? Faced with the tiny size of this detail and in spite of all my fondness for the thought, when one makes a comparison with a lithographic portrait²⁶ made, unfortunately, 15 years later in 1880, I must put this aside. Let me start by saying this: The question about this man's identity (just as the other one's) remains unsolved. He was possibly a member of Hornbostel's entourage or assisted Jägermayer.

It is clear that the man was not one of the local residents. Not only his *finer* clothing, but also his body language separates him from them. Distinctly removed from the group, standing calmly with his legs apart, he is looking at the photographer. With the possible exception of the young lad with his hands resting on top of each other on the upper chord, this anonymous gentleman is the only person in the group striking a pose. By this, I mean has taken up a deliberate stance intended to create a specific impression. This is a socially-determined physical technique solely produced by the presence of the camera. The pose expresses the individual's personal wish for expression. A prerequisite for this is an understanding of the technical features of photography and the willingness to subject oneself to them. This meant absolutely suppressing any uncontrolled movement during the exposure if one did not want to have an out-of-focus picture of oneself.

fig. 4 Anonymous, *Tegetthoffbrücke*, before 1873. Construction plan, from: E[mil]. Winkler (ed.), *Technischer Führer durch Wien*, Vienna: Lehmann & Wentzel, 1873. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

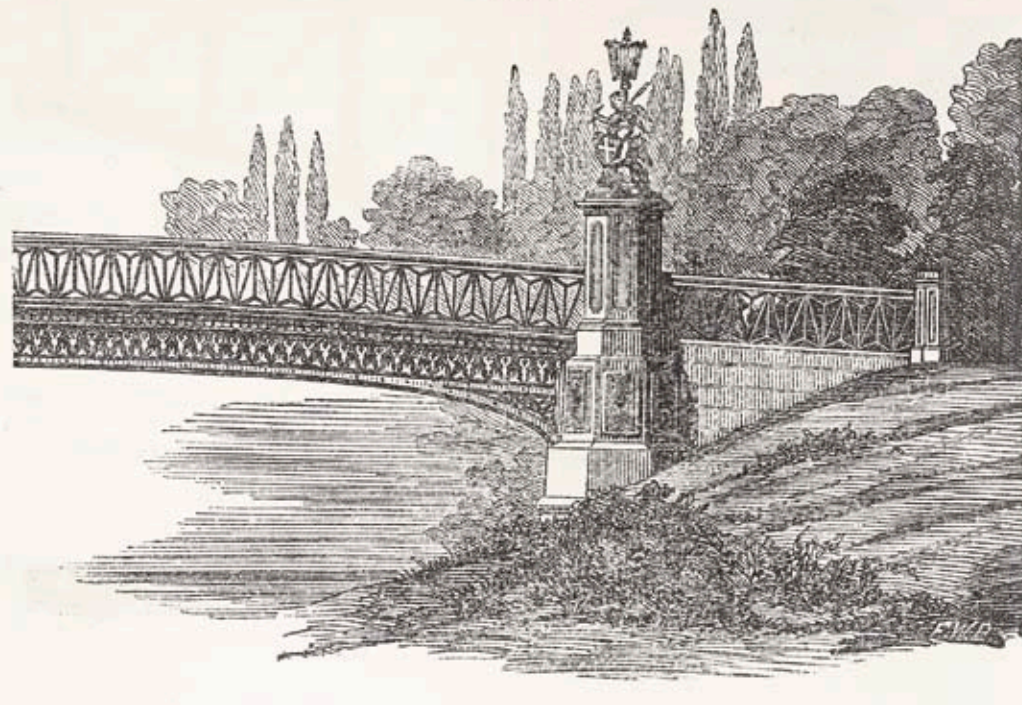
fig. 5 Julius Leth or Georg Krebesz, *Karolinenbrücke* (*Stadtparkbrücke*), before 1873. Woodcut after a photograph on wood (photoxylograph), from: E[mil]. Winkler (ed.), *Technischer Führer durch Wien*, Vienna: Lehmann & Wentzel, 1873. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

Fig. 8.



Tegetthofbrücke. — $\frac{1}{160}$ n. Gr.

Fig. 9.



This is precisely what the children could not – or did not want to – do. Contrary to their upper-class contemporaries, it can be assumed that these, mostly barefooted, proletarian individuals had never seen a photo studio from the inside and were completely unfamiliar with just how rigorous it was to create a picture. It is possible that they had never even seen a photographer. Seeing that they were forced to use the streets and banks along the Wien River as their playgrounds, these children, who were often left to their own devices, could not have failed to notice the arrival of the strangers. Overcome by curiosity, several of them balanced in the loops of the iron guard to be able to follow the proceedings. They clenched onto the upper chord of the bridge in order to maintain their extremely unstable balance. Their excitement about the herald of modernity can literally be seen in the form of the blurring caused by the movement of their little bodies. By consciously including the children – as symbolic representatives of all the bridge users – the conception of the picture goes beyond that of a pure view of

- 1 *Stadt.Leben.Wien* (20 October 2005 – 22 January 2006), Albertina, Vienna; accompanying publications: Monika Faber, Maren Gröning, *Urban Panoramas. Photographs of the Imperial and Government Printing Establishment 1850–1860*, Vienna: Brandstätter, 2008; Michael Ponstingl, *Street Life in Vienna. Photographs from 1861 to 1913*, Vienna: Brandstätter 2008.
- 2 Cf. Alfred Pauser, *Brücken in Wien. Ein Führer durch die Baugeschichte*, Vienna, New York: Springer 2005, 33–35; A. Pauser, email to the author, 5 June 2008.
- 3 Pauser, 2008 (note 2).
- 4 Cf. Rudolf Gerlich (ed.), *Wiener Brücken*, Vienna: [Jugend & Volk], 1982.
- 5 Cf. Günter Dürriegl, 'Der Wienfluß' in: *Der Wienfluß*, Vienna: private publishing venture of the Museums of the City of Vienna 1980, 6–8.
- 6 Cf. Martin Paul, 'Die Wienflußregulierung' in: M. Paul (ed.), *Technischer Führer durch Wien*, Vienna: Gerlach & Wiedling 1910, 212–223, here 212–215.
- 7 Building contract (substructure), Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, H.A.-Akten und Verträge / 1382–1984 Zl. 128/1864.
- 8 Cf. Else Spiesberger, 'Der Wienfluß – Lebensader des Bezirkes' in: Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Mariahilfer Heimatmuseums (ed.), *Das Wiener Heimatbuch. Mariahilf*, Vienna: Austria Press, 1963, 129–140; Bertrand Michael Buchmann, 'Dynamik des Städtebaus' in: Peter Csendes, Ferdinand Oppl (eds.), *Wien. Geschichte einer Stadt. Band 3: Von 1790 bis zur Gegenwart*, Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau 2006, 47–84, here 52f.
- 9 Cf. Paul, 1910 (note 6) 214f; Spiesberger, 1963 (note 8) 133.
- 10 Anonymous, '[Zur Sanitätspolizei]' in: *Das Vaterland*, 4 August 1865, 3.
- 11 Cf. Spiesberger, 1963 (note 8) 133.
- 12 Cf. Buchmann, 2006 (note 8) 60–65.

engineering technology. We can only assume what moved Hornbostel and Jägermayer to do this – just as why the picture was not stamped but delivered together with the other one with its dedication. In any case, the picture gives an impression – albeit a somewhat faded one – of what photographing in the suburbs meant in 1865. Such social depictions are rare. Viennese photographers – amateurs, in the first place – did not discover the “other side of the tracks” until the 1890s.

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- 13 There is an open casement on the top floor of the house on the left next to the one with the dominantly elongated fire wall (in the total view, the rear left lantern intersects with this window).
- 14 Carl Hornbostel's signature can be found on the drawing with the plans for the bridge (Technical University, Vienna, Main Library, Sign. 184.372 v).
- 15 Anonymous, '[Witterung]' in: *Die Debatte*, 3 August 1865, 3.
- 16 Cf. Anonymous, '[Städtisches]' in: *Neue Freie Presse*, 9 July 1865, 9.
- 17 Cf. Construction contract (superstructure), Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, H.A.-Akten und Verträge / 1382–1984 Zl. 128/1864.
- 18 Cf. Anonymous, 1865 (note 16).
- 19 Cf. *Beschreibender Katalog des k.k. historischen Museums der österreichischen Eisenbahnen*, Vienna: private publishing venture 1902, 181f.
- 20 Cf. Anonymous, 1865 (note 16).
- 21 Cf. *Oesterreichische Buchhändler-Correspondenz (OBC)*, vol. 3, 20.3.1862, advertisement no. 327.
- 22 Cf. *OBC* (note 21), vol. 4, 1.7.1863, 182; *ibid.*, 1.8.1863, 216; *ibid.*, vol. 5, 1.1.1864, 8; *ibid.*, 10.4.1864, advertisement no. 394; *ibid.*, 1.8.1864, advertisement no. 817; *ibid.*, vol. 6, 10.2.1865, 37.
- 23 Cf. Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Wiener Handelsgericht, B74, E6, 288.
- 24 Cf. Anton Holzer, 'Hinauf! Fotografie im Hochgebirge (1849–1914)' in: Deutscher Alpenverein (ed.), *Berge im Kasten. Fotografien aus der Sammlung des Deutschen Alpenvereins, 1870–1914*, Munich: unknown publisher 2006, 14–31, here 17–23.
- 25 Johann Varrone, *Magdalenenbrücke*, 1888, watercolour and opaque colour (Wien Museum Karlsplatz, Vienna); Alois Lahoda, *Magdalenenbrücke*, 1894, watercolour (Wien Museum Karlsplatz, Vienna).
- 26 Fritz, *Carl Hornbostel*, 1880, lithography (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv); I thank Robert Kinnl, Technical Museum, Vienna for drawing my attention to this.

Emöke Tomsics

II The Authenticity of the Artist and the Accuracy of Information Mutual Influences of Creative Art and Photography in Event Representation in Hungary in the 1860s

The advent of photography in the nineteenth century brought about a fundamental transformation in the traditional frameworks of visualization and sensation, as well as dramatic changes in the modes of visual memorialization, in the tools and possibilities of describing and interpreting the world around us. The 1860s were marked by emulation between the conventional modes of image creation (painting and lithography) and photography. Their inevitable and reciprocal influences nurtured several new methods of image recording, as well as a novel interpretation of visual authenticity, which remained prevalent into the early twentieth century.

An event of exceptional historical significance – the coronation of Emperor Francis Joseph as King of Hungary in 1867 – inspired an ensemble of images equally important for historians and experts in the history of photography. For the first time in Hungarian history, the task of recording the key moments and main protagonists of this event was assigned to photographers besides painters. This was when, according to our present knowledge, the first documentary photographs were taken. These pictures present a diagnosis, registered at a very propitious moment, of the transformation of visual culture in Hungary, and reveal the shifting ideals and possibilities involved in the old and new technologies of image creation. These pictures, arranged into spectacular tableaux, possess a special importance for the history of Hungarian photography, because they capture the moment for us when photography broke through the traditional boundaries inherited from representative arts and took the first steps on the path towards the genre which was later to become its own, *ie.* the reportage.

fig. 1 József Heller, *The coronation strike of the sword*.
Albumen collage, 29.8 x 23.5 cm. Kiscell Museum of the
Budapest Historical Museum.

From the Hungarians' perspective, the name of Francis Joseph, who had succeeded to the throne as a young man in 1848, evoked the bloody suppression – with the help of the Tsar –

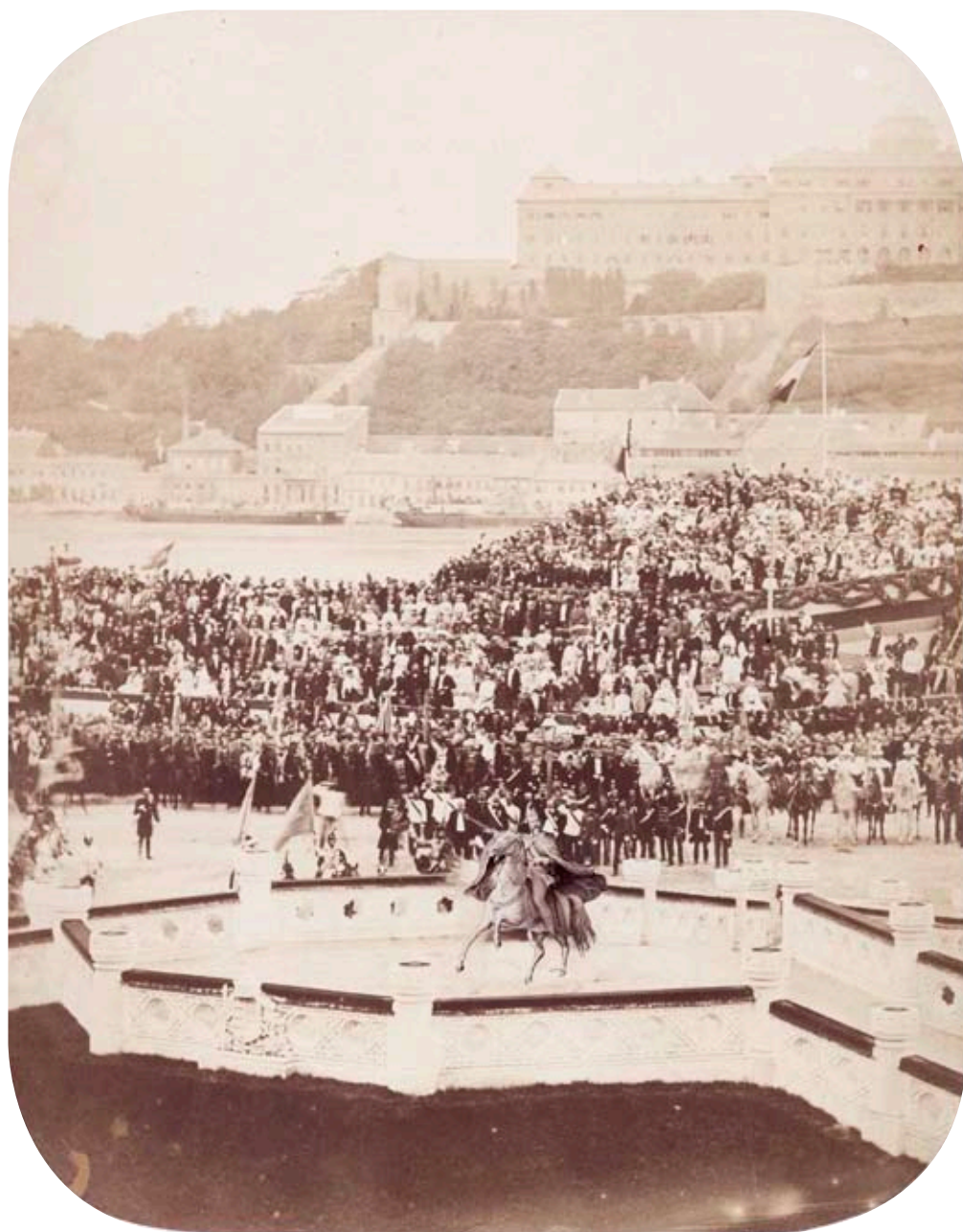




fig. 2 Borsos and Doctor, *Count Béla Széchenyi* (a member of the aristocratic *banderium*, in sixteenth-century style gala attire worn during the coronation). Coloured albumen print, 29.1 x 22.6 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

of the 1848–1849 revolution and war of independence, the execution of the head of the first Hungarian administered government and thirteen generals of the revolutionary army, followed by a decade of Germanization, absolutist rule, and the attempt to relegate the country to the status of a province of Austria. The Compromise of 1867 resulted both from Austria's debacles on the international diplomatic and military scene, and the perseverance and consistency of the moderate Hungarian opposition led by Ferenc Deák. With Count Gyula Andrassy as premier, a Hungarian Ministry was formed and, after nearly twenty years of rule, Francis Joseph was crowned King of Hungary on 8 June. The king was escorted to the locations of the ceremony in Pest and Buda by *banderia* (cavalry units) of the aristocracy and the counties, clad in attire evoking the most important events of Hungarian history, including anti-Habsburg struggles. Because of the gravity of the event, as well as the ambivalent sentiments of the contemporaries, the question of authenticity in the images that recorded the coronation, assumed paramount importance.

This very diverse stock of visual source material can be classified into four groups: (1) original photographs, (2) reconstructions created using collage techniques, (3) paintings ordered by the court and aristocrats, and (4) drawings and lithographs intended for the illustration of magazines, or as prints to serve as presents for their subscribers.

The vast majority of the original photographs, in accordance with the technological possibilities of the times, are portraits. They occur in innumerable instances on the images of events intended for information and memorialization, and were created using a variety of recording methods.

The photographers did not receive a commission to record the events, but the organizing committee of the coronation, consisting of aristocrats, called on the members of the *banderia* to have themselves and their attire photographed, “so that they may provide models for the future”. All the portraits were taken by one of two studios, Borsos and Doctor,¹ who had been painters before becoming photographers (fig. 2), or Ágoston Bülch.² The former even took equestrian photos – real rarities at the time – of the aristocratic participants in the procession, while the latter prepared a gala album of photographs coloured after reality for the royal couple. Both of the studios sometimes modified the images taken. Borsos and Doctor created a wooden fence out of the wall of a circus building, while Bülch used the paintbrush to implement small corrections to the dresses, or painted the simple black costume of the model into the colours of the gala dress.

The cameras of two renowned portraitists, the Borsos-Doctor duo, and József Heller,³ were witness to the open air events of the ceremonies, the royal oath, and the King's sword stroke. The pictures taken by Heller at the coronation mound, recording the movements on the square at nine different moments, almost amount to a real photographic reportage. The

most picturesque episode of the entire series of the coronation ceremonies, but also the one technologically impossible to grasp, was the one in which the ruler galloped onto the mound symbolizing the country brandishing his sword and swung this towards the four points of the compass, implying his readiness to defend the nation against all peril from whichever direction. Neither of the photographers was able to record this act on a sensitive plate and, therefore, both of them used a collage figure, put together from a drawn body and the portrait by Ludwig Angerer, to represent the monarch (fig. 1 – the picture, in which the real, but blurred, *spectre* of Francis Joseph is visible under the figure glued onto it, evokes thoughts worthy of the pen of Roland Barthes). The collage figures, representing the king on horseback, raising the sword high above his head, were also produced on a large scale as visiting cards and were among the most popular coronation souvenirs.

Only painters received official commissions to memorialize the coronation events. The organizing committee ordered four watercolours for the court from the famous historical painter Bertalan Székely (1835–1910), also renowned as a news draughtsman. He was also commissioned by the *Illustrated London News* to supply visual information about the coronation. The client was quite specific about what was expected of Székely's paintings, which have unfortunately only survived in reproductions: "Besides refinement in the execution, the artist should endeavour at complete historical accuracy, recording the individual participants, with every detail of their attire and their overall appearance, with full faithfulness."⁴ The painter, although he was in attendance at the events and made sketches, could only fulfil this task by creating the figures with the help of photographs. Székely, one of the artists who opposed photography most vehemently and also put his reservations in writing⁵ had a genuine concern for the authority of painting in the face of the "mechanically faithful" mode of image creation but, nevertheless, relied on the pictures of Borsos and Doctor, as well as Bülich, in representing the features and the splendid costumes in the participants of the ceremonies with photographic accuracy.

Apart from the painting which represents the sword stroke during the coronation in a film-like fashion by collapsing two separate moments into one – the procession marching into the square and the strike of the sword are shown simultaneously – Székely's pictures record the events with the accuracy of a reportage. The extent to which this mode of representation reflected the demands of the client is demonstrated by the fact that Székely's later oil sketches were conceived in an entirely different style. Instead of minute detail, these paintings are marked by a sublime dramatic character, evoked by strong effects of light.

The equestrian photographs by Borsos and Doctor (fig. 3) were converted into paintings by Wilhelm Richter (1824–1892), the painter who specialized in hunting scenes (meet pictures) and horses and also worked for the imperial family. The fence belonging to the studio is even recognizable in some of the equestrian portraits ordered by the aristocrats, court dignitaries and



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fig. 3 Borsos and Doctor, *Prince Ödön Batthyány* (a member of the aristocratic banderium, wearing silver chain-armor and leopard mantle, holding a mace). Albumen print, 28 x 22 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 4 Borsos and Doctor, *Prince Ödön Batthyány and his retinue in the coronation procession* (painting by Wilhelm Richter). Albumen print, visiting card, 5.4 x 8.9 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 5 Béla Vizkelety, *The Oath of Zrínyi*. Lithograph, 59.9 x 85.5 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 6 Franz Kollarz, *The coronation of Queen Elizabeth*. Pencil drawing, 38.6 x 49.3 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 7 Franz Kollarz, *The coronation of Queen Elizabeth*. Drawing, lithograph, 47.7 x 53.7 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

standard-bearers who participated in the coronation procession. Sixteen pictures by Richter – completed at record speed – which may have been thrown onto the market immediately after the event, are known today – mostly in visiting-card copies. ⁶ (fig. 4)

Draughtsmen and lithographers also made abundant use of the speed and faithfulness of representation ensured by photographed portraits. From the beginning of the 1860s, etched portraits, as well as ethnographic and city representations made after photographs, were regularly printed in the Hungarian press. Ever more frequently, the faces of the individuals on the images of events were also drawn after photographed portraits and then inserted into the ensemble. Different artists often drew inspiration from the very same photos. Although it took less time to complete a faithful portrait if a photographed model existed, its integration into an environment created with artistic freedom was more time consuming than the sketching of reportage drawings from immediate information about events. Therefore, this method of image recording first became widespread in the form of prints, whose primary purpose was memorialization. The first, very complex, known composition of this kind recorded the aristocratic participants in a patriotic charity event in 1860, in a heroic *tableau vivant* evoking the times of the anti-Ottoman struggles. ⁷ (fig. 5) However, by 1867 the papers also published illustrations executed after photographs taken by Vinzenz Katzler (1823–1882) and Franz Kollarz (1829–1894). The picture by Franz Kollarz representing the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, published as a supplement to two weeklies, provides an insight into the process of the use of photographed portraits for graphic illustration. In comparison with the artist's pencilled sketch, the carriage of the head of the figures became different, obviously because of the insertion of facial features taken from the available photographs (fig. 6 and 7).

However, the most interesting piece among all the representations of the coronation events is a gala album consisting of collages multiplied using photographic methods. ⁸ The author and publisher was the lithographer József Pataki. The novelty of the album consisted in its



conscious application of a technology of image creation which was unusual in Hungary at that time. The photographs of the individual participants in the event were placed against a drawn background. In a few cases, almost all the figures were represented by photographs, in others only the heads were replaced with photos. The collages thus completed were photographed anew, and then inserted into the album. In the albums, pictures representing the same event often differ from one another because the author either replaced some figures or added new ones.

The above solution, known as reconstruction image, was often applied in group pictures and portraits, especially in cases when no opportunity presented itself for taking the desired photograph. Individual or group portraits of the dynasty are characteristic Hungarian examples. This was the way in which the images of Francis Joseph and Elizabeth in Hungarian costume were made before the coronation: the photographer took Elizabeth's face from a picture by Rabending and placed it on a body clad in a Hungarian costume, while Francis Joseph's Austrian attire was simply re-painted into a Hungarian Hussar's uniform. The same solution is visible on visiting cards representing the royal couple with the coronation insignia in the style of eighteenth-century royal portraits.

Thanks to this technology, not only the moment became immortalized – something which the camera was not yet able to achieve – it also became possible to place the faces familiar from the press into a well-known and comprehensible frame in a novel, realistic fashion.

The most sophisticated device for the amalgamation of photograph, drawing and lithograph in one image is found in the picture in the Pataki album recording the act of coronation. József Pataki “enriched” Székely Bertalan's drawing of the coronation, published in the *Illustrated London News*,⁹ with the photographs of the participants (fig. 8). And, to carry the blending of pictures and artists even further, he inserted one of the coronation etchings by Katzler into



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the background of his collage and also supplemented it with a few photographed portraits. Strangely enough, the portraits in this etching, executed after photographs, were replaced by Pataki with photographs!

In a similarly refined manner, Pataki converted a photo by Borsos and Doctor into a collage recording the scene of the sword stroke. He “enriched” this image with figures cut from fashion prints, images from visiting cards, and some fragments of the picture by another photographer, József Heller. Two further metamorphoses of this photograph are also known. The likeness of one of these versions to photography is astonishing (its author is, unfortunately, unknown although it is possibly Borsos and Doctor). It takes a very careful viewer to discover that the mounted figures around the mound, also derived from photographs, are considerably larger than the audience seated immediately in front of them. The other one is a painting. In the picture of the sword stroke by Ede Heinrich (1818–1885), court painter of Archduke Maximilian, who received the commission to record the act from the court, the decoration of the buildings of the location, the square on the Pest side of the Chain Bridge, and the coronation mound, are represented with photographic accuracy. This should not come as a surprise: the composition and the perspective of this painting are fully identical with that of the picture taken by the popular photographers, Borsos and Doctor (fig. 9).

A lithograph representing the opening of the 1865 Diet that prepared the way to the Compromise further contributes to the understanding of the mutual aid of creative art and photography. In Vinzenz Katzler’s work, it is clearly visible that the heads of the participants were executed after photographs, and certain elements of this picture later recurred on some of Pataki’s reconstructions of the coronation. It is not only striking that the two authors used the same visiting card portraits – in one case as a main image, and in the other inserted into a composition – but the maker of the collage even took drawn figures from Katzler’s picture.

These examples illustrate the fact that the photographic and graphic elements of the images circulated in this period freely migrated among artists, publishers and printers according to the user’s needs, and that the collage “arch-reportage images” were, after all realizations of a procedure of image creation already standard in the form of lithographically-duplicated event representations, using the methods of photography.

On these grounds, we may risk the following claim about the relationship between photographs and the traditional genres of pictorial representation in the period under discussion: the photographic vision reached consumers not only through photographs but, thanks to the frequent use of photographs by the visual arts, also through countless channels, further whetting their – already increasing – appetite for the realism of photography.

fig. 8 József Pataki, *The coronation strike of the sword*. Albumen collage, 12.6 x 17.7 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 9 Ede Heinrich, *Strike of the Sword*. Water-colour, 71.6 x 117.5 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

For the “image consumer”, accustomed to encountering etched portraits executed after photographs and published in the press on a daily basis, photographic realism became one of the chief sources of authenticity. The great appeal of the portrait is apparent from the

advertisements for collages and etchings, tempting the reader to place orders. They emphasise the number of photographed portraits included in the images. The publisher of the *tableau vivant* mentioned above calls attention to the thirty likenesses of photographic authenticity;¹⁰ one of the papers promised its subscribers twenty portraits on the print recording the coronation of the Queen,¹¹ while the Pataki album boasted one hundred portraits in its picture of the coronation gala dinner.¹²

In the case of the collages based on genuine photographs, special care was taken to emphasize their greatest merit, the faithfulness of the portraits. Their main endeavour being the collection of the fullest possible portrait gallery of those in attendance at the given event, it was even irrelevant if the inserted picture dated from an earlier time, or if the position of the participants was not real. This is revealed by the fact that, as soon as Pataki acquired a new photograph, he inserted it into his pictures. Comparing the painting by Bertalan Székely and Pataki's collage which relies on it, one cannot help discovering that the position of the participants is represented far more accurately in the former than in the latter – one may also say that it is more authentic regarding the act. Pataki, by inserting original photographs, subverted the order defined by protocol. He did not even bother if a person was represented twice, or if the photograph of someone actually not present on the occasion was also used. For instance, Ferenc Deák, the emblematic figure who played a crucial role in preparing the ground for the coronation, and whose face appears on the collages as well as the etchings and the paintings, did not attend any of the events – as the contemporary press put it: “He was conspicuous by his absence.”

In vain did the camera witness the open air events of the coronation; the primary consideration in the visual memorialization of the series of ceremonies was not the objective recording of the actions, but the kind of interpretation familiar from the traditional visual arts. Pataki's collages do not merely reconstruct, but represent, the events in question.



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The use of photographs invested the images with a reportage-like naturalism, while the composition inherited from the visual arts ensured their rhetorical effect. Regarding their composition, the collages based on photographs were also adjusted to the canon of creative arts and, under the sign of historical authenticity, the traditional iconographic devices of the theme of a royal coronation were adopted. Praising the drawings of one of the most successful gala albums, the *Coronation Memorial Volume*, the reviewer of one of the newspapers underpinned the above claim about the dual requirement *ie.* of photographic realism in the portraits and idealizing, artistic composition: “The individual figures are real masterpieces by virtue of the authentic drawing, while *in the larger group formations reality is intertwined with the ideal.*”¹³ In relation to events of historical significance, this combination was the new interpretation of visual authenticity brought about by the advent of photography.

A representation dating from 1860 aptly illustrates the extent to which the presence of photography – no matter what kind of presence – in a picture lent an aura of reality and factuality to the spectacle. A visiting card recorded the scene of Count István Széchenyi, one of the charismatic figures of the Hungarian Vormärz period, being sculpted by the Austrian artist Hans Gasser a few months before the former committed suicide in the Döbling lunatic asylum. It is almost completely certain that the count was never photographed, and yet, some parts of the small visiting card evidently have their origins in photography.

- 1 The photographers József Borsos and Albert Doctor maintained a common studio in Pest between 1862 and 1868. Both of them had studied painting at the Viennese Academy. They were especially popular with the Hungarian aristocracy.
- 2 Ágoston Bülich's photographic studio existed in Pest between 1863 and 1890. In 1868, he was the first to be appointed Hungarian court photographer, by virtue of the album of coloured photographs of the members of the coronation procession presented to the royal couple.
- 3 The photographer József Heller maintained studios at several locations in Pest between 1847 and 1875. He was a portraitist especially popular among the middle classes. The pictures he took around the coronation mound have survived in several collections, both in 24 x 19 cm size and as visiting cards.
- 4 *Vasárnapi Ujság*, 1892, no. 39, 391.
- 5 Bertalan Székely, ‘Festészet és fotográfia’ (Painting and photography), *Koszorú*, 1863, no. 22, 505–510. Also published in András Bán (ed.), *On Photography*, Budapest: Múzsák Közművelődési Kiadó 1984, 38–53.

Even though, from the 1890s, snapshot photography and reportage became ever more widespread in the press, in case of need – *ie.* failure to obtain a genuine report photo – the papers continued to publish representations of events composed of both graphic and photographic elements until the end of the 1910s. When it came to events of symbolic significance, icon-like images remained in high demand for a long time. Some critiques of the photographs taken at the coronation of Charles IV in 1916 still evoke the requirements that had been set towards the pictures of the 1867 coronation, and refer to the “failure of photography” in the face of painting.¹⁴

My paper has sought to provide a sketch of the processes at work in the interplay of old and new methods of image recording during the 1860s in the field of event representation. Through the analysis and comparison of original photographs, paintings, and lithographs published in the press or sent as presents by magazines, I have explored some of the first steps in establishing the boundaries between their respective fields, and the ways and means by which the new medium contributed to memory formation. Besides providing insights into the path that leads from the interpretation characteristic of traditional methods of image recording to the “objective” quality of snapshot photography later on, the analysis of the coronation images also throws light on the development of the Hungarian notion of historical authenticity in the period.

- 6 On the basis of the ordering numbers of the photographers, we may suspect that some of the visiting card copies of Richter’s paintings reached the shops while photographing the banderialists was still in progress.
- 7 The Oath of Zrínyi. Béla Vizkelety’s painting was put onto stone by Alajos Rohn. The photographer Antal Simonyi took thirty portraits for this composition, which was the closing scene of an aristocratic gala performance at the National Theatre, organized for the aid of the victims of famine in Croatia.
- 8 Sándor Török (ed.), *Koronázási emléklapok az 1867. évi nemzeti alkotmányos örömműnnep megörökítésére*, designed and published by József Pataki, Pest, June 1867.
- 9 *The Illustrated London News*, 29 June 1867, 654.
- 10 *Vasárnapi Ujság*, 1860, no. 16, 190.
- 11 *Családi Kör*, 30 June 1867, 618.
- 12 *Fővárosi Lapok*, 23 June 1867, 571.
- 13 *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág*, 1867, no. 3, 429.
- 14 László Tóth, ‘A fénykép kudarca’ (The failure of the photograph), *Nyugat*, 1917, no. 6.

Steven F. Joseph

I2 Simonau & Toovey: The Introduction of Photomechanical Printing to Belgium, 1860–1873

Lithographers were often at the forefront of early attempts to apply photography to the printing press. The process of lithography, introduced at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was almost as revolutionary in its time as photography would become a few decades later; it supplanted, to some extent, well entrenched techniques of illustration such as copper engraving and went on to expand the scope of visual culture via book, poster and printed ephemera. Therefore, it was in keeping with the mentality of lithographers to be attuned to innovation; amongst the first to foresee the potential of photography, they would try to co-opt it, technologically and commercially.

Belgium's first photographer, J.B.A.M. (Marcellin) Jobard (1792–1861), himself a former lithographic printer and publisher, immediately predicted the rapprochement of photography and lithography. In a sealed note which he submitted to the French Académie des Sciences in November 1840, the contents of which were revealed in 1859, Jobard drafted a summary “description des procédés pour l’impression lithographique d’images héliographiques”.¹ Although Jobard played no further role in this development, the gist of his idea was about to be realized, as a fusion of photography and lithography brought photomechanical printing to Belgium.

Belgium was in the full throes of the industrial revolution in this period. Brussels, the capital, possessed a substantial and literate middle class, whose print buying was catered for by several longstanding firms including Simonau & Toovey. Gustave Simonau (1810–1870) was a watercolour painter and artistic lithographer, trained in the studio of his father Pierre. Pierre and Gustave Simonau founded their lithography works in Brussels in 1828 following a nine-year stay in London. The firm's premises were ransacked during the uprising of 1830 which led to Belgian independence from the Netherlands; a temporary setback. In the following years, the family enterprise prospered, gaining a reputation for views of Gothic monuments in Belgium

and neighbouring lands that were coming back into fashion, after centuries of neglect, at that time. The versatile Gustave played a key role in the firm's success, as artist, lithographer and printer: "Il a le triple mérite de dessiner d'après nature, de transporter ses dessins sur la pierre avec le crayon lithographique et enfin de les imprimer lui-même."²

The Simonau family retained strong links with England, particularly via Gustave's uncle François Simonau (1783–1859), a portrait painter and lithographer who had settled in London in 1815. William Toovey (born in Canterbury in 1821), a member of a family of artists and printers, arrived in Brussels from London in 1847 and became Gustave's business partner. His siblings included Edwin (1826–1906), a watercolour artist known for melancholy landscapes, and elder sister Anne (born 1820), who became Gustave Simonau's wife. Simonau & Toovey henceforth formed a dynamic and forward-looking partnership, issuing plate books and series of lithographs under their own imprint as well as supplying illustrations for other publishers.

Photography offered a logical outlet for expansion. Belgium had an advanced system for protecting intellectual property rights. The patent registry was an obvious source for monitoring technological developments. The first three patents registered in the field of photomechanical printing in Belgium, by Alphonse Poitevin, Charles Nègre and W.H.F. Talbot respectively,³ were either incompatible with Simonau & Toovey's printing presses and therefore too costly to integrate (Nègre and Talbot's gravure processes) or no longer available for licensing (the Paris firm of Lemer cier having acquired the rights to Poitevin's process). The first feasible opportunity to acquire photomechanical technology arose from an unusual source. Eduard Isaac Asser (1809–1894) was a member of a prominent family of Amsterdam lawyers. One of the very few Dutch amateur daguerreotypists, Asser had the attic of his townhouse converted into a studio. He was elected to membership of the Société française de photographie (SFP) in 1855 and exhibited his work at the first international photography exhibition held in

Amsterdam that same year.⁴ What prompted this well-to-do advocate to conduct experiments in photolithography is unclear, but by 1859 Asser had made sufficient progress to warrant him applying for patents under three jurisdictions⁵ and then publishing details of his process.⁶

Asser's process was recognized as a significant advance in photolithography since it was the first workable transfer process, based on the sensitization of paper with bichromated gum, rather than relying on the direct sensitization of the litho stone. Transferring the photosensitized image from paper to stone eliminated unnecessary handling of the heavy stones and opened the way for the same image to be transferred with ease to a number of stones for large print runs. Asser was hopeful of the commercial potential of his process, sufficiently different from Poitevin's basic photolithographic process to merit protection of its own; hence the patent applications in France, England and Belgium. It was this Belgian patent⁷ that Simonau & Toovey decided to acquire. Any doubts as to the process' viability would have been dispelled by two public airings of sample prints in 1859, at the North Holland Industrial Exhibition in Amsterdam and, more importantly for an international audience, at the SFP in Paris.⁸ In fact, on both occasions, Asser exhibited, alongside the proofs, litho stones to demonstrate the steps in his process.



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fig. 1 Unknown photographer, *Arrivée à Spa*, printed by Simonau & Toovey, c.1862. Photolithograph, 15.8 x 19.7 cm. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

fig. 2 *Price list for photolithographic printing* by Simonau & Toovey, 1873. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

fig. 3 Unknown photographer, *Notre Dame du Münster*, Ruremonde, Limbourg, printed by Simonau & Toovey, 1863. Photolithograph, 18.4 x 15.2 cm. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. A copy of this print was included in William Toovey's submission to the Société française de photographie.

Following negotiations conducted by Asser's son-in-law Edouard Mussche, a Brussels lawyer, Simonau & Toovey purchased rights to the Belgian patent on 21 December 1860.⁹ The following May, at the next exhibition of the SFP, they exhibited five specimens of the process, two reproductions of engravings, two reproductions of paintings and an unidentified view from life.¹⁰ The presence of a single print other than after an artwork may indicate teething troubles in obtaining continuous tone reproductions under normal studio conditions. In the first phase of exploiting the process, from 1861 to mid-1863, Simonau & Toovey's output published in books and periodicals is, indeed, for the most part in-line reproductions of artists' sketches and facsimiles of early engravings. In cases where the transfer process onto stone resulted in a loss of visual information, it would have been simple to strengthen the image with manual retouching. One outstanding exception – the only series of images from life which can unequivocally be attributed to this early period – is an undated souvenir view book *Spa et ses environs photolithographiés par Simonau & Toovey d'après le procédé de Mr Asser*, published under the imprint of G. Engel in Spa and containing thirteen prints of the main sites in the eponymous spa town (fig. 1). The images have an experimental appearance, grainy, most of the images printed in two tints, grey on bistre. The individual mounts are blindstamped EA, unique in the firm's output, indicating that Asser himself may have been involved in the printing or at least in quality control.

If the earliest commercial output was variable, this would explain why William Toovey set about improving Asser's process, efforts which came to fruition with a patent that he took out in 1863.¹¹ Toovey's improvements concerned using pressure for transferring the image

to stone, whereby heavily applied force caused the bichromated gum particles to penetrate the stone without the need for retouching or manual intervention. This paved the way for greater reliability in the printing process, a larger number of impressions per stone and, therefore, economies of scale.¹² The main advantage was gained in halftone reproductions, to compete against albumen prints, where Simonau & Toovey could stress the stability of photolithographic images compared to their commercial rivals' albumen prints that were prone to fading. Furthermore, albumen printing was slower and more labour-intensive and, therefore, less amenable to economies of scale than photomechanical printing. Typically, a series produced by photolithography would retail at about one-third the price of equivalent albumen prints. The longer the print-run, the greater the potential cost savings; hence, the very real incentive to extend the process to high-quality halftone impressions. The firm's price scale (fig. 2) shows that Simonau & Toovey charged twenty to twenty-five percent more for prints in halftone than in line, a modest premium if we assume that the latter were competitive with traditional lithographic impressions. It should also be noted that, by offering large format prints of up to 60 x 78 cm, the firm was positioning itself in the market for fine-art prints suitable for framing and display.

Toovey's improvements constituted a real breakthrough, commercially and aesthetically, allowing him to exhibit output of a consistently high standard, and bringing professional recognition and greater commercial opportunities. He exhibited under the firm's name at the SFP in 1863 and 1864, careful to credit Asser as the inventor¹³ and at the Photographic Society of London in 1864 where he was awarded a medal for the best photolithographs.¹⁴ Toovey could now be confident that the firm's prints counted amongst the finest photomechanical work in Europe. He, therefore, sought further recognition by submitting a set of prints for the prestigious Grand Prix of the Duc de Luynes, the long-running contest, administered by the SFP, for the best photomechanical process.¹⁵ The prize was eventually won by Poitevin; in its final report, the severely critical committee rejected Toovey's submission as being too derivative of Asser's, while Asser's own claim was dismissed as insufficiently distinct from Poitevin's original process.¹⁶

It is during this period that Simonau & Toovey's most notable collaboration flourished – with the English-born and Bruges-based art historian W.H.J. (James) Weale (1832–1917). Weale shared not only an Anglo-Belgian background in printing with Simonau & Toovey but also an interest in medieval art. His periodical *Le Beffroi*, which ran to four volumes between 1863 and 1873, was the first art-historical journal to provide a forum for serious archival research and scholarly criticism of early Flemish artistic heritage.¹⁷ It was predominantly illustrated with photolithographs (fig. 3), undoubtedly the first periodical in the world to use photomechanical illustrations so consistently. Weale organized a major exhibition of ecclesiastical art in Malines (Mechelen) in 1864; the most ambitious event yet held in the field.¹⁸ Weale planned a photographically illustrated record taken by the photographer and photographic printer

PHOTOLITHOGRAPHIE
FONDÉE W. TOOVEY

SIMONAU ET TOOVEY
BRUXELLES
PRIX-COURANT.
Dessins aux traits

FORMAT.	CÉLURE ou MOYEN.	PRIX DE L'IMPRESSION PAR		
		100 CO.	500 CO.	1000 CO.
18 x 24	12.00	3.00	14.00	24.00
21 x 27	15.00	4.00	18.00	30.00
24 x 30	20.00	5.00	22.00	35.00
30 x 40	30.00	10.00	40.00	60.00

Demi-taille.
Dessins ombres ou objets d'impression

FORMAT.	CÉLURE ou MOYEN.	PRIX DE L'IMPRESSION PAR		
		100 CO.	500 CO.	1000 CO.
18 x 24	15.00	4.00	18.00	30.00
21 x 27	20.00	5.00	22.00	35.00
24 x 30	25.00	6.00	28.00	45.00
30 x 40	35.00	12.00	48.00	75.00

Les formats et qualités des papiers étant exactement
suivis, les prix peuvent pas se comprendre dans les prix
ci-dessus, le prix du papier.
Notre format le plus grand, ouvrage non compris est de
60 x 78.

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4



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fig. 4 Joseph Maes, *Statue en chêne polychrome & Daniel dans la fosse aux lions*, printed by Simonau & Toovey, 1866 from a negative taken in 1864, photolithograph, 24.7 x 19.8 cm. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

fig. 5 Louis Duchâtel, *Vue du Marché au Poisson [Tournai]*, printed by Simonau & Toovey, 1864, photolithograph, 22.2 x 14.3 cm. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Joseph Maes (1838–1908), then operating out of Brussels. A first edition appeared as *Album des objets d'art religieux du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance exposés à Malines en 1864*, under Maes' imprint in 1864 with fifty-seven albumen prints and priced at 200 francs. A second edition was published in 1866 under the title *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica. Choix d'objets d'art religieux du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance exposés à Malines en septembre 1864* bearing the Simonau & Toovey imprint and containing the same images in photolithography, at the more affordable price of sixty francs (fig. 4). For quality and sheer number of plates, this work is arguably the firm's finest body of work.

Whether for aesthetic reasons or their clients' innate conservatism, no other periodical employed the firm's photolithography to the extent of *Le Beffroi*, or any publication as many halftone prints as Weale's work. The intermittent or occasional use of the process was more usual, and can be seen in a range of learned journals and regional publications. Often the author or publisher would commission Simonau & Toovey to supply illustrations in a variety of processes. As a typical example, amongst the nearly fifty lithos and chromos which illustrate *Tournai ancien et moderne* by A.F.J. Bozière, published by Delmée in Tournai in 1864, there are two views in photolithography from negatives taken by the author's brother-in-law, the professional local photographer Louis Duchâtel (fig. 5).

While Simonau & Toovey exploited Asser's Belgian patent and continued to pay licence fees, the inventor himself was attempting to sell his French and English patents. Negotiations with Lemer cier in Paris were unsuccessful and Asser was forced to conclude, in a letter to Edouard Mussche dated 2 January 1865:

“Je vous renvoie ci-inclus le contrat fait dans le temps avec Toovey. Il me paraît aussi qu'il n'y a plus lieu à espérer des resultats satisfaisants financiers du brevet de France et celui d'Angleterre et je veux donc bien quant à moi ne pas insister que MM Simoneau [*sic*] et Toovey poursuivent à payer les annuités, à condition qu'ils continuent à payer le brevet belge, et qu'ils fassent tous leurs efforts pour le faire fructifier.”¹⁹

Asser's offer to forego his annual fee is accompanied by an undercurrent of frustration. Whereas the Brussels firm was principally concerned with a short-term return on investment, Asser was now building on his original process to focus on fresh technical challenges. In 1862, he had registered an extension to his patent covering the transfer of artists' drawings to sensitized paper as an intermediate negative.²⁰ Asser pursued this line of research, eventually to include having drawings etched directly onto sensitized glass plates, in other words a form of *cliché-verre*, employing the technique for illustrating two books published in Amsterdam.²¹ His letter to Mussche continues: “Il y a un avenir dans ce genre, puisque les artistes eux-mêmes peuvent par là former des gravures de leur propre main. Monsieur Toovey a voulu faire des essais dans cette

branche. L'a t'il fait? et a-t-il réussi? Contre les quatre mille francs que j'ai payés sans utilité, je pense qu'un plus d'assiduité de la part de ces Messieurs n'est rien plus qu'équitable.”²²

It turns out that Asser was wrong to doubt the firm's commitment. Under the term *héliographie*, which they defined as “combinant le dessin avec la photographie pure et simple”, Simonau & Toovey commissioned work by several Belgian artists.²³ The largest body of such work was a set of twenty-four sketches *Salon de peinture et de sculpture de 1866* by the acerbic observer of human folly Félicien Rops (1833–1898).²⁴ Rops, a graphic artist open to the possibilities of photography, later gave a gently bemused account of working in this hybrid technique:

“Monsieur Simoneau [*sic*] nous donnait des plaques de verre comme les plaques des photographes. Ces plaques étaient enduites d'un vernis mat ... on dessinait au positif ce qui était très agréable. Simoneau emportait la plaque de verre aussitôt terminée, et alors, ce qu'il faisait en tête à tête avec sa pierre lithographique, c'était le secret des dieux. Le résultat était *une imitation lithographique d'eau-forte sur pierre surprenante ...*”²⁵

Simonau & Toovey may have shared Asser's optimism as to the future of *cliché-verre*, but it turned out to be no more than a *succès d'estime*. They continued to be preoccupied with the day-to-day marketing of mainstream photolithography. One application which the firm consistently exploited was the reprinting of facsimile editions of early books, to which the process was admirably suited.²⁶ Another, strategic application on which Simonau & Toovey worked in collaboration with Asser is mapmaking. Inadequately documented at the time for reasons of national security, the use of photolithography to reproduce military maps was of immediate interest to the Belgian government. Once the use of photolithography in mapmaking had become common knowledge, the firm was free to laud the process' advantages in terms of speed and cost: “La carte géographique est évaluée en gravure au prix de fr 250.– environ, et il faudrait pour graver cette planche, plus d'un mois. La Photolithographie peut en fournir des épreuves en 24 heures et le prix ne s'élèverait pas à plus de 20 francs.”²⁷ Following the successful integration of the process for reproducing military maps into the War Ministry's printing works, Asser was made a Knight of the Order of Leopold “en témoignage des services qu'il a rendus à la photolithographie si heureusement appliqué ... à l'art militaire et à la confection des cartes topographiques”.²⁸ The role played by Simonau & Toovey was passed over in silence.

By the late 1860s, a persistent criticism directed at photolithography was its failure to reproduce halftones satisfactorily. Sometimes unfounded criticism was laid at the door of Simonau & Toovey, despite many proofs to the contrary on public display. One English commentator wrote: “Messrs Simonau & Toovey produced some promising results with half-tone ... The process by which they were produced was not stated; and as it has not come into use,



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fig. 6 Specimen print published in *Bulletin Belge de la photographie*, printed by Simonau & Toovey, 1872, Woodburytype, 7.6 x 11.6 cm. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

fig. 7 Unidentified photographer, *Bas-reliefs en albâtre, sculptés par Guyot de Beaugrant de Malines*, printed by Simonau & Toovey, 1873, Woodburytypes, each 5.9 x 11.7 cm. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

fig. 8 Decorative title page of *Notice sur la photolithographie*, printed by Simonau & Toovey, 1873, photolithograph. National Photography Collection, Print Room, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

we fear that some uncertainty in working it must exist.”²⁹ This opinion was echoed locally: “La photolithographie convient très-bien pour la reproduction de gravures et textes anciens, d’autographes et de dessins à la plume, en un mot, de tout ce qui est exécuté au moyen de traits. Tant qu’à la reproduction d’images photographiques d’après nature ou d’après tableaux, les résultats obtenus ne peuvent encore s’appeler que des essais.”³⁰ Just once, Toovey answered these critics with the force of wounded pride: “On a pu juger du degré pratique de mon invention par les cent planches de divers genres exposées à l’Exposition universelle de 1867 ... ce procédé est celui qui, jusqu’à présent, a le mieux donné les demi-tons.”³¹

But in a broader sense, and for all of Toovey’s craftsmanship, his defence of the process was increasingly irrelevant. Photolithography had acquired the reputation of being a “difficult” process and, although the firm had been exploiting it for the best part of a decade, the market for halftone photolithography had failed to expand decisively. To which must be added the threat of shrinking market share: from about 1868, local competition emerged. Charles Claesen (born 1829), a Liège publisher, began marketing photolithographs in line of his own devising, breaching Simonau & Toovey’s monopoly in Belgium. How the firm tried – and failed – to regain the initiative forms a brief coda to its existence.

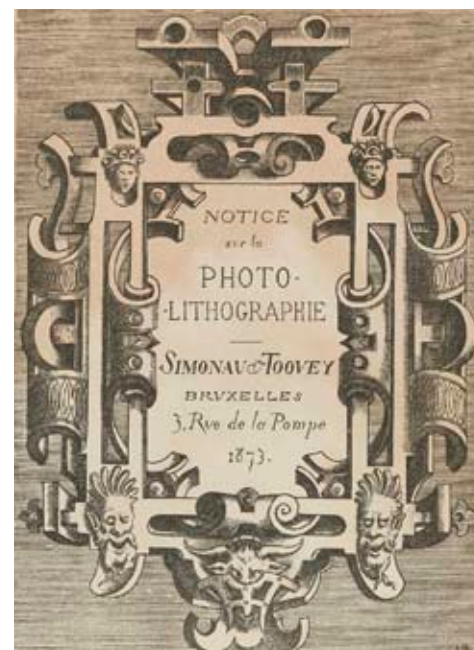
Walter B. Woodbury (1834–1885) registered the process that would bear his name in Belgium³² in 1865 and licensed it to Simonau & Toovey in 1869.³³ Over the next few years, the firm made strenuous efforts to commercialise the Woodburytype, issuing several series of reproductions of Renaissance and Baroque prints and publishing samples in the trade press (fig. 6). Timing was not on their side, however. By 1870, the era of collotype printing was about to dawn, a leaner and cheaper competitor that would eclipse other photomechanical halftone processes in all markets save France and Great Britain. In Belgium, upwards of six photographers set up collotype operations, amongst whom Joseph Maes was an energetic promoter. An informed

comparison of the two processes found in favour of the collotype: “Le procédé Woodbury n’est pas à la portée de tout le monde: il demande un outillage important, coûteux, une presse hydraulique d’une puissance énorme, de 132,000 kil. comme celle de M. Toovey! L’héliographie, la phototypie semblent seules réunir les conditions nécessaires à une exploitation facile, régulière, peu dispendieuse...”³⁴ Curiously, very few Woodburytypes in halftone, rather than after engravings, were printed by the firm, perhaps hinting at difficulties in getting the complex gelatin-based process to perform effectively in the damp climate of Brussels. In any case, Simonau & Toovey had backed the wrong horse, a cost-intensive process which, despite giving results of impressive quality (fig. 7), could not offer a decent financial return in a market as small as Belgium’s.



7

The firm’s decline was gradual. Gustave Simonau died on 10 July 1870 and, for a while, his widow and brother-in-law kept the partnership afloat under the name of Veuve Simonau & Toovey. They kept faith in photolithography, publishing their only known trade catalogue, composed entirely in the process to demonstrate its versatility, in January 1873 (fig. 8). But very soon afterwards, Toovey quit Brussels, probably returning to England, and the photomechanical side of the firm was run down. Anne Toovey moved out of the studio in Rue de la Pompe on 25 June 1877, settling in the suburb of Saint Josse, where she was still registered as a lithographer.³⁵ She ceded the business to Henri Leys (born 1854), a jobbing printer who occasionally used the Asser/Toovey process for printing in line, in particular architectural drawings.³⁶



8

A passing reference to “Toovey, photographic lithographer”³⁷, dated 1878, is our last sighting of this once leading figure, and thus closes definitively the era and work of a firm of distinguished pioneers and outstanding craftsmen, harbingers of photomechanical printing in the Low Countries.

- 1 *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences*, vol. 48, 1859, 222, session of 24 January 1859, quoted in: Steven F. Joseph & Tristan Schwilden, *Un cadeau à l'Europe: naissance de la photographie en Belgique*, Bulletin trimestriel du Crédit Communal de Belgique, 43rd year, no. 168, April 1989, 20.
- 2 Louis Alvin, *Compte rendu du salon d'exposition de Bruxelles*, Brussels: Meline 1836, quoted in: Pierre Bautier, 'Simonau (Gustave), aquarelliste et lithographe', *Biographie Nationale*, Brussels, vol. 22, 1914–1920, column 566.
- 3 Brussels, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Office national de la propriété industrielle, import patents no. 1971 of 8 November 1855, no. 3751 of 18 December 1856 and no. 6507 of 21 October 1858.
- 4 Mattie Boom & Jan Coppens, 'Biografie Eduard Asser', *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Fotografie*, Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Voetnoot, no. 14, 1990.
- 5 The best account of Asser's experiments and his intermittent attempts to commercialise the process, drawing on archive material in the possession of his family, is a four-part article: S. Rood, 'Procédé [sic] Asser', *Het Tarief*, 1923, no. 4, 22–24; no. 6, 39–41; no. 7, 48–50; no. 8, 58–60. For the comprehensive survey of his activities in photography, see: Mattie Boom, *Eduard Isaac Asser [1809–1894] Pioneer of Dutch Photography*, Amsterdam: Focus Publishing 1998.
- 6 'Procédé pour obtenir des positifs photographiques sur papier, à l'encre d'imprimerie ou à l'encre lithographique; par M. Asser', *Bulletin de la Société française de photographie*, vol. 5, 1859, 260–264.
- 7 Brussels, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Office national de la propriété industrielle, invention patent no. 7042 'Procédé de tirage des positifs photographiques, soit à l'encre autographique, soit à l'encre d'imprimerie', application dated 21 January 1859, granted on 10 February 1859.
- 8 *Catalogue de la troisième exposition de la Société française de photographie*, Paris: Renou et Maulde 1859, items 80–87 "Essais d'un nouveau procédé lithophotographique".
- 9 *Recueil spécial des brevets d'invention*, Brussels, 7th year, 1860, cession de brevets, 4.
- 10 *Catalogue de la quatrième exposition de la Société française de photographie*, Paris: Mallet-Bachelier 1861, items 1179–1183 'Specimens de photolithographie, procédé Asser'.
- 11 Brussels, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Office national de la propriété industrielle, invention patent no. 14486 'Perfectionnements dans les procédés de photolithographie, photozincographie et de gravure photographique', application granted 1 July 1863.
- 12 A description and analysis of Toovey's improvements can be found in: J.S. Mertle, 'Photolithographic procedure: history and principle of photolithography', *Bulletin, International Photo-engravers' Union of N.A.*, no. 1, part 1 and 11, August 1939, 54.
- 13 *Catalogue de la sixième exposition de la Société française de photographie*, Paris: Gauthier-Villars 1864, items 1069–1077 'Epreuves lithophotographiques (procédé Asser), faisant partie des collections publiées par les auteurs'.
- 14 'Brevet pris par M. Toovey pour la lithophotographie', *La Lumière*, vol. 15, no. 9, 15 May 1865, 34–35 (article reprinted from *The British Journal of Photography*).
- 15 Société française de photographie, Paris, archive file no. 432, Toovey, listing fourteen entries totalling nineteen prints; *Bulletin de la Société française de photographie*, vol. 9, 1863, 305.
- 16 A. Davanne, 'Rapport de la commission chargée de décerner le prix de 8000 francs, fondé par M. Le Duc de Luynes pour l'impression à l'encre grasse des épreuves photographiques', *Bulletin de la Société française de photographie*, vol. 13, 1867, 103, 106. For a complete account of the contest, including Asser's and Toovey's work, see: Sylvie Aubenas, *D'encre et de charbon: le concours photographique du Duc de Luynes 1856–1867*, exh. cat., Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France & Société française de photographie 1994.

- 17 Lori Van Biervliet, *Leven en werk van W.H. James Weale een Engels kunsthistoricus in Vlaanderen in de 19de eeuw*, Brussels: Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België 1991, 98–103.
- 18 Van Biervliet, 1991 (note 17) 124–127.
- 19 S. Rood, 1923 (note 5) 40.
- 20 Brussels, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Office national de la propriété industrielle, improvement no. 12869 to patent no. 7042 “Additions au procédé de tirage des positifs photographiques”, application granted 31 July 1862.
- 21 Mattie Boom, 1998 (note 5) 35. Asser himself used the term *etsphotogrammen* [etched photograms].
- 22 S. Rood, 1923 (note 5) 49.
- 23 ‘L’Héliographie’, *Bulletin belge de la photographie*, vol. 5, April 1866, 101–102; (reprinted from *Journal des Beaux-Arts*).
- 24 Pascal de Sadeleer, *Collection exceptionnelle de dessins, gravures, peintures de Félicien Rops*, Brussels: Librairie Simonson, 1990, no. 38.
- 25 Letter to Rassenfosse dated 17 November 1889, quoted in: Eugène Rouir, *Félicien Rops: les techniques de la gravure*, exh. cat., Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert 1er 1991, 12. Rouir refers to these prints as photolithographs, which fails to do justice to the complexity of the process.
- 26 For instance: ‘Un chef-d’œuvre de photolithographie’, *Bulletin belge de la photographie*, vol. 5, January 1867, 21, reporting the tricentennial reprinting of an issue of the *Gazette de Gand* of 1667. Also see: Claudine Lemaire & Elly Cockx-Indestege, *Manuscrits et imprimés anciens en fac-similé de 1600 à 1984*, exh. cat., Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert 1er 1984, no. 84, facsimile of Erasmus, *Silva carminum antehac nunquam impressorum*, printed by Simonau & Toovey in 1864 from the original edition of 1513.
- 27 *Notice sur la photolithographie*, Brussels: Simonau & Toovey, 1873 unnumbered page.
- 28 ‘Chronique’, *Bulletin belge de la photographie*, vol. 9, December 1870, 248.
- 29 *The Photographic News*, vol. 10, 20 April 1866, 182.
- 30 Emile Tasset, ‘Des nouveaux procédés de gravure’, *Annales de la Société L’Union des Artistes*, Liège, vol. 3, 1866–1868, 101–102.
- 31 ‘Correspondance’, *Bulletin belge de la photographie*, vol. 7, April 1868, 104.
- 32 Brussels, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Office national de la propriété industrielle, import patent no. 17698 ‘Une méthode de production des surfaces en relief au moyen de la photographie’ application granted on 15 April 1865, followed by supplementary patent no. 19147 for ‘des perfectionnements à la méthode de produire ou d’obtenir au moyen de la photographie des surfaces en relief ou en creux sur des matières alumineuses, vitreuses, etc.’, application granted on 1 March 1866.
- 33 *Recueil spécial des brevets d’invention*, Brussels, 16th year, 1869, cession de brevets, 3.
- 34 G. De Vylder, ‘Visite à l’atelier photographique de M. Maes, à Anvers’, *Bulletin belge de la photographie*, vol. 9, July 1870, 154.
- 35 Steven F. Joseph, Tristan Schwilden & Marie-Christine Claes, *Directory of Photographers in Belgium 1839–1905*, Antwerp: Museum voor Fotografie 1997, 353.
- 36 Joseph, Schwilden & Claes, 1997 (note 35) 256.
- 37 Lionel S. Beale, *The Microscope in Medicine*, London, Philadelphia 1878 (4th edition), xxxi.

Michael Pritchard

I3 Photographic Manufacturing and the British Patent System 1839–1910

This paper presents a broad survey examining how the photographic industry in Britain used the patent system and trade marks to protect and exploit inventions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It will look at how patents were perceived by the industry and some of the issues which surrounded them, all of which received extensive coverage in the pages of the contemporary photographic press.

The Legislative Framework and international differences

In England the patent system had developed continuously from the early 1600s making it the world's oldest patent system.¹ Patents were originally designed to stimulate industry by causing the details of the invention to be published and encouraging individuals or firms to exploit inventions, usually through the granting of a monopoly for a period of time.

By the nineteenth century the patent system was in desperate need of reform and the Great Exhibition of 1851 acted as a catalyst for this as manufacturers and patentees sought greater protection in the face of increasing foreign competition. The 1852 Patent Act set the basis for Britain's modern patent law, replacing separate systems in England, Scotland and Ireland, although the Act only partially met the demands of reformers.²

Despite the Act the *Photographic News* had by 1860 already run an editorial titled 'The Cost of a Patent' which bemoaned the continued expense and difficulty of obtaining a patent.³ A new Act in 1883, the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Act, addressed some of these concerns and codified other areas of intellectual property.

Unlike the American, the British patent system did not require the patentee to show novelty and many patents were simply variants on existing designs rather than a novel designs of apparatus, chemical processes or application of photography.⁴ The *Photographic Review of Reviews* in 1895 bemoaned this taking an 1850s example, it stated:

We thus see that this colouring of photographs by daubing pigments in oil on the back of the paper after rendering it transparent with varnish, was allowed to be patented by three different individuals within a period of thirteen months, the Patent Office pocketing the fees without a blush.⁵

In Europe differing patent systems were in operation. France established a modern patent system by 1844 with a simple registration system and the state acting as an active partner in managing patents and in their exploitation. In Germany unified national patent legislation was passed in 1877 with the specific aim of encouraging economic development. Switzerland and the Netherlands, for a period, both took the view that patents were not morally acceptable, and it was not until 1888 and 1912 and respectively that these countries reinstated patent systems – mainly in response to international pressure. Elsewhere, Japan had in 1886 reviewed the various European and American patent systems and its first patent law was passed in 1888 which copied many of the features of the American system which it considered superior to those in Europe.⁶

The photographic press and patents

The British photographic press actively reported on issues associated with the patent system. At the most basic level there was the question of whether it was even acceptable to have a system of monopolistic protection. While there were occasional calls to abolish patents altogether this was never seriously supported by the photographic press. In 1861 Thomas Sutton, himself a patentee, ran an extract from the *Saturday Review* supporting patent monopoly which he said ‘embodies our own views exactly’.⁷ When John A. Randall raised the same issue nearly forty years later Alfred Watkins was quick to support the concept of patents.⁸ The issue of protection for manufacturers and economic dominance grew more important throughout the century as Britain’s economic position weakened relative to that of America and Germany. Patent reform

to keep costs down, to provide international protection for British patentees and to provide for some form of novelty search were priorities which the photographic press endorsed. By the later part of the nineteenth century the main photographic trade periodicals considered patent matters a key part of their remit. The *British Journal of Photography* and, later, *The Photogram* regularly reported on new patents and published extracts of patents in their pages. In 1879 the *Photographic News* felt the issue of patents was of such importance that it stated:

To Correspondents. Patents, Trade-Marks, & C. – We have made arrangements to answer through our columns any questions which may be addressed to us respecting patenting inventions and the registration of trade-marks and designs. As these subjects are of growing interest and importance, we invite all our readers in doubt on any point to write to us. It is almost needless to say we make no charge.⁹

Changes to British and international patent law were regularly reported and given prominence in news and correspondence columns. The annual reports of the Comptroller-General of Patents were editorialised.

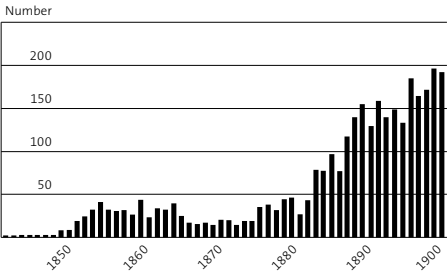


fig. 1 British photographic patents 1839-1900. Compiled from Patent Office data.

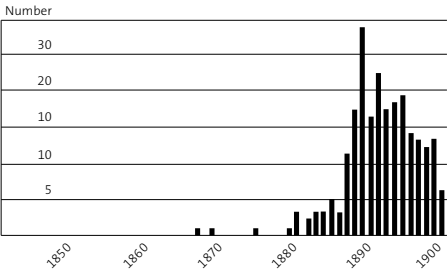


fig. 2 Patents: Changing-boxes 1839-1900. This shows the dramatic rise in patents from the later 1880s reflecting the rise in demand for photographic cameras from amateur photographers. Compiled from Patent Office data.

fig. 3 Advertisement for Woodward's patent solar camera. *Photographic Notes*, no. 80, 1 August 1859, 199.

Photographic Patents: General trends

The first British photographic patent was granted to Miles Berry, a well-known patent agent, on behalf of Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre and Joseph Isidore Niépce, junior, on 14 August 1839 and over the course of the next sixty years to 1900 some 3209 photographic patents were granted.¹⁰ Patent activity over this period was not consistent and as figure 1 shows there was a general increase in patent activity throughout the period with marked increases after the 1852 and 1883 Acts, the result of simplification of the application process and a reduction in costs. Photographic patents showed a steeper rise in the rate of patent activity than for patents as a whole suggesting other factors associated with photography were active. The failure of W.H.F. Talbot to substantiate his claim to the collodion process which had held back other experimenters freed up this area for patentees from the mid-1850s and in the 1880s the development of dry plates and portable hand cameras linked to the dramatic growth of amateur photography acted as an incentive to inventors. As an example, figure 2 shows patents for change-boxes, which can be taken as a proxy for the hand camera and amateur photography.¹¹

Patent Exploitation

It was not simply enough to secure a patent, some method of exploiting or licensing it to a third party on either an exclusive or royalty basis was needed if the patentee to profit from it. What is immediately apparent is that the over-whelming majority of British patents between 1839 and 1900 were never exploited commercial by either the patentee or a licensee. Those that were are the exception.¹²

The daguerreotype patent which was licensed to Richard Beard is the earliest example of the commercial exploitation of a photographic patent and has been well-covered in the literature.¹³ The Heathcotes record a series of geographically-based licenses which Beard negotiated on an individual basis with his sub-licensees. In addition, Beard would, on occasion, require a royalty on each portrait taken and would also supply the apparatus required for taking portraits. Talbot's own patent for the calotype process was the subject of a patent in 1841 and was licensed to photographers. According to Arnold, Henry Collen, Talbot's first licensee, was to pay Talbot thirty per cent of his takings. During the three years Collen worked as a Calotypist the total amount due to Talbot did not exceed £200.¹⁴ Both these processes had the novelty associated with the discovery of photography and by the 1850s there was more commercial realism associated with photographic patents and in their potential value when exploited.

Direct exploitation

Some patentees were able to exploit their own patents and undertake the manufacture of their invention. Thomas Grubb's improved photographic lens 'was manufactured under the license and supervision of the patentee, by his son, Mr Henry T. Grubb'.¹⁵

The Autotype Company manufactured the materials needed to produce autotypes and also authorised other manufacturers to do this same. In an 1877 advertisement it stated that Marion and Company is 'empowered to manufacture patent carbon tissue and transfer papers'.¹⁶

B.J. Edwards, who was always quick to protect his patent rights, stated: 'we have made arrangements for granting sub-licences to photographers who may desire to prepare their own isochromatic plates' while at the same time producing his own plates.¹⁷

In the 1890s the patentee Arthur Newman entered into partnership with Julio Guardia to manufacture cameras and shutters 'under the well-known Newman patents, the exclusive rights to which they hold'.¹⁸ With the Thornton-Pickard company, John E. Thornton was the initial patentee and inventor with Edgar Pickard proving the business and financial backing to commercialise them.¹⁹

Licensing

From reports and advertisements in the photographic press it seems that licensing was often the preferred means of exploiting an invention. This had the advantage that the patentee had no capital outlay in setting up manufacturing facilities and could pass on the responsibility for commercial success to the licensee – although if a royalty were involved then the patentee had a vested interest in promoting the product. All patentees had an interest in protecting the invention from being illegally copied.

Some were involved in licensing directly, for example, D.A. Woodward, the patentee of the solar camera (fig. 3), gave the right to manufacture it to John Atkinson of Liverpool but retained the licensing: 'No camera will be sold or used without being accompanied by a printed or written License to use the same, signed by D.A. Woodward, Patentee'.²⁰ The validity of Woodward's



patent was subsequently questioned and was allowed to lapse.²¹ Arthur J. Melhuish patented the first metal camera which he had made for him while he retained control of the selling and distribution of the camera.²²

Other patentees tried advertising to try and secure a partner to exploit their patent. In 1859 Mr Hartt placed the following advertisement in *Photographic News*:

To photographic dealers and manufacturers. The inventor of important improvements in Photographic Apparatus is desirous of finding a Party to complete and make for the invention, which has already received provisional protection. For particulars, apply to the Inventor, Mr Hartt, Horncastle, or Mr Spence, Patent Agent, 50 Chancery Lane, E.C.²³

Thomas Sutton was prepared to license the manufacture of his 'New Instantaneous and Portrait camera' to 'any of the first class firms' on 'reasonable terms'.²⁴

The early photographic processes were frequently licensed although there was a wide variation in the charges made. As early as 1855, A. Rollason was advertising his collodion transfers and inviting applications for licenses:

The patentee will grant licenses to public operators at £5 per annum; and to amateurs, upon the receipt of one guinea for practical instructions, he will grant a permit, and will otherwise meet the photographic public in a liberal spirit.²⁵

The Autotype Company wrote in 1877 that 'we have 363 licensees on our books' without specifying the price of a license, but claiming terms were 'not onerous'.²⁶ Alfred Harman was prepared to grant licenses to operate his process for finishing enlargements which was the subject of an 1878 patent and advertised: 'charge for licence and instruction, 10 guineas'.²⁷ A successful invention could be very profitable. B.J. Edwards, at the height of the demand for dry plates, held a key patent for a plate-coating machine:

... the ingenuity of our friend, Mr B.J. Edwards, whose plate-coating machine figures in so many dry-plate factories. We are told that "Mr Edwards rents out on royalty twenty of his patented plate-coating machines at a yearly rent of 500 dols. Per machine. One company uses five of them. Mr Edwards was a photographer, knew the needs, and applied his inventive ingenuity, finally accomplishing a successful result ..."²⁸

Licenses for working Squire and Co.'s Elephanton process for colouring photographs were available at five guineas each.²⁹ Unusually this made no distinction between amateur and

professional use, probably because there was an assumption that it would only be practiced by professionals. More usually patentees differentiated between professional and amateur use in terms of fees, on the basis that professionals were more likely to be able to pay more for a process which might give them commercial advantage and a small, or no charge, for amateurs was preferable than nothing - especially if there was the opportunity to sell the materials needed to operate the process. The *British Journal of Photography*, in editorial comment on the wothlytype process noted:

We believe that it is now contemplated by the Directors of the United Association of Photography, Limited, to make a single charge of ten guineas to professional photographers desirous of using the Wothlytype process; but that no charge will be made to amateurs who use it solely for themselves, and not for profit. We also understand that the prices to be charged for materials, together with full particulars, will be given next week.³⁰

The wothlytype process had limited success. The platinotype process, which was much more successful, was also licensed, and from 1882 the Platinotype Company charged a modest fee of five shillings to both professional and amateurs.³¹ By 1889 the company advertised 'no license is now required for printing on the patented sensitised papers manufactured by the Platinotype Company'.³² The popularity of the process and resultant profit on the sale of chemicals and papers was more significant; the need for a license acted as a barrier to these sales.

From the 1880s fewer processes were being patented and there was more limited commercial exploitation. The rise of the amateur photographer made the supply of chemicals and materials for home use more important. One of the first significant chemicals patented was the subject of British patent 5207 of 26 March 1889 with the compound being sold under the trade name Eikonogen.³³ Marion and Company of London had the new developer for sale by July and it was an instant success attracting wide editorial comment and correspondence in the photographic press.³⁴ Patent-wise there was less enthusiasm as other manufacturers in Germany claimed priority with their own chemical compounds. By 1893 these had been resolved:

We are requested to note that the patent disputes between the manufacturers of amidol, metol, glycin, diamidophenol, & c., have been settled amicably by mutual consent, and in future the sale of these developers in Britain and the Colonies will be effected through Messrs. Fuerst and Messrs Arthur Schwarz, in London, being sole agents for Professor Hauff, of Fuerbach, and Dr Andresen, of Berlin, respectively, all photographic dealers will now supply these developers.³⁵

German patentees, reflecting the growth of the German chemical industry, were increasingly evident in patenting compounds for photographic use from the 1890s.

Buying patent rights

Rather than acting as a licensee Lampray and Company bought out the entire patent of Thomas Sutton for a modest £10. The firm was the London agent for Thomas Sutton's paper, advertising: 'Sutton's patent albumenized paper ... Manufactories – Hammersmith, Westminster, & Jersey'.³⁶ When Messrs Ordish and Company began advertising the same paper and claimed to be sole agents for its sale Lampray stated this statement was 'entirely false ... [and] I have instructed my solicitor to take the necessary proceedings to punish the authors'. He stated:

I bought Mr Sutton's patent years ago for £ 10, and, in addition, I paid his patent agent's bill. Subsequently Mr Sutton was employed by me for several years in giving the paper its preliminary coating before I placed it in the hands of my work-people for albumenising.³⁷

Patents that could no longer be successfully exploited were, where possible, sold on as the *British Journal of Photography* reported:

We are informed that Messrs R.W. Thomas & Co. have disposed of the patent rights of the Sandell plate for Germany to a firm of German plate makers.³⁸

In the case of a company failing then patents were seen as important assets. When McKellen, Limited, was sold in 1901 the buyer, Richard H. Risk purchased: 'The stock of cameras and other photographic goods, with the machinery and all patents, belonging to the firm'.³⁹

In the case of Taylor, Taylor & Hobson, who were primarily lens makers and optical engineers, rather the camera makers, the Newman and Guardia Company took over TTH's patent for a reflex camera, to which they made further improvements. The camera was marketed as the N&G Princess reflex where it extended N & G's own camera range.⁴⁰ On occasion a patentee, having initially worked a patent, would set up a separate company to take over the rights:

We are informed that the Tella film camera having proved such a great success, Messrs Adams & Co. have sold the patent rights to the Tella Camera Company, Limited, who will shortly open convenient premises at 110, Shaftesbury-avenue, with a full stock.⁴¹

In this case A.L. Adams, the patentee and owner of Adams & Co., remained a director of the new company. In one instance, Alfred Watkins, having initially licensed R. Field & Company of Birmingham to produce his exposure meters, bought out their licence and established his own company to manufacture his invention:

Mr Alfred Watkins has purchased from Messrs R. Field & Co., Suffolk Street, Birmingham, their interest as licensees, their goodwill, and all book debts relating to the Watkins's exposure

meters and eikronometer, and will carry on the business at the Imperial Mills, Hereford, under the title of the Watkins' Meter Company.⁴²

Patent protection

If commercial exploitation could be a somewhat of a hit or miss affair the protection of a patent from unlicensed use was necessary to preserve financial success, although legal action could be expensive and unsatisfactory. This was compounded by the lack of a requirement to show novelty in British patents which led to frequent disputes between patentees.

The 1864 case of *Rouch v. How* attracted considerable attention in the photographic press.

As the *British Journal of Photography* reported:

The case of Rouch v. How although not of the same importance to professional photographers [as Talbot v. Laroche], is of more importance than the other to manufacturers of, and dealers in, photographic apparatus, all of whom must feel to a certain extent indebted to these two gentlemen – both of them manufacturers and dealers of reputation – for coming forward to fight a battle from which all may derive experience.⁴³

Although not directly relating to a patent – it related to a registered design – the case was important because it showed the increasing importance being given to intellectual property rights. As the early Beard and Talbot cases had shown patents were a more serious affair with, potentially, greater financial benefit and there were a number of legal cases after the 1850s where patentees tried to assert their rights.

Actions

In 1871 B.J. Edwards, who fought a number of court cases to protect his patents, undertook the first of these against Colonel Stuart Wortley to protect his patent combination printing frame which he was having made by the camera maker Meagher. The case which had been threatened for several months was concluded in December and after extensive submissions the Vice-Chancellor declared the patent invalid as Edwards had 'not given such a definite indication of the exact points that he claimed as novel to make his patent good; the improvement had not be described nor had the novelty been defined'.⁴⁴

Edwards defended what was a far more valuable patent for his plate coating machine in 1884 when he was criticised by another plate maker, Samuel Fry, for trying to patent a machine which Fry claimed was already in use. Edwards defended his patent with the justification:

I may add that the number of applications I have already received from plate-makers in various countries is alone sufficient evidence of the novelty and value of my invention.



4

He secured his right to the patent, and in an extensive advertisement for the machine which strongly highlighted the fact it was patented, he offered an annual licence or hire of the machine and warned against infringement. The machine was widely adopted and claimed to be 'successfully worked by the principal Dry-Plate Manufacturers in Great Britain and on the Continent'.⁴⁵ As *Scientific American* noted in 1895 Edwards enjoyed a significant income from its exploitation.

Edwards had a dispute with a firm manufacturing an orthochromatic emulsion for which he held the sole rights for 'Great Britain and the Colonies' from the patentees Attout and Clayson.⁴⁶ The infringers settled without resorting to court:

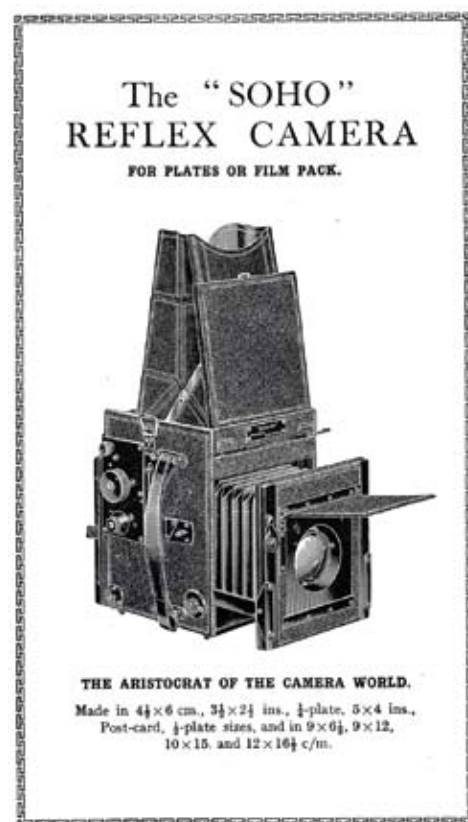
In consequence of a dispute having arisen as to Patent Right, Messrs Dixon & Son Discontinue the issue of the Dixon & Gray Orthochromatic Plates.⁴⁷

There were two further notable patent cases relating to photographic patents both involving the London firm of Shew. In 1892 *Skinner & Co. v. Shew & Co.* related to the design of a hand camera which had been the subject of a Shew patent.⁴⁸ In 1896 *Shew v. The Société des Lunetiers* involved the latter's infringement of Shew's patent for the Eclipse camera (fig. 4).⁴⁹ In the first, Skinner took action against Shew after being threatened over a new hand camera which they had asked the London Stereoscopic Company to make for them and which Shew claimed infringed its 1884 and 1885 patents. Shew lost the case over a point of law. In the second case Shew sued over infringement and won.

In 1910 a dispute over patents relating to reflex cameras also ended in court. George Nicolls claimed damages against A. Kershaw & Son of Leeds. Nicoll's had patented a reflex mechanism in 1904 which was built into cameras made by Spiers and Pond and sold by several firms from December 1907. Kershaw's own patent of 1904 was included in a camera (fig. 5) that was made by them and sold by several firms, principally by Marion & Co. as the Soho reflex. Judgment was given for Kershaw as the court ruled that there had been no patent infringement.⁵⁰

Rather than resorting to court public apologies were often solicited. In 1864 J.H. Dallmeyer forewent legal proceedings and obtained a public apology from Charles Burr for substituting Dallmeyer lenses for his own.⁵¹ In 1888 W.J. Lancaster of Birmingham received a public apology in the photographic press from another Birmingham camera manufacturer for infringing his 1887 patent for 'Improvements in Photographic Cameras'.⁵²

Sometimes an amicable resolution was possible. In 1903 E. Merck of London unwittingly infringed John J. Griffin and Son's patent for packaged photographic chemicals and was able to make 'arrangements with Messrs John J. Griffin and Sons, which enables me to continue the supply of photographic chemicals in cartridges with glass partitions'.⁵³



5

fig. 4 Shew's Eclipse camera which was the subject of an 1896 court case after it was copied by a French firm. (Photograph: Christie's, London)

fig. 5 The Soho Reflex camera, made by Kershaw of Leeds for Marion & Co. and the subject of a law suit in 1910. APM, Ltd., *Catalogue of Photographic Cameras, Apparatus, etc.*, [c.1921], 19.

Threats

Photographic patentees seem to have resorted to threaten proceedings against infringers of photographic patents rather taking legal action. R.W. Thomas in his advertisement for his patent box tent stated:

Caution to Manufacturers and others. Proceedings in Chancery will be taken against any person or persons infringing Mr Thomas's Patent ...⁵⁴

J. Cadett advertised:

The patentee having received intimation that his rights are being infringed, We are instructed to take immediate proceedings against any person or persons making or selling photographic apparatus actuated in any way by pneumatic appliances. Fitch & Fitch, ... solicitors for Mr Cadett.⁵⁵

In both cases, despite many apparent copies of both patents, no legal action appears to have been taken.

Failure to patent

The lack of completing the patent process could also have an impact on a patentee's exploitation of it. W.J. Stillman claimed to have invented and taken out a provisional patent for the folding baseboard on a camera. He sent drawings to Meagher who claimed the design was not workable and eventually had the camera made by George Hare. Stillman was 'subsequently to see the camera as later constructed by Mr Hare in Meagher's catalogue without any credit'.⁵⁶

In one case dating from c.1858, E. Edwards, a patent agent, who did not patent his design for a stereoscopic camera still benefited when he was approached by the photographic manufacturer W.W. Rouch who had made his prototype: 'Mr Rouch obtained my consent to continue the manufacture of this apparatus, and supplied a considerable number, not without pecuniary advantage to myself'.⁵⁷ The opposite applied to Henry Proctor who in 1887 noted that he had made a detective camera similar to one recently patented by A.S. Newman. He had made no patent application and therefore had no grounds to complain.⁵⁸

More significant was the Rowsell graphoscope for viewing photographs and stereographs which became extremely popular in the later 1860s and 1870s. C.J. Rowsell's patent 270 of 1 February 1864 for 'Improvements in Apparatus for Viewing Photographs' was never completed and Rowsell consequently lost out on the popular success of the graphoscope. The camera maker George Hare of London was said to be the most extensive manufacturer of graphoscopes in Europe (fig. 6).⁵⁹ Summarising the situation the *British Journal of Photography* stated:

Some of our metropolitan camera-makers having added to their usual branches of manufacture the production of an article now known as a “graphoscope”, Mr Rowsell has written to a contemporary stigmatising such conduct as unfair and dishonest ... Mr Rowsell did not complete his patent and the graphoscope has, therefore, become the property of the public.⁶⁰

James Forrest’s patent plate substitute glass was a cheaper alternative to Chance Brothers & Co.’s glass for photographic plates and was popular between 1872 and 1887.⁶¹ It was also imitated but Forrest, rather than issues threats or undertake legal action, encouraged purchasers to check for the trade mark:

Caution. We are extremely annoyed to find that spurious imitations of our Patent Plate Substitute Glass are being sold to the Public under our name. Please observe that none are genuine unless the packets are labelled with our Trade Mark [F.] J.A. Forrest & Co., Glass Manufacturers, 58 Lime Street, Liverpool.⁶²

Trade Marks

Increasingly through the nineteenth century trade marks were used as a sign of quality on both materials that had been patented and to protect objects that had not been patented (fig. 7).⁶³ The cost of defending a patent could be prohibitive for patentees who, in many cases, saw little financial return from their invention. As early as 1864 Spencer was highlighting the trade mark on his paper:

Mr Spencer has learnt with regret that Albumenized Paper has for some time past been sold as his which has not been manufactured by him. To put a stop to this practice, and as a protection to himself and a guarantee to purchasers of this well-known article, every sheet will in future be impressed with his name ... and each Ream with bear a distinctive Label and Trade Mark.⁶⁴

In 1868 Lampray & Co. claimed that every sheet of sensitised paper: ‘is stamped Lampray & Co., London and any infringement or colourable imitation of this Trade Mark will be proceeded against’.⁶⁵

The Merchandise Marks Acts of 1862 and 1887 gave manufacturers increased protection and the Trade Marks Registration Act of 1875 recognised the trade mark as intellectual property and gave the right to sue for infringement.⁶⁶ The strengthening of the law and the increasing commercial pressures between photographic manufacturers from the 1880s led to a rash of court cases over trade mark infringement. For example, in 1886 The Derby Photographic Dry Plate Company took issue with Barker, Pollard, Graham & Co. over their use of the word ‘Derwent’ to describe their products which the Derby company claimed was too close to their ‘Derby’ trade mark which had been registered in December 1885.⁶⁷



fig. 6 Advertisement from George Hare for the Graphoscope. *The Year-Book of Photography* for 1873, v.

fig. 7 Elliott & Sons used *Barnet* as their trademark for sensitised materials produced by them. H. Snowden Ward, *The figures, facts and formulae of photography*, London: Dawbarn & Ward Ltd, 1903, n.p. [advertisement]

"THE GRAPHOSCOPE,"

For Viewing Photographs, Drawings, and Pictures of any Kind.

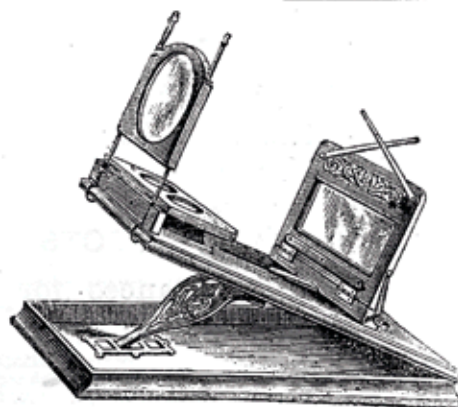


Fig. 1.

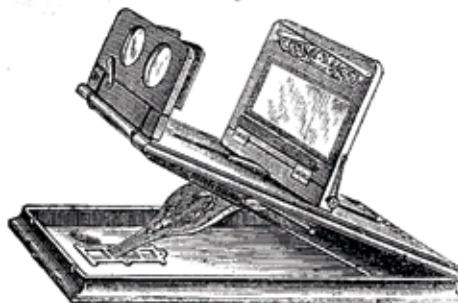


Fig. 2.

So Simple and Practical is this Instrument, that little need be said as to the mode of using. It can be focussed to suit any sight, whether long or short. Plain or Coloured Photographs, when viewed through the large lens, will be found to stand out with the roundness and reality of natural objects. The above, with an appropriate set of Photographs, forms a very handsome present.

FIG. 1 shows the Instrument open for viewing large objects, such as Prints, Photographs, Paintings, &c. To open it, raise the hinged platform, under which is the large lens sliding on two brass bars, which allows of sufficient adjustment of the lens to the centre of different sized pictures. Having put the lens in position, as shown in the diagram, raise the easel, at back, and place the object upon it. To obtain the proper focus, move the easel with both hands towards the lens.

FIG. 2 shows the Instrument adjusted for use as a Stereoscope. The large lens should be replaced under the platform, and the hinged frame, with the two stereoscopic lenses, raised and fastened in position by the hook. Move the easel as before to suit the vision.

For Transparent Stereographs only, the Instrument should be so placed that a good light passes through the lens at the back. By night a lamp or other strong light can be used with advantage.

DIAMETER OF LENSES AND PRICES.

	No. 1, 4½-in.	No. 2, 5¼-in.	No. 3, 6½-in.	No. 4, 7½-in.
In Mahogany ...	£1 12 0	£2 12 6	£4 10 0	£5 5 0
In Walnut ...	2 0 0	3 3 0	5 5 0	6 6 0

A large Assortment of BEAUTIFULLY COLOURED PHOTOGRAPHS, suitable for the above, in *Cabinet* and *Whole-plate* Sizes.

MANUFACTURED AND SOLD BY
GEORGE HARE,
1, LOWER CALTHORPE STREET,
GRAY'S INN ROAD.

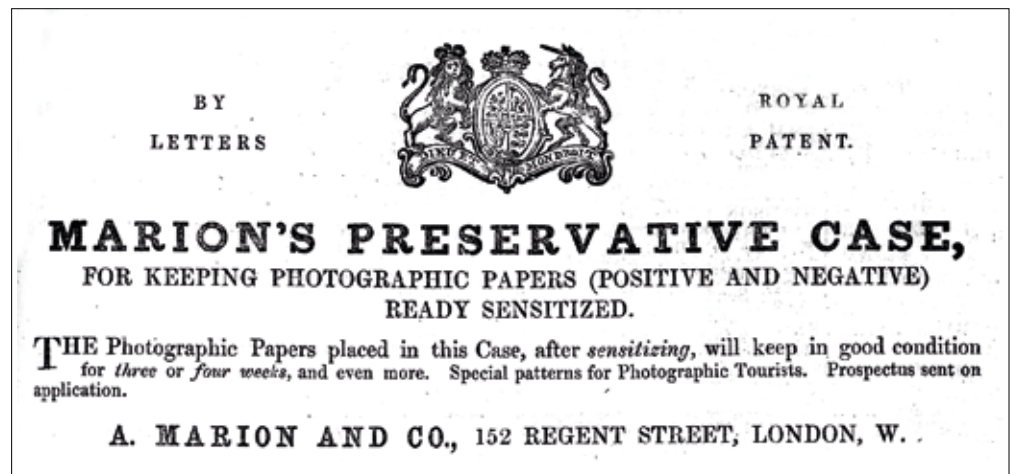
The biggest case during the period was over the use of ‘Britannia Dry Plates’ between the manufacturer of the plates, Alfred Harman, and Marion & Company, who sold the plates. A dispute between the two parties had grown increasingly acrimonious and Harman stopped making the plates for Marion’s and began retailing them on his own account and applied for an injunction to stop Marion from selling their version of the plate under the same name. The case was the subject of a decision in the High Court of Chancery in February 1886, with the case won by Marion as they were the trade mark owner; Harman was only the manufacturer.⁶⁸ Both parties advertised in the same issue of the *British Journal of Photography* with Marion highlighting its success and the right to use the name and Harman giving notice ‘that, in future, these well-known Plates will bear the title of “The Ilford Dry Plates”’.⁶⁹

The patent as a marketing tool

One aspect of the patent which has not been discussed by historians is the role of the patent in advertising. It is clear throughout the period 1840 to 1910 that having a patent associated with a particular piece of equipment or process conferred some status to the product (fig. 8). Manufacturers’ advertising frequently emphasised the presence of a patent frequently by quoting ‘protected by patent’ or ‘patented’ and including the royal arms. This was simply more than as a warning to potential infringers: it was a positive endorsement of the novelty and efficacy of the product.

Retailers and agents for patentees also promoted the presence of patent to their clientele. Much of Richard Beard’s advertising for the daguerreotype noted its patented status. Richard Kennett in 1874 stated that he will ‘on and after the 2nd of March, issue his patent Sensitised Gelatine Pellicle’.⁷⁰ The makers of cameras and photographic apparatus, especially in the period before

fig. 8 Advertisement for Marion’s patented preservative case. This was the subject of British patent number 2961 of 1858. The advertisement emphasises the royal arms and patent. *Photographic Journal*, 6, no. 88, 15 August 1859, n.p.



the 1880s, included the patented status in their advertisements. Other companies such as the Patent Dry Collodion Plate Company of Birmingham and Patent Films Syndicate Limited included the presence of the patent in their business name.⁷¹

How much the presence of a patent was noted by a purchaser or added to the sale of a product is impossible to quantify. What it would do would be to add to a sense of originality and gravitas about a particular product.

Increasingly by the turn of the century the trade mark and trade name had overtaken this function as more careful marketing and advertising to endorse a brand rather than particular products became the norm, although for true novelties the patent still had this role to play.

- 1 A general history of the British patent system is given in Neil Davenport, *The United Kingdom Patent System. A brief history*. Havant: Kenneth Mason, 1979, and a more specific history is John Hewish, *Rooms near Chancery Lane. The Patent Office under the Commissioners, 1852–1883*, London: The British Library 2000.
- 2 Klaus Boehm, *The British Patent System. 1. Administration*, London: Cambridge University Press 1967, 14–37.
- 3 ‘The cost of a patent’, *Photographic News*, vol. 4, no. 113, 2 November 1860, 313–314.
- 4 Oliver E. Allen, ‘The Power of Patents’, *American Heritage*, vol. 41, 6 (September/October, 1990); <http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1990/6> (26.01.06) provides a useful survey of the American patent system.
- 5 ‘Our Patent Office’, *Photographic Review of Reviews*, vol. 4, September 1895, 312–313.
- 6 B. Zorina Khan, ‘An Economic History of Patent Institutions’, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/khan.patents> (01.01.08) provides a survey of different patent systems on which this section was partly based.
- 7 *Photographic Notes*, vol. 6, no. 131, 15 September 1861, 261–264.
- 8 John A. Randall, ‘Photography by Patent’, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 45, no. 2009, 4 November 1898, 832; Letter from Alfred Watkins, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 45, no. 2010, 11 November 1898, 735.
- 9 *Photographic News*, vol. 23, no. 1077, 25 April 1879, 204.
- 10 The Daguerre patent was number 8194 of 1839. For ease of reference patents are cited in the form: patent number and year. In Britain, unlike the United States, there was no sequential numbering of patents until 1916 when numbering started at 100,001. Until then patents were numbered on an annual basis. The number of 3,209 photographic patents is approximate as some patents that might be considered photographic were included in other classes of patents and the photographic class included patents that are clearly not photographic, for example, for emulsifying milk.
- 11 The data for this has been compiled by the author. A searchable database of all British photographic patents from 1839–1900 has been built, with each patent categorised to give visibility to some of the apparent trends.
- 12 It is difficult to quantify just how many patents were exploited commercially as they are often difficult to identify from surviving equipment or materials. From the author’s database of all British patents and an examination of all patent specifications it would seem likely that fewer than 15 per cent enjoyed any commercial success.
- 13 See: Bernard & Pauline Heathcote, *A Faithful Likeness. The First Photographic Portrait Studios in the British Isles 1841 to 1855*, Lowdham: Bernard & Pauline Heathcote 2002; B. V. & P. F. Heathcote, ‘Richard Beard: An Ingenious and Enterprising Patentee’ *History of Photography*, vol. 3, 4 (October 1979), 313–329; R. Derek Wood, ‘The Daguerreotype in England: Some Primary Material Relating to Beard’s Lawsuits’, *History of Photography*, vol. 3, no. 4, (October 1979), 305–309; <http://www.midley.co.uk> (01.01.08).

- 14 H. J. P. Arnold, *William Henry Fox Talbot*, London: Hutchinson Benham Ltd 1977, 138–141.
- 15 Advertisement. *Photographic News*, vol. 2, no. 32, 15 April 1859,
v. This relates to British patent number 2574 (1857).
- 16 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 24, no. 898, 20 July 1877, vii.
- 17 Letter from B.J. Edwards. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 35, no. 1448, 3 February 1888, 80.
- 18 *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 38, no. 1649, 11 December 1891, 800.
- 19 Douglas A. Rendell, *The Thornton-Pickard Story*, Prudhoe: Photographic Collectors Club of
Great Britain 1992, 6–11.
- 20 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 7, no. 109, 1 January 1860, ix.
- 21 ‘The Solar Camera’, *Photographic News*, vol. 5, no. 146, 21 June 1861, 289.
Woodward’s patent was number 2459 of 1857.
- 22 A. J. Melhuish, ‘The Patent Metal Camera’, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 7, no. 109, 1 January 1860.
One example of the camera is known and was offered at Christie’s and is now in the collection of the
National Media Museum, Bradford.
- 23 Advertisement. *Photographic News*, vol. 2, no. 49, 12 August, 1859, iii. This may relate to British patent 1139 of
1859 by Frederic William Hart [sic] for a photographic printing frame.
- 24 Advertisement. *Photographic Notes*, vol. 6, no. 131, 15 September 1861, n.p.
- 25 Advertisement. *Liverpool Photographic Journal*, vol. 2, no. 23, 10 November 1855, n.p.
- 26 Letter from the Autotype Company. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 24, no. 905, 14 September 1877, 443.
The Autotype Company had itself purchased from John Robert Johnson and Ernest Edwards their interest in a
contract with the patentee of the carbon printing process, J.W. Swan. The company’s letter was a stout defence of
their patent rights and licensing methods in response to comments made by the BJP’s contributor
‘A Peripatetic Photographer’.
- 27 British patent no. 2174 (1878). Advertisements, *Photographic News*, vol. 22, 1031, 7 June 1878, vii.
- 28 *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 39, no. 1928, 16 August 1895, 519. The BJP was quoting from a paragraph
headed ‘Royalties’ in Scientific American.
- 29 Advertisement, *Photographic News*, vol. 5, no. 171, 13 December 1861, 1.
- 30 ‘Wothlytype Process’, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 11, no. 235, 4 November 1864, 441.
The Wothlytype process was the subject of patent no. 2347 of 1864 and used uranium salts to
produce a photographic image.
- 31 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 29, no. 1131, 6 January 1882, vii.
- 32 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 36, no. 1504, 1 March 1889, ii.
- 33 Granted to M. Andresen [sic], the patent abridgement summarised the patent as: ‘relates to a developing solution
the essential portion of which consists of diamido-naphthalene, amidonaphthol, dioxynaphthlene, or their
sulpho acids. One or more of these substances may be used’.
- 34 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 36, no. 1524, 19 July 1889, xix.
- 35 ‘Notes’. *Photographic News*, vol. 37, no. 1807, 21 April, 1893, 242.
- 36 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 12, no. 265, 9 June 1865, vii.
- 37 T. Lampray, ‘Sutton’s Patent Albumenized Paper’, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 22, no. 768,
22 January 1875, 48. Letter from Thomas Sutton, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 22, no. 770,
5 February 1875, 71.
- 38 ‘News and Notes’, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 41, no. 1766, 9 March 1894, 154.
The Sandell patents had a chequered history with Sandell himself establishing two companies to
exploit his patents, both of which had limited commercial success and ultimately failed.
- 39 *Photographic News*, vol. 45, no. 295. New Series, 23 August, 1901, 543.
- 40 ‘Taylor, Taylor & Hobson Reflex Cameras’, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 56, no. 2540, 8 January 1909, 27.
TTH’s remaining stock of cameras were sold off at a reduced price ‘and in the meantime the new model, with
improvements, is receiving the attention of Messrs Newman and Guardia, at their works, and should be ready in
the course of a very short time’
- 41 ‘Ex Cathedra’, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 46, no. 2023, 10 February 1899, 82.
- 42 *Photographic News*, vol. 44, no. 254 New Series, 9 November 1900, 738.
- 43 ‘The recent trial for alleged piracy of the design of a registered tent’,
British Journal of Photography, vol. 11, no. 218, July 8, 1864, 230.

- 44 'Edwards's patent combination printing-frame', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 18, no. 605, 8 December 1871, 576–577.
- 45 Letter from Samuel Fry, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 31, no. 1271, 12 September, 1884, 590; Letter from B.J. Edward, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 31, no. 1272, 19 September, 1884, 606–607; Advertisement, *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 32, no. 1336, 11 December 1885, supplement. The Edwards patent at issue was number 8643 (1884).
- 46 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 34, no. 1392, 7 January, 1887, supplement. The original patent was 101 of 1883 for sensitised plates.
- 47 Advertisement. *Photographic News*, vol. 31, no. 1482, 28 January 1887, v.
- 48 'An important Patent law case', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 39, no. 1679, 8 July 1892, 441–442.
- 49 'Ex Cathedra' and 'Important patent case', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 43, no. 1894, 21 August 1896, 529, 539–540. 'Legal', *The Photographic Dealer*, August 1896, 58–59.
- 50 'Reflex camera lawsuit', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 57, no. 2594, 21 January, 1910, 52–53, 57; no. 2595, 28 January, 1910, 60–61, 72–73.
- 51 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 11, no. 216, 15 June 1864, v. Burr was made to take out advertisements in the *BJP* and *Photographic News* apologising for the passing off of goods.
- 52 Advertisement. *Photographic News*, vol. 32, no. 1541, 16 March, 1888, xii. Shaw's apology was made in front of a solicitor and was advertised in four journals.
- 53 Letters to the Editor. *Photographic Notes*, vol. 46, no. 383, New Series, 1 May, 1903, 286.
- 54 Advertisement. *Photographic News*, vol. 9, no. 351, 26 May 1865, vii. Thomas's patent for 'Developing-tents and the like' was number 2122 of 29 August 1864. There were a number of manufacturers producing similar devices and the threat of action was probably made explicit as any court case to uphold his patent would have been expensive and difficult to win.
- 55 Advertisement. *Photographic News*, vol. 25, no. 1205, 7 October 1881, x.
- 56 Letter from W.J. Stillman. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 44, no. 1964, 24 December 1897, 832.
- 57 Letter from E. Edwards. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 19, no. 609, 5 January 1872, 5.
- 58 Letter from Henry R. Proctor. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 34, no. 1413, 3 June 1887, 351.
- 59 'The Graphoscope', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 18, no. 564, 24 February 1871, 84–85.
- 60 *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 17, no. 506, 14 January, 1870, 14. Paul Wing, *Stereoscopes. The first one hundred years*, Nashua: Transition Publishing 1996, 131–132.
- 61 'News and Notes', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 42 no. 1842, 23 August, 1895, 540. Forrest's plate glass substitute sold for an average of 1S per superficial foot against 2S 9D for Chance Brothers & Co.'s patent plate glass. Forrest erected a factory to supply his substitute and it remained popular until glass from Belgium superseded it.
- 62 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 17, no. 548, 4 November 1870, iv.
- 63 See: The Patent Office, *A Century of Trade Marks*, London: HMSO, 1976; David C. Newton, *Trade Marks. An introductory guide and bibliography*, London: The British Library, 1991, 13–15, 17.
- 64 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 11, no. 239, 2 December, 1864, 1.
- 65 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 15, no. 420, 22 May, 1868, vii.
- 66 *Trade Marks Journal. List of Applications for the Registration of Trade Marks*, London: HMSO. The *Trade Mark Journal* was the official register of trade marks and their owners and was established after the passing of the 1875 Trade Marks Registration Act and modified under the Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Acts of 1883 and 1888. A recent survey of the *TMJ* from its first publication in 1876 (no. 1) to 1900 (no. 1187) in December 1900 shows a relatively small number but increasing number of photographic companies making use of trade marks throughout the period.
- 67 'Photography in Court', *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 33 no. 1344, 5 February 1886, 92.
- 68 *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 33, no. 1347, 26 February, 1886, 129.
- 69 *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 33, no. 1347, 26 February, 1886, iii, xv.
- 70 Advertisement. *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 21, no. 719, 13 February 1874, iv.
- 71 The Patent Dry Collodion Plate Company was formed by Dr Richard Hill Norris to exploit his patent number 2029 of 1 September 1856 for an improved dry collodion. The Hill Norris collodion was very sensitive and was popular until the 1870s. The Patent Films Syndicate Ltd was registered in 1892 (National Archives, BT 31/5428/37468).

Michael Gray and John Falconer

I4 James Waterhouse, Assistant Surveyor-General-Survey Office of India: His Career in Process Printing

When we enter this field [of photography] it is impossible to say where this must lead us, and the number of subjects we may be induced to study simply on account of the interest in them bought about by photography.¹

The first phase of his career prior to 1863 marked the pinnacle of Waterhouse's achievement as a photographer in the field and as a master-printer. The fact that his contribution to Kaye and Watson's *The People of India* proved to be among the largest body of work originating from any single photographer, was fortuitous; his successful 1862 commission was also the longest official secondment made for such photographic duties in India, and its overall success, despite various mishaps, clearly indicated that photography in the right hands could perform a valuable documentary function.² Through the support and backing of superior officers such as Colonel R.J. Meade, his name was brought to the attention of senior administrators, and Meade's concluding statement of his confidence that Waterhouse "will give satisfaction if employed at any future time by Government on similar or other duties,"³ were clearly advantageous to his later career in the photographic field.

Waterhouse's photography in the early 1860s, however, was largely confined to the small or medium-format negatives and it was not until the work of an ambitious and technically competent generation of professional photographers emerged, that the use of large format glass negative became more generally employed and photography could be more fully exploited in the field of photomechanical printing and reproduction. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, men like Philip Delamotte, Roger Fenton and Francis Frith in Great Britain and Hippolyte Bayard, Bisson Frères, Gustave Le Gray and Charles Negre in France, switched from paper to glass negatives, although a few solitary exponents remained loyal for a time to the paper processes. In the course of the 1850s, photographic societies and journals in India devoted considerable space to discussion, experiment and research on the relative merits of glass and paper, and with

the emergence of Scott Archer's wet collodion process in 1851, photography on glass swiftly became the preferred option for both British and European expatriate savants, as results became more consistent and less technically flawed. The rising generation of photographers in the 1860s and 1870s, figures such as Samuel Bourne and Edward Saché in India and John Thomson and Wilhelm Burger in the Far East, were able to reap financial rewards by making available high quality photographic images of a mysterious and exotic orient, enabling the newly emergent wealthy middle classes of Europe to participate vicariously in the great European colonial adventure.

But if the recording of the topographical grandeur and exotic peoples of the subcontinent has generally captured the attention of photographic historians, less immediately romantic and visually appealing, but equally significant uses of photography were also taking place in India. The demands of an expanding colonial administration in the latter half of the nineteenth century created an unprecedented demand for reproductions of all types, whether in the form of maps, scientific illustrations or scholarly facsimiles. The advance of photographic technology placed the medium at the centre of the search for improved and economical methods of reproduction: if Waterhouse is justly celebrated for his portrait and architectural record photography, his largely neglected technical contributions to the advancement of photo-mechanical processes and procedures have in the long term proved of even greater significance to the history of the medium. This has not always been the case. The trend of modern photographic scholarship has generally been directed towards aesthetic rather than technical developments, but earlier writers such as Josef Maria Eder, paid fulsome tribute to Waterhouse's importance to the technical development of the medium. The vast majority of these researches were carried out in the course of his work with the Photographic Branch of the Survey of India in Calcutta. Forty years later, during his two-year presidency at the Royal Photographic Society in London, Waterhouse himself recalled the importance of his Indian experiences to his photographic achievements:

I have perhaps been specially favoured by opportunities, and the varied training I acquired in this way by photographing Indian archaeological remains, native tribes, sun pictures and eclipses, and practically working out many of the principal photo-mechanical processes and orthochromatic and spectrum photography has been very valuable educationally and has added very greatly to the interest and pleasure of my way through life.⁴

1866 marked a pivotal turning point in Waterhouse's career, for in July of that year he was appointed Assistant Surveyor and became responsible for the superintendence of photozincographic operations in the Office of the Surveyor General of India. Waterhouse would appear to have been the right person, in the right place, at the right time: the Crown, having in 1859 taken over responsibility from the East India Company, was becoming increasingly aware that the cadastral, cartographic and printing capabilities of the Survey of India had failed to keep abreast of modern developments in the graphic arts, particularly in relation to the use of photography. It was therefore ill-equipped to meet a rapidly expanding demand for maps and other printed materials, whether for the use of revenue officers, engineers or the military. This young and ambitious officer, barely twenty years old, but already a highly experienced photographer, understood that this field offered promising prospects for challenging work and personal advancement. In an era of political and military expansion, imperial control and scientific advance, photography was a tool of huge potential.

The direction his career and focus of his interests was now directed towards the use of photography in the newly emergent graphic arts processes, initially directed largely to the production of maps for official use. At the Survey of India's headquarters in Calcutta, Waterhouse was made responsible for the setting up of the origination, printing and production of all cadastral and map-making work. For the first ten years that the facility was under his superintendence, the conditions under which his section had to operate became one of Waterhouse's principal concerns. In addition to the dilapidated and unsanitary condition of the buildings he inherited, almost all the photographic and photomechanical processes practised by the branch necessitated regular physical contact with a variety of toxic chemical baths in open dishes, in poorly ventilated workshops and darkrooms, including ether and cyanide compounds (wet-plate photography), dichromates (collotype, lithography and photogravure), acid etches (photo-zincography and letterpress relief blockmaking), volatile alkalis (photogravure) and lead and mercuric salts (image intensification and reduction). It is clear from the records of his career, that in addition to his administrative and managerial duties, Waterhouse was personally involved with much of the experimental research and development work undertaken by his department. In doing so he must have subjected himself to a wide range of toxic substances, the cumulative effect of which may well have contributed to the chronic ill-health which required substantial periods of sick leave and recuperation in Europe.⁵

Waterhouse had been in his new post for less than a year when he was granted extended medical leave from 1867–1869. At this time the sea voyage to Europe took between 100 and 120 days. Waterhouse would therefore have had something in the order of three months remaining to recuperate and carry out the extensive period of work that he undertook while in Europe. It is unclear whether Waterhouse simply took advantage of this time in Europe to bring himself up to date with the latest developments in his field, or whether his furlough coincided with an official research tour. In any event, additional time was added to his leave, allowing him to undertake an extensive tour of European printing establishments, in order to obtain practical information and working details of recent improvements and operational advances in photographic and reprographic printing processes. Up to this point, his knowledge and experience had been acquired through personal experiment and practice, and from the study of journals and manuals. It seems likely that his first contacts with his Austrian, British, French and German counterparts had been by previous correspondence. Direct and invaluable personal contact with his professional contemporaries and future collaborators was made during this time.

No documentation appears to survive that might suggest the precise order and sequence of Waterhouse's European itinerary, other than the succession in which they are recorded in his later report to the Surveyor General. It is clear, however, that apart making contact with Sir Henry James, the officer in charge of the Ordnance Survey at Southampton, a priority was to visit the 1867 *International Exhibition* in Paris, to view at first hand specimens of the latest technical developments in the reprographic arts. Not only was an extensive selection of work produced by Sir Henry James's Southampton establishment on display, but the exhibition also represented work from a number of major European printing works, among them the Vienna Government Printing Office, the Portuguese Department of Gravure and Photo-electrotyping and the Imperial Russian Bureau of Engraving in St. Petersburg. Here he certainly met some of the foremost photographic scientists of the day, including Amand Durand, H. Placet, Henri Garnier, Drivet and no doubt many others – figures who constitute a veritable roll-call of the most distinguished technicians and scientists of the day.⁶

These repeated trips to Europe, far more frequent than an officer could generally expect in the course of an Indian career, did, however, allow him to keep abreast of scientific developments in a way which would have been impossible in India. His first furlough, which had lasted for nearly two years, not only allowed him to recover his health, but also enabled him to make an extended tour of all the foremost reprographic and photographic printing establishments in the United Kingdom and mainland Europe, evaluating and discussing the latest improvements and working practices in large-scale commercial and government printing establishments. Waterhouse not only reported officially on this tour to the Surveyor General, but also made the results generally available to the photographic community, in a series of articles entitled *An Indian Photographer on the Continent*, which appeared in various issues of the *British Journal of Photography* in 1870. This extensive and detailed review of photographic printing

practice throughout Europe, in addition to its influence on his own working practices, remains a valuable historical account of 19th-century photomechanical processes during a period of intense development. Another extended tour of European printing establishments was made during a further period of sick leave in 1878, and this fruitful pattern of research was continued while on European leave in 1879–1881, 1885, 1886, 1891 and 1894.

During Waterhouse's period of appointment, the Calcutta office of the Survey produced a remarkably wide range of illustrative material to service the administrative, military and scholarly demands of British India. By the 1870s, photography was in general use for the registering, identification and description of historical monuments, and this was only one aspect, if the best known, of a more ambitious and overarching objective. Waterhouse's Photographic and Lithographic Office in Calcutta was responsible for the production of an extensive range of graphic arts material: photographs, maps, diagrams and illustrations; reproductions of paintings, drawings, etchings, and engravings produced utilizing a wide range of autographic, photographic, reprographic and photomechanical processes. Photolithography, photozincography, collotype, photogravure, photoetching and engraving were all employed, in addition to the moderately small output from a photo (letterpress) block-making section. As well as work commissioned by the Crown, the facility provided a range of reprographic and reproductive services more often than not customized to meet the demands of individual government departments, as well as for other professionals and commercial firms located within the British colonial area of influence. Even so this represents a small part of the totality of the prodigious output of the Calcutta studios.

By 1886 demand for the services that were provided by the facility had escalated, and this led Waterhouse to return once more to the problem of acquiring suitable premises for the efficient servicing of the ever-increasing load placed on his establishment. In that year, during which his department's workload had doubled, he wearily noted that, "The pressing question of office accommodation again occupied a good deal of my attention during the early months of the year before I went on furlough."⁷ But despite the ever-growing workload, his report for 1885–1886 reveals the "expenditure to have been less than last year, while the amount and value of work done was much larger."⁸ Despite this achievement, it was clear that the situation could not continue indefinitely; financial constraints had delayed the construction of suitable premises for a number of years, but by the end of the 1880s, it was finally recognized that entirely new offices would have to be constructed if modern requirements for printed material were to be met efficiently and economically.

A tour of the photographic department of the survey of India in Calcutta

"Making the copies is a very mechanical affair, one good superintendent would be able to direct 20 workmen employed in that department of the manufacture. For it is a true manufacturing process. William Henry Fox Talbot, 1843."⁹

The potential cost-effectiveness of large-scale printing and reproduction, implied in this remark by one of the inventors of the medium, might have been thought to supply sufficient inducement for the Government of India to invest in suitable premises and machinery to service its growing requirements. However, although Waterhouse had been pressing for new accommodation for his staff almost from the time he first took up office, it was to be two decades before any practical steps were sanctioned by his superiors. The ceaseless and often confusing experimentation that characterized photography in the later decades of the nineteenth century meant that technical advances and chemical procedures were introduced and superseded with perplexing speed. The pace of these changes demanded considerable experience and skill in planning the construction of economical, efficient and durable working premises; it was therefore a major achievement on Waterhouse's part to oversee the planning and construction of studios and reprographic workshops that were amongst the most up-to-date anywhere in the world and which continue to function to the present day.

The Indian Government's eventual response to Waterhouse's arguments was to fund the construction of a new building complex in Calcutta, as part of a completely refurbished headquarters for the Survey of India in the block of land next to St. Xavier's College and bounded by Park Street, Wood Street and Short Street. The Photographic and Lithographic Department, sited across the road from the small, ramshackle group of former private dwellings where the printing offices, darkrooms and workshops had previously been located, was one of three large new blocks, standing between the Mathematical Office and the Office of the Surveyor-General.

This new building complex was constructed in three phases, with the new Photographic and Lithographic Office 'laid out in the form of a square with a quadrangle in the centre, the front entrance and face being in Wood Street.' Completed in February 1889, the removal and transfer of equipment and stores, and the installation of the new presses and power plant took up virtually the rest of the year. The transfer of the lithographic stones alone from one site to another was in itself a daunting task, given that the gross weight must have been in the region of 2,000 tons. Even so, Waterhouse was satisfied at finally having in place a well-equipped, purpose-built facility, which was capable of increased output, higher quality and a drastic reduction in waste.¹⁰ Further modern amenities were available in the form of gas, water and steam power, available whenever and wherever needed, and a constant and reliable water supply, fed from six 400-gallon tanks on the roof. Each photographic workshop darkroom, in which cool water was a necessity, had its own dedicated water tank acting as a reserve supply should the primary source run short.

What Waterhouse and his colleagues had achieved was remarkable: this ambitious and impressive facility was in its time one of the largest and most advanced photographic and photo-reprographic establishments in the world. In 1893, out of a total complement of 300, over 200 men were employed in the main pressroom and, as Waterhouse observed, it "may

be imagined, when all the presses are working it presents an animated spectacle".¹¹ Spongers, formerly employed as *bhistis* (water carriers), were now responsible for "damping down" lithographic plates and "gumming up".

It was no doubt with some satisfaction, that after years of work, Waterhouse was able to state in his report for 1889–1890, that "the most important event of the year has been the removal of these offices into the new building, No 14 Wood Street", further noting, "it will suffice to state that they were designed by Mr. W.B. Gwyther [William Banks Gwyther of the Public Works Department] on the basis of plans furnished by Colonel Waterhouse and are arranged on a square block on four sides of a central quadrangle the northern half being for the most part being devoted to the accommodation of the Lithographic and Zincographic Printing Sections."¹² Waterhouse's report also describes what this section contained in terms of equipment and staff, the ground floor being occupied by lithographic draftsmen, presses, lithographic and type-printing machinery, with zincographic presses and staff in the gallery, all laid out in a manner that allowed the staff to be kept under "observation and proper supervision". Aware of the heat and humidity of the Calcutta climate, all the open areas were well lit and ventilated, "and it is hoped that in the hot weather it may not be too oppressive". For the dark rooms, a system of "serpentine passages" ensured the circulation of air and the dispersal of chemical fumes, without admitting excessive light. The principal studio housing the massive cameras for photographing original artwork, was housed on the south side of the building on the first floor, with natural lighting supplied through the glass roof. This was a huge advance compared to the old premises, where the studio was built in a garden and the cameras had to be mounted on masonry blocks resting on sand to mitigate the vibrations from passing carriages.¹³

The actual removal of the office was begun in June 1889, commencing with the Heliogravure and Cadastral Zinc-printing sections from No. 2 Wood Street, with the Lithographic section from No. 1 Carnac Street following in July and the Photographic section by the end of September. The whole operation was so efficiently organized that the transfer was undertaken with little or no stoppage of work, although the new machinery for steam litho-printing ordered from England had not arrived by the time that the end-of-year review was completed.

In 1897, at the age of 55 and eight years after the completion of "the finest and most completely equipped establishments for photo-mechanical work", Waterhouse reached the official retirement age for government officials. The new facility had been one of the principal goals towards which Waterhouse had been working for two decades, from the time when he first took on the responsibility of the photographic and lithographic department in 1866. It was the first fully integrated multi-process photographic and graphic arts printing facility in the subcontinent, responsible for the origination, replication and production of a very varied range of material, utilizing all the major processes then current.

Much of the work of Waterhouse and his staff concerned the development and application of the newly emergent photo-reprographic technologies to map-making and surveying. But Waterhouse understood and anticipated the inherent advantages that the newer processes also held for book illustration and journals, noting that “in book illustration, photography has worked an entire revolution within the past few years.”¹⁴ Photogravure, photolithography and collotype technology opened up new horizons, more efficient, accurate and effective alternatives to the intensive and laborious craft-centred processes of hand engraving on steel and copper.

Through the Agency of Light: New Technologies, new Methods and New Processes

“The medium records events in a manner not previously possible and re-presents that with which we are familiar in new ways.”¹⁵

Waterhouse’s statement evokes the same predictive sentiments as those recorded decades earlier by Talbot and Grove on the nature and possible future direction of photography. Up until the late 1870s, the evolution of the Survey of India’s Photographic and Photo-reprographic multi-process facility had been essentially *ad-hoc* and reactive. With the completion of a new purpose-built workshop complex, equipped with the most modern machinery, Waterhouse by 1890 was able to take advantage of technological innovations and advances that had been made within the new media, and in the remaining years of his Indian career was able to make a major contribution to the photomechanical arts in a variety of technical spheres. Some account of the technical advances with which he was associated is necessary for a full appreciation of this contribution.

Within the graphic and photographic arts, industrialization brought about a succession of radical changes that required the development of new technologies and new skills and consequently, the need to move away from artisan-dominated structures. Prior to the introduction of the Talbot-Klíc process of photogravure, the Woodburytype and carbon processes established a standard of excellence that other emergent print and reprographic technologies were for some time unable to match. The man behind the camera became only one of a series of skilled operators, part of a long process line. Of all the mainstream modes of production only letterpress, photogravure and photolithography (collotype) survived. Socialization was virtually complete when photography became integrated in the media of daily newspapers and popular magazines, and at the same time, entered the mass market, requiring large-scale industrial production of cameras and the continuous production of chemicals. Photography within this significant range of applications was becoming mechanised.

Within the context of the British colonial sphere of influence, the services provided by Photographic and Photolithographic Offices performed a key supportive role in the origination, production and dissemination of strategically important data both for the governance of India and its military, scientific and commercial interests. Much of the Photographic and

Lithographic Printing Office's output was indeed devoted to the production of standard maps of the topographical and revenue surveys of India and for the creation of maps for the cadastral village surveys of the North West Provinces, Bengal, Assam, and Burma. In any one year 400 of the former were produced, "and about the same number of general and provincial maps, town plans and charts." Of the latter, more than 5,000 copies were printed off on imperial size sheets (22 x 30.5 inches). However, this represented only a small proportion of the work undertaken.

In 1898, a year after his retirement from the Survey of India, Waterhouse reported at a meeting of the Royal Photographic Society that the greater part of the work by the Photographic and Lithographic Office was undertaken on behalf of "the miscellaneous departments and offices, military and civil, besides many public institutions", to provide illustrations for their "reports or copies of plans and drawings". Later in the same article he provided further amplification: "A great part of this extra departmental work is lithographed, and some reproduced by photogravure and other photographic processes, but the bulk must be done by photozincography."¹⁶ However, these were only some of the technical processes employed: on a smaller scale Waterhouse and his team examined a number of new developments in the field that could be of potential future use. Among those processes and techniques exhaustively tested in his Calcutta offices in the 1870s–1880s were: Platinotype (printing with the more permanent salts of platinum rather than silver), photo-transfer (tissue), photo-engraving tissue, collotype, pigment printing, heliogravure, photogravure, photo-electrotype, photo-typographic etching and cyanotype. Among the numerous advances that can be credited to Waterhouse and his department during this period was the development of a practical three-colour collotype printing process.

In the late 1880s, the use of silver-based photographic printing processes was virtually abandoned in favour of the cheaper and quicker cyanotype (or blueprint), for the pre-press proofing of maps within the reprographic department. Between 1889 and 1897, the year of his retirement, new techniques were explored, including the use of combination printing, particularly for the addition of topographical information (photogravure in colour) on a single image (black printing) originating from a photo-zincographic plate. This opened up the possibility of being able, at the last minute, to overprint strategically sensitive data onto a pre-printed single-colour original, a technique which was to become standard practice for all future military and security-sensitive map production. The late 19th century was a period of unprecedented experimentation, witnessing the introduction of a range of new photographic and photomechanical processes, often given exotic and confusing names, many of them entailing the attachment of the suffix '-type' to the inventor's name. Almost all of these were, however, barely disguised variants of the four principal processes. A brief account of the technical characteristics of the most important of these will give some indication both of the variety and the complexity of the work undertaken by Waterhouse and his associates.

The Collotype Process

Still in use today by a small number of fine art printing houses, the collotype process (also often known by its German name of *Lichtdruck*) is based upon the fact that gelatine in its natural state is water receptive and retains moisture, whilst gelatine rendered insoluble by the action of dichromate of potassium and light, becomes oliophilic (grease receptive). Minute surface reticulations occur following after-treatment, and within these areas the microscopic cracks help both in the retention of the ink and the formation of the subtle tonal gradation, characteristic of the process. A sheet of glass is coated with a thin film of dichromated gelatine and dried. It is then exposed, in contact, under a photographic negative and a faint image can be seen on the surface. The plate is then washed over with cold water, and those parts that have not been acted upon by light, absorb water and swell up.

During the process of development there is, however, a further action, which takes place in the half tones. In those areas representing the intermediate tones, the surface reticulates and breaks up into a fine random network of interstitial lines. The precise nature of this granular complex is difficult to describe, but it has the important property of being able to retain ink in parts, whilst rejecting it in others, thus producing a fine and delicate range of unbroken tone, particularly in the highlights.

Joseph Albert, a Munich photographer, is generally acknowledged as being the first to have developed a commercially successful version of the collotype process, which was patented under the name *Albertotype* in 1868. Some of the finest work ever produced in collotype was executed by the Portuguese photographer Carlos Relvas, who in 1870 had obtained exclusive rights from Albert for the whole of Portugal. Waterhouse was so impressed by range and quality of Relvas' work that, on his second European furlough, he made a point of travelling to his studio in Portugal to see his photographic atelier and collotype printing workshop at first hand.

There can be little doubt that Waterhouse's decision to abandon collotype had as much to do with its unsuitability in the hot and humid climate of Calcutta as to improvements in photogravure printing. Further refinements to the process were introduced by Jakob Husnik, who briefly etched the surface of the glass and added first of all a substratum of powdered glass and dichromated albumen, thus giving a greater degree of adhesion for the final coating of dichromated gelatine. Although this proved to be of benefit for ateliers and workshops in Europe, it did little to increase the reliability of the collotype in India.

Photolithography

The originations for all photolithographic plates in half-tone at the Southampton Ordnance Survey Office and at the Survey of India Office in Calcutta, were taken from images that had first been created in collotype and printed on specially prepared transfer paper, inked up with a greasy ink and transferred, under pressure to a lithographic stone or plate, from which printing

was then carried out. It is undoubtedly the close links and concordance between the two processes and the ensuing terminological imprecision that leads to the continuance of erroneous assumptions regarding the separate nature of the process, when in fact photolithography is essentially lithographic printing from a collotype original. Both Burton (1887) and Wilkinson (1892) identified this as being a concern, within their own time.¹⁷

Photo-etching (Photogravure)

There were two separate and distinct lines of development along which all photo-mechanical printing process evolved: the methodology founded upon the work of Niépce, using bitumous compounds and that based upon the properties of the chromates and their effect on colloidal compounds. Of these entirely separate and distinct lines of evolution the latter proved to be the most enduring and of the greatest utility. The unique properties of dichromated colloids¹⁸ ultimately led towards the emergence of the three photo-reprographic printing processes: photogravure, photolithography (collotype) and photoengraving. Dichromated gelatine when exposed to light becomes more or less soluble in direct proportion to the amount of light to which it has been exposed. This thin membrane or stratum has an additional characteristic upon which William Henry Fox Talbot's photoglyphic engraving (essentially photogravure), Alphonse Louis Poitevin's (1819–1882) lithography and collotype, Swan and Fargier carbon transfer, and Woodbury's Woodburytype processes were all based.

Waterhouse's 1898 paper describing his department's work provides corroboration that the only photo-mechanical process in regular use at the workshop in Calcutta after the late 1880s, apart from photo-zincography (which was cheap, quick, but incapable of the fine definition and tone of other processes), was the "photo-etch method of heliogravure, commonly known as the Talbot-Kliç process." In the same paragraph he also states that the electrotyping methods first used, between 1878 and 1887, "have now been quite abandoned in favour of the quicker and more certain method."¹⁹ His evident enthusiasm emerges again towards the end of the same paper: "I may mention here that the heliogravure process seems particularly well adapted for producing most delicate and excellent enlargements from small negatives. Details come out that can scarcely be seen in the originals, and there need be very little loss of sharpness. The softening of definition adds to the delicacy of the picture without producing fuzziness."²⁰ Waterhouse's inclusion in his 1889–1890 departmental report, of photographs of the exterior and interior of the new Calcutta complex, printed in photogravure, demonstrates both the quality of work produced by his department and the fine tonal rendition possible with the process.²¹

Photo-galvanography²²

Otto Volkmer in *Photo-Galvanographie* (a work that provides historically accurate and practically useful information on the most important photo-galvanographic methods still based on the use of dichromated gelatine), describes the two distinct lines of development that were

both rendered obsolete by the Talbot-Klič process of photogravure.²³ Paul Pretsch's approach was to employ a swelled gelatine relief as the basis of his process, on the surface of which a thin layer of copper was galvanically deposited, and subsequently block-mounted so that it was possible to print type and image up together. Poitevin's version was an even more complex operation taken up by Emil Mariot of Military Geographic Institute at Vienna, both of whom appear to have been the earliest experimenters in this direction. About 1869, sections of a map of Austria-Hungary were printed at the Military Survey Department at Vienna using photo-galvanography. Shortly afterwards Waterhouse was himself motivated to experiment with the Poitevin / Mariot method, in a manner which, according to Denison, "has very materially improved the Mariot process in making it better suited for completely rendering half-tone. As far back as 1878, he [Waterhouse] published a method of producing grain on the wet carbon print, by treating it – while on the silvered copper plate – with a solution of five parts of tannin in one hundred parts of alcohol, after which it is rinsed, dried, and slightly waterproofed by the application of wax dissolved in turpentine. Plumbago or silver bronze powder is used to make the film conductive."²⁴

Further modifications and improvements, including those employed by Geymet, Placet, Andra and others, are attributable to Waterhouse. Reference should also be made to his method of graining the wet carbon image by sifting upon it fine sand (slightly waxed on the surface to prevent adhesion), the sand being brushed off when the carbon print was dry. This procedure is described in detail by Burton as Waterhouse's "discriminating grain" process.²⁵ Although discontinued and taken no further in Calcutta, it was nevertheless greatly improved by J.R. Sawyer of the Autotype Company.

James Waterhouse in perspective

James Waterhouse's career spanned 38 years in India, with extended furloughs in England and Europe, followed by 24 years in England until his death in 1921. In India he first became an artillery officer in 1859 at the age of 17, then added photography to his accomplishments, before changing the direction of his work to photographic and photomechanical printing in 1866. From then on this became his major interest and full-time professional occupation, both as head of the Survey of India's photographic department and as a contributor to a variety of relating to scientific investigations, such as his involvement with astronomical photography in the 1870s. He was instrumental in arguing the case for, and planning, a new facility for photographic printing in India, which was finally completed in 1889. He made it his business to keep abreast of developments in his field, and contributed a number of major innovations in printing science and technology.²⁶

After his retirement in 1897, and his return to England, Waterhouse continued to be an active researcher and wrote numerous technical and research papers. Over the following two years, eleven scientific papers were published on a variety of topics centred on photographic chemistry

and the graphic arts, but without doubt the most important academic contribution he made at this stage of his career was his authorship of three comprehensive papers on the prehistory of photography: *Notes on the early history of the camera obscura* (1900 and 1901), *Notes on early tele-dioptric lens systems and the genesis of tele-photography* (1902) and *The beginnings of photography: a chapter in the history of the development of photography with salts of silver* (1902).

Waterhouse also contributed to the running of the Royal Photographic Society, becoming its first Honorary Secretary in 1899 and President in 1905. It is our loss that in 1914, at the age of 72, he apparently ceased his researches, and published no papers after 1915. It is unfortunate too that he never drew his papers together into a book, or, indeed, saw to the preservation of his papers, which do not appear to have survived; perhaps if he had, his achievements would not have remained neglected in the ensuing decades.

1 James Waterhouse, 'The President's Address. By-ways of Photography', *The Photographic Journal*, vol. 45, no. 10, London: November 1905, 351–359, 354.

2 Photographers represented include J.C.A. Dannenberg, R.H. DeMontmorency, E. Godfrey, W.W. Hooper, H.C. McDonald, J. Mulheran, G. Richter, Shepherd & Robertson, B. Simpson, B.W. Switzer, H.C.B. Tanner, C.C. Taylor, and J. Waterhouse.

Taken in the 1850s and 1860s, these photographs portray the people of many castes, culture groups, and occupations in India, posed individually and in groups. Indian culture groups portrayed include Bhogta, Bhoti, Chero, Dombo, Gond, Gujarati, Ho, Kachari, Kishangarh, Kota, Lepcha, Mishmi, Munda, Naga, Pahari, Paithan, Rajput, Saora, Singpho, Thakur, Tharu, and Toda. Peoples portrayed are from parts of India and surrounding areas, now in Afghanistan, Burma, Iran and Pakistan, such as Assam, Bareli, Behat, Cachar, Chittagong, Delhi, Hazara, Hisar, Kohat, Lahore, Madras, Munjpur, Mysore, Palamau, Shahabad, Shahjahanpur, Sikkim, and Sind. Occupations illustrated include barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters, charcoal carriers, farmers, fish vendors, horse dealers, interpreters, landlords, mendicants, merchants, officials, priests, warriors, and water carriers. Activities shown include dancing and knitting. Artifacts and material culture documented include books, buildings, devotional objects, tools, and weapons such as bows, clubs, shields, guns and spears.

3 Major R.J. Meade, Governor General's Agent for Central India, to Colonel H.M. Durand, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign department, Gwalior, dated 25 February 1863. Government of India Foreign Department, Public Proceedings, July 1863, 17. British Library.

4 James Waterhouse, 1905 (note 1) 354.

5 See Appendix for a biographical chronology of Waterhouse's life, which records the substantial periods of sick leave he was compelled to take in the course of his career.

6 *Camera Obscura*, vol. 2, no. 14 (1900), 110–111.

7 *Survey of India Annual Report for 1885–86*, Photographic Department, appendix, LXXXV: Office Accommodation.

8 *Survey of India Annual Report for 1885–86*, Photographic Department, 71 in section paragraph [31]

Major M.W. Rogers R.E. reports in Waterhouse's absence that "The amount of silver printing has been considerably larger. In heliogravure, electrotyping and photo-collotype printing there has been a large increase and these processes are now beginning to be fairly established".

9 William Henry Fox Talbot to Améline Petit de Billier, letter of 8 February 1843.

10 Although Waterhouse was, once more, away on sick leave in Europe for much of the period of construction, it is clear from his reports that he remained involved in all aspects of the work.

While many of Waterhouse's achievements in the field of photomechanical reproduction and research have subsequently received scant attention, his contemporaries were more conscious of his major contribution. In this assessment of the significance of his work, it is perhaps fitting to close with the opinion of the President of the Royal Photographic Society, the Earl of Crawford, who, as chairman of the society's January 1898 meeting, invited Waterhouse to present a lecture outlining the scope of his career with the Survey of India. Waterhouse, he considered,

"must be regarded as the father of photo-mechanical work to most of those present; for many years he had pursued his researches into the subject with great success, giving his results most freely and generously to the world and to him was very largely due the enormous impetus which had been given to photo-mechanical printing in recent years."²⁷

- 11 *General Report on the Operations of the Survey of India Department ... during 1889–1890* (Calcutta, 1891). British Library Department of Manuscripts, East India office Collection report for 1890.
- 12 General Report, 1891 (note 11).
- 13 James Waterhouse, 'Photo-mechanical printing in connection with the Survey of India', *The Photographic Journal*, vol. 22 (new series), No. 5, London, January 1898, 133–143, 134.
- 14 See note 3.
- 15 Waterhouse, 1905 (note 1) 351.
- 16 Waterhouse, 1898 (note 13) 138.
- 17 See generally, William K. Burton, *Practical Guide to Photographic and Photo-mechanical Printing*, London, 1887 and W.T. Wilkinson, *Photo-mechanical Processes*, London, 1892.
- 18 Ijiro Yoshioka (ed.), '3: "The Agency of Light" alone... the Techniques of the Photographer, Gray, M.W. and Joseph, S. F', *Through Wider Windows: 170-Year Breakthroughs in Photography*, Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, Tokyo, 2004.
- 19 Waterhouse, 1898 (note 13) 139.
- 20 Waterhouse, 1898 (note 13) 140.
- 21 From the 1890s through to the early 1900s, the annual report of the Survey of India from the 1890s included several examples of the high quality reproductions of which photogravure was capable, both in technical work and more general pictorial subjects. In the 1890s, also, Waterhouse's department was responsible for the production of the photogravures of members' work that were regularly reproduced in the *Journal of the Photographic Society of India*.
- 22 Also known as galvanoplasty.
- 23 Ottomar Volkmer, *Die Photo-Galvanographie zur Herstellung von Kupferdruck- und Buchdruckplatten nebst den nöthigen Vor- und Nebenarbeiten*, Halle, 1894.
- 24 Refer in general to Herbert Denison, *A Treatise on Photogravure in intaglio by the Talbot-Klic process*, London: Iliffe and Son, n.d. [c.1895].
- 25 W.K. Burton, 'Historical Sketch of Photo-mechanical Printing Processes', *A Practical Guide to Photographic & Photo-mechanical printing*, London: Marion and Co. 1887, 6, 11–33.
- 26 In addition to his published works there also exists a wealth of primary source material relating to his technical researches in the annual reports of the Survey of the India in the 1880s and 1890s.
- 27 *The Photographic Journal*, vol. 22 (new series), no. 5, London: January 1898, 133.

Thomas Freiler

IS The Eder-Hecht Sensitometer and the Beginnings of the Standardization of Photographic Technology

Sensitometers are principally aids for depicting the sensitivity of photographic layers optically and, if necessary, making them numerically readable and comparable. Apparatuses were already developed and used in the early days of photography for this purpose but mainly for controlling copying processes. As a rule, photographic materials had to be freshly prepared, immediately before the shot was taken and were, therefore, difficult to evaluate.

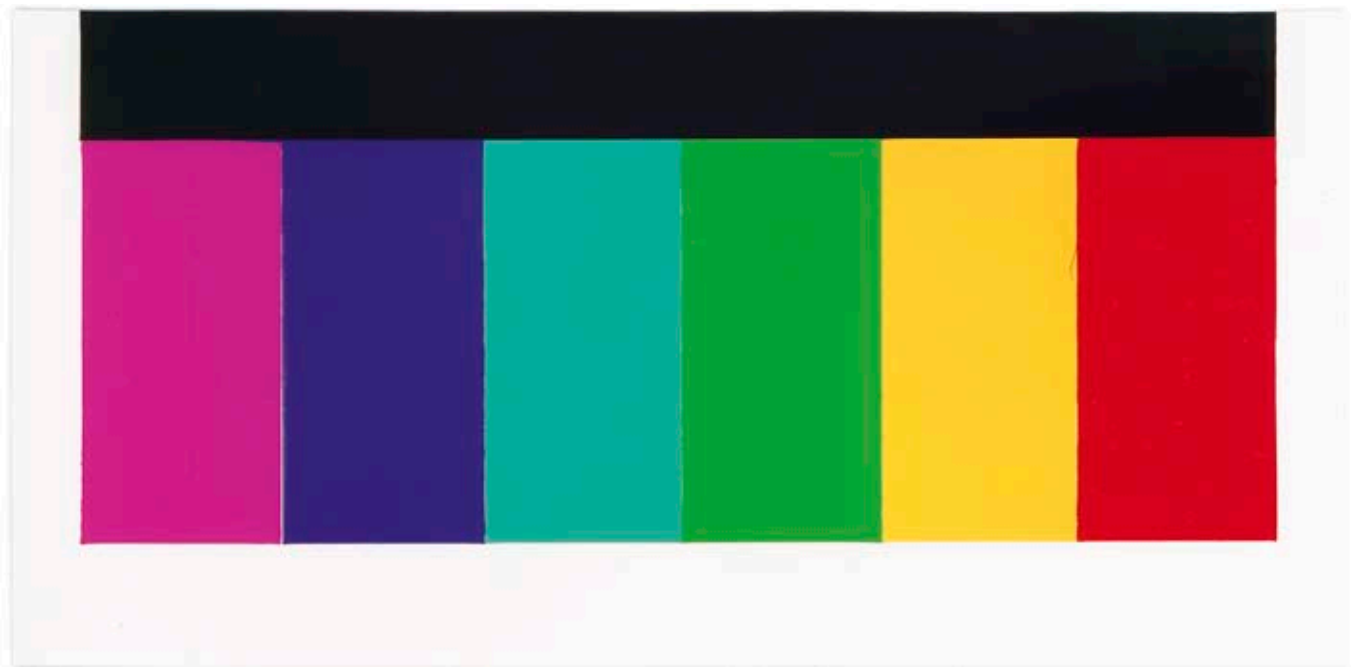
Wet collodion plates, for example, were cast by the photographer or an assistant according to general – or personal – formulas, and the method for processing them determined the sensitivity and character of the emulsion to a large degree. The photographer adapted his material and its processing according to the individual requirements. The photographer's personal experience and talent in preparing photographic material was just as important for the success of a photograph as his sense of aesthetics or skill in handling the photographic apparatus.

From the 1870s, the industrially produced gelatin dry plate provided a ready-made product whose properties were originally unknown to the photographers who had to rely on the information provided by the producer. The first gelatin dry plates actually made an extremely simplified form of photography possible, compared with the use and processing of collodion plates, as they did not have to be developed immediately after exposure and one could keep them on stock; however, both overall sensitivity and colour sensitivity were initially less satisfactory than with plates using the wet collodion coating.

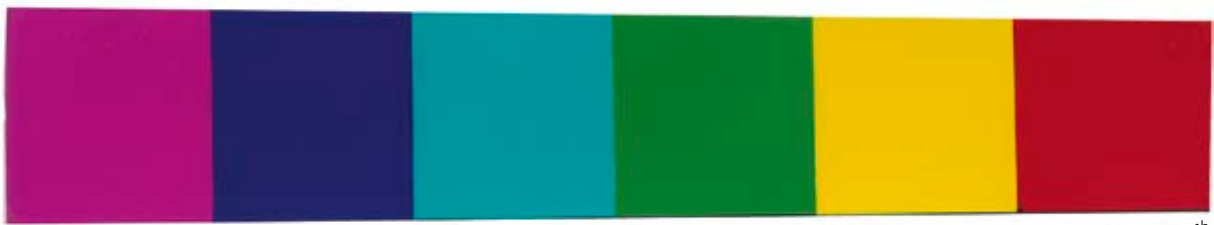
In addition, one always had to take considerable differences in sensitivity into consideration; on the one hand, resulting from production and, on the other, from the various labelling practices of the individual producers. In his 1919 photo companion, Ludwig David noted that "... therefore, the prevailing competition makes it necessary to treat the specifications of the manufacturers with caution".¹ The material described as the ultra-rapid plate could have a Scheiner sensitivity ranging from 17 to 22 degrees (today, approximately ISO 3–12).² After 1880, this situation increasingly led to the development of methods for verifying the sensitivity of photographic plates – in the factory itself and also through comparisons and controls of the goods on offer made in scientific institutions such as the Grafische Lehr- und

fig. 1 Thomas Freiler, *Works on Photography – Das Apparative in der Fotografie – Principles of Colour Photography in Question, Series 3.xx(x).x*, 1989–1992.

- a)** colour chart, 1992, Cibachrome, 10 x 20 cm, Edition Galerie Stadtpark, Krems.
- b)** colour chart, 1991, Cibachrome, 5 x 30 cm.
- c)** colour chart and red spotlight, 1991, Cibachrome, 6 x 30 cm.



1a



1b



1c

Versuchsanstalt in Vienna (Graphic Educational and Experimental Institution). And, finally, through the development of the Eder-Hecht Sensitometer by Josef Maria Eder that Dr. Kögel, professor at the Technical University in Karlsruhe, commented on in the following manner on the occasion of Josef Maria Eder's seventieth birthday celebration at the Technical University in Vienna in 1925:

"... a sensitometer that belongs to the type of the intensity photometer was developed by Eder from the Goldberg and Hübl wedge and recalibrated for relative and absolute values. It is a measuring instrument used in illumination technology, industrial hygiene, photobiology and therapy, by the botanist and phytogeographer, and in agriculture. Many meteorologists as well as aeronauts, who are obliged to use photometry, take advantage of the Eder-Hecht Sensitometer."³

As explained by J.M. Eder,⁴ the principle of the grey wedge sensitometer mentioned in Prof. Dr. Kögel's laudation can be traced back to Franz Stolze who was the first to produce a gelatine wedge coloured with black Indian ink. Although Stolze was aware of the limitations of this grey wedge and described them, in 1883 he thought about the possibility of a standardized wedge similar to the standard meter or kilogramme: "... As one will soon see, these are no drawback to the viability of observations made with the same instrument and, if one should desire to make a so-called norm instrument of this, it would make the precise determination of the amount of colour as easy as with Warnerke's Sensitometer, if not easier. (Here, a sheet of glass with various transparently coloured fields was used) However, even if this were not to happen, it would be easier to calibrate each instrument through the comparison with a 'Norm Sensitometer'."⁵

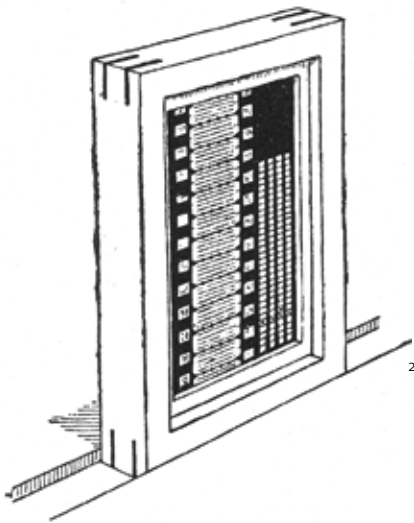


fig. 2 Eder-Hecht Sensitometer.

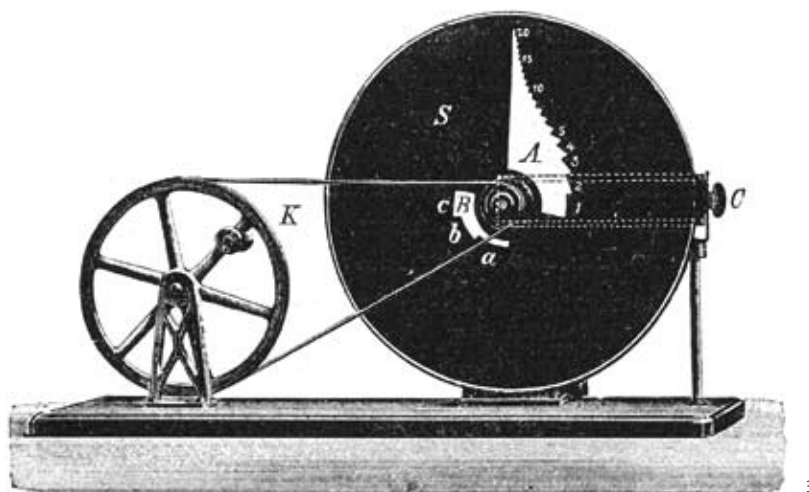
fig. 3 Scheiner's Sensitometer.

all in: Dr. Josef Maria Eder, *Ausführliches Handbuch der Photographie*, 3. Band, Teil 4: *Die Sensitometrie, photographische Photometrie und Spektrographie*, Halle (Saale): Verlag Wilhelm Knapp 1930.

In his 1930 publication "Sensitometry, Photographic Photometrie and Spectrography", J.M. Eder himself describes the Eder-Hecht Sensitometer in the following manner: "The Eder-Hecht Grey Wedge Sensitometer contains a grey wedge in the format of 9 x 12 cm, with an average wedge constant of 0.4, on a mirrored glass. The light grey gelatine coating is protected with zapon paint with an overlay of celluloid or cellophane, where the scale is printed in black and then powdered with bronze dust to increase its opacity. The graduations of the scale increase from two to 2 mm (*ie.* by 2 degrees E.H., resulting in an increasing sensitivity reading of one to 1.2. The entire scale covers a light intensity from around 1 to 200,000."⁶ (fig. 2)

This Eder-Hecht grey wedge was originally produced at the Grafische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt by Walter Hecht following J.M. Eder's specifications and later, as reported in various literature, by the Herlango Company in Vienna. It belongs to the type of sensitometer with a so-called intensity scale and constant exposure time in contrast to the often-used Scheiner sensitometers with the same exposure intensity but varying exposure times. Scheiner's instruments produced, in a form adapted from Eder, a grey wedge by means of a rapidly-rotating metal disc with a series of cut out segments of the circle of varying lengths, through the intermittent exposure

(recurring with each rotation) of a strip of photographic paper or photographic plate, depending on what was to be tested, behind it. In this process, the grey wedge itself was the result and was evaluated by placing the appropriate mask inscribed with the Scheiner scale of numbers over it in order to classify the values. The Scheiner degree number that stood opposite the first perceptible blackening was chosen as the sensitivity designation; it was read at the threshold value



of the blackening. Scheiner's Sensitometer was recommended – in a form J.M. Eder had slightly modified – as the norm sensitometer at the Third International Congress for Applied Chemistry in Vienna in 1898 and, in this way, the Scheiner degree numbers were introduced as the general denomination for the sensitivity of photographic recording material (fig. 3).

As can be seen when comparing figures 2 and 3, the E-H Sensitometer greatly simplified the organization of testing as it had no mechanical moving parts and the test instrument was no larger than the sample itself.

One generally speaks about the Eder-Hecht Sensitometer but J.M. Eder did not use only one type of this instrument but varied its form in keeping with the assignment that had to be performed. Figure 7 (see next spread) shows the calibration of an Eder-Hecht grey wedge in the format of 9 x 12 cm with which two tests could be compared directly with each other using two identical scales: Beginning on the left, four narrow grey wedges with colour filters for the colours R (red), G (yellow), GR (green) and B (blue) were placed, followed by a broader one without a colour filter but numbered from 0 to 120 on both sides and, finally, another series of colour-filtered wedges from R(ed) to B(lue). Eder names 0.4 as the wedge constant, meaning an increase in absorption by 2.52 times per 1 cm.⁷ An additional constant used by Eder of 0.305 that seems more practical from today's perspective will be dealt with later in the text.

As is the case with most of the figures in this text, the one shown on the next spread is taken from J.M. Eder's *Comprehensive Handbook of Photography*, third volume, section four: Sensitometry, Photographic Photometry and Spectrography and only shows the calibration and not the grey curve of the instrument. It was not possible to make an exact photographic reproduction of the E-H Sensitometer as the sensitometer's range of density is bigger than could be shown on a



4

fig. 4 Bloch's Unimeter.

In: Dr. Josef Maria Eder, *Ausführliches Handbuch der Photographie*, 3. Band, Teil 4: *Die Sensitometrie, photographische Photometrie und Spektrographie*, Halle (Saale): Verlag Wilhelm Knapp 1930.

fig. 5 Schematic diagram of a photometer

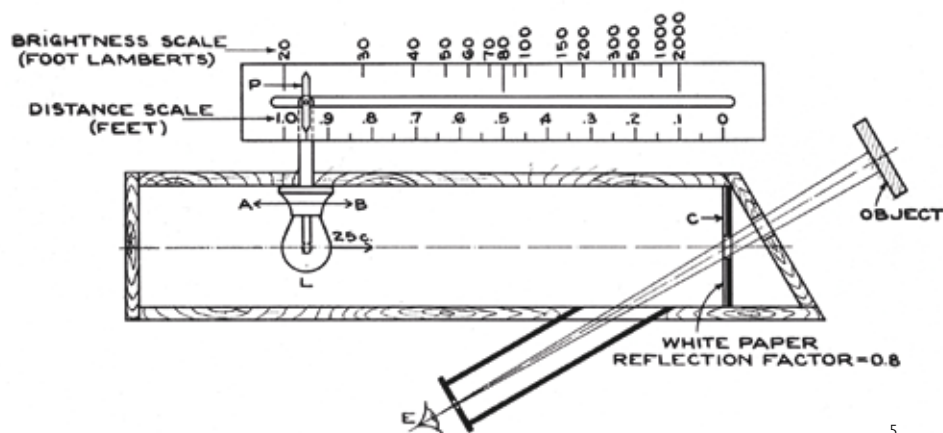
In: C.E.K. Mees, D.Sc., *The Fundamentals of Photography*, Rochester, NY: Eastman Kodak Company 1935.

fig. 6 Differing reproduction of an Agfa colour card using an orthochromatic and panchromatic photographic plate.

fig. 7 Calibration of an Eder-Hecht grey wedge.

fig. 8 E.H. Sensitometer with a large wedge surface.

single photographic plate, let alone be printed. Today, this would mean a range of contrast of around 18 f-stops or a density of approximately 5.5. Figure 8 shows a test using another version of the E-H Sensitometer with a large wedge surface for a rough reading of sensitivity on the left and a simple colour scale on the right. The wedge with the red filter cannot be seen in this illustration as this shows the test of an orthochromatic plate insensitive to red. Eder selected the colour filters so that they would approximately join together to comprise a continuous



5

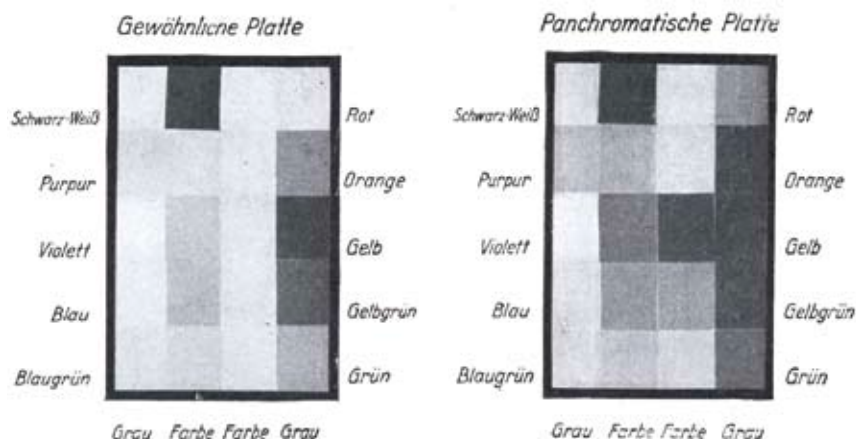
spectrum from blue 330 $\mu\mu$ to the most extreme red. He gives the translucence of the glass as the bearer of the grey wedge in the blue spectrum as 313 $\mu\mu$ ⁸ and draws attention to the fact that this sensitometer is constructed for photography in the visible spectrum. In the period of the sensitization of photographic materials, Eder considered the determination of the colour sensitivity to be as important as the overall sensitivity. In figure 6, Eder shows the differing reproduction of an Agfa colour card using an orthochromatic and panchromatic photographic plate.

Standardization and testing conditions

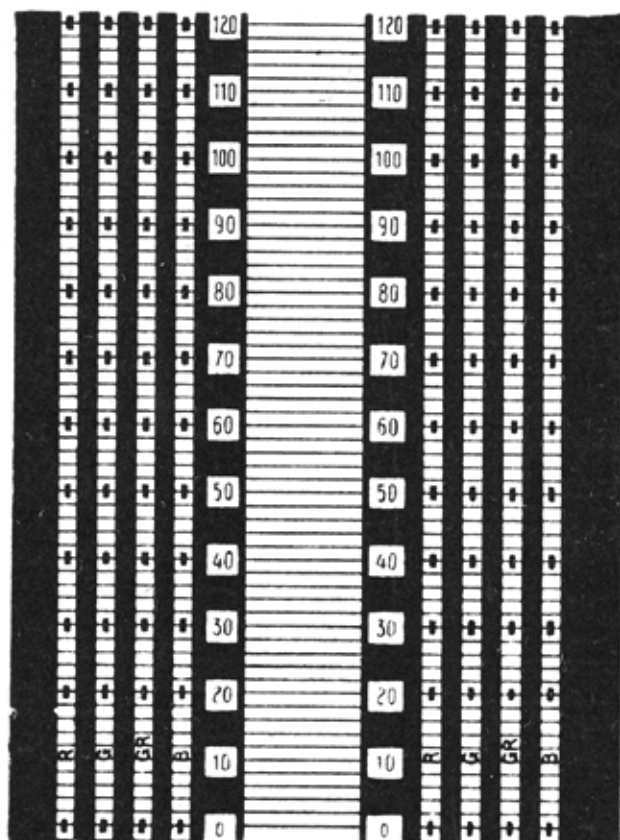
As is standard practice in scientific experiments, Eder implemented a concrete testing protocol in order to obtain accurate scale values and numbers and, for this, he had to determine and standardize the individual components: source of light, exposure, development, measuring methods and reference picture.

Eder initially used the so-called Hefner candle as his source of light. The Hefner candle, colour temperature c.1830 Kelvin, was chosen as the standard source of light at the photographic congresses in Paris in 1889 and Brussels in 1891, as well as at the International Congress for Applied Chemistry in Vienna in 1898 in order to determine the sensitivity of photographic plates to light according to Scheiner's method.

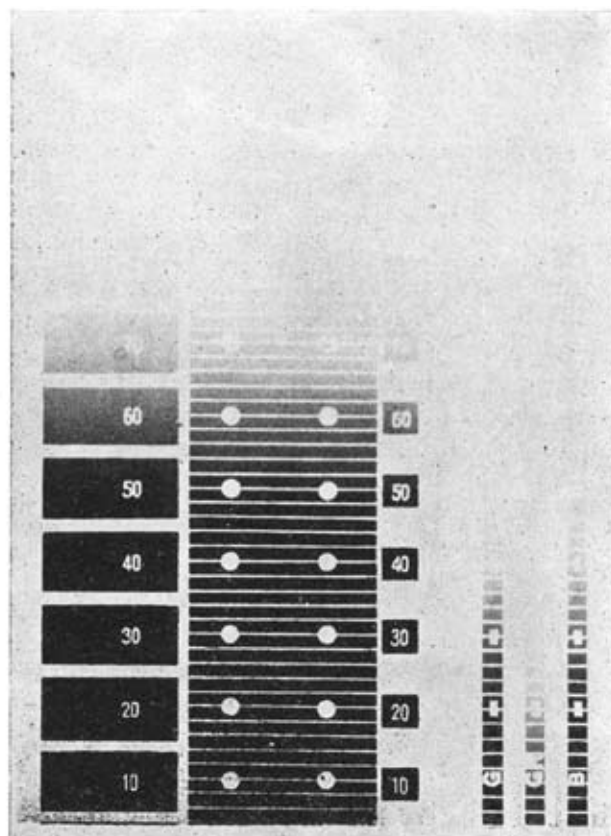
As a rule, exposure with the Hefner candle was from a distance of 1 metre for 1 minute. The tests were developed by Eder in a developer which he described as a normal developer and were always repeated up to six times, several development times chosen and, subsequently, a mean value cited as the result. In order to standardize testing, he always used freshly prepared photo paper of a constant sensitivity following the formula of Bunsen and Roscoe as his standard paper that was only sensitive to the blue light spectrum.



6



7



8

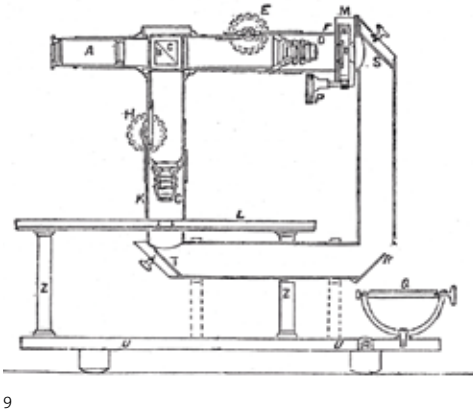


fig. 9 Hartmann's Microphotometer

In: Dr. Josef Maria Eder, *Ausführliches Handbuch der Photographie*, 3. Band, Teil 4: *Die Sensitometrie, photographische Photometrie und Spektrographie*, Verlag Wilhelm Knapp, Halle (Saale), 1930.

Eder does not indicate a standardized observation light and the precise instructions for the assessment situation but merely the advice to test transmitted light against a clouded sky and incident light by good daylight. Instruments called the densometer and photometer were available for measuring absorbance. Some examples of these apparatuses are Bloch's Unimeter in figure 7, the schematic diagram of a simple apparatus in figure 8, as well as the diagram of J. Hartmann's microphotometer, an instrument for determining the brightness of stars in astronomy, presented in Berlin in 1899 (fig. 9).

The microphotometer in Figure 9: An optical construction reflects the detail of the sample to be measured onto the field of view of a standardized, calibrated grey wedge. If the brightness appears the same in the eye of the observer, the scale is registered and classified.

The assessment almost always occurred through the perception of the human eye and, there, through the perception of differences. In a lecture held at the Grafische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt in Vienna around 1920, L. Richtera explained that there must be at least a difference of one hundredth between the two magnitudes being compared, independent of the absolute magnitude itself. Extreme values, such as dazzling brightness or absolute darkness, are the exceptions.⁹

The lecture also showed that, in this connection, the perceptive theories of Fechner, Mach and Hering, on the one hand, and Helmholtz, on the other, were followed with great interest. Knowledge of the subjectivity and conditionality of human perception was taken into consideration in the testing methods and, for this reason, Eder also described statistical evaluations of samples stemming from the judgement of a number of observers, in great detail, in addition to measurements using densometers.

The search for international standards

The standardization of testing procedures to be able to determine relevant variables was especially challenging. At least five kinds of light sources were used by scientists for sensitometric testing. Finally, the electric, standardized vacuum tungsten filament lamp (2360k) with a selective absorbing copper-cobalt light filter and the mean midday sunlight in Washington (5000k) were established as the standard sources of light at the international photographic congresses held in Paris in 1925 and London in 1928.¹⁰ The light temperature of the sources of light grew in importance with the increasing colour sensitivity of photographic emulsions.

Gradations after Scheiner, Eder-Hecht, Warneke, Hurter & Driffield, Langer and a few others competed for the specification of the general light sensitivity of photographic materials in Germany alone. The *Deutsche Institut für Normierung* (German Institute of Standardization)

replaced these with the DIN-Norm in 1934. These were then superseded by the ISO 5800 Norm in 1987 which included the American ASA standard for film sensitivity – today’s ISO classification. The division of the apertures for exposure into the f-stops that we also know today was established at the Paris International Photographic Congress in 1900 as a new French system.¹¹

In 1931, one year after the publication of the final edition of J.M. Eder’s *Comprehensive Handbook of Photography*, the International Illumination Committee (*Commission Internationale de l’Eclairage* – CIE) determined the average human colour perception under specially defined conditions for the first time and, in this way, created a kind of “standard observer” as colour-blindness can lead to great deviations in this regard.

Standard motif

A grey wedge can be described as an ideal, standardized motif that at least demonstrates all possible gradations of brightness reproducible in a photographic medium and, ideally, all those possible in practice. This norm and standard motif is ideally a placeholder for all the possible pictures in the pictorial universe, which the philosopher Vilem Flusser summarized as the totality of photographic depictions. Its structure attempts to include all those conditions considered as being relevant and configure them in a way making it intelligible as an evaluation method – in the case of the Eder-Hecht Sensitometer, for the perception of differentiation by the human eye and the allotment of values followed by further mathematic development in tables. In the twentieth century, a great number of standard tables and machine-readable test charts were developed that attempted to standardize photographic apparatuses and materials and reproduction media and optimize them in accordance with the characteristics of human perception.

It was actually only possible to make the statement that the tested sample possessed the determined properties under special testing conditions and that, only because the testing conditions were similar to those in practical applications, these properties could also be expected there. In his publications, Eder often used terms such as “sufficiently precise” or “almost exact”. Eder was aware of this lack of definition but, in his tests, he attempted to solve this when a more suitable approach was possible. For example, seeing that, in practice, exposure times are usually much shorter than one minute and the sensitivity and character of photographic emulsions do not perform linearly, Eder soon replaced the Hefner candle with burning magnesium – naturally, using a rigorously determined method (instead of an exposure of one minute from a distance of one metre with a Hefner candle, 2 mg of magnesium placed 3 metres away from the sample).

Application

With the help of his sensitometer, Eder calculated detailed comparative tables on the general sensitivity and colour sensitivity of a number of the photographic products on the market at the time.

Starting with his Eder-Hecht degrees, he constructed tables for the conversion of the various common units of which, as mentioned above, there were many.

The colour wedge integrated into the E.H. Sensitometer, on the other hand, made it possible to quantitatively determine the colour sensitivity of photographic recording material taking the colour effects of various sources of light into consideration and permitted calculable three-colour photography and three-colour printing that was true to nature.

In addition, through the targeted processing of photo materials, the calibrated grey wedge made the depiction of the various gradations, along with the determination of sensitivities, possible and thereby the calculable adjustment of copy materials:

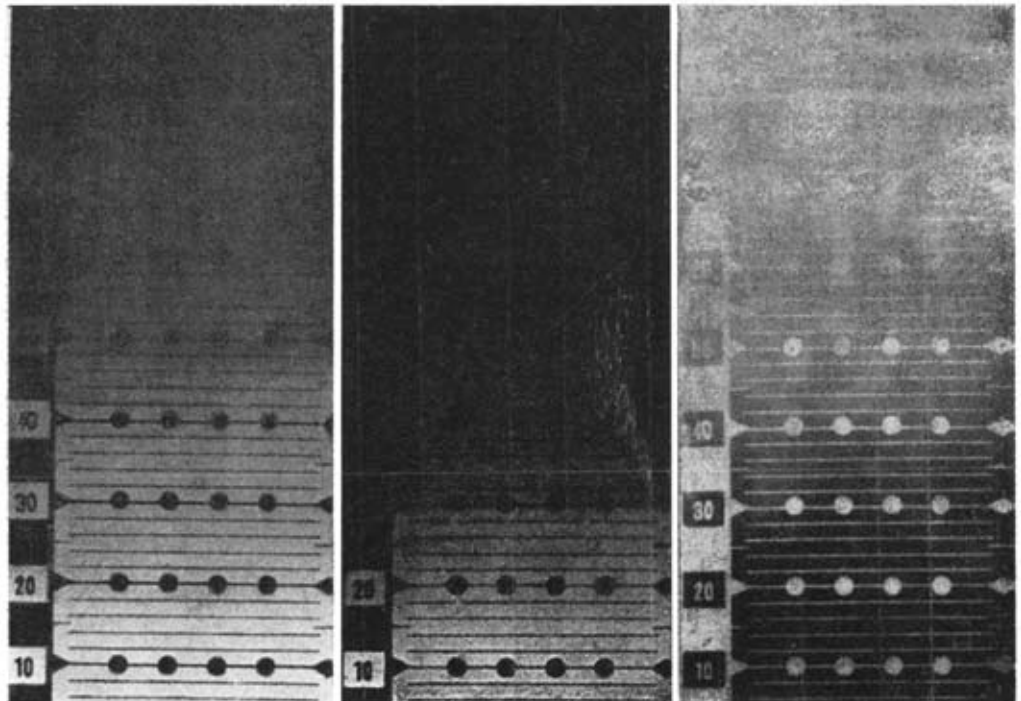
Eder reported that, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt in 1928, Otto Krumpel produced a finely screened autotype printing block from an Eder-Hecht grey wedge and used it to create several prints using various methods on different papers.¹² As can be seen in figure 10, there were significant differences in the scope of the reproduced tonal values and the density. The result made it possible to investigate the suitability of various kinds of paper for specific types of printing and as a result of reading the grey values of the impression it got possible to adapt the half-tone blocks to the possibilities of print-paper-combinations, by limiting those gradation to the section that could be reproduced in printing as half-tones between the white of the paper and the greatest attainable density.

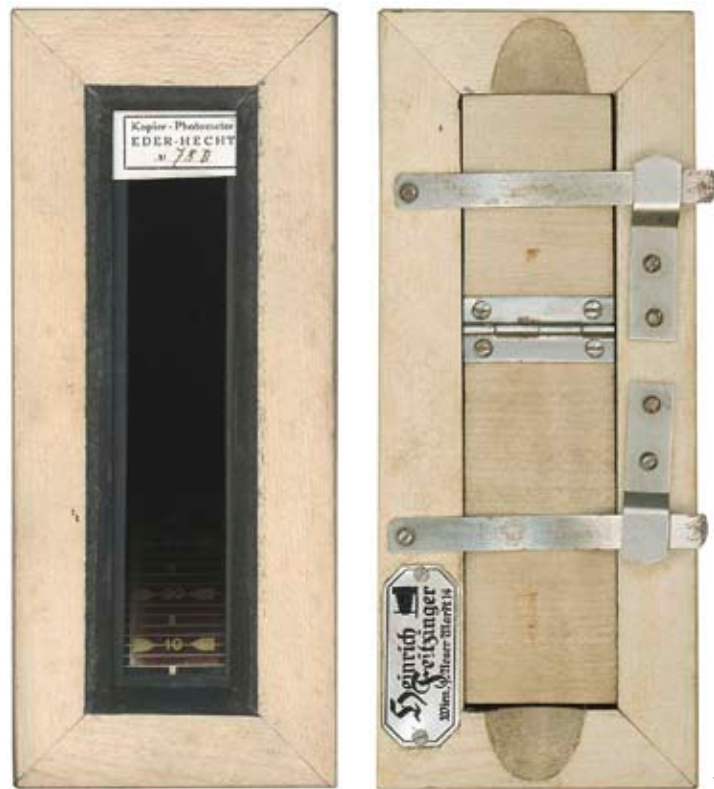
fig. 10 Differences in the scope of the reproduced tonal values and the density, E.H. Sensitometer.

In: Dr. Josef Maria Eder, *Ausführliches Handbuch der Photographie*, 3. Band, Teil 4: *Die Sensitometrie, photographische Photometrie und Spektrographie*, Halle (Saale): Verlag Wilhelm Knapp 1930.

fig. 11 Eder-Hecht copy photometer.

Foto: Thomas Freiler, 2008.





11

Appendix I

Grey wedge sensitometer constructed by J.M. Eder for special purposes: For the measurement of especially slight differences in brightness, grey wedges with a wedge constant of 0.188 were constructed as “permanent grey wedge photometers” for scientific purposes, e.g. meteorology and other applications mentioned in the quotation by Prof. Dr. Klösel: a 16cm long and 2cm wide photometer with a wedge constant of 0.3 for measuring light intensities of greatly varying magnitude.

A photometer produced to control copying times in “photographic practice”, also has a wedge constant of 0.3. (fig. 11).

Eder explained: “The calculation of the effective amount of light is simple: For example: if a negative that has proven to be too little copied with 60° is to be copied with the double amount of light, one copies with 70 Eder-Hecht degrees of the copy photometer ...”¹³ (here, it must be mentioned that the calium-bichromate paper exposed in the copy photometer for the measurement immediately changed colour and that this blackening could be monitored through a flap in the photometer during exposure).

fig. 12 Eder-Hecht copy photometer: Exposure on Ilford Multigrade iv paper. Thomas Freiler, 2008.

fig. 13 Eder-Hecht copy photometer: "black-and-white negative" scan. Thomas Freiler, 2008.

fig. 14 Eder-Hecht copy photometer: "black-and-white slide" scan (tonal values reversed with Photoshop). Thomas Freiler, 2008.

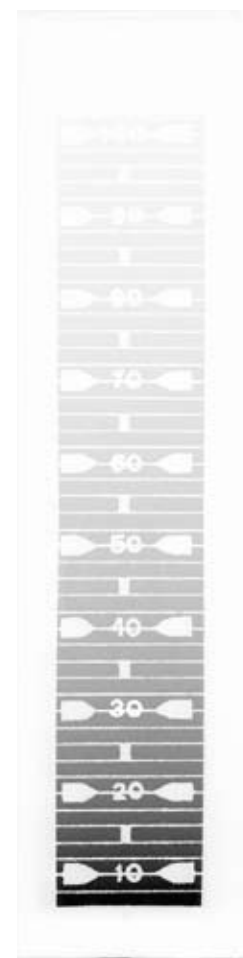
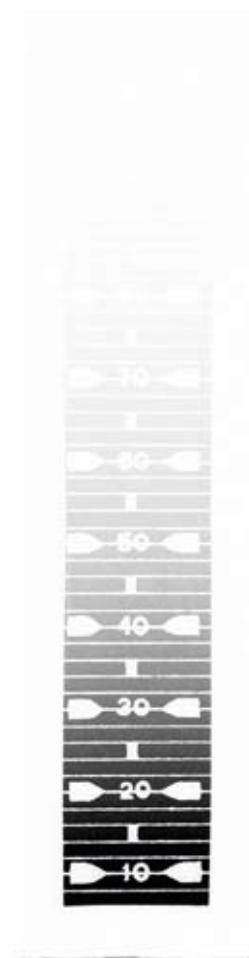
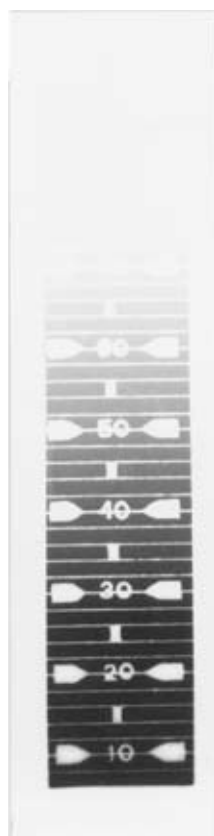
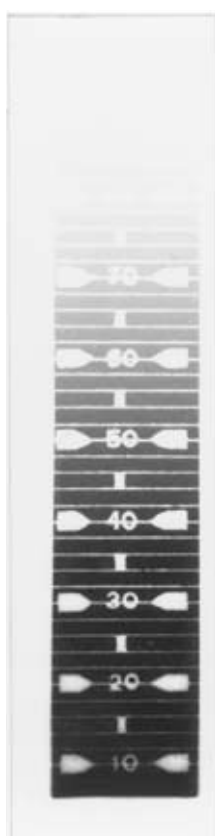
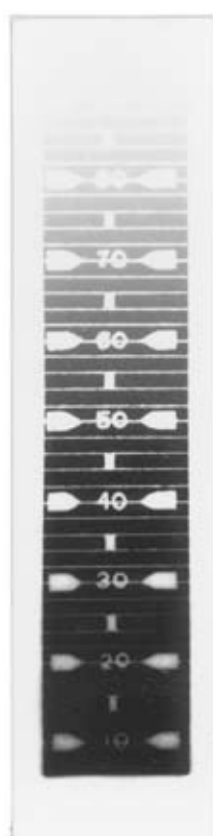
Appendix II

Finally, a contemporary small-scale test using the Eder-Hecht copy photometer that was carried out during the preparation of this text should be described. A copy photometer, Eder-Hecht number 78 11, made by Heinrich Feitzinger, Vienna, Neuer Markt 14 – and not one manufactured by the Herlango Company – was found and used for the following experiments.

1) Exposure on Ilford Multigrade iv paper using a Durst 6 x 7, Modular 70 colour head, without colour filtering, Schneider-Kreuznach Componon-S, 2.8, 50 mm, distance 1 m, time 1 min with f-stops of 2.8, 4, 5.6 and 8 respectively (fig. 12)

It is easy to discern that one f-stop almost exactly corresponds with a step of 10 on the scale as given by Eder himself.

It can also be seen that, in the given setting, the paper only reproduces an area of around 4 f-stops of the curve but, with a steady increase in the grey curve and a value of 50% black in the centre of the area covered by the photo paper.



2) Two scans with a Canon 9950F flat-bed scanner in transmitted light without any adjustment using the scanner's optimization programme:

In "black-and-white negative" scanner mode (fig. 13) and "black-and-white slide" mode; later the tonal values were reversed using Photoshop CS2 (fig. 14).

The "black-and-white negative" mode almost – and the "black-and-white slide" mode, exactly – reproduces the range of tonal values of the Eder-Hecht copy photometer from 0 to 100.

However, the increase in tonal values does not proceed evenly as is the case with an analogue copy on photo paper. The increase occurs in a geometric row. The increase in tonal value, therefore behaves differently and this simple experiment shows that, when using the 9950F scanner, the picture file of a positive digitalized from paper shows a marked difference in its grey curve when compared with a picture file created directly from the appropriate negative. By entering the brightness values on a table, as was customary in Eder's time, and transferring the values to the processing curve of gradation in the picture processing programme of the computer, the grey curve can be naturally adjusted to the analogue exposure if so desired.

- 1 Ludwig David, *Ratgeber im Photographieren*, 128.-138. print run, Halle 1919, 8.
- 2 Hofrat Dr. Josef Maria Eder, *Ausführliches Handbuch der Photographie, Dritter Band, vierter Teil: Die Sensitometrie, photographische Photometrie und Spektrographie*, Halle (Saale): Verlag Wilhelm Knapp 1930, 411.
- 3 'Die Eder-Feier an der technischen Hochschule in Wien', *Österreichische Chemiker-Zeitung*, Number 7, Vienna, 1 April 1925, 53.
- 4 Eder, 1930 (note 2) 394.
- 5 Dr. Wolfgang Baier, *Quellendarstellungen zur Geschichte der Fotografie*, Leipzig: VEB Fotokinoverlag 1980, 349.
- 6 Eder, 1930 (note 2) 398.
- 7 Eder, 1930 (note 2) 406.
- 8 Eder, 1930 (note 2) 398.
- 9 Ludwig Richtera, *Die Farben als wissenschaftliches und künstlerisches Problem, die Grundlagen der Farbenlehre für Künstler und Kunstgewerber*, Halle (Saale): Verlag Wilhelm Knapp 1924, 65.
- 10 Eder, 1930 (note 2) 339.
- 11 Dr. J.M. Eder, *Rezepte und Tabellen für Photographie und Reproduktionstechnik*, 1x Auflage, Halle (Saale): Verlag Wilhelm Knapp 1917, 202.
- 12 Eder, 1930 (note 2) 436.
- 13 Eder, 1930 (note 2) 432.

Rosina Herrera

I6 Europe in Alfred Stieglitz's Lantern Slides



Collectively, the works of Alfred Stieglitz are among the best known in photography. However, a small but important group of photographs remains a lost chapter in his oeuvre. To date, no in-depth review of his lantern slides exists. This article will address only a subgroup of the slides: those held in the collection of George Eastman House in Rochester, New York.

Following Alfred Stieglitz's death in 1946, Georgia O'Keeffe, assisted by Doris Bry, worked to organize and distribute the photographer's legacy among the most relevant public collections.¹ Between 1951 and 1952, George Eastman House received more than 100 Stieglitz works: 82 prints, 5 autochromes, 32 lantern slides and some photogravures. The acquisition also included some of his photographic equipment as well as two complete sets of *Camera Work* and two calotype negatives by the Scottish photographers D.O. Hill & R. Adamson.²

fig. 1 Alfred Stieglitz, *November Days (Munich)*, 1886.
Lantern slide, 8.5 x 8.5 cm. George Eastman House,
Rochester, New York.

Born 1864, Hoboken, New Jersey, Stieglitz lived with his family in Berlin, Germany, from 1881 to 1890. Originally a mechanical engineering student at the *Königliche Technische Hochschule*, he also pursued interests in science, chemistry and photography. His photography teacher was the renowned photochemist Hermann Wilhelm Vogel, who taught more than technique, encouraging his students to think about all aspects of the medium, including aesthetics and its relationship to other arts.

During this early stage of his photographic work Stieglitz explored a variety of subjects, including landscapes, portraits, genre studies and the reproduction of works of art. His friend and fellow New Yorker, Frank Simon Hermann, a painter studying at The Royal Academy of Munich, introduced him to popular artists such as Franz von Defregger, Edouard Grützner, Franz von Lenbach and Ludwig Passini. At this time, Stieglitz and his colleagues at the school were immersed in the conventions of European academic art and their photographs often imitated the style, subject matter and even titles of artists working in that tradition.³

Stieglitz made lantern slides early in this period of his career, generally working from negatives he had taken in Europe. As we shall see with the examples illustrated here, he was very meticulous about the finish and presentation of his work. The final package is carefully bound and often labelled with relevant information, such as the date, title or description, and sometimes the photographer's signature. Of the slides at George Eastman House, we know, or can deduce that twenty to twenty-two of the original images were taken in Europe between 1886 and 1894, while the rest were taken in New York City from 1892 to 1899.

Stieglitz considered the process of slide making an excellent medium in which to express his art. Much more than simple positives on glass, his slides are objects of delicate appearance and colour. After learning the process early in his career, he refined developing and toning techniques that allowed him to achieve maximum results. He then generously shared his improvements through the photographic journals of the day. Nowadays, this part of his work is little known as are his reasons for using the process. The most likely explanation for his choice

of medium is his membership in the two main groups of amateur photographers then active in New York, one of which, The Society of Amateur Photographers of New York, he joined in 1891.

Established in 1884, the Society was an early organization devoted to amateur photography. The members of such clubs regularly organized shows for viewing and sharing their work. For this purpose they used lantern slides, which was the most effective medium for displaying images to an assembled audience. Additionally, a branch of the organization, The American Lantern Slide Exchange, relied on slides to critique the work of other photographers and evaluate the activities of similar societies from around the country.⁴

In 1897 the Society rejoined with the New York Camera Club (which they had split away from in 1888) to form The Camera Club of New York. Alfred Stieglitz was offered the presidency of the new organization but declined. Instead, he became vice-president and took seats on the Exhibitions and Lantern Slide Committees. Some of his extant slides bear a printed label with the legend 'The Camera Club, N.Y.' (fig. 9, along top edge). Stieglitz also assumed the chairmanship of the Publications Committee,⁵ after which the lantern slide process became a common subject in the journal *The American Amateur Photographer*.

fig. 2 Alfred Stieglitz, *Jubilee Exhibition (Berlin)*, 1889. Detail, lantern slide, 8.3 x 8.3 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

fig. 3 Alfred Stieglitz, [Exhibition of photographic images and equipment], c.1889. Detail, lantern slide, 8.0 x 8.0 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

The first stage in Alfred Stieglitz's photographic career provides an in-depth document of his life on both sides of the Atlantic. Stieglitz took up photography while living and travelling in Europe and continued the practice upon his return to the USA. In this time he made many

negatives, resulting in numerous gelatin printing-out paper and platinum/palladium prints, as well as photogravures, lantern slides and a few carbon prints. Some of the lantern slides at George Eastman House correspond to known prints. However, many of the images apparently were never printed on paper support, making the uniqueness of these fragile glass objects even more evident.

The earliest examples at the museum were taken during Stieglitz's residence in Berlin. The oldest, *November Days* (fig. 1), was shot in 1886 in Munich, when he visited the previously mentioned Frank Hermann.⁶ Other slides in the collection were taken the following year, when the two friends and amateur photographer Louis Schubart travelled together to Italy.⁷ On this trip Stieglitz made images in Pallanza, Piedmont (fig. 6); Chioggia, Veneto (fig. 7); and Bellagio, Lombardy (fig. 4). Alfred Stieglitz made special note of their day in Chioggia, the 'miniature Venice', devoting an entire article to it which included some technical details and travel anecdotes.⁸ The shooting of *On the Bridge* (fig. 7) was an especially comical moment since the image was directed and performed by Frank Hermann to create a scene similar to one of Ludwig Passini's paintings.⁹





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Two years later, under Vogel's supervision, Stieglitz prepared a large exhibition in Berlin to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the invention of photography. The 1889 *Jubilee Exhibition* consisted of four sections: artistic work by amateur photographers, scientific photography, photomechanical reproduction, and apparatus and chemicals.¹⁰ The *Jubilee* was a particularly significant exhibition, one without precedent in the history of photography. For the first time, the work of national and foreign amateur photographers was shown in Germany.¹¹ Figure 2 illustrates the large quantity and variety of photographic material presented at the hall. Another of the exhibition's innovations was its integrated showing of photographs with technical material and equipment, which was a tangible demonstration of Stieglitz's great interest in both the techniques and aesthetics of photography. For their technical work his own photographs were recognized for excellence with a silver medal awarded by Steinheil, the German camera and lens manufacturer.¹²

While the *Jubilee* display panels in figure 2 are easily identified by the slide's handwritten title (presumably in Stieglitz's hand), unfortunately the next example has no identifying inscription. The title was probably lost when the original binding tape was replaced. Despite its lack of identification, the image almost certainly was made at the same exhibition. Notably, the room is filled with photographic equipment of the time. Looking at the detail in figure 3 one sees bellows cameras, tripods, lenses, finishing tools, such as burnishes and a large stereo viewer. Also present is the model of a photographer's skylighted studio.

In August 1890, Alfred Stieglitz went on vacation to the north of Italy, travelling to Sterzing, in Tyrol, and to Cortina d'Ampezzo, a tourist town at the base of the Dolomite Mountains.

fig. 4 Alfred Stieglitz, *Maria, Bellagio*, 1887.

Lantern slide, 8.5 x 10.3 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

fig. 5 Alfred Stieglitz, *Sunday Morning, Gutach*, Germany 1894.

Lantern slide, 8.3 x 8.3 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

fig. 6 Alfred Stieglitz, *A Nook in Pallanza*, 1887.

Lantern slide, 8.5 x 8.5 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.



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fig. 7 Alfred Stieglitz, *On the Bridge, Chioggia*, 1887.

Lantern slide, 8.5 x 10.3 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

fig. 8 Alfred Stieglitz, *Two Fashions, Venice*, 1894.

Lantern slide, 8.5 x 8.5 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

fig. 9 Alfred Stieglitz, *A Bit of Katwyk, Netherlands*, 1894.

Lantern slide, 8.5 x 8.5 cm. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.



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He published an account of the trip in his article *Cortina and Sterzing*.¹³ A few months later Stieglitz returned to the USA and soon joined The Society of Amateur Photographers. In 1893, he married Emmeline Obermeyer. For their honeymoon the couple travelled to Europe, where they visited Venice, Vienna, Munich, the Hague, Paris and London.

After the couple's return to New York, Stieglitz published an article that focused on two small European towns he visited in 1894,¹⁴ probably as part of the honeymoon trip: Gutach in Germany (fig. 5) and Katwyk in the Netherlands (fig. 9). A comparison of the images Stieglitz made there offers an obvious visual analogy, since each depicts houses characteristic of its region, with three figures moving into the distance. However, while they may seem pictorial cousins, Stieglitz made clear in his article that the towns and their citizens were quite different.

Situated in the heart of Germany's Black Forest, the town of Gutach¹⁵ is a place devoted to the land and the harvest. For Stieglitz, it was an especially captivating locale that offered "everything that the artist could desire: ... Trees, flowers, wheat – fields, mountains and valleys ... willing models in their quaint caps and mediaeval costumes, what more can the artist or photographer desire than unlimited time and an inexhaustible supply of plates and lenses."¹⁶ Katwyk, on the other hand, is seated on the Dutch North Sea coast, very close to the Hague. The landscape is driven by the ocean and the people there are devoted to the sea. The strong fishermen, their boats, and their houses built to resist storms¹⁷ were of interest to visiting artists. When writing about Katwyk, Stieglitz described how differently its people reacted to his camera than those of Gutach: "A superstition exists among them that to have their portraits taken is to sell their soul to the Evil One ... A group of women and children seated on the sand gave promise of some fine pictures, but at the first click of the shutter they started on their feet, and with pale and frightened faces left the spot."¹⁸

Urban visitors to these towns would be shocked by such remarkable cultural differences, most of them a consequence of the lack of economic development of such rural areas at that time. On his previous trip to Cortina, Alfred Stieglitz had observed the presence of hand pumps in the roads, necessary since the clothes and dishes were still washed in the street.¹⁹ In the same vein, electricity and running water were luxuries in Katwyk, a deficiency that interfered with Stieglitz's work, making interior shots nearly impossible and the processing of his plates very difficult.²⁰

The images Stieglitz took during his time living and travelling in Europe played a significant role in his early career. When he presented this original work in the USA it was very well received by other amateurs and the general public. In the words of Sarah Greenough, "the photographs Stieglitz made on his 1894 European trip established him as one of the leading

photographers of the time.” These prints and slides would form the main group of photographs in Stieglitz’s first solo exhibition at The Camera Club of New York in 1899.²¹

Alfred Stieglitz stopped making lantern slides sometime between 1910 and 1919. By then, his photographic life was considerably different. On the technical side, he had experimented with the new process of autochrome as well as the use of gelatin silver paper. Of more importance, his aesthetic approach had changed dramatically. He had moved away from Pictorialism and no longer participated in the photo club activities for which he made his masterful lantern slides.

Alfred Stieglitz used gelatin dry plates to make his lantern slides. For exposing the original image on location, he wrote of his preference for plate brands such as Lumière Ortho or Schuessner Ortho.²² When making a positive from one of his negatives, he used a reduction camera²³ to copy them onto Carbutt plates, which he considered superior to those from Eastman Kodak.²⁴ When toning them, he was very particular in his approach. Most of them exhibit some sort of colour rather than the common neutral tone (fig. 8). The results could vary greatly. His uranium salt-based formulas allowed him to obtain six tones, from blue to dark brown or bright red, and a single slide could show multiple colours and be partially or wholly toned.²⁵ He gave considerable thought to the process and shared his methods in the journals of the period.

In 1892 Stieglitz gave a lecture to *The Society of Amateur Photographers of New York* about the use of uranium nitrate salts for toning lantern slides.²⁶ His procedure involved toning applied directly to the processed plate. A bleaching step was unnecessary, a method that differed from formulas he later published in 1897. After developing, fixing and washing, the next three stock solutions were prepared for toning the plate: uranium nitrate in water (1:100), potassium ferricyanide in water (1:100) and perchloride of iron in water (1:10).²⁷

The building blocks of Stieglitz’s formulas are based on different mixtures and dilutions of these three solutions. Warm tones were obtained by mixing uranium nitrate and potassium ferricyanide, while blue-green tones were reached with the addition of the third solution, perchloride of iron. Applying the solutions locally permitted the use of more than one colour in the same image. The beautiful effects of localised toning were especially recommended by Stieglitz, who used the method for seascapes and moonlight effects.²⁸

In 1897 Stieglitz published a new set of recipes for toning lantern slides.²⁹ He now recommended that before toning some unusual considerations be taken during the processing of the plate. After developing with hydroquinone, until “the image has totally disappeared when examining the plate by transmitted light,”³⁰ the plate was fixed with hypo. The resulting

image was flat, without gradation of tones and hard to see. For achieving his desired colour, Stieglitz began with a very dark slide that was locally bleached or reduced in order to build up tonal values. After bleaching, the slide could be toned in different solutions in order to achieve blue, green or red colours. The formulas vary greatly, depending on the desired colour, but basically blue tones were reached with the use of gold chloride, greens with iron and chromium salts, and reds with uranium salts. The directions given by Stieglitz in his papers are easy to follow and include all the necessary details. However, since many variables affect the final results, it is difficult to unlock the secrets of his individual slides.

In conclusion, even before there was photography, and certainly before movies, a form of the lantern slide was used to project images. The large photographic prints that are so common nowadays were generally unachievable in the 19th and early 20th centuries. At that time, when

- 1 The largest collection of Stieglitz's work went to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. Known as *The Key Set*, it includes an example of every print that was mounted at the time of Stieglitz's death. It is worth noting that there are no lantern slides in *The Key Set*, nor were lantern slides mentioned in the O'Keeffe text accompanying the photographic material that went to George Eastman House. In her text "Conditions for the Care of the Alfred Stieglitz Collection" attached to a letter to Beaumont Newhall, then director of the museum, on 18 June 1951, O'Keeffe makes recommendations for the storage and exhibition of this collection at a time when there was very little concern about photograph preservation. Since Stieglitz himself loved the technique of slide making, this distinction between the high recognition of Stieglitz's prints and the obscurity of his lantern slides probably come from Georgia O'Keeffe's preference. For this subject, see: documents and correspondence in the Registrar's Office at George Eastman House.
- 2 For more information about the deal between O'Keeffe and Beaumont Newhall see: Therese Mulligan, (ed.), *The Photography of Alfred Stieglitz: Georgia O'Keeffe's Enduring Legacy*, Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film 2000, 3–16.
- 3 Sarah Greenough, Alfred Stieglitz, *The Key Set: The Alfred Stieglitz Collection of Photographs* vol. 1, Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art; New York: Harry N. Abrams 2002, xvi.
- 4 Valerie Wingfield, "Camera Club of New York. Records, 1889–1983" (The New York Public Library Humanities and Social Sciences Library Manuscripts and Archives Division, 1993), 4; <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/cameraclub.pdf> (accessed March 2007)
- 5 Wingfield, 1993 (note 4) 3.
- 6 Greenough, 2002 (note 3) xvi.
- 7 Greenough, 2002 (note 3) 22.
- 8 Alfred Stieglitz, 'A day in Chioggia', *The Amateur Photographer*, prize tour number (June 1889), 7–9.
- 9 Greenough, 2002 (note 3) 22.
- 10 Katherine Hoffman, *Stieglitz, A Beginning Light*, New Haven: Yale University Press 2004.
- 11 Hoffman, 2004 (note 10) 97.
- 12 Hoffman, 2004 (note 10) 96.
- 13 Alfred Stieglitz, 'Cortina and Sterzing', *Sun Pictures from Many Lands*, London 1892, 60–61.
- 14 Alfred Stieglitz & Louis H. Schubart, 'Two artists haunts', *The Photographic Times*, 26 (January–June 1895), 9–12.
- 15 Stieglitz was quite familiar with this area since his father had a house in Gutach and he probably stayed there often during his residence in Berlin. Greenough, 2002 (note 3) xv.
- 16 Stieglitz & Schubart, 1895 (note 14) 10.

a large image was called for, a projected lantern slide was used, limited only by the size of the receiving wall or screen.

The act of enlargement in photography, especially when large scales are involved, requires great skill; the tiniest defect, for example, whether a scratch or dust, results in an amplified disturbance on the screen or print. Perhaps for this reason, few photographers used a process that required the right plate selection, the finest grain (and thus processing), the most careful retouching of the negative and, of course, the highest finishing of the actual product. Alfred Stieglitz was more than just a maker of lantern slides. Combining his considerable knowledge of chemistry, composition, colour, retouching and presentation, he not only used the process, but furthered it to produce some of the most beautiful examples of lantern slides known to the history of photography.

- 17 Stieglitz included some anecdotes about working in difficult weather and how sand would get inside the plate holders, scratch the lenses and deteriorate the varnish of the camera. [Stieglitz & Schubart, 1895 (note 14) 12].
- 18 Stieglitz & Schubart, 1895 (note 14) 12.
- 19 Hoffman, 2004 (note 10) 103.
- 20 Stieglitz & Schubart, 1895 (note 14) 12.
- 21 Greenough, 2002 (note 14) xx.
- 22 "The pictures taken during my trip were made with Lumière ortho and Schleussner ortho plates. ... Although having various lenses with me, I invariably used the Zeiss anastigmat 1: 7 ½, with a Thornton – Pickhard time and instantaneous shutter. Most of the plates were developed during the trip at night. All my pictures were taken on plates; my experience with films never having been very fortunate." Stieglitz & Schubart, 1895 (note 14) 12.
- 23 Alfred Stieglitz, 'Experience with slide plates', *The American Amateur Photographer* 4, February 1892, 63.
- 24 For a detailed comparison between Carbutt and Eastman Kodak plates, see Stieglitz, 1892 (note 13) 61–63. Stieglitz considered Eastman plates too slow and found that their exposure times needed to be between 35 and 45 times longer than for Carbutt plates. In addition to longer exposures, a stronger developer was needed for Eastman plates. The information in this article should not necessarily be taken as accurate because at that time the batches of plates differed from one to another and the technology was not yet developed in order to obtain homogenous results in each batch.
- 25 Stieglitz's toning formulas for lantern slides and the technical analysis performed on some of the examples to uncover the nature of the toner was the nucleus of my research project as a fellow of the 4th Cycle of the Advanced Residency Program in Photograph Conservation at George Eastman House and Image Permanence Institute, Rochester, New York. For the final report where a deeper description of Stieglitz toning technique and the results of the X-rays fluorescence spectroscopy analysis can be found, see Rosina Herrera, "Alfred Stieglitz's Lantern Slides: History, Technique and Technical Analysis," Advanced Residency Program in photograph Conservation, http://www.arp-geh.org/FileUpload_demo/Stieglitz_lantern_slides_final%201028.pdf (accessed May 15, 2008)
- 26 The lecture Alfred Stieglitz, "Toning slides with uranium salts, and a few additional remarks on the color of slides in general" was published first in *The Photographic Times* January 22, 1892, 42–43 and later in the *Bulletin de la Société Française de Photographie* 8, 1892, 187–190.
- 27 The IUPAC names for these chemicals are: Uranyl (VI) Nitrate, Potassium Hexacyanoferrate (III) and Iron (III) Chloride.
- 28 Stieglitz, 1892 (note 13) 43.
- 29 Alfred Stieglitz, 'Some remarks on lantern slides: a method of developing partial and local toning.' *The Amateur Photographer* 24, September 10, 1897, 203–204.
- 30 Stieglitz, 1897 (note 29) 204.

Rolf H. Krauss

I7 Karl May: “Empor ins Reich der Edelmenschen” Winnetou’s photographic Ascension

Empor ins Reich der Edelmenschen (*Up towards the realm of the noble people*) was the title of a lecture Karl May delivered to an audience of over two thousand people in the Viennese Sofiensaal on 22 March 1912. It was his last public appearance. He died eight days later. Speaking without notes, the contents of his thoughts were, roughly, the following: Sitara, the star taken from an Arabic fairy tale, is compared with the Earth – not, as May said, “geographically, but considered purely from an ethical point of view”.¹ It does not have five continents, but only two, namely “Ardistan, the swampy, low-lying land of the violent people”, and Dschinnistan, “the elevated, blissful land of the noble people ...”. The two continents are separated by what May calls the “Geisterschmiede”, the smithy of spirits, lying deep in the forest, “where the cinders are forged out of man”. May equates Dschinnistan with paradise from which Adam is expelled because he “tasted Ardistan’s harmful fruits against God’s will”.

Adam is punished with death, but he is granted “his descendents’ permission to live on in them, in order to regain paradise through continual spiritual reformation”. Adam is the noble person who has sinned and who must make all efforts to return to paradise. The “Menschheitsfrage” (question of mankind), a subject which May repeatedly discusses in his work, must “resound in the heart of all humanity and in the heart of every individual”. And here, May promises help: “Just as all heartache was brought to Earth by one single person”, he finishes his train of thought, “so, in turn, will it also be overcome by one individual alone. In other words, when the whole of humanity will in brotherly harmony come to resemble a unique, magnificent noble person, then, but only then, will the creation of Man be accomplished as God so wanted it”.

Karl May personified this “unique, magnificent noble person” as the Indian chief, Winnetou – the incarnation of a “red saviour”. It is significant that May does not create a new person for this purpose, but rather uses a figure who emerges early on, and keeps recurring, in his work² and to whom he devoted three eponymous novels: the Winnetou trilogy. May, thereby, follows a principle that he consciously applies in his entire literary corpus: his early stories and serial

novels, as well as the travel literature of the middle period, says May, are only the necessary precursors of his later “philosophical” work. The entire œuvre develops in line with May’s notion of a humanity proceeding onwards and upwards, step by step, in order to attain ever more profound and universally valid insights. On the one hand, *Winnetou IV*, May’s last novel, in which he summarised his philosophical thought two years prior to his death, consciously follows the context of volumes I–III of the same title which had already been published in 1893. However, on the other hand, the novel that appeared in 1910 – seventeen years later – is anything but a mere sequel to its predecessors.

“Here, May presents the ‘philosophical’ programme of his latter years”, writes Günter Scholdt. “It concerns nothing less than a ... universal mythology, a cosmopolitan utopia of peace and appeasement.”³ May abandons typical Western heroism and adventurous romanticism. Instead, he yearns for pacification and reconciliation which he exchanges against former scenes of fighting and chasing. The symbolic figure of this vision is Winnetou – however, not as we know him, as the fighter and hero, but as the peacemaker and charismatic leader of the red race and, above all, of mankind altogether. The novel serves to elaborate this vision. Winnetou – who, in volume III, still shoots criminals insidiously⁴ and rids an enemy of his scalp⁵ – thus becomes the hero of a quasi salvation story in which we find all the associated clichés. The dead Messiah is misunderstood and assaulted; there are the disciples and the traitors; there is a testament written by Winnetou in which he envisages the possible foundation of a religion and the creation of parishes (May intended to make this testament the subject of further Winnetou volumes, a plan he was not able to fulfil) and, so, in the end, the eyes of the multitude witness the performance of a virtual ascension into heaven.

It is particularly noteworthy that this journey heavenwards takes place, as we shall see, with the help of photography. Significantly, moreover, and in total contrast to May’s other works, modern technology is given a prominent place. The aeroplane, for instance, plays a role in the

novel's action. In his Vienna lecture, May mentions flying as a means of not having to endure the pain and torment of the "Geisterschmiede". "The time of the spiritual aeroplanes has also arrived",⁶ he exclaims there. In *Winnetou IV*, the "Young Eagle" flies around the "Mountain of Medicines" three times in a self-made flying machine, returning the medicines captured by Old Shatterhand to the chiefs as a message of peace. Dieter Sudhoff appraises *Winnetou IV* as "one of the earliest literary responses ever to modern aviation".⁷ However, while flying only plays a minor part in the novel, *Winnetou IV* would be impossible to imagine without photography. In no other work by Karl May does photography affect the plot so profoundly.

The novel is, above all, influenced by the impressions of the American visit that Karl May undertook with his second wife, Klara, in the autumn of 1908. It is unclear whether Klara May herself took photographs on this trip; in literary reality, at any rate, she is the expert for the subject of photography. As we read about her: "She loves to take photographs, she is always keen to learn new things to the old. As for me, I have much less an interest in images than in the objects themselves".⁸ Karl May, the first-person narrator, is invited to attend a congress of the Indians to unveil a monument for the dead Winnetou at Mount Winnetou and the couple decided to accept the invitation. The trip is also intended to be used to establish contacts with possible publishers of his works in America. For this reason, "Herzle" (or "little heart"), as May's wife Klara is affectionately called in this book, makes photographic reproductions of the novels' illustrated covers. "In order to show the titles", writes May, "she made large-format photographic copies of the originals ..., not on cardboard, but unmounted, that is, so thin that they hardly took up any space in the suitcase and could be rolled up or folded into the jacket pocket" (24).⁹

The most important image is "Sascha Schneider's Winnetou striving heavenwards" (24). May had met the painter and etcher, Sascha Schneider (1870–1927), as early as 1903. He was fascinated by the latter's symbolist art and commissioned Schneider with the cover designs for the new bindings of his Collected Travel Writings, which were then used for the so-called Fehsenfeld edition from 1905 onwards. The relevance of these pictorial reproductions for the climax of the story becomes clear when, on page twenty-four, we read the following: "The course of the story will show that several of these images contain an exceptional significance in the chain of events". Indeed, they form the material for the plot's grandiose apotheosis on the last pages of the novel. All secondary plots that unfold on the pages in between are, as it were, mere arabesques around this main narrative strand.

Initially, Karl and Klara May's literary itinerary was identical with the real one. The Mays arrived in New York on 16 September 1908, stayed there for approximately one week and then travelled, via Albany and Buffalo, to Niagara Falls where they found lodgings in the "Clifton House" hotel on the Canadian side of the border. In the novel, the couple also stays at "Clifton House" – not as Herr and Frau May but, undercover, as Mr and Mrs Burton, thus taking the

first step from reality to fiction. They continue their journey as the married couple Burton, and en route to their destination, almost unnoticeable for the reader, the first-person narrator Burton becomes the first-person narrator, Old Shatterhand. At this point, at the very latest, the thread to the familiar environment and to the characters of *Winnetou I–III* is picked up again.

The group of travellers who form around Old Shatterhand must endure the usual adventures. The most important happening proves to be the discovery of Winnetou's aforementioned testament. Old Shatterhand discovers various objects that belong to him in the rooms in which Winnetou penned this testament. "Among them two photographs which I considered well made. They were pretty much faded by then. On the wall there hung around twenty sheets of paper with attempts to trace these photographs by hand" (428). It is the unfamiliar impression of a wholly other, hitherto unknown, Winnetou sitting at a desk and writing and drawing that renders this episode significant. It allows us to draw conclusions about the unabashed vanity of the aging May and it is, above all, interesting with regard to the presence of photography in the novel.

The group eventually reaches a wide valley in which the delegates of all Indian tribes have already set up camp, in order to take part in the planned congress and the unveiling of the Winnetou monument. The valley is contained at its end by a lake. This "Secret Lake or Medicine Lake", according to the text, ran as a "waterfall-veil ... in the widest sense possible, from one side of the [valley] to the other ... The line in which it did this was completely straight and completely horizontal so that the water – evenly spread, smooth and level, like a polished mirror – fell into the valley. Indeed, this mirror was fifty metres tall. Nowhere was its smoothness flawed and its continuity fractured; and because it encompassed the entire breadth of the inner valley, it is easy to imagine what a profound, profound impression it made!" (409f.). The natural phenomenon was remarkable "in that this cataract did not form a lake or any such body of water at the bottom of its fall, but that it instantaneously and in its entirety disappeared into the Earth below" (410).

Construction work had begun to erect a colossal statue, on a pedestal of ten giant steps lying one on top of the other, in front of this imposing scenery as a means for trying out the announced Winnetou monument, which was to ultimately find its definitive location on a "high mountain projection". "The one leg was already finished up to the knee, the other already halfway up the thigh. It was clearly visible that the figure was to wear Indian riding pants and moccasins" (411). Yet Old Shatterhand is appalled about how his friend Winnetou was to be represented for future generations; the more so, as the figure in the model shows the chief in a warlike pose, leaning "on a silver rifle which he holds in his left hand [...] while the right hand extends a hostile loaded revolver" (446). It is no coincidence that the water cascade was chosen as the background for the presentation of the monument. "The statue is to be presented there. By night it is to be illuminated there, with electricity, lamps and artificial fireworks" (412).



fig. 1 Sascha Schneider, illustrated cover of Karl May's *Winnetou IV*, 1910.

Furthermore, the cataract's drop is to be used as a screen for the projection of images of the statue's two creators. An engineer is in charge of the necessary equipment and this includes a "gigantic projection apparatus" (541).

Old Shatterhand subsequently tries to convince the Indians of his vision. He is able to do so by contrasting his personal, more spiritual and conciliatory, vision with the intended representation of a crude, heavily built Indian chief, ready for violent action, in the form of the oversized statue. For this purpose, his wife shows "the photographic prints she had made at home", among them "Sascha Schneider's Winnetou, striving towards heaven". " 'That is our Winnetou', said I", we read in the text, " 'not yours' " (498f.). The reaction of those present is overwhelming. "But not his body, rather his soul!" cries Old Shatterhand's audience. "It floats up to heaven! Above him the cross! ... The chieftain feather falls from his hair! The last earthly remains still clinging to him! Now he is liberated! Now he is free! How beautiful, how beautiful!" (500). "Herzle" had the idea of contrasting this image of the naked Winnetou, delivered from his earthly shackles, with the aggressive artistic entity of the monument. Together with the engineer, whom she won over, a transparency of the print was made and, as the monument caves in due to its weight and disappears from sight, the transparency is projected onto the cascading waterfall in front of an elated crowd.

The art of projection already looked back on a long history by the time May wrote this novel.¹⁰ Since the middle of the nineteenth century at the very latest, not only painted, but now also photographed, projections had become possible. Projections had long moved from the sphere of children's toys and funfair attractions and conquered the lecture halls of universities and

popular education institutes. It is notable, however, that this technical medium takes a central position in a Karl May novel, which – as it were – is not devoted to the visible world, but rather to the communication of an idealistic vision. Even more remarkable is the fact that May invents the implementation of the projection apparatus – a large-scale open-air projection – which, to my knowledge, had not been realised before. Moreover, this idea is pushed towards the very limits of practical feasibility: the image is not projected onto an oversized screen or the façade of a building, but rather onto a natural phenomenon, conceived and constructed by the author solely for this purpose – namely, onto a waterfall which, due to its physical characteristics, enhances the impression of an ascension already intimated by Schneider's image.

The engineer turned on "his apparatus", we read in the text, "and immediately there appeared our Winnetou on the grandiose cascade of water, striving heavenwards with his hair blowing about, his chieftain feather falling back to Earth. Because of the downward movement of the water, it appeared as if the figure was truly moving upwards, which conveyed a simply indescribable impression" (614f.). This had the expected effect on the Indians – untouched by technology and magically at one with nature, as they were. "They pointed to the marvellous physique of our Winnetou", so the text concludes. "They were told that it was no longer about constructing a lifeless image out of stone, but rather about the creation of a large, noble, living body of Winnetou, a 'Clan of Winnetou' which was to spread across the whole of America and beyond, about one who demands of his members nothing else but to be noble people who only seek to give love" (617).

- 1 Karl May in a self-written press release, in: Ekkehard Bartsch, 'Karl Mays Wiener Rede, eine Dokumentation', *Jahrbuch der Karl-May-Gesellschaft*, 1970, 67–68. All subsequent citations relating to this subject stem from this text.
- 2 Initially in the novella 'Wanda', in: *Der Beobachter an der Elbe, Unterhaltungsblätter für Jedermann*, vol. 2, Dresden: H.G. Münchmeyer 1875.
- 3 Günter Scholdt, 'Winnetou IV' in: Gert Ueding (with Klaus Rettner) (eds.), *Karl-May-Handbuch*, 2nd edition, Würzburg 2001, 207.
- 4 Karl May, *Winnetou III*, Freiburger Erstausgaben, vol. 9, reprint of the first Fehsenfeld edition 1892–1910, Bamberg: Karl-May-Verlag 1982–1984, 167.
- 5 Karl May, 1982–1984 (note 4) 393.
- 6 Karl May, 1982–1984 (note 4) 68.
- 7 Dieter Sudhoff, 'Der beflügelte Mensch', *Jahrbuch der Karl-May-Gesellschaft*, 1986, 136.
- 8 Karl May, *Winnetou IV*, Freiburg i.Br.: Friedrich Ernst Fehsenfeld 1910, 540.
- 9 The number in parentheses, as in all subsequent applicable citations, refers to the respective page reference in *Winnetou IV* (note 8).
- 10 On this subject, in particular, cf.: Jens Ruchatz, *Licht und Wahrheit, eine Mediumsgeschichte der fotografischen Projektion*, Munich 2003.

Katherine Hoffman

I8 Art, Propaganda or Cultural Ambassador: The Russian Photographs of Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin- Gorskii, Aleksandr Rodchenko, and Margaret Bourke-White

“Photography penetrates into all domains of knowledge ... Memory aided visually by an interesting exhibited subject, will leave our ordinary methods of memorizing far behind.”¹

Sergei M. Prokudin-Gorskii

“The modern city with its multi-storey buildings, the specially designed factories and plants ... automobiles, illuminated signs ... the ocean liners, airplanes ... have redirected ... the normal psychology of visual perception. It would seem that only the camera is capable of reflecting contemporary life.”²

Aleksandr Rodchenko

“A picture refreshes us insofar as it gives us a chance to see the world in a new way ... There is no reason for photography to imitate any other art. It is an outstanding means of expression and the best, I believe, for portraying the power and force of industry ... all around us we have new shapes, new forms.”³

Margaret Bourke-White

“I turn to all of you in the room. You are the image makers. The whole world bases its beliefs on the evidence you present. Photography breaks the language barrier and moves the message from people to people. You have enormous power in your hands.”⁴

John G. Morris, former picture editor Life Magazine

fig. 1 Alexander Rodchenko, *Portrait of My Mother*, 1924. Gelatine silver print, 41.0 x 30.5 cm. National D'Art Musée Modern, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Photo: CNAC/MNAM/Dist. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.



Taken together the works of Prokudin-Gorskii, Rodchenko, and Bourke-White are evidence of the powerful interplay of art and photojournalism, of propaganda, and cultural diplomacy. Photography has the power to break language barriers and provide new ways of perceiving the world, in direct concrete ways, that are frequently distinct from other visual arts forms.

The power of photography, in shaping artistic, cultural, social and political identities, is significant. This paper deals with the role of photography as art, propaganda,⁵ and/or cultural ambassador, in the larger social and political context of Russia, the United States and their relationship in the early 20th century.

The pre-World War I Russia of Tsar Nicholas II was a land of striking ethnic diversity. Russia at that time was home to more than 150 million people, and comprised the geographic terrain of what was to become the Soviet Union, as well as Finland and much of Poland. The photographs of Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii (1863–1944) provide a colourful portrait of the now lost world of the Russian empire prior to the Russian Revolution.

By 1904, Prokudin-Gorskii was working on colour-sensitive glass plates hoping that these could eventually be projected onto screens in classrooms to help educate Russian youth. For him colour was the best way to reproduce reality, and thus was superior to black and white imaging. His method involved taking three exposures of the same subject at about one second intervals, making glass plate negatives, to produce positive glass slides for his illustrated lectures. He projected his slides through the red, green, and blue filters of a ‘magic lantern’ which superimposed the images onto the screen resulting in a full colour image. He also made prints that were put into numerous albums.

His most important work was probably from 1909–1915 when he worked intensely for Tsar Nicholas II, documenting the vast reaches of the Russian Empire. Prokudin-Gorskii and his son Dimitri were given a special Pullman coach car with a dark room. Until 1915, the commission remained open ended. Prokudin-Gorskii’s travels took him to the far corners of the empire; Turkestan and Samarkand, the Caucasus, the Urals, to Tolstoy and Yasnaya Polyana. He photographed architectural monuments, people at work, transportation modes, rivers, and waterways, churches and icons, as well as everyday village life. His photographs are documentary, artistic, and similar to propaganda in recording the geographic, social, and ethnic diversity of the vast Russian Empire. Prokudin-Gorskii was also instrumental, through his testimony and slide exhibition before a special committee of the State Council, in having photography recognised as art, thus entitling the photographer to the right of authorship under Russian law. His own 1911 petition to the Duma, however, requesting that the government purchase his work for a public museum, was not successful.

Prokudin-Gorskii’s beautiful colour images continue to remain poignant in their ability to engage the viewer through colour and composition. Naturalist, pictorial, and often painterly,

fig. 2 Margarete Bourke-White, *Shock Brigadier*, UDSSR, 1931. Photogravure, 23.5 x 33 cm. From: *Margaret Bourke-White's Photographs of UDSSR* with an introduction by the artist, Albany, NY and New York: Argus Press for Ralph L. Boudreau, 1934. Westlicht Museum / Peter Coeln, Vienna.

the images sometimes also reveal a sense of isolation that existed in the far corners of both urban and rural sections of the empire. One sees, as examples, Russian peasant girls offering berries to visitors to their 'izba', a traditional, rural wooden house along the Sheksna River; a profile of a young nomad Uzbek woman, standing on a richly decorated carpet at the entrance to a portable 'yurt'; a Chinese foreman at a chakva tea farm; a Muslim fabric merchant at a Samarkand market; a robed Sart woman; a study of three generations, employed at a Ural Mountains Zlatoust arms plant, shows the two younger generations wearing western dress, suggesting the co-existence of old and new, of East and West.

Prokudin-Gorskii captured the splendour of the Russian countryside and its monumental churches as well as the co-existence of Muslim and Christian religions, alluding to religious tolerance, if not real, then suggested. For example, one finds the pastoral image of the spring on Olga Hill at Goritskii Monastery where the lush green grass and rich blue sky with pink-white clouds embrace the beautifully constructed wooden structure. This stands in contrast to the solidity of the tiled columns, the Islamic abstract designs on the walls, the dome of the 17th century Registan Shir-Dor madrasa.

Prokudin-Gorskii moved easily from sacred to secular imagery, capturing the classical beauty of the Likani chateau in Borzhom, where Greek and Roman influences dominate the architecture, allowing Russian audiences, including the Tsar who regularly viewed the results of his commissions, to see architectural alliances of east and west, and an empire that tolerated diversity on a variety of levels. Whereas the spa connoted wealth and leisure, Prokudin-Gorskii also dignified the world of work with images such as factory interiors glorifying the



machine, workers in a hayfield, or the railroad bridge across the Shuya. In a number of these 'man/technology' and 'nature' coexist peacefully, and the hard physical labour needed to build structures, both utilitarian and artistic, is barely alluded to. It is unclear whether Prokudin-Gorskii was at all inclined to document the poverty, degradation and sometimes cruelty of imperial Russia as it approached its end, but his position did not allow for such.

The Russian Revolution left Prokudin-Gorskii in a precarious position of being suspect as a Tsarist supporter, even though many of his images supported the dignity of the peasant, and work itself, as well as the significance of new technologies. In 1918 Prokudin-Gorskii and his family left Russia. His collection of slides remained intact with the exception of approximately 10 negatives of the Romanov royal family, that are yet to be found. In exile, the family spent

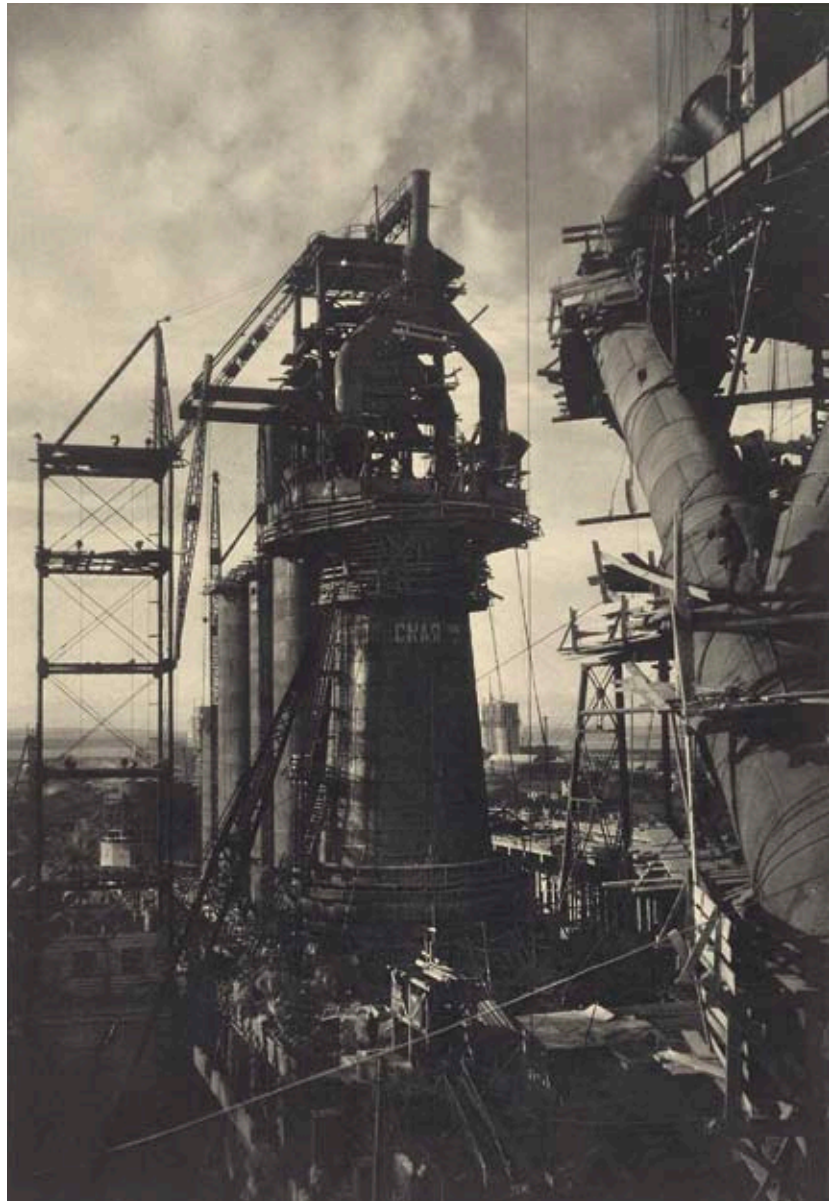


fig. 3 Margaret Bourke-White, *The World Largest Blast Furnace*. Magnitogorsk: Ural Mountains, UDSSR, 1931. Photogravure, 33 x 23.5 cm. From: *Margaret Bourke-White's Photographs of UDSSR* with an introduction by the artist, Albany, NY and New York: Argus Press for Ralph L. Boudreau, 1934. WestLight Museum / Peter Coeln, Vienna.

two years in Norway before going to England and France, where he made contacts with the Lumière Brothers. He continued to give slide lectures and patented an optical system for a movie camera. In the late 1940's a Russian translation programme of the American Council of Learned Societies sought colour illustrations for its newly translated volumes. John Marshall, the Paris representative for the Rockefeller Foundation, was able to locate Prokudin-Gorskii's sons, who held the collection of approximately 1,600 plates, and who agreed to sell the collection for \$5000 to the ACLS in 1948. The ACLS ultimately deposited them in the USA Library of Congress. Although his work may have been initiated by a Tsar who saw the photographs as artistic and political capital to support his wide spread regime, Prokudin-Gorskii's collection as a whole, may be seen in retrospect, as a type of cultural ambassador, that allows modern viewers, in part, to recover a lost world. In the early days of the Cold War, this project at the ACLS allowed at least a few Americans to see a Russia that was not monolithic, but a vast, complicated, diverse set of peoples and places.

With the coming of the Russian Revolution came the work of new avant-garde artists, the Constructivists and Supremacists, who believed that new forms in the visual arts could help the new state and its 'citizens,' that Lenin and the Bolsheviks called for. Technological progress was seen as a corner stone of the Communist social programme. Although Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their 1848 *Communist Manifesto* did not specifically describe in detail what the role of art might be in reaching a utopian classless society, Lenin realised the power that art and artists could play, particularly in the areas of photography and the cinema.

Aleksandr Rodchenko (1891–1956) was among the most prolific of the young Constructivist artists, working in a variety of media, including photo-collage or montage, and photography. Spending his early childhood in St. Petersburg, attending art school in provincial Kazan, and moving to Moscow in 1915, Rodchenko quickly rose to prominence as head of the Museum Bureau, and became part of a significant 'think tank' *INKHUK* (Institute of Artistic Culture), as well as teaching at the important *VKHUTEMAS* (Higher State Artistic-Technical Workshops, the principle state art school). Rodchenko won silver medals at the grand Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925, and, as of 1928, sent photographs to foreign salons in Zurich, Antwerp, New York, Chicago and Tokyo. In 1928, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the future director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and Jere Abbott, later Associate Director of MOMA, visited Rodchenko in Moscow. That visit marked a significant cross cultural exchange as Barr greatly admired Rodchenko's work and arranged to obtain photographs of Rodchenko's work for an article.⁶ It appears that Barr's ideas about modern art and his subsequent collecting strategies, were no doubt influenced by his trip to Russia.

When Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) ended some of its privileges for the avant-garde artists, they founded the Left Front of the Arts (LEF) 1923–1928 and produced a significant magazine for which Rodchenko designed all the covers. With Stalin's rise to power, Rodchenko was accused of 'bourgeois formalism' and in 1932 was expelled from October, a group whose

aim was to bridge the gap between the working class and new art forms. From 1933 onwards, he was not permitted to photograph without a permit, and his work became limited to what might be called propaganda reports of sports, parades and so on. A number of his works were published in the lavish propaganda monthly, *USSR in Construction*, that was published in several languages including English. His work for this magazine, issue no. 12, 1933, documenting the construction of the White Sea Canal; from the Baltic to the White Sea, tells of the power of the photographic medium to publicise Stalin's public works projects. Rodchenko took over 3,000 photographs of the project, although one does not see the suffering of the labourers, for penal labour under Stalin was to be viewed as redemptive; rehabilitating the worker. Even Rodchenko himself viewed his assignment as a kind of redemptive work after being criticised. Looking back on his work on the project, he wrote in 1935 in an article 'Reconstruction of the Artist', "I left for the White Sea Canal in a very bad mood ... Man arrives downcast, punished and embittered, and leaves with a proudly held head, with a decoration on his breast, and a start in life. And it reveals to him all the beauty of real, heroic, creative labor."⁷

To understand the scope and impact of Rodchenko's photographic work, it is helpful to look more closely at specific elements and images of his photographic career, which became more significant after he stopped easel painting in 1921. The majority of his photo-portraits were taken between 1924 and 1928 and they reflect his world of pro-Revolution artists and writers, endorsing the Left Front of Art. They are direct, strong, without superfluous background, details or props. The literary critic Osip Brik, and the poets Sergei Tretyakov and Nikolai Aseyev, the artist Alexander Shevchenko are depicted. In some instances Rodchenko explored the effects of double exposure. His series of portraits of Mayakovsky show him in several instances standing or sitting alone, centre stage, before or on a grid configuration. Mayakovsky's strong, determined expressions juxtaposed with 'constructivist' building block forms emphasise the role of the Constructivist aesthetic in establishing a 'new world order' in Russia. Rodchenko's series of images, such as his wife, his mother (fig. 1), his apartment building, or landscape imagery, allowed him to explore an object from a variety of perspectives, thereby bringing Cubist and cinematic techniques to his still photography, and thus engaging the viewer more fully. His wife, Vavara Stepanova, was his on-going model. Over 30 years he made hundreds of photographs of her, recording the various stages of her life, reflecting their shared life, and experimenting with new cameras, different viewpoints, lighting, etc. We see Varvara as wife, mother, painter, business women. In some of these images, Rodchenko seems to have left the fervour of the public world of Revolution to explore a more private world, as well as the intersection of public and private life.⁸

Rodchenko's ability to probe the depths of his subjects can also be seen in the sequence, *Glass*, part of which was published in 1928 in *Novyi LEI* No. 3. Rodchenko captured delicate halftones and textures, and the dance of light and shadow on the glass. His multiple images call forth the inherent beauty of an industrial product, making it possible for the viewer to see everyday

objects in a new way. Other photographs, such as *Radio Tower* (1929), *Pioneer Girl* (1930), or *Cogwheels* (1929), show him experimenting with a variety of angles and close-up imagery, particularly his famous oblique angle, using both industrial and State subjects, as well as exploring the pure artistry of formal elements such as line, shape, shadow.

In later pictures, such as several titled *Girl with a Leica* (1934), Rodchenko bathed his subject and student, Evgenia Lemberg, in a web of light and shadow created by a wooden trellis. It is significant that Rodchenko chose to photograph his student with the small hand-held Leica, which marked a relatively new advancement in photographic technology, allowing more people access to the medium of photography and thereby democratising the medium.

Such images were in part responsible for the sharp criticism Rodchenko received, calling him a bourgeois formalist, and he began to receive fewer commissions from the Stalinist regime. Of this criticism, Peter Galassi, curator at the Museum of Modern Art, rightly notes:

The great irony of the attacks that began to mount against Rodchenko in 1928 and of his subsequent gradual exclusion from official culture, is that his style was simultaneously becoming the cornerstone of Stalinist photographic propaganda. Simplified and homogenized, his oblique angles and dynamic forms established the public image of the five year plan mentality. Rodchenko's own sports and parade photographs of the 1930's are exemplary of this transformation; their bold forms and sweeping lines project an impersonal image of indomitable power, but they derived from the mobile perspectives of the experimental modernist.⁹

This is to be seen in images such as *Male Pyramid* (1936), *The Plunge* (1934–1935), or *On the Parallel Bars* (1938). Sports ability, particularly gymnastics, was not only seen as a symbol of strength, emphasising the power of youth, and potential for setting new world records in competitions, but also as a type of social liberation, and as readiness for military service.

As World War II struck, Rodchenko and his family fled to the Urals, returning to Moscow in 1943. In the early 1950's he experimented with colour photography and some painting. Although there is a poignant lyricism in the later work, gone is the passion and power of his earlier period. In 1952 he failed to be nominated for membership in the Artists' Union in the Soviet Union. His works, however, continue to evoke strong viewers' responses to rich visual tapestries of modernist artistic expression, which although they may have been made for State purposes, also demonstrated Russian contributions to Modernist expression, serving, in part, as a form of cultural diplomacy. Rodchenko's work may be viewed as a 'paradigm shift' to use Thomas Kuhn's term, in its redirection of visual perceptions and in its duality of function, combining utilitarian and artistic trajectories to arrive at images that force viewers to rethink their existing beliefs and ways of viewing the world.



4

As Rodchenko was reaching the peak of his experimental years, the young American photographer, Margaret Bourke-White (1904–1971) made her first trip to Russia in 1930, and two other trips in 1931 and 1932. She was one of the first to obtain a visa to visit a Russia that had closed its doors as it attempted to enter the modern world following the Revolution. Her cover photograph of the Fort Peck Dam for the first issue of *Life* magazine in 1936, followed closely the experimental composition she had used in one of her Russian photographs of the Dnieperstroï Dam. Bourke-White's photographs of people, places, and events in Russia, provided the American people with a glimpse into facets of Soviet life that otherwise they would have had no sense of. She, like Rodchenko, was also interested in the aesthetics of the machine, and saw art, at least in her early work, as drawing “inspiration from industry because industry is alive and vital. The beauty of industry lies in its truth and simplicity; every line is essential and therefore beautiful.”¹⁰ Her two books, *Eyes on Russia* (1931) and *U.S.S.R. Photographs* (1934), contain photographs that continue to be powerful.

Bourke-White's fascination with the world of industry and the machine age began at age eight when her father took her inside a foundry. Important, too, was her study at the Clarence White School of Photography where she encountered Arthur Wesley Dow's theories of composition, influenced by Eastern aesthetics that emphasised principles of abstraction, and elements of

fig. 4 Alexander Rodchenko, *New Power Station*, Moscow 1929. Vintage Silver print, 11.5 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy Gallery Johannes Faber, Vienna.

modern design, particularly the interplay of light and shadow. By the 1920's, the machine had become a dominant part of American life and culture. As Paul Strand wrote, man has "consummated a new creative art, a new Trinity: God the Machine, Materialistic Empiricism the Son, and Science the Holy Ghost ... but the whole Trinity must be humanized unless it in turn dehumanizes us."¹¹

For Bourke-White the machine was primarily an artistic creation, although she seemed to acquire a growing awareness of its dehumanising potential, as Strand warned. Because of her ability to capture the beauty of the mechanical, she was the first foreigner permitted to photograph the rapid industrialisation of the Soviet Union in the early 1930's after months of frustration trying to procure entry visas. Bourke-White was ultimately able to travel 5,000 miles, taking about 800 photographs, forty of which appeared in her *Eyes on Russia* in 1931. She also made two movie shorts, *Eyes on Russia* and *Red Republic*. Maurice Hindus's introduction to the 1931 book stresses the distinction between Bourke-White's approach to the machine versus the Russian approach:

It is because of her love of the machine that her Russian photographs are so impressive, for the Russians, too, love the machine and venerate it even more. They differ from Miss Bourke-White...They love the machine more for what it does than for what it is. They view it as a social benefaction, as an instrument of a great deliverance, and they espouse it with a faith and a zeal with which in an earlier day men espoused their religion. To Miss Bourke-White the machine is first and foremost an artistic attraction.¹²

In her text for *Eyes on Russia*, Bourke-White commented further on Russian-American connections during this Soviet industrialisation period, with American firms having technical contracts for the construction of factories in the Soviet Union at this time. She noted in particular the role of the Detroit offices of Albert Kahn, Inc. which provided very quickly a team of experts to draw up architectural and engineering plans for Tractorstroi in Russia to oversee the project being completed in a record 7½ months. Bourke-White notes that 5,700 tons of steel were used, 6,200 workers engaged, and 36 million dollars spent on the plant alone, consisting of 10 principal buildings and approximately 6 auxiliary buildings.¹³

Bourke-White photographed the ballet, and noted that machine worship "permeated even the classic Russian ballet. Little girls with gear wheels in gold or silver painted on their chests, danced Machine Dances."¹⁴

With a year's interval between Russian trips, Bourke-White's second visit, involved doing 6 illustrated human interest articles for Sunday's *New York Times Magazine*, such as 'Silk

Stockings in the Five Year Plan,' or 'A Day in a Remote Village in Russia.' As with Rodchenko's photographs of Stalinist Russia, nowhere is there evidence of the labour camps, and the suffering that were also a part of Stalinist Russia. In 1941, when Germany attacked Moscow on July 22nd, Bourke-White was the only foreign photographer in the USSR at the time. Her photographs record the terror, and horrifying beauty of night raids against the dark silhouettes of Moscow architecture.

Bourke-White's pictorial magazine essays in the 1930s and 1940s were written at a time when the world was ripe for the rise of photojournalism, and access to concrete, 'realistic' documentation of events, people, and places. But, in general, the United States isolationist position between the World Wars, along with restrictions of publishing military defeats, violent battlefield scenes, or dead bodies, kept war imagery from dominating pictorial magazine stories. War served as a backdrop to depicting altered life styles.

Bourke-White's photographs from Russia range from panoramic landscapes to glorifying the machine, to poignant portraits of official workers, and citizens in everyday settings (fig. 2 and 3). She photographed in schools, at the ballet, and factories, and in the fields. Some of her best known images from the Russian photographs include *A Worker's Club in Moscow* and *A Generator Shell*, both taken in 1930. At the Workers Club, an old man descends while

- 1 Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii, quoted in: *Photographs for the Tsar: The Pioneering Color Photography of Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii*, Robert H. Allshouse (ed.), New York: Dial Press 1980, ix.
- 2 Aleksandr Rodchenko, *The Paths of Modern Photography*, 1928 in: Christopher Phillips (ed.), *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings 1913–1940*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Aperture 1989, 258–259.
- 3 Margaret Bourke-White, *Eyes on Russia*, New York: Simon & Schuster 1931, 64–66.
- 4 John G. Morris, Address to the Photojournalist VII Seminar, Royal Geographic Society, London, April 13, 2007. Morris is former picture editor of *Life Magazine*, the first executive editor of Magnum Photos press agency, and the author of *Get the Picture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998, 2002.
5. Although it is not possible to discuss various aspects of, and theories about the nature of propaganda in this article, the following texts are helpful adjuncts to considering issues of photography in relation to aspects of propaganda. Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Man's Attitudes*, New York: Alfred Knopf 1972, (See particularly Ellul's disjunction between agitation and integration propaganda); Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, London, New Delhi, and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999 (See particularly the chapter on 'Propaganda and Psychological Warfare, 1926–1939') and Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, New York: Harper & Row 1979.
6. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 'Russian Diary' in: Irving Sandler and Amy Newman (eds.), *Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.*, New York: Harry N. Abrams 1986, 113. A positive meeting involving Barr, Abbott, Rodchenko and his wife was recorded in a day entry by Varvara Stepanova, *Chelovek ne muzhet zhit' bez ehuda Pis'ma, poeticheskie opyty, zapiski khudozhnitsy*, ed. O.V. Mel'nikov compiled by V. Rodchenko and A. Lavrent'ev (Moscow: Izd, Sfera, 1994), 222.

a young man ascends; the viewer is just behind the young man. Through the contrasts and rhythms of light and shadow, youth and old age, as well as the viewer, become interconnected in the realm of the worker. A Generator Shell finds man and machine at one, as the young man tightens the bolts in a prayer-like pose.

For 1930's readers of *Eyes on Russia*, the work was revelatory. But Bourke-White did not pass judgment. As Hindus wrote, "She poses neither as a social theorist nor as a political prophet ... Artist that she is, her testimony is all the more valuable because it is free from glib pronouncements either in praise or condemnation."¹⁵ Today, since we know Bourke-White did not include the suffering of the Stalinist era, some of these images can more easily be read as propaganda, but a propaganda, not so much for the glory of the Soviet Union, but for the power and glory of a new Machine Age that ushered in not only new production modes, but also new aesthetics and the world of Modernism, set on an international stage. These three photographers' works thus illustrate the political, social, and aesthetic powers of photography, and also raise significant questions about censorship and propaganda issues which continue today.¹⁶ Together, these photographers' lives, works, and legacies may be seen to illuminate significant aspects of early 20th century Russian and American cultures, their roles in the rise of Modernism, and important interconnections between two major world powers.

English translation in Varvara Rodchenko, 'Days in the Life' in: Dabrowski, Dickerman, Galassi, *Aleksandr Rodchenko*, New York: Museum of Modern Art 1998.

7 Rodchenko quoted in Leah Dickerman 'The Propagandizing of Things' in: *Aleksandr Rodchenko*, 1998, 96.

8 It is interesting to compare this series by Rodchenko of his wife with that of the American photographer Alfred Stieglitz of his wife, Georgia O'Keeffe, over a similar period of time (beginning in 1917). Stieglitz's early images of are often more intimate, exploring the human form and the role of the nude in modern photography.

9 Peter Galassi, 'Rodchenko and Photography's Revolution' in: *Aleksandr Rodchenko*, 1998, 129–130.

10 Margaret Bourke-White quoted in: Theodore Brown, 'The Legend that was Largely True' in: Sean Callahan (ed.), *The Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White*, New York: Crown Publishers 1972, 9.

11 Paul Strand, 'Photography and the New God', *Broom* (November 3, 1922), 252, 257.

12 Maurice Hindus, 'Introduction' to Margaret Bourke-White, *Eyes on Russia*, New York: Simon & Schuster 1931, 13.

13 Margaret Bourke-White, *Eyes on Russia*, 1931, 124.

14 Margaret Bourke-White, *Portrait of Myself*, 1963, 95.

15 Hindus, 'Introduction' to *Eyes on Russia*, 1931, 14.

16 See as examples, Andrew E. Kramer, '50% Good News is the Bad News on Russian Radio', *New York Times*, April 22, 2007; *New York Times* website, or Peter Johnson, 'Moyers Hammers the Media for Buying the War in Iraq', *USA Today*, April 23, 2007; 3D. PBS Documentary, April 25, 2007; *Buying the War*, Bill Moyers' Journal; Frank Rich, 'All the President's Press', *New York Times*, April 29, 2007, *New York Times* web site; Clifford J. Levy, 'Putin's Iron Grip on Russia Suffocates His Opponents', *New York Times* website, February 24, 2008; Amy Knight, 'The Truth About Putin & Co.', *The New York Review of Books*, May 15, 2008, 11–14.

Mark Pohlad

I9

The New Vision on Campus: Moholy-Nagy's Photographs of Oxford and Eton

Imagine two men walking down a sidewalk at Eton College in the mid-1930s. One, a tall Scotsman, is nattily dressed and sports a monocle. The other man wears glasses, a rumpled mackintosh and a 35mm Leica around his neck. Suddenly, the second man darts into a shop and, uninvited, sprints up the stairway to find an upper story window. The Scotsman, a former Etonian himself, blushes and makes excuses as the camera's shutter is heard clattering. The photographer is László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946), who has been commissioned by his companion – Bernard Fergusson [Lord Ballantrae] (1911–1980) – to take the pictures for his book, *Eton Portrait* (1937).¹ This scene would repeat itself a lot during Moholy's brief time in London, for he produced three picture books, two of which deal with English schools and which I examine in a new light here: *Eton Portrait* (1937), and *An Oxford University Chest* (1938).²

By the time Moholy arrived in England in 1935, his resignation from the Bauhaus was seven years in the past. Since then he had been working in film and stage design in Berlin and had also lived in Paris and Holland for short periods. Now in London, Moholy was engaged in a flurry of commercial work, including advertising for a menswear store in Piccadilly, for the London Underground and for Imperial Airways. Also, passionate about film in this period, he produced special effects for fellow Hungarian Alexander Korda's *Things to Come* (1936). Still, it was as a photographer that he was best known. Moholy had been featured at *Film und Foto* (Stuttgart; 1929), the most important photography exhibition of its time, and Franz Roh's book, *Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos* (1929), had been eagerly received by an international audience. Moreover, Moholy himself was an avid polemicist for photography, and his reach was international.

Between 1922 and 1930 he wrote over thirty articles, published two Bauhaus-related books, and served as the photography and film editor for a Dutch journal.³ About Moholy's engagement with photography during his time in Britain, Terence Senter has described how: "Although

fig.1 László Moholy-Nagy, *School Yard from the Provost's Lodge* from *Eton Portrait*, 1937. Gelatin silver print. Taken with a 35mm Leica; the whereabouts of the original photographs are unknown.



brief, this period represented the peak of his photographic activity...”⁴ Moreover, the period of the book projects (1936–37) represents the high-water mark of Moholy’s personal engagement with camera-based photography (not photograms), and represents his most protracted foray into the production of specifically social documentary imagery. Finally, Moholy’s picture books represent the first time that a serious photographer used a small, hand-held camera to make a series of publishable, artworthy pictures of these schools.

The 1930s witnessed a diaspora of photographic talent fleeing west before the rising tide of fascist oppression. Photographers Greta Stern, Felix Man, Germaine Krull, John Heartfield, Herbert List and many others came to London in the mid-thirties, as did editors and publishers such as Andor Kraszna-Krausz, Alex Strasser, and Simon Guttman. Stefan Lorant, perhaps the most influential photo-editor of the century, left the *Müncher Illustrierte* for London where he founded *Lilliput* (1934) and *Picture Post* (1938), and edited the *Weekly Illustrated*. David Mellor regards this exodus as “the overwhelming cultural event which would shape the course of German and British photography in the middle and late 1930s ... [It] brought a pool of talent to London, which reinforced the incorporation of the new German photography into the mainstream of British culture.”⁵ Moholy’s English picture books are accurately seen as part of this phenomenon.

I would argue that, beyond fulfilling the demands of the commissions, Moholy’s English school photographs represent the application of the New Vision to subjects to the most venerable, most ‘English’ institutions, and thus to English values overall. As such, these books should be regarded as landmark examples of how modernism was produced in conservative environments and received by popular audiences. But Moholy’s images of English schools have not been discussed before, nor treated as a distinct category of his work, probably because they are perceived as simply rote commercial commissions. Also, as they are more purely documentary images, they differ drastically from the elegantly abstract photograms and photomontages for which Moholy is best known. But these daring images, embedded into a traditional and popular literary form – the college picture book – demonstrate how avant-garde formal innovations found their way into popular venues. In Moholy’s pictures of Oxford and Eton, the principles of the New Vision are applied to subjects ostensibly least likely to allow for it.⁶ Indeed, they represent a test case for that new sensibility, for the New Vision’s applicability to real-world venues. More generally, they represent the influx of modernism in England.

But these college books should be regarded not only in the context of the New Vision or Moholy’s own *œuvre*, but also in terms of the phenomenon of the photographically-illustrated picture book of the 1930s.⁷ That period witnessed an explosion of technology and talent. Moholy himself was a veteran in publishing and with Walter Gropius had produced fourteen Bauhaus books between 1925 and 1930, two of them his own: *Malerei, Photographie, Film* (1925) and *Von Material zu Architektur* (1929). He certainly understood the value of book publishing

to affect changes in perception and pedagogy. When examining Moholy's English school pictures, we are reminded that London itself had become the subject of countless photographic picture books in the previous decade. The German-born English expatriate photographer E[mil] O[tto] Hoppé (1878–1972) produced several of these including such titles as *London* (1930), *London Types Taken from Life* (1926), and *Image of London: a hundred photographs by E.O. Hoppé* (1935). Nowadays called an 'Edwardian Modernist' and 'the most famous photographer in the world in the 1920s', Hoppé was a popular portrait, landscape and travel photographer.⁸ Some of his photos achieve a decided New Vision quality, perhaps not surprising since, like Moholy, he used a 35 mm Leica. Moholy may have known and admired Hoppe's books and their attention to formalistic and documentary aspects.

Now standing before the mellow buildings of Oxford and Eton and witnessing its ancient academic rituals and castes, what must Moholy have thought? Was he sensitive to the vast cultural and pedagogical differences between these elitist schools and the progressive, design-oriented Bauhaus he had left just a few short years earlier? By the time he made the English school photos, Moholy himself had been a young professor at the Bauhaus, and so must inevitably have measured himself against the fustian dons he was shooting. And the top-hatted students at Eton must have puzzled and delighted him. But there was much to be done and hundreds of photographs to take.

Moholy went to Eton with author Bernard Fergusson on several occasions where Fergusson would "tell him what to photograph..."⁹ This coupled with the fact that he referred modestly to Moholy as "my photographer" suggests that Fergusson played a prescriptive, editorial role in the project. Even so, he also recalled how spontaneous and creative Moholy was in composing shots. There was something of Cartier-Bresson's 'decisive moment' aesthetic at work, where the photographer aims to capture the fleeting picture that best describes the scene. "He excelled in seizing the moment", Fergusson said of Moholy, "and it was a lively experience to see him at work."¹⁰ It was Moholy's habit to stop suddenly during a walk to frame an imaginary shot with his fingers as he discussed its composition.¹¹ Moreover, Moholy insisted on candid shots, and would settle for nothing less. Fergusson remembered how if he caught the eye of somebody whom he was about to photograph he pouted and walked away, saying "He is schpoilt".¹² In the foreword to *The Street Markets of London*, Moholy apologized to his reader for any lowering of picture quality "in view of the rapid and unprepared fixation of lively scenes that could never have been posed".¹³

Fergusson recalled that Moholy "was an unconventional figure to go about with..."¹⁴ On school grounds and elsewhere, Moholy was repeatedly suspected of being a German, his broken (Hungarian-inflected) English instantly giving him away.¹⁵ For his part, Moholy regarded the British as conservative and overly-regimented and badly in need of good design.¹⁶ He made sure that for this project he produced good work. For the project Moholy took more

than four hundred pictures; only fifty-seven appear in the book itself.¹⁷ None were cropped, as Moholy composed his pictures entirely within the viewfinder.¹⁸ The selection process was difficult, but collaborative. The photographs not used for the book – nearly three-hundred and fifty by Fergusson’s calculation – were destroyed. “Moholy feared a cheapening of his market,” Fergusson recounted, “and forbade it. He destroyed the negatives himself.”¹⁹

The most reproduced image from *Eton Portrait* is *A Field Match: A typical winter afternoon, when it begins to get dark at change* (page 40). It shows two striding top-hatted figures in velvety black silhouette; the field, trees and athletes beyond are dissolved in mist. Though the shot is journalistic and quickly taken, there is something of the artistic print in it, very much recalling similar pictures by Henri Cartier-Bresson or Moholy’s compatriot, Martin Munkácsi (1896–1963). In many of the English school photographs, as here, Moholy uses high contrast in tone to achieve very graphic effects.



School Yard from the Provost’s Lodge (fig. 1) is a striking application of New Vision principles to the venerable topography of the school grounds. Its overhead point of view encourages the disorienting, formalistic patterning of the pavement design, its overall shape unexpectedly modernist. The two groups of walking figures are contained within that pavement design; they share the path with the sculpture in the center of the square. A similar picture is *Practicing for Certificate A: Seen from an upper window of Drill Hall Schools* (fig. 2), in which Moholy utilizes the window frame from which he shoots to frame a group of marching students. It is the public school version of Alexander Rodchenko’s photographs of parades.

No less than six of the Eton photographs show students engaged in art or design production, an inordinate number considering the number of images overall. Students are seen working at machines; others show students drawing from a live model or on large-scale papers. Another shows a boy working at a potter’s wheel; still others show marionettes and boats being fashioned. Images such as these reflect Moholy’s ideals of the practical imagination, creative production in which the producer generates good design. Similarly, several images show students at play, engaged in sports or watching activities with light-hearted enthusiasm. These were doubtless included to encourage fond memories of Eton, but they also reflect the sense of well-being Moholy thought would attend students engaged in meaningful and worthwhile pursuits.

One of these, a photo of boys playing a handball-like game called *Fives* (page 44), displays an intriguing formalism. The composition is divided – in a ratio approximating the Golden Section – by a wall that separates two separate games being played. On one side of the wall, one sees the shapes of boys vigorously moving in the middle of a point; by way of contrast, a

boy on the other side stands stock still. The spontaneity and urban quality of this photograph resembles other twentieth-century images of boys at play like those by Henri Cartier-Bresson or Ben Shahn.

We now consider *An Oxford University Chest* (1938). Moholy met Betjeman, a former assistant editor of *Architectural Review*, within a month of his arrival in London. It was Betjeman who recommended him to Harry F. Paroissien of John Miles publishers, an offshoot of Simpkin Marshall. Over the next three years Paroissien commissioned him to illustrate all three of his English picture books: *Street Markets of London*, *Eton Portrait*, and *An Oxford University Chest*. Besides being extremely popular as a poet, and later as a media personality, Betjeman (1906–1984) wrote voluminously on architectural history. However much they represent the New Vision, Moholy-Nagy's images apparently satisfied Betjeman's predilection for topography and sense of locale.



fig. 2 László Moholy-Nagy, *Practising for Certificate A: Seen from an upper window of Drill Hall Schools*, from *Eton Portrait*, 1937. Gelatin silver print. Taken with a 35mm Leica; the whereabouts of the original photographs are unknown.

fig. 3 László Moholy-Nagy, *No undergraduate may be out after midnight without special leave*, from *An Oxford University Chest*, 1938. Gelatin silver print. Taken with a 35mm Leica; the whereabouts of the original photographs are unknown.

Unlike the other two picture books, *An Oxford Chest* is dense with text and is more like a travel guide.²⁰ The book is divided into what Betjeman describes as the three Oxfords: Christminster, Motopolis, and the University. Accordingly, Moholy's images are grouped to illustrate each of these three aspects of the city. The nervous formal qualities of the photos are contradicted by the nostalgic descriptions of the text – often excerpting college memoirs from the distant past – and by the early nineteenth-century wood engravings that appear on nearly every page.²¹ In the case of *Oxford Chest* and *Eton Portrait*, it appears that the photographs were produced separately from the text, for the authors do not refer specifically to any of the images, nor use them to illustrate information about the respective schools. Nor would it seem that Moholy was given a shooting script, or even a list of things to photograph, though conversations with the respective authors would have provided him with prompts. Titling the resulting photographs was almost certainly taken out of the photographers' hands. It is not known if Betjeman accompanied Moholy to Oxford as had Fergusson to Eton, but it is reasonable to assume so. In any case, it is worth noting that, considering that all three books were produced within three years (1936–1938) it is likely that Moholy was shooting at different locales simultaneously.

Many of Moholy's Oxford photographs are of the towers, spires, and rooflines of Oxford's academic edifices, and seem to suggest something of the lofty and ethereal nature of the academic pursuits taking place within. In certain pictures, however, they can also seem oppressive, as in *No undergraduate may be out after midnight without special leave* (fig. 3)

and work against the lighthearted, nostalgic tone of the text. Printed in negative, and so recalling Moholy's celebrated photograms, it shows the barbed top of Trinity College's gate. Does Moholy mean to suggest something about the autocratic, confining nature of English traditional education? Recalling the aforementioned parade pictures of Rodchenko produced just a few years before, Moholy took several photographs of walking students from above, as in two photographs in *Oxford Chest*. One shows a leader pointing to something above and out of the photograph, his arm creating a strong, dramatic diagonal. The photograph underneath shows a procession of schoolgirls walking along. Their uniforms and cadences recall socialist parades; the patterns of hats and aprons flit in front of the stolid limestone shapes behind.

Many of the figures in Moholy's English school pictures are seen from behind, turning or walking away from the viewer. Besides ensuring candid shots, this aspect projects the viewer's interest in the picture space. Only dons and working-class servants are shown frontally and are posed rather than candidly shot, as was Moholy's usual practice. The photo of a *Scout* (page 90), for all intents and purposes a valet for students. The directness of the shot, the expansiveness of the scout's pose and facial expression and the complete readability of his station suggests the class/vocational photographs of August Sander. Describing the importance of scouts to Oxford, Betjeman writes, "They *are* [emph. his] the college".²²

The interior photograph of *An Undergraduate's bedroom* (page 91) calls to mind Moholy's compatriot André Kertész's immaculate images of Mondrian's studio. The only picture to show the living quarters of undergraduates, it is a close-up of the sponges and washcloths on a bedside washstand. Taken from above, the composition seems as much an exploration of form as it does a document of undergraduate dormitory life. The many lighthearted and candid images of students at work and play rub against any morbid traditionalism and make college life at those stodgy universities look fun and improvisational. In this they reflect the kind of positive energy and playful atmosphere Moholy felt was indispensable to a creative and educational environment.

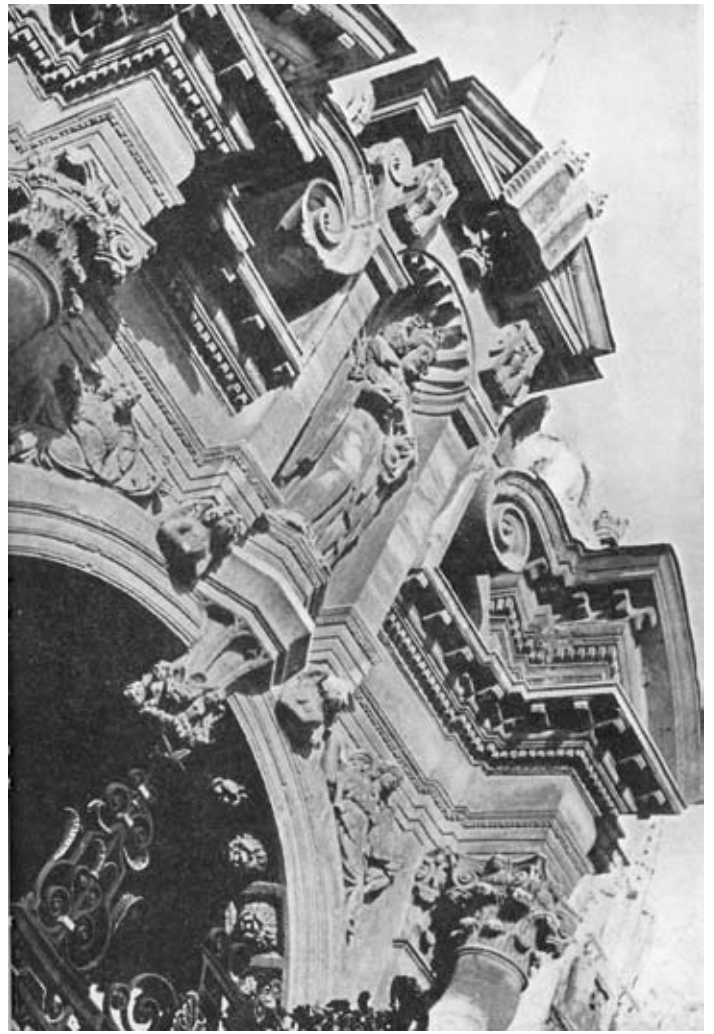
The single most complex Moholy photo in *An Oxford University Chest* is undoubtedly *Between Tom Quad and Peckwater, Christchurch* (page 120), a dense web of bare tree branches and shadows cast on the elevation of the church. The sundial inscribed on the wall introduces notions of time, change, and permanency. Several photographs in *Oxford Chest* revel in the density of its architectural ornament, such as *Entrance Porch, St. Mary-the-Virgin's Church, 1637 – Oxford's most extravagant Baroque* (fig. 5). The boldly oblique point of view is a textbook example of New Vision formal strategies; the striking chiaroscuro of the architecture creates disorienting, graphic shapes. The photograph of *Hawksmoor's Cupola (1736) on the High Street front of the Queen's College* (page 152) becomes a study of round, spherical, and arched forms. Moholy has even included a street lamp containing as it does still more circles and conical

fig. 4 László Moholy-Nagy, *Jericho*, from *An Oxford University Chest*, 1938. Gelatin silver print. Taken with a 35mm Leica; the whereabouts of the original photographs are unknown.

fig. 5 László Moholy-Nagy, *Entrance Porch, St. Mary-the-Virgin's Church, 1637 – Oxford's most extravagant Baroque*, from *An Oxford University Chest*, 1938. Gelatin silver print. Taken with a 35mm Leica; the whereabouts of the original photographs are unknown.



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forms. The roofline sculpture is seen in such a quirky scale as to recall his witty collages of the 20s, some of which feature women figures floating against a geometric background. This effect is also seen in the image 'The Cherwell' in which a female figure lying face down in a punt (facing page 118). Though Moholy's photographs of Oxford generally depict its oldest buildings, the iron ribs and glassy vaults of *The University Museum, 1855–60* (facing page 169) show a fascination with what are essentially modern building techniques. A wonderful rhyme occurs between the ribs of the primitive alligator skeleton below and the exposed skeletal structure of the building, as if Moholy were wittily demonstrating the permanence of solid, modern architectural logic in both beast and building. These references to the modern world suggest that this book is not just a picture of a dreamy, remote past.

In the chapter, 'Architectural Tour', Betjeman's description of 'The Morris [Automobile] Works' is worth special attention for it leads to a discussion of the social dimension of the English school photos. Here Betjeman writes of his feelings about wages, about working-class housing, about the ill effects of the automobile, and about the gulf separating industrial Oxford and the university. "Oxford is no longer primarily a University town", he opines, "but primarily an industrial town".²³ Betjeman is as impassioned here as anywhere else in the text.

I spent little more than an hour for the purposes of this book [surveying the Morris Works proper]. But ... a few minutes more would have sent me off my rocker. ... To one who, like me, sees nothing short of horror in such a life [as on the assembly line], the Morris Works are an inferno, the houses round them a warning to the rest of England against the speculative builder.²⁴

Betjeman then imagines a scenario in which a working-class daughter has won scholarships to Oxford, but her study of obscure authors is for naught and does her little good in the end. Class differences are unbridgeable. "Between Morris Cowley and the Bodleian there is a great gulf. Those on either side of it have nothing in common but flesh and blood," he grimly concludes.²⁵ Likewise, the image of the working-class housing of *Jericho* (fig. 4) describes a different social reality than the happier university imagery elsewhere in *Oxford Chest*. The hopeless lives of the inhabitants of these stark, featureless rowhouses are suggested by the greasy-wet pavement and by the black silhouette of an ownerless dog.

In only one of the three of Moholy's English picture books, *The Street Markets of London* (1936), does there appear an explanation of his method and principles in his own words. For this particular project, he addressed the special social reality of street markets and something of his own outlook. His time in London and the class subjects he was asked to shoot made Moholy more sensitive and interested in documenting social realities. "I am convinced that

the days of the merely ‘beautiful’ photograph are numbered”, he speculates, “and that we shall be increasingly interested in providing a truthful record of objectively determined fact”. He also indicates here that shooting street markets was not “a task to which the purely aesthetic principle of pictorial composition – which many readers may expect in my work – can be applied ...”²⁶ This suggests something of an awareness of his own style and its reception, and an awareness that a different subject – working class street markets – demands a different treatment, one akin to documentary film. Altogether, this is a different Moholy than the Bauhaus mystic-formalist for this is a call for photography to alter social perceptions. It is no less than an ethos for the New Vision; one that goes beyond a perception-altering formalism.

Moholy referred to his own film-inspired approach in the picture book *The Street Markets of London* as “literary and impressionistic photo-reportage”.²⁷ Perhaps not surprisingly, then, his interest in the mobilizing power of documentary photography was reflected in his admiration for the pioneering British documentary filmmaker, John Gierson, whose pioneering propaganda film unit Moholy frequently visited.²⁸ Depicting English mores and class realities became something of an obsession in the 1930s. Photographers both in Britain and abroad sought to document an expanded notion of social reality. In the introduction to Bill Brandt’s *The English at Home* (London: Batsford, 1936), Raymond Mortimer referred to the photographer as an anthropologist who had the “detached curiosity of a man investigating the customs of some remote and unfamiliar tribe.”²⁹ On first glance, Brandt’s book seems merely a celebration of the English – rather like Moholy’s college books under discussion here – but as it progresses, an agenda reveals itself: to contrast images of the English poor and their living conditions, with images of the upper class.³⁰

Moholy’s method of shooting and his interest in documenting the socio-economic realities of a specific locale brought him very close to the nascent Mass Observation movement, and to the work and mission of its most well known photographer, Humphrey Spender (1910–2005).³¹ Begun in the mid-1930s, at the same time as Moholy was shooting Oxford and Eton, Mass Observation was an attempt to document the real lives of ‘average citizens’ through photographs, diaries, recorded conversation, questionnaires and the like. Along these lines, the texts and captions of both *Eton Portrait* and *An Oxford Chest* reveal an interest in documenting the specific rituals and vernacular speech of their respective schools. Spender learned candid photography in Germany in the 1920s and, like Moholy, used a 35mm Leica. He was sensitive to architecture, having studied at the Architectural Association school until 1933. Spender’s technique was similar to Moholy’s: taking lots of images as candidly as possible to capture people in their ‘natural’ states.³² Indeed, Moholy and Spender were part of a wave of international socially-minded documentary photography in the 1930s.

As his English schoolbooks so eloquently demonstrate, Moholy's New Vision was not merely a 'look' glibly laid atop local subjects. Its formalism provided a language with which pictorial values were communicated as social values. That it could do so for a popular audience and within the parameters of ostensibly straightforward commissions like these says much about Moholy's well known commitment to the necessity of good design. That collaborative patrons like Fergusson and Betjeman could support the New Vision on campus is a testament to the remarkable reception of Eastern European exiles like Moholy.

I am grateful to Hattula Moholy-Nagy and to the Moholy-Nagy Foundation, for the kind permission to reproduce images from these books.

- 1 Fergusson describes this incident in the foreword of his *Portrait of Eton*, London: Frederick Muller Ltd. 1949, 9. The resulting picture appears on page 64. This book is virtually a reprint of the earlier *Eton Portrait* (1937) save for the addition of Fergusson's foreword, which constitutes the lengthiest description of Moholy's working method for his English picture books. It also includes a 'glossary' of Eton terms, and a section for 'autographs'. These addenda, it should be noted, make *Portrait of Eton* more of a yearbook than the earlier *Eton Portrait*.
- 2 Bernard Fergusson, *Eton Portrait*, London: John Miles 1937, and John Betjeman, *An Oxford University Chest*, London: John Miles, 1938; rpt. Oxford University Press, 1970, 1979, 1990. References to *Eton Portrait* in this essay are to *Portrait of Eton* (1949), and references to *An Oxford University Chest* are to the 1979 printing.
- 3 The journal was *I 10: International Revue*. See Eleanor M. Hight, *Picturing Modernism: Moholy-Nagy and Photography in Weimar Germany*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT University Press 1995, 5–8, on Moholy's reputation. Although fascinating for its treatment of Moholy's relationship to Weimar and the roots of modernist culture, Hight does not deal with his post-Berlin activities and thus does not even mention his London picture books.
- 4 Terence A. Senter, 'Moholy-Nagy's English Photography', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 23, 1981, 660. This article remains the only publication on the artist's English photographs, though it treats neither individual pictures nor the college books per se. Also see Senter's entry on Moholy-Nagy in Oxford Art Online, formerly the Grove Dictionary of Art.
- 5 David Mellor, 'London-Berlin-London: a cultural history; the Reception and Influence of the New German Photography in Britain, 1927–33', in: Mellor, *Germany, the New Photography, 1927–33*, London 1978, 129.
- 6 Aspects of the New Vision include: a pervasive formalism, shooting modernist subjects (industrial architecture, eg.), the use of hand-held cameras, stop action, radical close-ups, bold diagonals, spatial disorientation, graphic effects, quirky cropping, and an avoidance of eye-level points of view. A great many – but not all – of the photographs in *Eton Portrait* and *An Oxford University Chest* feature these qualities.
- 7 See Andrew Roth (ed.), *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century*, New York: PPP Editions, in assoc. with Roth Horowitz LLC 2001.
- 8 See the website dedicated to him at <http://www.eohoppe.com> (30.08.08) which features images from his picture books.
- 9 Fergusson, 1949 (note 1) 9.
- 10 Fergusson, 1949 (note 1) 9.
- 11 Senter, 1981 (note 4) 670.
- 12 Fergusson, 1949 (note 1) 10.

- 13 Mary Benedetta (ed.), László Moholy-Nagy (photographs), *The Street Markets of London*, London: John Miles 1936, reprint: London: Benjamin Blom 1972, viii.
- 14 Fergusson, 1949 (note 1) 9.
- 15 Those who mistook Moholy for a German might have been even more startled had they realized he was Jewish (his birth name was Weisz), especially considering that English conservative and Tory institutions such as Oxford and Eton were not particularly welcoming toward Jews.
- 16 Quote from Moholy's unpublished English notebook, cited in Senter, 1981 (note 4) 671.
- 17 Fergusson, 1949 (note 1) 10.
- 18 Moholy's daughter Hattula remembered seeing her father compose pictures in this period entirely within the view-finder so as to obviate any subsequent cropping. Senter, 1981 (note 4) note 76, 670.
- 19 Fergusson, 1949 (note 1) 10.
- 20 Brimming with topographical and historical information, *An Oxford University Chest* is very like the books Betjeman's would produce in his famous *Shell Guide* series, published by the Architectural Press beginning in June, 1934.
- 21 The acknowledgements (xiii) reveal that most are taken from James Ingram's *Memorials of Oxford* [illustrated by John Le Keux], Oxford: John Henry Parker 1837. Others are by minor nineteenth-century illustrators.
- 22 Betjeman, 1938 (note2) 95. Interestingly, although he attended Oxford for three years (1925–1928), Betjeman was sent down and did not graduate.
- 23 Betjeman, 1938 (note2) 155.
- 24 Betjeman, 1938 (note2) 155.
- 25 Betjeman, 1938 (note2) 157.
- 26 Benedetta, 1936 (note 13) 'Foreword', vii-viii.
- 27 Benedetta, 1936 (note 13) vii.
- 28 Senter, 1981 (note 4) 669.
- 29 Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography*, Boston: McGraw-Hill 1999, 306.
- 30 Roth (entry by David Levi Strauss), 2001 (note 7) 90.
- 31 To view some of the more than nine hundred photos Spender made of 'Worktown', Bolton, visit <http://spender.boltonmuseums.org.uk/index.html>. On Mass Observation see Nick Hubble, *Mass-Observation and Everyday Life*, Houndmills-Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2006.
- 32 Despite Moholy's sentiments about the need to capture a realistic view of the working class, he veers close to condescension when he describes "the characteristic features of the [street market] traders, their happy-go-lucky behaviour, their elementary actor's skill, their impetuosity..." Benedetta, 1936 (note 13) viii.

Matthew S. Witkovsky

20 Circa 1930: Art History and the New Photography

“Can’t you see, my dear Roh, that all this writing about art irritates rather than advances it. ... The few who matter ... will go their way, thank God, just as well without us. God knows we cannot change the path of their art and certainly not of art in general.”
*Hans Baeker to Franz Roh, 30 December 1925*¹

Franz Roh, a protégé of the Renaissance historian Heinrich Wölfflin, received the letter quoted above in response to his book *Post-Expressionism (Nachexpressionismus)*, a survey of trends in contemporary German painting that included a chapter on photography. Isolated articles notwithstanding, it was highly uncommon in 1925 for someone with a doctoral degree to write a scholarly treatise on art of his own time. Baeker, a former classmate, had earlier fretted to Roh that to write on contemporary art meant to abandon scientific inquiry for mere “art news reporting.”² The appearance of *Post-Expressionism*, following Roh’s debut publication (and dissertation) on Dutch painting, confirmed Baeker’s worst fear: that scholars might breach the temporal and critical distance separating art from its evaluation as history.

In fact, Roh would become one of a group of trained art historians in central Europe who did that and far more for photography. These advocates and enthusiasts, commenting simultaneously on new work in their day and on photography’s nineteenth-century beginnings, and often experimenting with photographic images themselves, contributed to the rapid establishment of photography as a branch of art historical inquiry. Taken collectively, their investigations established the parameters for photography’s consideration as a *medium* – a word brought suddenly into usage in this time, and which has stayed ever since, with all its confusions, as the material basis for claims of unity in this demonstrably disparate field.³

The books, exhibitions, articles, and lectures that proliferated in central Europe around 1930 – those writings and ideas Martin Gasser identified in a pivotal essay as the first “histories of photographs as images” – developed from the simple yet remarkable premise that all images

fig. 1 Paul Citroen, *Metropolis (Großstadt)*, 1923.
Photomontage (printed matter), 76.1 x 58.4 cm.
Collection of Prentenkabinet, University Library, Leiden.





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involving a photographic component belong in a grand, unbroken aesthetic history.⁴ This manoeuvre, essentially the creation of an art history for all photography, contained a predictable bias toward fine art (whether academic or avant-garde) although accusations on this point can be overstated. Roh, for example, shared his mentor Wölfflin's preference for anonymous makers, and held the "genius" of photography to reside in "general lay productivity" (*allgemeine Laienproduktivität*), while his closest school chums, Hans Finsler and Siegfried Giedion – one a career photographer, the other a historian enamored of camera work – likened photography to engineering as disciplines free of outmoded expressivity or "personal style."⁵

Charges of elitism are in any case not as interesting to pursue as a critical review of the implications involved in claiming an encyclopedic coherence to photography's manifold forms and uses, with work of circa 1930 as the model for such claims. The first, most obvious implication is that modernism becomes the privileged moment in this unification of photography's many pasts and presents – without, however, disowning or discrediting the past. To observe this much is already to suggest an important divergence with arguments for modernist painting, whose advocates by and large wished to jettison past conventions – particularly those of the

bourgeois 1800s – and certainly did not place them on a pedestal. The issue, however, may be less a split between discourses in photography and fine art than a convergence between photography and central European intellectual traditions (fig. 1). The modernism in question here is anchored in interwar central Europe: a place and period in which reformist innovators paradoxically sought great legitimation in the past. It is within this environment that, indisputably, nearly all the first image-oriented writing on photography was created.⁶

The second implication of this premise of encyclopedism is an equivalence posited between the practice of photography and its history as art, with both understood to be modernist enterprises *when properly performed*. Vanguard photography seems in this reading to tend inherently toward the encyclopedic and the interpretative. To take the two most influential strains in this period: for those such as Roh who admired above all László Moholy-Nagy and the New Vision (fig. 2), the creation of composite or otherwise evidently manufactured images was likened to sorting through repositories – of objects or, in the case of photomontages, of ready-made images. This activity of building or sifting through things constituted, we will see, a form of historical commentary.⁷ For those such as Heinrich Schwarz, Carl-Georg Heise, or Helmut Th. Bossert, who were enamored of Albert Renger-Patzsch and the New Objectivity (fig. 3),

photographs seemed to “bear witness” to culture in its artifacts, as did the historian. They proffered knowledge in a form that could illuminate the core character of a time, and therefore establish the meaning of an epoch. In either instance, the success of vanguard projects conferred on photography a capacity for analytical omniscience contained, apparently, in the very apparatus or operations of recording.

It was a self-serving investment by central European art historians in photography, then, that led them to champion modernist work of their day; the “new photography” was understood to be art history by other means. Early claims for photography as a medium were based on this equation, as are the most influential theories of photography of subsequent decades, in which “medium” has been replaced by subtler ontological terms such as *memento mori*, *punctum*, or index. To comprehend that intellectual legacy, it is good to revisit its historical origins, and to understand that the first historians of photography as art built up an entire field, its past and present, as a slide lecture idealizing their own profession.

The first acknowledged art historical monograph on a photographic subject was Heinrich Schwarz’s 1930 study of Scottish portrait painter and photographer David Octavius Hill. Based upon field research in Scotland, and enriched by plates reproduced exclusively from the originals as well as commentary on those portrayed, the book was a pioneering scholarly effort.⁸ Its author held a doctoral degree in art history from the University of Vienna, and a curatorial



fig. 2 László Moholy-Nagy, *Photogram with Eiffel Tower* (*Fotogramm mit Eiffelturm*), 1925–1929. Gelatin silver print, 29.7 x 23.5 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek.

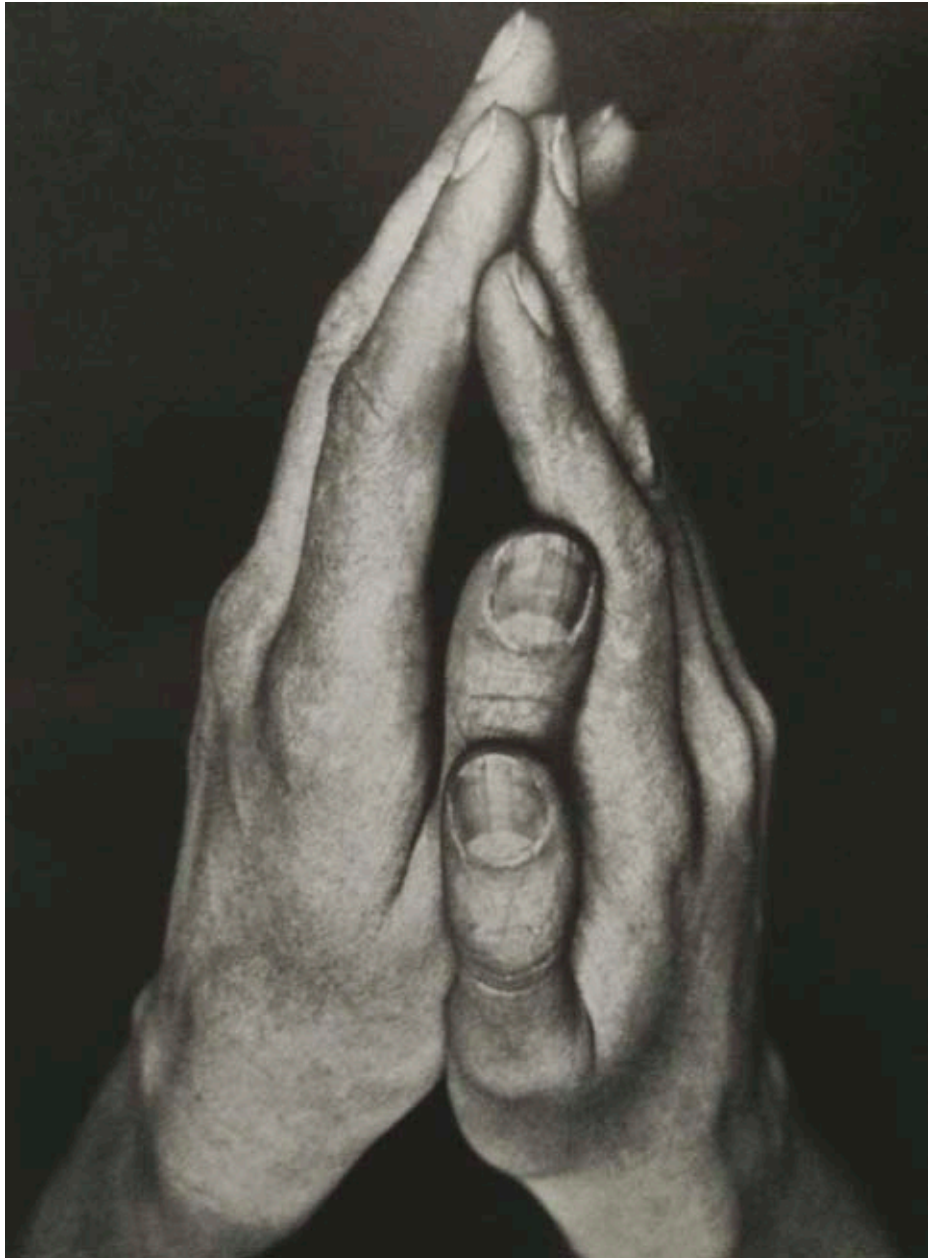
fig. 3 Albert Renger-Patzsch, *Still Life with Tools* (*Geräte-stilleben*), before 1929. Gelatin silver print, 27.9 x 38.3 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek.

position at the city's Belvedere Castle galleries. In 1928, Schwarz had organized Austria's first post-imperial showing of historical photographs, including a group of work by Hill and his unjustly neglected partner, Robert Adamson, obtained on loan from Hamburg. He followed this effort with a reprisal in Vienna of the landmark German exhibition *Film und Foto*, which surveyed the past and immediate present of photography from a decidedly Bauhaus perspective. Schwarz thus had a foot each in the originary and the contemporary worlds, a deciding factor in his historical approach.

Schwarz's positivist, progressivist convictions are well known, the more so as they typify writing on photography in his day. In his view, photographic technology is at its heart realist and eminently suited to an age of reason, science, and the belief in progress.⁹ The many and independent efforts of discovery in the early nineteenth century "bear witness that the time was ripe; and they refer the individual act of invention back to some motive power greater than the personal, to an impulse that was strictly determined by historical forces". By this Schwarz meant a bourgeois social order based on a desire for "pictorial witness", in which all "novel aspects" must be "expressed plastically in some new, unique, and especially appropriate medium."¹⁰ Also in common with writers circa 1930 on photography's history as art, Schwarz divided the century preceding his moment into three phases, one each of ascendancy, decline, and rebirth. The "generation of 1840–1870", as everyone called it, "surrendered itself unconditionally to the artistic mission of photography, that most radical tool at the disposal of realism". Their successors of 1870–1900 betrayed that artistic mission precisely by turning their backs on realism, as did their followers. "Not until the emergence in our own immediate past of our present artistic impulses", Schwarz concludes, was it again recognized that art and photography – like art and science – might be united in a common purpose. "Today", he writes, "it is the artists who emphatically insist, as they did during the period of its invention, that photography is a perfect medium [that word again] for the expression of their artistic ideal: an exact record of reality, an essential reproduction of nature ..."¹¹

Photography's "destiny" thus lies in answering a civilizational call for realism. Individual generations (the pictorialists, for example) might deviate from that teleology; one would not be wrong, I think, to connect such a judgment upon photography with the sense of betrayal liberals around 1930 felt toward the generation of their fathers, who had engineered what they saw as the colossal leap backward of World War I.¹² This destiny must nevertheless ultimately be fulfilled. There is no historical relativism here, only ineluctable evolution. But the evolution ended in revolutionaries. Schwarz mentions in conclusion the Surrealists, about whom he clearly doesn't know much, but nevertheless takes to be allies in his cause; he also footnotes the work of Renger-Patzsch, a signal reference. At the same time, revolution involves a putative return to origins. Why, in a book on the 1840s did Heinrich Schwarz praise art of his own day, and vanguard art at that? Why did he find vanguard art praiseworthy for going back to past beginnings?

fig. 4 Albert Renger-Patzsch, untitled plate from *The World is Beautiful (Die Welt ist schön)*. Photolithograph, 29 x 21.7 cm. National Gallery of Art Library, Washington.



In his picture book on early photography, published nearly to the week with Schwarz's study, folk art historian Helmut Th. Bossert (also a PhD in art history) likewise writes of "honest workers" and their followers, 1840–1870 (the period covered in his book); a trough of degenerate imitators and commercial speculators, after 1870; and the *rinascita* of recent years. Bossert's concluding lines contain a nearly explicit commitment to one modernist approach in particular:

The present time is returning to the beginnings, and recognizes exemplary achievements there, in which, on the basis of the most thorough technical abilities and artistic taste a picture arises that meets the demand for strictest objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*), without killing the spirit within it.

Such qualities, and particularly the adjective *sachlich*, point strongly in 1930 to Albert Renger-Patzsch, at the time perhaps the most widely respected figure in central Europe among lovers of fine photography. Bossert (and Schwarz, who uses nearly identical language) were not alone among art historians in elevating Renger to the status of a model artist-photographer. Schwarz's close associate, Carl Georg Heise, curator of the Hanseatic city museum of Lübeck, had discovered his passion for contemporary photography as art precisely through a visit to a Renger-Patzsch exhibition in Hannover, in early fall 1927. Within weeks he had purchased a group of Renger's prints, opened his own exhibition of Renger's work in his museum, begun a lecture and essay on the photographer, and initiated negotiations that landed Renger a terrific contract to photograph views of Lübeck and its monuments – itself the subject of an exhibition the following year.¹³

Heise also made Renger-Patzsch into a cornerstone of what he called the "Collection of Exemplary Photography" at his museum. He bought 145 of the photographer's Lübeck pictures, and eventually some 75 other works by him as well. This remarkable collection, shaped mainly by Renger's preferences, came to cover contemporary art school projects, photojournalism, portraiture, and, once again, as a historical baseline, a large group of photographs by Hill and Adamson – whose work Heise acquired in conversation with Schwarz.

One might explain Renger-Patzsch's success in terms of its social conservatism. Disciplined, sober, and shot through with an undercurrent of piety, his photographs eminently fulfilled Bossert's or Schwarz's calls for a spiritually laden materiality. Renger even thematized the requirement: he photographed chimneys and trees as if they were cathedral steeples, and then also photographed the cathedrals; he photographed hands at work as if they were raised in prayer, and then photographed hands at prayer (fig. 4). And he did this all with the stress on modesty and hard work that would endear him to a central European audience.

Joining such expectations is a deep-seated if less obvious cultural prejudice, one that connects interest in Renger to the terrific passion circa 1930 for older photography, and for a history of photography as art: his encyclopedic reach, which delights those who seek omniscience through pictures. This ability is what led Heise to describe the photographer's work, in a letter

asking the eminent literary critic Kurt Tucholsky for help in publishing *The World Is Beautiful*, the great picture book of Christmas 1928 that would catapult Renger-Patzsch to fame, as “amazing, wonderful new possibilities for photographic pictorial art”. It is the sense that Renger represented photography in all its singular and exceptional possibilities. Which in turn implies that photography had such possibilities, that across its infinite manifestations it was definable, that it had an essence. Listen to Heise describing for Tucholsky Renger’s qualifications:

he photographs in fact not only hands, machines, plants, and animals ... but in the last analysis everything ... from old headstones and herring nets to roof gutters and cathedral spires and everything that lies in between.¹⁴

Photography historian Olivier Lugon has explained such claims as a key paradigm shift in advocacy, in which image profusion, long seen as the bane of photography’s artistic aspirations, suddenly became theorized as the very reason to view photography in artistic terms: “Art now aimed at the collective transformation of vision, meaning that the more fields in which photography could open our eyes, the more legitimate its role as the art of the future.”¹⁵

Lugon cites a 1930 review of recent publications in the high-brow amateur monthly *Das Deutsche Lichtbild*, which seems a direct elaboration of Heise’s claims:

The whole world is revealed in these images: snow blanketing a landscape, jets of flame shooting from smokestacks high as towers, a plane awaiting takeoff, a young girl smiling at someone ... a young vine showing its tendrils, church bells, macaroni curls, piles of boards forming a fantastic image; the steel armature of a radio tower rising elegantly skyward, a smiling landscape on the Danube, slender trees casting their shadow in the Thuringian forest, a carp showing its open mouth, ... a boat resting gently at shore ... One hundred subjects caught from life itself, from an old man’s peaceable head to artful light reflections cast by an invisible lamp.¹⁶

The reviewer, it turns out, is not commenting on Renger-Patzsch’s *The World is Beautiful*, but instead on August Sander’s *The Face of Our Time* (*Antlitz der Zeit*) and *foto-augel/photo-eye*, the picture anthology edited by Roh and designed by Jan Tschichold – two books rather different in content and method from the one by Renger. In fact, as observers of the period know, Renger-Patzsch detested *photo-eye* in particular and the experimental Bauhaus world for which it stood.

Roh’s book was, in form and content, demonstrably distant from *The World is Beautiful*. Notwithstanding the idyllic tenor of the review just quoted, the world it catalogues is raucous, fragmented, politically and sexually charged, and bloody with violence toward its end. It is rife with the earlier Dada works of Max Ernst, George Grosz, and John Heartfield, that Walter Benjamin in his *Artwork* essay would claim were fired from a gun. The most exuberant images,

such as a plate from the New York Times picture service, of a diver about to enter the water, betray an off-kilter, nervous energy, as if a happy landing might skew into a neck-breaking accident (fig. 5).

Roh came to photography not through folk art, as Bossert, or early lithography, the subject of Schwarz's doctoral thesis, but through contemporary painting. In the chapter of *Post-Expressionism* on photography, mentioned earlier, Roh wrote – like all advocates – of the artistic importance of selection and framing, decisive mental operations that precede any manual activity. Unlike Schwarz, however, Roh found the ultimate expression of mental clarity not in a clean and unretouched photographic print, but in photomontage. Following on what he called “photographic pieces of reality” in Expressionism and Futurism, a work such as Paul Citroen's *Metropolis* (fig. 1) was for Roh exemplary in its marriage of contradictions: fantasy and tenderness, tremendous artistic license coupled to pure imitations of the real world. Those contradictions in no way undermined aesthetic and interpretative coherence: “Artistic work involves here the sure and patient collecting of such decisive fragments, each tied to the others, that it is completed only when they are meaningfully pieced together.”¹⁷ The steady assembly of piecemeal visual information into a unified aesthetic interpretation of reality – such a procedure seems remarkably analogous to that of the art historian.

Roh made clear in *photo-eye* his differences with Renger-Patzsch: “our book does not only mean to say ‘the world is beautiful’, but also: the world is exciting, cruel and weird.”¹⁸ His many-hued panorama was culled largely from exhibits at the 1929 *Film und Foto*, masterminded by Roh's great mentor in things photographic, Moholy-Nagy (and indirectly by Roh's former classmate Giedion, with whom Moholy-Nagy had become quite friendly).¹⁹ Renger, meanwhile, had written to Heise of bitter disappointment when he visited the show at its inaugural venue: “I find the exhibition ... to put it bluntly, mediocre and *unsachlich*.” He claimed that Moholy-Nagy had simply promoted himself and the Bauhaus, squeezing to the side those who, like Renger, “don't fit in with that flashy stuff”, and eliminating many others altogether (the jury, it is worth remembering, included no photographers, but rather two designers and, once again, an art historian). The exhibition organizer, Gustav Stotz, “wondered why I had sent him so little”, Renger reported to Heise with delicious irony, “and then he said that I must have many more interesting prints at home. Upon this I told him that I thought the exhibition entirely too interesting, but he didn't get it.”²⁰

Much has been made of this split between Renger and Moholy or Roh, by photo historians attentive to period feuds, and, quite rightly, to formal differences. Bridging that gap in appearances, however, is a shared sense that the camera can capture the world. If anything, Moholy and Roh simply trump Renger at his game, as Roh himself indicated: they show more of the world, and they show it in more ways. Speaking to this point, Lugon cites one fan of the New Vision who claimed in 1928: “There are infinitely more images than things. A single object offers innumerable views from above and below, partial or complete. This is where the philosophy of photography begins.”²¹ Moholy-Nagy is famously said to have argued that any

print could provide new views simply by turning it on its side or upside down. Lastly, as Lugon notes, there was the constellation of outlets available through potentially unlimited reproduction in print. Small wonder, then, that Renger, for all his differences, had been asked to participate in *Fifo*, or that his work appears (if slightly) in Roh's *photo-eye*. His "world" has simply been swallowed by a galaxy.

What does this argument of profusion and universality have to do with history lessons? It is this: history is the final, the grandest dimension of the encyclopedism of this age. It is the ultimate leap into infinitude, adding to the possibilities of subject, pose, angle, print orientation, and context of presentation or reproduction the further universe of endless instants in time. Those instants stretch, meanwhile, into a nearly horizonless distance. In the most egregious instance, Bauhaus photographer and teacher Lucia Moholy – like Schwarz a native of Prague, who had studied art history at university there before moving abroad – claimed in 1939 that a "desire for photography [dates] from the earliest days of mankind". To follow her own arguments, her book, titled *A Hundred Years of Photography*, is off by more than one order of magnitude, as Moholy adduces examples of this "desire" from China in the second century B.C. to Assyria, Egypt, and Pompeii. When she finally lands her time machine in the era of photography's official invention, it is to declare, parroting the phrase by Schwarz, that "the time was ripe".²²

Photography, strategically argued as a unified and continuously developing field (pictorialist deviants notwithstanding), is endowed through such sweeping arguments with a global prehistory and an unbroken historical past, as well as a limitless present and future. Beyond questions of subject matter, of print technique, mode of distribution or context of reception; over and above the antagonisms of commercial professionals versus artistic amateurs, of private snapshooters or domestic album makers versus the trained elite, or even of New Objectivists versus New Visionaries; containing and conjoining all these disparate directions is photography's unifying identity as a singular "medium" – and that identity is capped, crowned, by the forces of history.

I return in conclusion to Heinrich Schwarz's very first published writing on photography. It was written in spring 1929, one season after Schwarz's Belvedere show on early photography, and precisely coincident with the inauguration of *Film und Foto* in Stuttgart. This essay is not, however, on photographs of the 1840s, nor on Bauhaus experiments. It is a review of *The World is Beautiful*:

I don't know what effect this book has on professional or amateur photographers; I don't know whether, for example, a professional or amateur photographer has decided after seeing this book to give up his activities entirely until he is able to settle the



fig. 5 New York Times Picture Service, *Diver*, in Franz Roh (ed.), *foto-auge/photo-eye*, 1930. Photolithograph. National Gallery of Art Library, Washington.

shock it has caused [and make of it] a profound, lasting experience. Or perhaps this book would mean more to the non-photographer, perhaps the beauty of its pictures would more quickly and convincingly captivate someone not looking through the hood of the specialist, but who feels and enjoys naively, without preconditions?²³

Boom – the sectarianism of photography’s rival métiers is dispatched with that salvo. Yet the model viewer of these pictures is not so uninstructed as the final sentence implies. Schwarz quickly explains which “non-photographer” he has in mind, and what that person’s recognition is worth:

Writers realized the creative deeds and revolutionary art of a Manet, Van Gogh, Cézanne, or Marée earlier and more clearly, they fought for them and engaged on their behalf, while painters followed the crowds and jeered the great ones uncomprehendingly. Why should this drama not repeat itself in photography; it appears that it must be repeated, as if by law, always and everywhere.²⁴

To state it plainly: Renger-Patzsch is the Manet, or perhaps the Hans Marée, of his time, but the art historian takes at least as great a risk in supporting him. In the case of photography, the prejudice would seem to be not just against an individual but against an entire medium. Only through recourse to art history, apparently, can that prejudice be corrected; art history makes the medium as such, and that undertaking is to be understood as a vanguard activity. The practicing photographic avant-garde, meanwhile, assumes the mantle of collecting, interpretation, and period awareness formerly worn by the art historian. It is a curious state of affairs, and one whose consequences and blind spots still await fuller review.

1 Franz Roh Papers, Getty Research Institute, collection number 850120, box 1, folder 2.

2 H. Baeker to F. Roh, 21 June 1925, Franz Roh Papers.

3 In her response to the 2005 roundtable anthologized as *Photography Theory*, ed. James Elkins, Routledge, 2006, Anne McCauley remarks on the many imprecisions in historical and contemporary discussions of what the term “photography” designates, and what constitutes it as a medium (“Do We Know What We Are Talking About?”, 409–419).

4 Martin Gasser, ‘Histories of Photography 1839–1939’, *History of Photography*, 16/1 (Spring 1992), 50–60.

I follow Gasser here in separating attention to images from attention to technology, although the best commentators of the period, such as Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, considered the meaning of images only in light of period consciousness and operations of capital in the industrial era.

5 Roh made this point in his introduction to *photo-eye* (1930), discussed below; in English as ‘Mechanism and expression: the essence and value of photography’, in David Mellor (ed.), *Germany: The New Photography 1927–1933*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978, 29–34. That Roh’s idealization of “lay” material left only incidental marks on his actual art historical preferences may be inferred from the follow-up publications to *photo-eye*, two books in an unrealized series called *Fototek*. A 1931 review relays the editor’s stated wish to address “Police Photos, Photomontage, Kitsch Photos, Sport Photos, Erotic and Sexual Photos” – Oswald Blakeston, ‘Recapitulation. A review of Franz Roh’s Fototek series’, *Close Up*, reprinted in Mellor, 1978, (note 5) 43.

Yet the two books Roh did publish in the series were monographs on artist-photographers, Aenne Biermann and László Moholy-Nagy. Similar challenges beset the thinking of Finsler and Giedion, and indeed of Wölfflin

- himself, despite his stated admiration for “nameless art history”. My thanks here to Olivier Lugon for his paper, “‘Schooling the New Vision’: László Moholy-Nagy, Sigfried Giedion, and the ‘Film und Foto’ exhibition,” delivered at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in June 2007.
- 6 Of the thirteen studies that Gasser, 1992 (note 4) classes as histories of the photograph as image, ten were authored by natives of central Europe. One might add to his list essays by Karel Teige, such as ‘On Photomontage’ (O fotomontáži, 1932) and ‘Tasks of Modern Photography’ (Úkoly moderní fotografie, 1931) – the latter piece contains a lengthy historical preamble culled from French and German sources. In 1947, Teige, who had begun his career as a critic and practicing artist in 1920 by abandoning university studies in art history, wrote the first art historical study of Czech photography, ‘Paths of Czechoslovak Photography’ (Cesty čsl. fotografie). Czech photographer Jaromír Funke also sketched an art history of photography in several essays, beginning with rudimentary remarks in a 1927 article on Man Ray, and continuing in 1936 with the pendant essays ‘Old Photography’ (O staré fotografii) and ‘Contemporary Directions in Photography’ (Současné směry ve fotografii). See my ‘Jaromír Funke’s Abstract Photo series of 1927–1929: History in the Making’, *History of Photography* 29/3 (Autumn 2005), 228–239.
 - 7 Moholy himself, as Lugon has pointed out (‘Schooling the New Vision’, see note 5) came to this understanding by the time of the *Fifo* exhibition, under the influence of Giedion and, perhaps, Roh as well.
 - 8 The book, justly celebrated today as a pathbreaking step, has received its fullest historiographic treatment by Bodo von Dewitz, ‘In einsamer Höhe’, in B. von Dewitz and Karin Schuller-Procopovici (eds.), *David Octavius Hill & Robert Adamson. Von den Anfängen der künstlerischen Photographie im 19. Jahrhundert*, Cologne: Museum Ludwig / Agfa Photo-Historama 2000, 45–52; see also comments by Wagner in Schwarz, *Techniken des Sehens* (note 10).
 - 9 Timm Starl rightly characterizes such assumptions as survivals from the mid-nineteenth century that held back the history of photography relative to writing on the fine arts as well as scholarship in other humanities disciplines; see his ‘Die Geschichte der Geschichte’, introduction to the special issue of *Fotogeschichte* 63 (1997), 2.
 - 10 Heinrich Schwarz, *David Octavius Hill – Master of Photography*, New York: Viking Press, 1931, 3–4 (emphasis mine). Anselm Wagner states that the book appeared in November 1930, see H. Schwarz, A. Wagner (ed.), *Techniken des Sehens – vor und nach der Fotografie. Ausgewählte Schriften 1929–1966*, Salzburg: Edition Fotohof 2006, 20.
 - 11 Heinrich Schwarz, 1931 (note 10) 9.
 - 12 A similar judgment upon the generation that matured in 1870 emanates from Walter Benjamin’s ‘Short History of Photography’ (1931) and the much earlier essays by Josef Čapek, particularly his ‘Photographs of Our Fathers’, first published in October 1918, just weeks before the Armistice. To the “shapeliness, *grandezza*, seriousness and clarity” of a portrait photograph from before 1870, Čapek opposed in this newspaper feuilleton the “fogginess, emptiness ...” and overall “boring”, “disharmonic”, “agitated” and “dissipated” tone of one made in the 1880s. The earlier picture, he observed, reflected a society that “respected the person”, whereas in the “newer age” Czechs (and perhaps all Europeans) “looked at life in a small way”. J. Čapek, ‘Fotografie našich otců’ in: *Nejskromnější umění (The Most Humble Art)*, Prague: Dauphin, 1997, 41.
 - 13 See *Die neue Sicht der Dinge. Carl Georg Heises Lübecker Fotosammlung aus den 20er Jahren*, exh. cat., Hamburger Kunsthalle 1995.
 - 14 Carl Georg Heise to Kurt Tucholsky, 3 May 1928. Getty Research Institute, Albert Renger-Patzsch papers, 861187, box 1, folder 3.
 - 15 Olivier Lugon, “‘Photo-Inflation’: Image Profusion in German Photography, 1925–1945,” in: *History of Photography*, 32/3 (Autumn 2008), 220.
 - 16 Olivier Lugon, 2008 (note 15) 220–221, citing Eugen Szatmari, ‘Neues Sehen in neuen Büchern’ (New Vision in New Books), *Berliner Tageblatt*, 16 January 1930.
 - 17 Franz Roh, *Nachexpressionismus; Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei*, Leipzig: Klinckschardt und Biermann 1925, 46.
 - 18 Franz Roh, ‘mechanism and expression’, cited in Mellor, 1978 (note 5) 31.
 - 19 See on this point Lugon, 2007 (note 5). Lugon attributes the insistence upon a history of photography specifically to Giedion, who had formulated the phrase *Schulung der neuen Optik*, in a proposal for the *Fifo* display that morphed into Moholy’s celebrated “Room One.”
 - 20 Albert Renger-Patzsch to Carl Georg Heise, 8 June 1929; Albert Renger-Patzsch papers, Getty Research Institute.
 - 21 Olivier Lugon, 2008 (note 15), citing Hugo Sieker, ‘Lob der Photographie’ (Praise for Photography), probably 1928 or 1929.
 - 22 Lucia Moholy, *A Hundred Years of Photography*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1939, 22–23.
 - 23 Heinrich Schwarz, ‘Die Welt ist schön’ (1929), reprinted in: H. Schwarz 2006 (note 10), 28.
 - 24 Heinrich Schwarz, 2006 (note 10) 28.

Vladimir Birgus

2I Eugen Wiškovský and Czech Avant-Garde Photography

Although works by Czech avant-garde photographer Eugen Wiškovský¹ are now part of collections in such important institutions as the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, or J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, these holdings, with the exception of larger sets of prints he made himself, which are deposited in the Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, and the Moravian Gallery, Brno, each comprise only several photographs. One reason is that Wiškovský never exhibited much and he therefore had little reason to make exhibition-format prints. Consequently, vintage prints of his photographs are now exceptionally rare and there are far fewer of them in collections, public and private, than there are of works by František Drtikol, Josef Sudek, and Jaromír Funke. That is also one of the reasons his work – like that, for instance, of Jaroslav Rössler, another important Czech avant-garde photographer – has yet to be fully appreciated internationally.

Wiškovský was born in a middle-class family in Dvůr Králové nad Labem, Bohemia, on 20 September 1888. He had three brothers and all of them received university educations. In 1906 Eugen began to study French, German, and psychology at the Czech part of Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague and spent the winter semester 1909–1910 on a scholarship at the University of Geneva. After graduating, he spent many years teaching at various secondary schools until 1937, except during the First World War, when he fought as a soldier in the Austro-Hungarian army in Italy and Russia and was wounded twice. In April 1917 he married Anna Streitová. In 1918 their daughter Eva (d. 1997) was born, followed, a year later, by their second daughter Hana (d. 1985).

Eugen Wiškovský was an educated man of many talents and interests. He devoted himself to the reform of teaching foreign languages at the secondary-school level, was a co-author of a Czech-German dictionary, worked with the Alliance Française, was a member of the Czech Psychological Society, and translated Symbolist works by Maeterlinck as well as the writings of Freud and Jung. He was also profoundly interested in belles-lettres and the fine arts, played tennis competitively, and devoted time to swimming, skating, athletics, and camping.

Wiškovský inherited his interest in photography from his father. While still a little boy, he used his father's 13 x 18 cm camera to take various family photos. At the age of fourteen or fifteen he got a more flexible camera, for 9 x 12 cm plates, but photography gradually gave way to other hobbies. He returned to it for a while toward the end of the First World War, making portraits of his wife and first daughter. He did not really begin to treat photography seriously, however, till the end of the 1920s, when in Kolín he began to make friends with a former student – Jaromír Funke (1896–1945). At that time Funke was already a leading Czech avant-garde photographer. Many years later, in October 1962, Wiškovský, in a letter to Anna Fárová, a historian of photography, recalled his work with Funke:

Not that he explained anything theoretical to me – that wasn't his way. He didn't like to express himself verbally about his work. That was because of shyness stemming from a slight speech defect, and also because he didn't want to expand on the matter when I was in the midst of experimenting. We used to go out into the field together, to the building site of a power plant, to places nearby, to the tower of the Business School – and we photographed the 'New Objectivity' – stocks of concrete rings, rails, Mannesmann line pipes, and so forth. Funke soon gave that up, because he saw that it was what I was specializing in, and he was also doing it more realistically than me. His greatest help to me was that I could print the good negatives in his darkroom (in the bathroom), since I didn't have my own at the time. ²

Wiškovský was also acquainted with another famous photographer from Kolín, Funke's contemporary, Josef Sudek (1896–1976). But whereas he had much in common with Funke intellectually and socially, Sudek's intentionally accentuating his being one of the common people, particularly at first, was a certain barrier. ³

Even in his early works, in the late 1920s and early '30s, Wiškovský showed himself to be an original artist. In May 1930 he showed works in the *New Czech Photography* exhibition held



fig. 1 Eugen Wiskovsky, *Lunar Landscape (Collars)*, 1929. Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague.

in the gallery of the Aventinum publishing house, Prague. On the model of the acclaimed 1929 Stuttgart exhibition, *Film und Foto*, the Prague exhibition was organized by the young photographer and film-maker Alexandr Hackenschmied and his friends. Wiškovský's photos at this first group exhibition of Czech avant-garde photographers in Prague were shown next to works by Funke, Rössler, Jiří Lehovec, Ladislav Emil Berka, and Sudek, as well as a number

of scientific photographs. A year later he exhibited in a similar show at the same venue and in 1933 had works in the "International Exhibition of Social-documentary Photography" in Prague, which was organized by the *Film-foto* (Cinema and Photography) Group of the *Levá fronta* (Left Front). Three years later, five of his photographs were accepted for the *International Exhibition of Photography* in the Mánes Gallery, Prague, where they appeared next to works by Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy, Hans Bellmer, Raoul Hausmann, Alexander Rodchenko, and other leading avant-garde photographers from around the world.⁴ Although his works were included in important avant-garde photography exhibitions, Wiškovský himself never joined any avant-garde group. One reason for this was his introversion.

Wiškovský soon shared both Funke's enthusiasm for the "New Photography," which applied the principles of Constructivism, Functionalism, and New Objectivity, and his aversion to the survivals of Impressionist and Art Nouveau pictorialism, which imitated painting and graphic art and used oil prints, bromoil prints, carbon prints, and other pigment processes while suppressing the many features specific to photography. In his first important article on art photography, published in *Foto* in 1929, Wiškovský, undoubtedly under the influence of Funke's writing on theoretical aspects of photography, clearly rejected painterly efforts, stressing instead features specific to photography.⁵ In accordance with the views of the Russian Constructivists and the German Functionalists, Wiškovský emphasizes the search for new aesthetic values in apparently unphotogenic objects of modern technical civilization.

These works totally adhere to the principles of New Objectivity, a trend whose leading proponents, for instance Karl Blossfeldt, Albert Renger-Patzsch, Charles Sheeler, Paul Strand, and Edward Weston, had directed attention to the question of elementary forms and structures, the photographically most perfect, most effective expression of the essential features of the depicted objects, the discovery of aesthetic qualities in apparently unaesthetic objects, and, in the area of form, maximum sharpness and richness of the tone of the photographic image. In Czech photography of the 1920s, too, it already had several important proponents, particularly Funke, Sudek, Rössler, and Lausmann, who, in the next decade, were then joined by many others, including Josef Ehm, Vladimír Hipman, Jindřich Hatlák, Jaroslava Hatláková, Marie Rossmannová, Jindřich (Heinrich) Koch, Josef Voříšek, Emil Vepřek, and Karel Kašpařík.⁶

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Wiákovský could directly follow on from Funke's photographs of parts of cog-wheels and metal barrels as well as the general enthusiasm that a number of avant-garde artists had for modern technical civilization. In his own apparently simple, but in fact carefully thought-out, compositionally refined, photographs of line pipes, bundles of iron rods, bolts, insulators, sifters, or close-ups of turbines, light bulbs, and mortars he found artistically cogent forms. He presented ordinary, often-seen objects, which he could easily find at home or at the building-site of the Kolín power plant, in novel ways, surprising the viewer and demonstrating to the viewer that his or her eye had become tired and dim. He ingeniously used large details, which take the depicted objects out of their usual spatial contexts and often also change perspective and scale. With the move from the color original to the black-and-white photograph, with cropping and masterful work with light, he freed the main motif from superfluities and thus let the most important lines and tones stand out. He often used multiplication and the rhythmic repetition of geometric forms or whole objects, as is evident, for example, in the photos of eggs, corrugated iron, ceramic pipes, or spindles with wool. With extraordinary invention, artistic feeling, and technical precision, he thus put into practice his conviction that "the less unusual the content, the more unusual the presentation has to be."⁷ Wiákovský's photographs in the style of New Objectivity are rigorously rational while being full of imagination. The objectivity of the perfect depiction of details of the surrounding world is blended with the subjectivity of the photographer's personal way of looking at things, his thinking, feeling, intellect, inner world.

Wiákovský's photographs from the New Objectivity period are few in number and often depict various views of the same object. Unlike Funke, Wiákovský often returned to individual motifs, photographing until he was completely satisfied with the results. According to his daughters and Josef Ehm, Wiákovský often spent hours setting up one shot, or would even leave home with his camera but end up not taking a single photograph.

Despite all the rationality and formal mastery he was often concerned with more than just the artistically unusual depiction of simple and often apparently unaesthetic objects and the solution to problems of the visual minimum or relations between the whole and its parts; he was also concerned with the photographic expression of objective relations as well as his own impression of them, and often, as well, the search for analogies in form and metaphorical meaning. More than once he managed to go beyond a terse optimal description of reality typical, for example, of many of the works of Albert Renger-Patzsch, Aenne Biermann, and other leading practitioners of New Objectivity, and to create photographs with a more symbolic effect, whose metaphorical quality has much in common with Edward Weston's photographs of seashells or artichokes. The objects in some of Wiákovský's photographs are depicted with the aim of stripping them of their identity. The analogies of form and metaphor do not, however, appear in all Wiákovský's photographs, yet where they do appear they often play an important role. This is most striking in *Lunar Landscape* (or *Collars*) from 1929 (fig. 1). The composition with stiff shirt collars was transformed by suppressing the scale and isolating repeating details, by inventive lighting using a bulb placed among the collars, and, in a later version of the

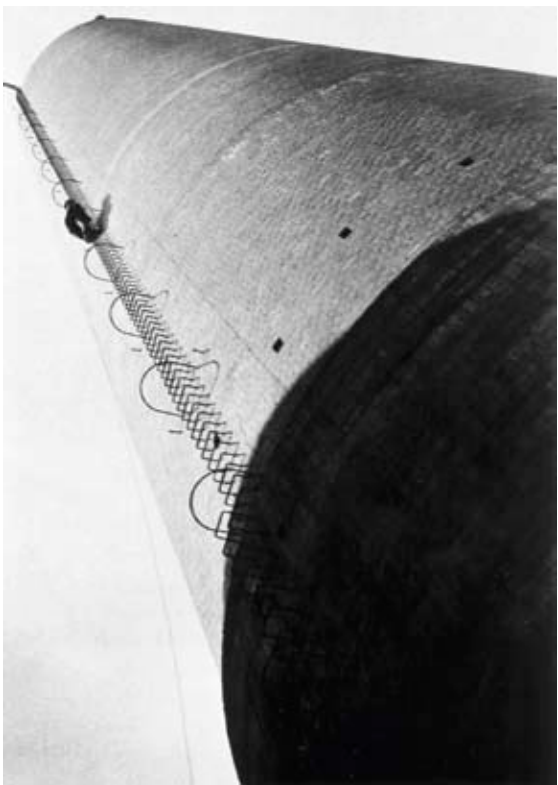


fig. 2 Eugen Wiskovsky, *Smokestack (Power Plant Kolín)*, 1932. Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague.

fig. 3 Jaromir Funke, *Power Plant Kolín*, from the series 'Neue Architektur', 1931/32. Collection Miloslava Rupesova, Prague.

photo, the addition of the silhouette of a coin placed in the background onto the photographic paper like a picture of the Earth, into an imaginative picture of the cratered surface of the Moon.

In the early 1930s Wiškovský often photographed the new ESSO power plant in Kolín. This modern Functionalist piece of architecture by Jaroslav Fragner provided him with a number of motifs for unusual photographs, which were often modeled on works by Rodchenko, El Lissitzky, and Moholy-Nagy, with striking low-angles or dynamic diagonal compositions. The building was also photographed several times by Sudek as well as by the Bauhaus graduate Jindřich (Heinrich) Koch. Photographs by Funke, who often accompanied him to the building-site of the power plant, also have much in common with Wiškovský's Constructivist photographs. Some of their diagonal shots of the power-plant smokestack are so similar that it is often difficult at first glance to determine which is by whom. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that Wiškovský tends to put more emphasis on geometrical qualities of the basic elements of the construction of the building, works more with details, and has even created the more original shot – namely, the photograph of the factory smokestack with its reflection in the surface of the river, composed in a rhomboid (fig. 2 and 3).

Wiškovský made also an exemplar photograph called *Functionalist Architecture*, of a new apartment building, and several photos with the motif of the swimming pool and the Barrandov Terraces restaurant. This photogenic spot on the edge of Prague was among the most popular subjects of Czech photographers in the interwar period. It has been photographed in various ways by Sudek, Růžička, Ehm, Lauschmann, Funke, Pikart, Julius Tutsch, and others.⁷ Whereas most of them, however, have depicted it with a high-angle shot of the semicircle created by the tables and umbrellas, and some, like Růžička and Lauschmann, even used a lyrical soft focus, Wiškovský stresses the contrast between the terrace and the swimming pool below it, in which he achieves a striking change of perspective and scale. No other photographer obtained from this milieu more radical shots capturing the very essence of modern architecture or even the modern age in general.

In 1937 Wiškovský and his family moved to Prague, where he taught at a secondary school in Ječná ulice and another for girls in Libeň. In Prague he continued to associate with Funke, who had been teaching photography at the State School of Graphic Art since September 1935. He also made friends with Funke's colleague Josef Ehm (1909–1989), another important photographer of technically precise works depicting architecture and sculpture, classic landscapes, portraits, and more experimental photos based on the principles of New Objectivity and responding to Surrealism. Ehm was able to help Wiškovský because he knew much more about technique than he did. He usually printed in the postcard format, and often Ehm had to print photos for some exhibition.⁸

Whereas in Kolín he mainly photographed industrial buildings, details of technical objects, and modern architecture, in Prague Wiškovský began to be concerned chiefly with landscape photography. He already had some experience in this area, for example, his masterfully composed photograph of the path through a field near Police and Mesuji, made as early as 1933, and the diagonally depicted high-angle shot of the River Soave with the Scout camp, made about a year after that. He later justified his interest in landscape photography in the article “Prod fotografujeme krajiny” (Why we photograph landscapes): “The land, the soil, the earth, attracts us precisely because of what is lasting in it as opposed to the fleeting and changing nature of everything else in our lives. For us, it is the greatest satisfaction and greatest consolation to find in it harmony with our inner selves. The land, like our inner selves, is similarly manifold, and has idyllic nooks for a blissful dreamer, just as a stormy sea and rocky cliffs have for the romantic misfit.”⁹ In the landscape photos Wiškovský was interested chiefly in elementary geometric forms, unusual surface textures, and phantasmagorical images. For his motifs he did not have to travel to foreign countries, usually finding them in familiar places. Mainly, it was in Hlubočepy, on the western edge of Prague, whose picturesque cliffs and valley (the Prokopské údolí) had attracted many other photographers as well. Wiškovský also photographed the monumental cliffs of Hlubočepy in romantic late-afternoon light, but more often depicted details of them stripped of their true dimensions, revealing natural sculptures, elementary geometric forms, and sometimes also metaphorically effective analogies of forms.

Wiškovský made his most original landscape photographs around the Šalamounka farm in the Prague district of Smíchov. There, he photographed in many variants a small section of land with a hillock and house: sometimes he was fascinated by the contoured little rows of mowed grass, other times by the geometric forms of haystacks or the menacing shadow of the neighboring hill, which made a ghostly symbolic image. The zenith of Wiškovský’s landscape work is the metaphorical photo of lodged wheat with the protruding roof of a farmhouse, suggesting a ship sinking in a stormy sea. This almost Surrealist meshing of reality and imaginary vision is intensified by the title *Disaster*, under which the photograph was later published (The original title was *Wheat*).

The late 1930s and early 1940s were the most important period of Wiškovský’s theoretical writing.¹⁰ This was owed mostly to Ehm and Funke. In October 1939 Ehm became the new Editor-in-Chief of *Fotografický obzor*, and invited Funke to join him. They gradually managed to turn this conservative monthly of the Association of Czech Amateur Photographic Societies into a modernly conceived specialist journal, increasing its print-run in a short time from 4,000 copies to almost four times that number. This was because Wiškovský had published in *Fotografický obzor* not only a number of his photographs, but also four of his original theoretical essays:



‘Tvar a motiv’ (Form and motif), ‘Dezorientace názorů na fotografii’ (A confusion of opinions about photography), ‘Zobrazení, projev, sdělení’ (Depiction, expression, communication), and ‘Oproštěním k projevu’ (Expression by way of simplification). Together with articles by Funke and Karel Teige they form the basis of modern Czech photography theory. Here, as in several other articles published in 1946–1948, Wiškovský first tried to deduce the principles of photographic composition from the process of perception on the basis of Gestalt psychology. He was concerned with questions about the point of photography, and sought to use his knowledge of information theory to construct a new theory of photography. Owing to their depth, originality, and precise formulation, these articles were unique in Czech photography theory, and were therefore not understood by most readers interested in photography.¹¹ It lasted decades before they were finally appreciated. At the same time, however, it must be stated that here and in other articles by Wiškovský the same ideas are sometimes repeated, for example, the idea that high-quality photography was a visual adventure guaranteed to be reality. (Nevertheless, the belief, so frequently presented by Wiškovský, that the depicted image is reality itself, has now been completely undermined by the comparatively recent advent of digital technology.)

In ‘Tvar a motiv’ Wiškovský anticipates later attempts to apply gestalt psychology to the area of the fine arts, as practiced, for example, by the German-born theorist of film Rudolf Arnheim in his *Art and Visual Perception* (1954). Despite all its originality, depth of thought, and precision of formulation, this fundamental article by Wiškovský did not meet with unanimous approval.

Ehm and Funke ran *Fotografický obzor* has a high-quality, venturesome periodical, and as late as November 1940, a year and eight months after the beginning of the German occupation, faced with the Nazi opinion that avant-garde work is “degenerated art”, they managed to publish a special issue devoted to experimental photography. In early 1941, however, due to increasing denunciatory statements from some Czech photographers, they gave up the editorship, and Wiškovský thus lost, till the end of the war, a place to publish his articles; but he continued to take photographs. At the very end of the war, during the Prague Uprising, he made documentary photos of the building of barricades and their defense. These photos are the exception in his otherwise thoroughly static oeuvre. They tend to be descriptive shots, largely lacking in drama, and cannot be compared with the far more dynamic, emotionally effective photos of the same event taken by a number of other Czech photographers. Shortly after the war Wiškovský also made several photographs of German and Czech women who collaborated with the German regime, and were forced now – often humiliatingly painted with swastikas – to clear way barricades and debris. In the short period of relative freedom and democracy between the end of the Second World War and the Communist seizure of power in February 1948, Wiškovský published other articles on theory in the periodicals *Fotografie*, *Československá fotografie*, and *Zpravodaj fotografů*. Parallel to his theoretical writing he made other landscape photographs in Hlubočepy, static photos of Prague, and details of various natural motifs, like the well-known *Chestnuts*. In this period he also showed works in several important group exhibitions, in particular *Modern Photography in Czechoslovakia*, first held in Vienna in late

July 1947, and later in Zurich. It was a major exhibition of works by leading Czech and Slovak photographers, for which *Orbis* published a catalog with 24 plates and an article by Teige providing an outline of the development of Czechoslovak photography.

Soon after the Communist regime established itself in Czechoslovakia in early 1948, the propagandistic role of photography in the style of Socialist Realism was officially asserted above all others. Consequently, there was no room on the officially sanctioned scene either for creative experiments or for profound articles on theory based on gestalt psychology. In the years of the most rigid Stalinism of the Communist regime led by Klement Gottwald (till his death, several days after Stalin's, in early 1953) articles appeared in photographic periodicals questioning whether landscape photographs without tractors could be anything but a bourgeois holdover. Wiškovský at the time quit teaching, publishing and exhibiting. In his photographs in the 1950s Wiškovský devoted himself primarily to work on the large series of imaginative photographs from the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague. Many of his photos of the Old Jewish Cemetery seem highly descriptive and some motifs repeat themselves. Although they demonstrate the depth of his ideas and his mastery of composition, they also indicate his decline as an artist. Wiškovský now photographed the historical architecture of Prague, flowers (for postcards), and genre shots of people walking in a park. He also returned to the old motifs of the juxtaposition of Nature and the changes by man. He was gravely ill, forgotten by the wider public, and on the margins of photographic life. The only substantial recollection of his personality, photographs, and writings was an article by Jiří Jeníček in the April 1957 issue of *Československá fotografie*, accompanied by three of Wiškovský's photographs.

The credit for truly rediscovering Wiškovský's work in the early 1960s is due to Anna Fárová. The first fruit of their collaboration was a set of twelve postcards with copies of his photographs and a short, but cogent article by Fárová, which came out in the *Profily* (Profiles) series of the *Orbis* publishing house, Prague, in July 1963. Unfortunately Wiškovský died before Fárová had compiled and edited the small book as the 23rd volume in the *Umělecká fotografie* (Art photography) series of the SNKLU publishing house, Prague, 1964. He died on 15 January 1964 at the age of 75.

- 1 Anna Fárová, *Eugen Wiškovský*, Prague: SNKLU 1964; Vladimír Birgus, *Eugen Wiškovský 1888–1964*, Prague: House of Photography 1992; Vladimír Birgus, *Eugen Wiškovský*, Prague: TORST 2005.
- 2 Letter from Eugen Wiškovský to Anna Fárová, October 1962, archive of Anna Fárová.
- 3 Jaroslav Anděl, *Josef Sudek o sobě*, Prague: TORST 2001.
- 4 Anděl, 2001 (note 3).
- 5 Eugen Wiškovský, 'O obrazové fotografii', in *Foto*, no. 12, 1929, 184.
- 6 Vladimír Birgus, *Czech Photographic Avant-Garde 1918–1948*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), London: The MIT Press, 101–157.
- 7 Eugen Wiškovský, 'Zobrazení, projev, sdělení' in: *Fotografický obzor*, no. 1, 1941, 2.
- 8 Jaroslav Anděl, *Nová vize: Avantgardní architektura v avantgardní fotografii 1918–1938*, Prague: Slovart 2005, 182–185.
- 9 Wiškovský, 1941 (note 7).
- 10 My conversation with Josef Ehm, Prague, 28th August, 1983.
- 11 Evžen Sobek, *Teoretické práce české fotografické avantgardy*, Opava: Institut tvůrčí fotografie, Slezská univerzita 2004.

Ulla Fischer-Westhauser

22 “I have always been independent!” Lilly Joss Reich – a Forgotten Jewish Woman Photographer

In the period between the two world wars, photography flourished as never before. It gained from the increased demand for images in advertising and journalism and also benefited from the improvement in camera and reproduction techniques. Women looked on photography as both a means of self expression and a profession; in fact they expanded the range of their professional expertise. In the nineteenth century, photography was said to be one of the very few professions – similar to nursing and school teaching – that was considered socially acceptable when – and if – a woman had to make a living of her own. In Europe, fewer women had been active in the medium before the First World War than in the United States. In the 1930s, however, it seemed that “European women ‘rivalled’ men in photography while remaining ‘inferior’ in other visual arts”.¹ But, even before the Nazis deprived Germany and Austria of their foremost artists and intellectuals, the unsettled political and cultural situation on the Continent forced many women, in particular those maintaining new roles, to relocate.²

It was always very important to Lilly Joseph to have an income of her own; something which was still not common in the upper middle-class circles of her time. No wonder she remarked that her mother was a “Luxusfrau [luxury woman]”, not meaning that she had spent a life in luxury, but that she had never earned her own money. At an early age, she was taught by her father Georg Joseph to be independent and go her own way. Lilly was born in Vienna on 28 June 1911, just under a year after her sister Gertrud’s birth on 6 July 1910.³ Georg Joseph (* 1869 in Demmin, Germany) owned a flourishing shop for optical instruments and photographic supplies at Operngasse 1 in the first district of Vienna and was also a purveyor to the imperial court. His wife Ida, née Rosauer (* 1879 in Dobrowitz, today Dobrowice, CZ – near the Polish border)⁴ descended from a Bohemian family that manufactured spices for beer breweries. Lilly remembered her childhood as a time when the pleasant smell of pastries, baked

fig. 1 Lilly Joss Reich, *Fernand Léger*, New York 1943.
Gelatine silver print, 29.2 x 27.7 cm.
Wien Museum Karlsplatz, Vienna.



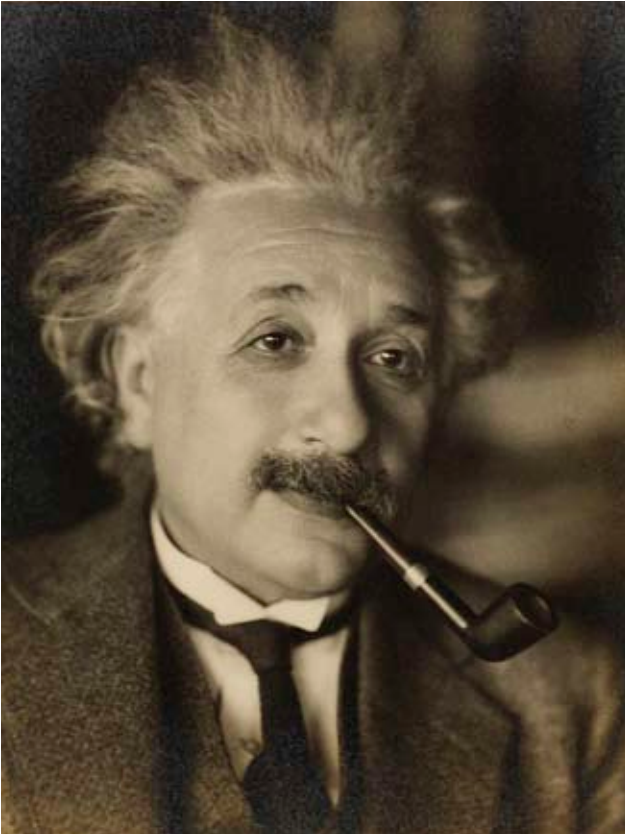


fig. 2 Lilly Joseph, *Albert Einstein*, Paris 1937.
Gelatine silver print, 23 x 17.5 cm.
Pierre Björklund, Stockholm.

fig. 3 Lilly Joseph, *Local Inhabitants and Emigrants*,
Casablanca c.1940. Gelatine silver print 17.5 x 24 cm.
Pierre Björklund, Stockholm.

every day, wafted through the family's flat at Alleegasse 69/9 (today Argentinierstraße) in the fourth district. This experience was to play an important role later in her life. The early death of the family's provider from tuberculosis in 1920, during the lean years after the First World War, forced the penniless widow and her daughters to move to Berlin, in order to be supported by relatives living there. This early experience of financial dependence on other people convinced Lilly to always be able to have an income of her own.

When the young girl got a Box-Tengor camera for her twelfth birthday, her later profession was determined. In 1926 Lilly Joseph won the first prize in a newspaper's photo competition with the image of a narrow street in Stralsund, made during a trip with her school. From that day on, she only wanted to become a photographer.

After her school-leaving exam, and in opposition to the wishes of her relatives, she started a photographic apprenticeship with the portrait and theatre photographer Mira Schmiegelsky in Berlin,⁵ which she completed in 1933. Lilly was very interested in photo chemicals and, therefore, enrolled in chemistry at the Technical University of Berlin during her apprenticeship, with the goal of producing her own developing emulsions.

During her training in Berlin, she travelled to Paris several times. Her sister had been living there since 1928 and studied French at the Sorbonne, where she would later work as a linguistics professor. At that time, Paris was the European centre for the fine arts and intellectual life and that is why the city attracted her magically. In the meantime, life had become threatening for the Jewish citizens of Germany following Hitler's seizure of power in 1933. Therefore Ida Joseph moved to Saint Germain-en-Laye near Paris in 1934 to live with her daughter Gertrud, who had been married to an English veterinarian since 1932. Lilly also went to Paris after the end of her

apprenticeship and took a flat in rue Erlanger near Bois de Bologne, which also served as her studio. She was soon able to establish herself as a portrait photographer with an illustrious circle of clients. She did not restrict her work to this activity but also worked for French magazines and newspapers. One of her assignments was taking photographs of the Oswald Haerdtl's Austrian pavilion for the 1937 World Exhibition in Paris. During those few, but nevertheless successful, years between 1937 and 1940, renowned persons such as Albert Einstein (fig. 2) – whose acquaintance she had already made in Berlin – composer Franz Lehar, film producer Sacha Guitry, author Tristan Bernard, members of the Rothschild family and also the last Austrian chancellor of the First Republic Kurt Schuschnigg posed in front of her camera. In 1938, her first photo exhibition took place in a Parisian book shop under the patronage of Tristan Bernard.

But this successful career came to a sudden stop when Hitler's army crossed the French border and Nazi troops invaded Paris. Lilly stowed away her glass negatives, the studio camera and

several papers in the cellar and the safe-deposit box of an American friend. Together with her mother she then fled to Bordeaux hoping to reach a vessel that would take them to England where relatives already lived. The two women found places on a steamer together with “half the French government and a load of dynamite”.⁶ After the first night on board, she felt uncertain and asked a steward about their location. His answer really shattered her because, instead of going to England, they were on their way to Casablanca in Morocco.

There, she soon realized that it was impossible to earn a living for her and her mother working as a photographer. And, apart from that, Ida Joseph was suffering from diabetes, which made life even more difficult than it already was. Casablanca, infamous for political intrigues and for its more-or-less shady characters roaming the dark streets, was full of refugees from different nations. Despite the bad situation, Lilly was sure that she could master those difficulties because of her trust in her own strengths.

To make ends meet, Lilly started to teach German to local middle- and upper-class children. Many of their parents were convinced that Germany would win the war. The contacts to the households of the Moroccan society one day led to her acquaintance with an archaeology professor who purchased dresses and ritual wedding objects of Berber tribes on behalf of the Archaeological Museum in Stockholm. As the professor didn't speak any French, but only German, he engaged Lilly as his interpreter. She accompanied him on his tours and soon developed her own negotiating initiatives. It seems that she became very clever in haggling, because she soon made tours without the professor and was able to buy the one or other object on favourable terms.



Although the Rolleiflex, the only camera she was able to take with her, was not used for working in Casablanca, Lilly Joseph finally found time to document life in the streets of this busy town (fig. 3). Several of the still existing pictures show the everyday life of the Moroccans together with the refugees.⁷ Those pictures are remarkable in many ways. Without any knowledge of their origin, they have the appearance of contemporary, exotic travel photographs. The European clothed people among the inhabitants of Casablanca in their Arab garments seem to be tourists and not emigrants. Another aspect was that photographic material was not only expensive, but also difficult to purchase!

In the late autumn of 1941, Lilly Joseph and her mother finally held the longingly awaited entry visa for the United States in their hands. Ida's brother Moritz Rosauer, already living in California, had sent the affidavits. The two women left Casablanca on board the "S.S. Serpa Pinto" on 20 November 1941 and landed in New York Harbour on 26 December 1941.⁸ At the arrival, an unpleasant surprise was again waiting for them, because the immigration authorities retained them at the infamous immigration station on Ellis Island longer than usual. Ida Joseph's documents had become invalid, as the yearly immigration quotas for citizens born in the Czech Republic had been changed and, additionally, the authorities were very interested in Lilly's travel activities in Morocco. Representatives of the Office of War questioned her for several days about her observations of the infrastructure and conditions in the North African state. Due to her almost photographic memory, she was obviously able to give useful information because, out of gratitude, she was offered support. Lilly told about the loss of her photographic equipment and asked for help in replacing it as a basis for a new start in the USA. She was granted a loan and used it to buy a *Graphflex* with a negative format of 9 x 12 cm. The negative glass plates and her professional photo equipment left in Paris had been discovered and stolen by German soldiers.

A letter of recommendation from the French *Vogue* to the New York agency *Black Star* made it possible for her to start a new career as a photographer in New York and she soon worked for leading magazines including *Life*, *Look*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*.

Together with her mother, she rented a room in an apartment, owned by an Italian family, on the Westside near Hudson River on the 11th floor of 875 Westend Avenue. This rented flat, where she would live all her life, was left to her soon after the war when the Italian residents relocated to Italy. Now there were enough rooms to install a darkroom and accommodate a lodger to cover the costs.

In 1958, Lilly married the Viennese theatre and movie author Richard Reich, who had immigrated to New Jersey via Belgium in 1938, in New York.⁹ When her mother died in 1958, Lilly developed into an enthusiastic cook and gave dinner parties for her friends, serving them Viennese pastries following her mother's recipes.¹⁰

After her marriage, she dedicated herself more and more to portrait photography and hardly accepted any reportage jobs for magazines. She even became a theatre photographer making

fig. 4 Lilly Joss Reich, *Authority*, New York 1947.
Gelatine silver print 35,5 x 28,5 cm.
Pierre Björklund, Stockholm.



the stills for her husband's productions.¹¹ At the end of the 1960s, her eyesight unfortunately deteriorated and, in the mid-1970s she was forced to end her career as a photographer. Only then, did she give in to her friends' pressure to publish a book with the marvellous recipes for her mother's pastries. She started a second career with the publication of *The Viennese Pastry Cookbook – from Vienna with Love*, over 200 authentic recipes for classic pastries and warm desserts¹² and, additionally, gave cooking lessons. In 1993, Richard Reich died in a New York hospital. Lilly Joss-Reich followed him at a very old age, passing away after a long illness on 31 March 2006 in her apartment in Manhattan.

The Humanist Photographer Lilly Joss

Black Star was founded by Ernest Mayer, Kurt Kornfeld and Kurt Safranski, three German Jews who had fled the Nazi regime, in 1935 when the need for quality in photo journalism attracted American agencies, virtually exclusively, to the unique ability of European photographers to work in a journalistic manner. For the émigré photographers, *Black Star* was a piece of Europe in the centre of New York. Here, they had no problems with making themselves understood and being outsiders.¹³

Many famous photographers including Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Philipp Halsman, worked for *Black Star*. The well-known German photographer Ilse Bing, whose picture stories appeared frequently in French and German periodicals between 1929 and 1935, and who also immigrated to the United States from France in 1941, found that “publications preferred men to women photographers”, despite the fact that, after the war, magazine photography was becoming a true profession.¹⁴ In the early post-war period, the field of photo journalism was partially opened up to women by those female photojournalists, who had worked in Europe during the 1930s. For example, through the first decades of *Life*, women only represented a tiny proportion of the photographers whose works were reproduced in the magazine. By the late 1950s, the work of male photographers dominated the pages of *Life* and women found themselves mainly commissioned to handle domestic subjects for the magazine (compare fig. 4–6).¹⁵

Lilly Joseph, who had to change her surname into Joss at the request of the agency (!), in order to make her name sound less German and biblical, had been given a very bad contract. At *Black Star* photographers generally got 60 to 80 percent of the fee; Miss Joss only got half of it – a confirmation of the statement about the situation of women photographers. In order to increase her low income, she and her mother depended on the rent of the lodger and Lilly's additional work at the Museum of Modern Art, where she retouched pictures by the hour. At least, the museum paid ten dollars per hour. She even told that she used to retouch photographs for Henri Cartier-Bresson, star photographer at *Black Star*. Additionally, she took medical pictures of patients' skin states for the dermatologist Dr. Max Wolf at Park Avenue.¹⁶

The *Black Star* assignment to portray the French painter Fernand Léger, who spent the war

fig. 5 Lilly Joss Reich, *Spring in Centralpark*, New York 1945. Gelatine silver print 33.4 x 26.5 cm. Pierre Björklund, Stockholm.



5

time between 1940 and 1945 as professor at Yale University, in his apartment on 42nd Street in New York established her successful professional career in the USA (fig. 1). “Little Lilly Joss”, as friends affectionately called her, often felt handicapped by her five foot height, because, in many cases, she was only taken seriously when she told her clients that she had been sent by *Life*, *American* or *Woman’s Home Companion* – “well, if they send her out, I suppose that little thing can do the job”¹⁷ she overheard occasionally. The photo magazine *The Camera* dedicated a lavishly illustrated article to her in 1948, mentioning her “intriguing Austrian-French accent” right at the beginning, continuing that she was not a “‘sophisticated’ photographer, but let an assignment come in for a series of pictures requiring a heart and a sympathetic understanding of human nature – and editors naturally think of her, because she’s a ‘natural’ for such work.”¹⁸

She had a special way with children and was able to respond to them, although she remained childless. She felt that she would learn a lot from them. In July 1945, *The Woman’s Home Companion* sent her, together with the journalist Naomi Jolles, into the refugee camp Fort



fig. 6 Two pages from: *The Camera*, vol. 70, March 1948, 42–43.

Oswego, N.Y. to report on the children's situation. Although the camp officials had refused direct contacts with the children till then, both women managed to convince the management of the importance of their work. The photographer "...Lilly Joss, was able to speak to the children in their own languages for she, too, was a refugee. ..." ¹⁹ After that, Lilly Joss made photo reportages about Chinese children in a school in New York's China Town, new education methods in public schools, an educational picture report about vandalism at school and a photo essay "Spring in New York" (fig. 5), to give just a few examples. Soon she made a name as a popular children's portrait photographer. Instead of asking them into her studio, she preferred to visit her clients at home, taking all the necessary equipment with her and only used to operate a dark room at home. An illustration in *The Camera* shows the little, visibly energetic, young woman loaded up with camera, tripod and lamps (fig. 6). She preferred strong lighting productions; for picture stories she liked to use several flashlights, often placing up to four of them, to expose those conspicuous contrasts that lend them a certain excitement. Her photographs give evidence of a deep affection for the tall and little people in front of her camera. Philippe Halsman once remarked about her photographic work: "Little Lilly Joss puts everything of herself into the pictures. She feels each story deeply – and her work reflects it." ²⁰

- 1 Hélèn Gordon, 'Les Femmes Photographes au Pavillon de Marsan' in: *La Revue de la Photographie* 35 (February 1936), 5 cited in: Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers*, New York 1994, 115. The prominence attained by women is to some extent confirmed by the exhibition record: for example, the First Independent Salon of Photography, held in Paris in 1928, displayed the work of five men and four women.
- 2 About the situation of Austrian and German woman photographers, see (a selection): Rosenblum, 1994 (note 1), 115–149 and 181–237; Lena Johannesson, Gunilla Knappe (eds.), *Women Photographers – European Experience*, Gothenburg 2004, 16–92; *Frauen, Kunst, Wissenschaft* (FKW) [focus on photography], vol. 14, Marburg 1992. About émigré photographers: Klaus Honneff, Frank Weyers, ... *Und sie haben Deutschland verlassen ... müssen. Fotografen und ihre Bilder*, exh. cat., Bonn 1997; Anna Auer, *Übersee. Flucht und Emigration österreichischer Fotografen 1920–1940*, exh. cat., Vienna 1997; Andrea Winklbauer (ed.), *Moderne auf der Flucht. Österreichische Künstler in Frankreich 1938–1945*, exh. cat., Vienna 2008.
- 3 The exact dates of birth were given to the author by Pierre Björklund (Stockholm), son of Gertrud Joseph, who immigrated to Sweden remaining there; Lilly died childless.
- 4 For the year and place of birth, Ida Joseph: National Archives Records Administration (NARA), Passenger manifest of "S.S. Serpa Pinto", Washington, USA, role 6601 vol. 13420, 22. For the dates of Georg Joseph: registration papers in the Vienna City and Province Archives.
- 5 Born in 1898, emigrated from Berlin to The Hague in 1933, died in Amsterdam in 1958, in: obituary by Anna Auer, 'Lilly Joos Reich (1917–2006) [sic!]. Fotografin und Spezialistin für Wiener Mehlspeisen' in: *Zwischenwelt. Literatur-Widerstand-Exil*, vol. 23/4, Vienna 2007, 38. Many women photographers were trained by other photographers. An alternative was to attend a school for photography. In Germany a school for women photographers was already initiated in 1890 by the "Lette-Verein" in Berlin, see: Doris Obschernitzky, *Die Frau und ihre Arbeit. Lette-Verein. Zur Geschichte einer Berliner Institution*, Berlin 1987 and contemporary Eliza Ichenhaeuser, 'Die Bildnis-, technische und wissenschaftliche Photographie als Frauenberuf' in: *Arena*. [octavo edition of *Über Land und Meer*], vol. 11, DVA, Stuttgart 1914, 1583–1590. However, in Austria Josef Maria Eder only opened the Graphische Lehr und Versuchsanstalt for female students in 1908 (see Hans Schreiber, *Trude Fleischmann*, 1990, cited in: Monika Faber, "... Mein Wunsch und meine Aufgabe..." Die Gründung des Fotoateliers Dora Kalmus' in: *FKW* 1992 (note 2), 15.
- 6 Personal communication with Lilly Joss Reich.
- 7 On Anna Auer's initiative 163 photographs from the 1930s and 1940s were purchased by the Vienna City Museum in 1998.
- 8 NARA (note 4)
- 9 Richard Reich, born Jewish on 24 January 1904 in Vienna, was a successful playwright for Viennese theatres and was able to establish himself on New York's Broadway quickly after his flight from the Nazis, due to a letter of recommendation by Max Reinhardt, and also because he was able to write his plays in English from the start.
- 10 Only this collection of pastry recipes, hand written by her mother Ida, was left when the Nazis raided her safe in Paris. Lilly Joss Reich handed the manuscript over to the author. Today, it is in the collection of manuscripts in the Austrian National Library.
- 11 *Pictures of Girls are the Funniest* (Broadway, NY 1968) by Lilly Joss Reich in the Theatre Museum in Vienna, estate of Richard Reich.
- 12 First published by Macmillan, then by Simon & Schuster. The popular book is already in its 7th edition, today at Bisquits Books, Massachusetts.
- 13 Hendrik Neubauer, *Black Star. 60 Years of Photojournalism*, Cologne 1997, 16. The history of *Life* magazine is closely bound up with the picture agency *Black Star*, see: C. Zoe Smith, *The History of Black Star Agency: Life's European Connection*, paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association of Education Journalism and Mass Communication in Gainesville, Florida, 7 August 1984, typescript. Marianne Fulton, *Eyes of Time. Photojournalism in America*, New York 1988. In 2005, the black and white photographic collection of *Black Star* (nearly 300,000 pictures) was donated anonymously to the Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada.
- 14 'Ilse Bing: Une Pionnière de la photographie des années 30', *Photographies*, April 1983 in: Rosenblum, 1992 (note 1) 143.
- 15 Rosenblum, 1992 (note 1) 187.
- 16 Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, *Max Wolf – Fotografie in der Emigration*, Passau 2003, 57.
- 17 Barbara Green, 'Lilly Joss. Magazine Photographer' in: *The Camera*, vol. 70, March 1948, 42.
- 18 Barbara Green, 1948 (note 17) 42.
- 19 "Conversation – What goes on behind what goes into the Companion" in: Internal information for employees of the *Woman's Home Companion* about the content of the July edition 1945, typescript, July 1945, 4. A short comment on the report is given in the thesis by Michael E. Ruddy, *Education and the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Center: A study in courage and myth*, State University of New York at Buffalo, New York 2003, 62. In end note 23, the author unfortunately quotes the name of the photographer as Lilly Ross [sic!].
- 20 Barbara Green, 1948 (note 17) 141.

Ben Baruch Blich

23 Photography and Photographers in Concentration Camps and Ghettos during World War Two

*Dedicated to the memory of Ita and Baruch Blich,
my grandparents, and children who were brutally
murdered by the Nazis in their hometown Rowne
(Ukraine) in November 1941*

The purpose of my paper is to shed light on photographs taken during World War II by ordinary Nazi soldiers who were stationed in concentration camps and in or near various ghettos, especially in Poland. By bringing these photos into the open and focusing on their visual qualities, I first intend to point out their merits as an historical source for a period some of us have wanted to forget, or even deny, in the last few years. My second aim, which is no less important and vital, has to do with the photos themselves – why, and for what purpose, were the photos taken, and how should we, after all these years, interpret them? Would it be correct to say that the act of taking pictures in concentration camps and ghettos is not of the same character we ordinarily relate to photographing per se? Should the photos made by the Nazis be interpreted as a documentation of scenes they were exposed to, or should we interpret these photos as a ritual, identifying those who took them as being members of a cult, chosen to take part in a mission open only to a few? Would it, therefore, be a far fetched assumption to say that, unknowingly, the photos were intended not only for private use and memory but were considered, unintentionally and unconsciously, as a means for elevating those who made them – simple soldiers who were involved in deportation and killing – to the level of their leaders?

If my interpretation is correct, then the very act of taking these photos and the discourse attached to them, should not only take the subject matter represented in the photos, but also their ontological status as vehicles of identification, much the same as ranks and medals, for the ordinary soldier, into account.

This is the line of thought I intend to pursue in my paper: Photos of the kind mentioned above were photos which served several purposes – for documentation, memory, etc. – but

their importance and, to my mind, their *raison d'être* lie in their role of being used for self identification and as a means for the photographers' status to be recognized by their peers and leaders.

To substantiate my thesis, one only has to read the inscription written on one of the photo-albums compiled by a soldier who photographed the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941–42: *Das Warschauer Ghetto: Ein Kulturdokument fuer Adolf Hitler* (Warsaw Ghetto: A Cultural Document for Adolf Hitler). The album consists of 65 photos of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto along with many other photos and postcards, placed side by side, in one album dedicated to his *Führer*.

Photography as evidence

Perceived nowadays, photography is no longer a myth. It has freed itself from the obscure darkroom, from Plato's cave, to become a medium that not only represents, preserves and artistically exhibits reality, but also dramatically violates traditional epistemology by constituting new and unfamiliar attitudes towards the act of representation.¹ The camera is an intricate vehicle – it serves as a means of transferring information, of documentation, of memory, of preservation and by the same token it is a voyeuristic, invading apparatus which rejects the private and concealed in favour of an open and free flow of information.

One does not simply look at and register a photographic image; according to Jacques Lacan,² one sees and perceives a photographic scene in the same way a child recognizes its own image in the mirror for the first time – a stage which marks the child's ability to reflect on his own being and construct his persona. Being a means of reflection, a photo may become a simulacrum, an object through which we experience a frame onto reality, and yet that very frame, as in the case of photographs of the Holocaust, may become an object in itself, replacing the so called 'real scene' of historical facts to become a discourse constituting our point of view, emotions, values – and even some of our cognitive understandings.



For Susan Sontag, her first encounter with Holocaust photos was

“a kind of revelation, the photographically modern revelation: a negative epiphany ... it was photographs of Bergen-Belzen and Dachau ... Nothing I have seen in photographs or in real life ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously. Indeed, it seems plausible for me to divide my life into two parts, before I saw those photographs (I was twelve) and after, though it was several years before I understood fully what they were about. ... When I looked at those photographs, something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror; I felt irrevocably grieved, wounded, but a part of my feelings started to tighten, something went dead, something is still crying”.³

Having such an impact, photos should not only be considered as instrumental mediators between us and the world but, in certain cases – and this is the case with Holocaust photos – as a simulacrum; *ie.* an entity connoting a scene evaporated into the chronological pages of history books – photos that “are not [only] ‘denotative’ (unambiguous) complexes of symbols (like numbers, for example), but ‘connotative’ (ambiguous) complexes of symbols providing space for interpretation.”⁴ And indeed, being able to decode photos, comprehend their manifested and concealed manipulation, is, in essence, what is taken by Flusser as the ‘phenomenological doubt of photography’ – “the extent that it [a single photo] attempts to approach phenomena from any number of viewpoints” ... “a hunt in which the photographer and the camera merge into one invisible function ... a hunt for new states of things, situations never seen before”.⁵

Using the ‘hunter’ metaphor, we can say that the soldier in the concentration camp hides himself behind the camera like a hunter as if he himself is not present at the site but only his eyes, looking through the camera lens and taking pictures derogating the Jews, to be dedicated to his leaders and, probably, for the sake of being decorated with medals.

Barthes names this merge a *punctum*, that very moment which pricks us, the viewers, as a result of the photographer’s unknowingly catching a moment of truth – a moment from which there is no return and which can not be repeated. By pinpointing the photographic *punctum*, the subject photographed is transformed into an object, and some say – as Barthes continues – into a museum object⁶, and yet the moment a scene in a photograph becomes an object, it ipso facto turns into history merging us, the consumers of history, with the trauma reflected by the photographs. “Photographs do not seem to be statements of the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that

anyone can make or acquire...”⁷

It is no wonder that Sontag uses the name of Plato in the first chapter of her book. It is not so much for the analogy – the camera as an agent of truth rescuing us from the darkness of traditional means of representation such as painting, etc. – but for the idea that the camera teaches us to see and apprehend the world around us. On the one hand, the camera is a non-intervention vehicle, an indifferent means to what is depicted and seen through its lenses, and yet its power lies in its intricate abilities to change and sometimes even distort our understanding of presented reality. Amateurs at the one pole and propagandists at the opposite use the same apparatus for different and contrary aims with the intention of constructing a series of values and beliefs. Having in mind that the camera is indifferent to the scenes presented, one can not leave aside and ignore the role of the photographer in representing scenes he or she is interested in showing.

It is, therefore, misleading to say that photographers simply push the button and the camera passively registers what it can or can not represent. It is especially true in the cases we are dealing with here; photos which were not taken to remember the old days or as documentary evidence of the job the Nazis were proud to accomplish.

Walter Genewein’s collection of slides⁸ is a testimony to my intuition that the photos were made for private use and not for propaganda purposes. Genewein was an Austrian, deceased not long ago, who served as a chief accountant in the Lodz Ghetto up to its liquidation around 1944. Starting in 1941, he photographed the ghetto for almost three years using a Movex camera; some say he had confiscated it from a Jewish prisoner. Genewein is an interesting case, not only due to the fact that he made the effort to take pictures and arrange them according to their dates to give his collection a structure; the case is interesting because he substantiates my thesis on the sort of *action* taken by these photographers; an action of *hunting* for recognition, unknowingly ‘using’ their photos to show themselves as private anonymous people deserving attention in the overall Nazi war machine. Their photos served, therefore, as medals or ranks do and that is the reason why some photographers bothered to dedicate their album to the Fuhrer, or kept it to themselves in their private houses, as in the case of Genewein, showing it, once in a while, to their closest ones to gain their recognition and appreciation.

Known and unknown photographers in concentration camps and ghettos

As mentioned briefly, photographs were part and parcel of the war machine during World War Two; most of them were made by the Nazi propaganda authorities and I do not intend to deal with those here, whereas others were taken by soldiers (of all ranks) for their private collections. In my opinion, most of the photos shot by ordinary soldiers were taken for reasons of self recognition, as is the case of the commandant of Treblinka, ss-Untersturmführer (equivalent to Lieutenant) Kurt Franz, who captioned his album with the sentence “The best years of my life”. His album does not reveal much information about Treblinka. It includes photos of his

fig. 1 Walter Genewein, *Ghetto School Lunch*, n.d. Jewish Museum Frankfurt/Main.

fig. 2 Walter Genewein, *Pabianice Examination*, n.d. Jewish Museum Frankfurt/Main.

fig. 3 Walter Genewein, *Ghetto Lodz “Commerce”*, n.d. Jewish Museum Frankfurt/Main.

fig. 4 Unknown photographer, *Starved children in Warsaw Ghetto*, n.d. From ‘Das Warschauer Ghetto: Ein Kulturdokument für Adolf Hitler’. Electronic Archive of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.



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holiday in Italy, the dog he possessed at the time, animals in the camp zoo, and a few photos which show the cranes used in 1943 to exhume bodies for burning when the camp was being liquidated. Placing his pet and holiday experiences side by side with pictures of the camp in its last days prevents any intelligible interpretation being made unless he desired to present his camp life on the same level as the other photos as a way of 'saying' that he cherished both equally.

Franz's album is not an exception. There were others who took the effort to arrange their photos in a certain order. One of them was Walter Genewein, already mentioned in brief above. His case is interesting and appealing not only for the narrative of his photos but also for the fact that most of them were in colour. Taken in colour, the photos transmit a double message: on the one hand, the colour washes away the gloomy, grey, apocalyptic character most of the photographs have. The scenes look serene, quiet, and normal – especially the photo showing the selection of ties in a shop inside the Lodz Ghetto. Yet, on the other hand, the fact that the photos are in colour is an indication of Genewein's efforts to produce as realistic a view of the ghetto as possible. Colour slides (negatives transformed into positive prints) were rare during the first half of the 20th century – especially during the war – and his insistence on having pictures in colour, preserving them while evacuating the ghetto, brings me to the conclusion that his interest in photography was not only for the sake of photography itself but also for the sake of 'telling' a lively story about a place that would, at least, continue to live in the photos, as simulacra do. In the photographs, one can discern Genewein's conviction that the Third Reich would prevail and the job he was carrying out in the ghetto was something to be appreciated and valued.

By displaying the ghetto, Genewein creates the impression that he – and only he – was responsible for its prosperity and efficiency, a position any factory owner would take when promoting his products. Implicitly, it seems that, by developing so many slides and attaching detailed captions to them, Genewein was, first of all, trying to convince himself that he was doing the right job in the war efforts of the Third Reich and the photos were the only form of recognition he desired from his superiors.

Genewein's photos were mainly focused on the workshops in the Lodz Ghetto that produced all sorts of products; a few other photos depicted street scenes – people gathering, walking, etc. A small number of the photos relates to the infrastructure of the ghetto – the police, the fire brigades, stores, markets – with the intention of putting the ghetto on the map as one of the industrious sites in the occupied territories of the Third Reich. Genewein did not ignore the

deportation of the Jews expelled from Western Europe – people in their hundreds – carrying suitcases, pillows, some even with pieces of furniture, for their resettlement in the east.

If we look at a selection of the enormous number of photos, it is easy to trace the narrative Genewein desired to portray: a place worth paying attention to, of course in the context of the Nazi ideology of the period. The *Ghetto Schulausspeisung* (Ghetto School Lunch, fig. 1) shows an impressive number of school kids facing the camera with the sun in their eyes, fully dressed, smiling, waiting in line with buckets in their hands to receive their meal.

The same serene atmosphere is transmitted by the photograph *Pabianice Untersuchung* (Pabianice Examination, fig. 2) in which a group of men examines clothes in the open area as if the owner had decided to let his workers have the pleasure of taking some fresh air on a hot, sunny day.

The same can be said of the photo of the tie shop *Getto L'Stadt der 'Handel'* (Ghetto Lodz 'Commerce', fig. 3) in which a civilian, probably a German or Pole, examines the texture and colour of ties with a well-dressed Jew wearing the yellow star behind him.

As a tentative conclusion, it is appropriate to say that all the photos taken by the Nazis, as well as the film footage they produced, are, beyond dispute, a primary source for the horrifying atrocities of the war. Albums compiled by soldiers serving in the concentration camps and in the various ghettos, such as Lodz and Warsaw, were private initiatives influenced, in a roundabout way, by Nazi propaganda. One well-preserved album is the one bearing the inscription *Das Warschauer Ghetto: Ein Kulturdokument fuer Adolf Hitler* (Warsaw Ghetto: A Cultural Document for Adolf Hitler) – the album includes a series of photographs that a German soldier, who passed through Warsaw with his Air Force supply unit, had taken in his spare time and placed together with other photos and postcards he had collected – 56 photos in the collection depict life in the ghetto. Arnold Becker, Heinz Joest, Willi George and J. Heydecker are just a few names of German soldiers from several units who were stationed not far from Warsaw and, for some inexplicable reason, decided to take photographs of the Jews in the Ghetto in their spare time. Paradoxically, the limited number of photos taken by the Jewish communities in the ghetto glorified Jewish life, portraying their leaders, their cultural life etc. Under the circumstances, these were optimistic photos or, may I say, make-believe photos. The Nazi photos represented the real harshness of life: deportation, hunger and death and, without them, so it seems, vital and important information would not have survived (fig. 4).

The photo (fig. 4) was taken in Warsaw and found in the previously-mentioned album. It depicts a starved child collapsed near a wall, his friend is next to him and, in the foreground of the photo, we see another kid and an adult pointing at him. This and other photos represent scenes which do not bring the question about the composition of the frame to mind, as much as the role of the apparatus in forming the information represented. Being present at this very moment is, no doubt, a coincidence and the action of photographing is “purely contingent”⁹ and yet it has a *punctum* – the point of effect which represents a moment of

fig. 5 Unknown photographer, *Taken out of his hiding place in a bunker, Warsaw Ghetto*, n.d. USHMM Photo Archive.

fig. 6 Arnold Becker, *Near the gates of the Warsaw Ghetto*, 1941/42. Electronic Archive of Yad Vashem.

fig. 7 Ernst Hoffman, *Auschwitz*, n.d. From 'The Auschwitz album – the story of a transport'. Yad Vashem & Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2002.



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truth that cannot be staged or repeated. “The essence of a photograph is to ratify what it represents ... it does not necessarily say what is no longer, but only for certain *what has been*. This distinction” said Barthes – “is decisive. In front of a photograph, our consciousness does not necessarily take the nostalgic path of memory, but for every photograph existing in the world, the path of certainty”¹⁰ is consolidated by its very existence. If I understood Barthes correctly and apply his insights to the photos I am analyzing here, photographs which have historical merits and are often used, sometimes again and again – as Sontag rightly remarked¹¹ – will saturate and lose their shocking message, and yet their *punctum* does not fade – their virtual imprinting, their gestalt, the atmosphere projected by them, and the trauma transmitted, are all strengthened by being repeatedly exposed to them. If one asks what the Holocaust is all about – showing the picture will provide an answer, not only for what is seen through the photo but also for the *action* taken by the photographer.

To support my line of thought, let us look at the following, much more widely circulated, photo which, undoubtedly, has become the icon of the Holocaust. It is a photo depicting a child raising his hands as a sign of surrender. Even though this photo has been exhibited in magazines, museums and television shows world-wide, it is one of those rare photos which has accumulated meaning going beyond its historical context. The very moment of surrender caught by the photographer will never saturate, and will repeatedly cause us to see the photo and its connotations (fig. 5).

Moreover, assuming that the photo was not intended to serve the indoctrination machine of the Nazi regime, although it was later mobilized by the authorities and used as a propaganda photo, the question of why and for what purpose the photo was taken still remains relevant. The child at the front and the commotion behind him, expressing total loss and trauma, was a photo which, to my mind, served the soldier taking it as recognition for his devoted duty to the regime he was collaborating with.

The same applies to a series of 16 photos taken in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 by Arnold Becker. The photo exhibited here shows an officer sitting in his car with the gate of the surrounded Warsaw Ghetto behind him. The fact that the Wehrmacht officer has opened the door of his car facing the fence to pose for the photographer next to the ghetto gate supports the thesis that the photos were not only meant for remembering the glorious days of the past, but also for reflection and self-appreciation for the job undertaken during the war (fig. 6).

Amazingly, in this, and lots of photographs taken in concentration camps including Auschwitz, one can notice the close – and even intimate – relationship between the Jews and their oppressors. And yet, in spite of all that, it cannot be denied that the photos are meant to demonstrate a fundamental hierarchy (fig. 7).

The bulk of the photos portrays almost every step from the arrival of the Jews in Auschwitz by train, over their selection by doctors and daily work, to the endless rows of people on their way to the gas chambers (fig. 8–10).

The photos were not only nicely preserved, they were taken by professional people – two ss men; Bernhard Walter, who was responsible on the identification service, and Ernst Hoffman, who was a photographer by profession. Both were assisted by a few prisoners who helped them carry the cameras etc. The photos, as said, depict almost every stage in the killing of the Jews and were carefully executed with the emphasis on composition (there are photos which were made from the top of the water tower or from the roof of the train wagons arriving in Auschwitz, fig. 11). As said, the photos were made with a motivation and in compliance with the overall propaganda of the time and served as a token of loyalty and obedience.

But, what about the photos that depict executions and killing? After all, the final solution programme was kept secret and was supposed to be known by only a few.

I want to end my paper with a selection of photos that are rarely displayed and, through them, sharpen my thesis expressed throughout this paper (fig. 12 and 13).

The last picture shown here (fig. 13), as in the case of Susan Sontag referred above, opens Janina Struk's book describing the photo and raising the question about what the photographs were striving to accomplish.

“Three naked men stand on the edge of a pit. Another man and boy, also naked, are walking into the frame. Surrounding them are seven perpetrators, some armed, some not. A uniformed man in the far right-hand side of the picture is standing on the mound of earth, presumably dug from the pit, seemingly directing proceedings, and appears to be gesturing towards the camera. ... It was this photograph that marked the beginning of my research into photographs taken during the Holocaust – that is, photographs related to persecution and extermination of European Jewry ... The pitiful sight of the hunched figures thoroughly shocked me. The bowed heads of the two men in the foreground are facing the pit. The child is wearing a hat and the elderly man to his right appears to be wearing a shoe or a sock, as though made to undress in a hurry ... I felt ashamed to be examining this barbaric scene, voyeuristic for witnessing this nakedness and vulnerability, and

fig. 8 Ernst Hoffman, *A transport of Jews arriving in Auschwitz*, n.d. From 'The Auschwitz album – the story of a transport'. Yad Vashem & Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2002.

fig. 9 Ernst Hoffman, *An inspection by a medical doctor in Auschwitz*, n.d. From 'The Auschwitz album – the story of a transport'. Yad Vashem & Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2002.

fig. 10 Ernst Hoffman, *A woman (a mother?) with children on their way to the gas chambers*, n.d. From 'The Auschwitz album – the story of a transport'. Yad Vashem & Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2002.



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disturbed because the act of looking at this photograph put me in the position of possible assassin. ... But I was compelled to look, as if the more I looked the more information I could gain. ... It was also difficult to know how to find a context for this photograph, in terms of either an historical event or a photographic genre.”¹²

Struk’s description of the photo displaying the execution of the 5 people in 1943 and her question about how it should be classified – as an historical photo or as a photographic genre – supports my question as to the nature of the soldier’s action (genre in her words) of taking the photo while witnessing the execution.

Again, a simple-minded answer to the question of why these photos were taken would be that the photos served the young soldiers as a souvenir of their military service. Another answer has to do with the overall mood of the time which was dictated by propaganda and the photos reflect the Nazi ideology that prevailed in education, public affairs, communication, etc.¹³

A more sophisticated answer to the question of why such horrifying photos were taken lies in the very act of using the camera as a means not only of presenting reality and making it possible to see and examine it at a later time, but also one through which one can display and represent reality with the intention of enhancing it. Or, as Rosalind Krauss put it: “a photograph – within what discursive space does it operate?”¹⁴

In other words, merely pointing and revealing that there are photos of the kind mentioned is one step towards uncovering the conditions that made these photos possible. This is much the same as Foucault, who labelled an archive of historical facts as an historical *a priori* for understanding what made a specific archive possible. If we follow this line of thought, we will inevitably reach the conclusion Foucault¹⁵ makes vis-à-vis history and knowledge: photos rendering scenes are archaeological data; they signify ideas inherent in them; they are products of motivations, interests etc., unintentionally constitute a discourse either for the individual who produces them, or even for wider circles who would come across them. With the help of this discourse, the photographer unconsciously took a stand towards the objects photographed and rationalized his deeds, not as a collaborator in the atrocities he was involved in, but as a photographer hiding himself behind the apparatus. It would sound a bit strange to say that photographers in concentration camps, who were involved in brutal killing, hid themselves behind the camera as if it was a wall or a trench, and yet if we interpret the photos and uncover their narratives we would inevitably come to the conclusion that the camera is no less aggressive than the machine

gun or the gas chambers, was recruited by the photographers mentioned here, as a means not only for memorizing the past, but also as a vehicle with the help of which they constituted a cult of unity amongst themselves, objectifying the atrocities they witnessed with their naked eyes.

Intrigued by Holocaust photos, I reach the conclusion that those photographers used their images for “realizing themselves, either by making themselves feel their own power or by the recreation of the object represented”¹⁶ – in other words, photography of atrocities *fetishistically* reconstituted the objects depicted in order to be able to re-examine them privately, again and again, as if to revive the first emotive excitement experienced in the past.

- 1 Ben Baruch Blich, ‘The Epistemology of the Photographic Image’ in: *Photoresearcher* No. 8, September 2005, Vienna, 27–29. European Society for the History of Photography.
- 2 Jacques Lacan, ‘Le stade du mirror come formateur de la fonction du «Je»’ in: *Revue française de psychanalyse*, no. 4, 1949, 449–455.
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- 4 Vilém Flusser, *Towards a philosophy of photography*, London: Reaktion books 1983, 8.
- 5 Flusser, 1983, 38.
- 6 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, translated by Howard Richard, London: Flamingo 1984, 13.
- 7 Sontag, 1973 (note 3) 4.
- 8 Ulrich Baer, *Spectral evidence: The photography of Trauma*, Massachusetts: MIT press 2002, 168–169.
- 9 Barthes, 1984 (note 6) 28.
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- 11 Marianne Hirsch, ‘Surviving images: Holocaust photographs and the work of postmemory’ in: Barbie Zelizer, (ed.) *Visual culture and the Holocaust*, London: The Athlone press 2001, 216–217.
- 12 Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of evidence*, London: Tauris books 2004, 3.
- 13 Judith Levine, & Daniel Uziel, *Ordinary men, Extraordinary Photos*, Yad Vashem studies, no. 26, 1998, 280–293.
- 14 Rosalind E. Krauss, ‘Photography’s Discursive Spaces’ in her: *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and other modernist myths*, Massachusetts: MIT press 1987, 133.
- 15 Michel Foucault, *The order of things: An archeology of the human sciences*, New York: Vintage books 1970, 125–165.
- 16 Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A middle-brow Art*, translated by Shaun Whiteside, California: Stanford U. press 1990, 4.

fig. 11 Ernst Hoffman, *A photo taken from the roof of a train wagon after arriving in Auschwitz*, n.d. From ‘The Auschwitz album – the story of a transport’. Yad Vashem & Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2002.

fig. 12 Unknown photographer, *Hanged hostages*, n.d. From ‘The Treblinka Hell’ by Vassily Grossman, 1984.

fig. 13 Unknown photographer, *Tormenting Jews before their execution*, Saniatyn, 11 May 1943. Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum.

Anton Holzer

24 The Holocaust in Pictures The debate on the photographs from Auschwitz

“In order to understand, one has to see it for oneself. We have to attempt to make a picture of what the hell in Auschwitz was like in the summer of 1944. Let’s not merely refer to it as something inconceivable (L’imaginable).”¹ The French art historian and philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman begins his latest book *Images in Spite of All* with these words. In it, he deals with four photographs taken in Auschwitz in summer 1944 (figs. 1–4). According to the author, the special aspect of these pictures is that they make an appeal against Nazis’ stipulation that there be no pictures of the extermination of the Jews. They provide evidence from the scenes of the crime, for which there are no other pictures (and were never intended to be). And, it is a fact that – with the exception of these four photographs – we have no knowledge of a single picture being made in the immediate vicinity of the crematoriums of the concentration camp – and in this case, by the victims, not the perpetrators.

The author made a minutely detailed reconstruction of the historic circumstances under which these photographs were taken. He reports on how the Polish resistance was able to smuggle a camera into the concentration camp. This finally came into the hands of a member of the so-called “special commando” – one of those groups of prisoners put together by the ss to “service” the gas chambers. Four of the pictures created using this camera have been preserved. It is not known precisely on which day these photos that show the area around Crematorium v were taken. There are only reports that a Greek Jew called Alex operated the camera and that another prisoner named David Szmulewski, as well as some other prisoners, helped in the extremely courageous action. The exposed strip of film was brought back to the main camp where Helena Datón, an employee in the ss canteen, hid it in a toothpaste tube before it was smuggled out of the camp. The photos came into the hands of the Polish resistance on 4 September 1944. Georges Didi-Huberman does not stop at this reconstruction of history. Taking the four pictures as his starting point, his book provides a study of the – philosophic, aesthetic and historical – question of the possibility of depicting the Shoah visually. The first section of the book is based on a contribution made by the author in 2000 for the exhibition catalogue *Mémoires des camps. Photographies des camps de concentrations et d’extermination Nazis 1933–1999*, edited by Clément Chéroux (the exhibition was shown in Paris, Munich, Winterthur and other cities).² The second is a reaction to the heated debates this contribution – and the exhibition as a whole – caused in France.

fig. 1 and 2 Burning of corpses in front of Crematorium v in Auschwitz, taken secretly by members of the Jewish special commando a few days before 4 September 1944. Contact copy from a 6 x 6 negative. Auschwitz Birkenau, States Museum.



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The debate

What is this confrontation about? The discussion revolves around the question of whether it is possible to depict the Holocaust in photographic (or cinematic) pictures. On 19 January 2001, the French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann attacked “the intolerably schoolmasterly attitude” of Didi-Huberman’s contribution to the catalogue in the daily newspaper *Le Monde*.³ A few months later, two extremely polemical texts appeared in the *Les temps modernes* magazine (published by Claude Lanzmann); one penned by the psychologist Gérard Wajcman and the other by the psychoanalyst Élisabeth Pagnoux. Both attacked Didi-Huberman head on. Wajcman’s text begins with: “There are no pictures of the Shoah.”⁴ The authors accused Didi-Huberman of “voyeurism” and “finding pleasure in horror”⁵ and regarded his argumentation as making an unacceptable, religious fetish out of the photographic picture and criticized what was, in their eyes, an untenable attempt to question the inconceivability of the Shoah by focussing on the four photographs. Finally, they accused him implicitly of fostering anti-Semitism and revisionism.

Much of Didi-Huberman’s book is a confrontation with the polemics put forward by the two authors. However, it is also his aim to make a fundamental investigation into the subject of the aesthetic possibilities of depicting the Holocaust. He criticizes the iconoclastic stance, the radical opposition to the picture that characterizes the position of his critics. He argues that the iconoclast only hates pictures so much because “he basically concedes that they actually have a much greater force than the most-convinced picture lover ever would.”⁶ Didi-Huberman vehemently appeals against the supposed un-portrayability of the Holocaust in pictures and repeatedly brings Claude Lanzmann and his film project “Shoah” into the arena as aesthetic and moral witnesses. He agreed that Lanzmann was right in his criticism of the reconstruction of Auschwitz as carried out by Steven Spielberg. However, this criticism should not be permitted to develop into a dogma of iconoclasm, to an absolute criticism of pictures from the archives, as Lanzmann does.

The author opposed the idea of fundamentally denying archive pictures the right to report on historical events. However, he did not blindly take the opposite course; namely, of regarding pictures as an indisputable path into the past. Instead, he proposes a middle course between the radical scepticism of some post-modern authors (Hayden White and Jean-François Lyotard, for example) have exhibited towards the positions taken by positivist historians, on the one hand, and a too naïve rehabilitation of the indexicality of pictures, on the other. Citing the historian Carlo Ginzburg word-for-word, the author demands that the sources neither be considered “open windows, as the positivists believe, nor walls which obstruct the view, as the sceptics feel”.⁷ With this differentiated understanding of bearing witness, Didi-Huberman expresses his objection to both the banning of pictures as well as the thoughtless depiction of the Holocaust à la Hollywood.

The four Auschwitz photos make it possible to illustrate these contextualising approaches to carrying out historical work using pictures; something which requires much time, patience and effort. According to Didi-Huberman, the pictures from the camp are not simple photographs but, quite the opposite, extremely complex and virtually paradoxical. At first glance, there is almost nothing to be seen in the pictures. At least, nothing that we did not know about from other sources. But, the photos are extremely important: they express a “moment of truth”⁸, they capture a moment of existential plight from the summer of 1944. The pictures provide an “immediate” and extremely concrete impression of the Holocaust and, at the same time, they hinder a simple interpretation. They are characterized by “non-transparency”. Didi-Huberman writes: “It is precisely the duality of all pictures which so often irritates historians and causes them to turn their backs on this kind of ‘material’.”⁹

Photographic witnesses

We could ask why this debate only emerged six decades after the photos were taken. There are many reasons for this. In recent years, (supposed) taboo breaches in the area of Holocaust research were frequently grounds for embittered debate which were not only carried out in the universities but also before the general public. And, it comes as no surprise that university polemics can rapidly escalate into full-scale, fundamental controversies, and these controversies into genuine scandals. Apparently, the media’s desire for Holocaust pictures has remained unbroken. The closer the surviving pictures come to, what is today, the picture-less centre of the extermination policy, the gas chambers, the greater the public’s voyeuristic desire to see even more. However, the pictures have been known for many years. So, why now? In recent times the question of the way to remember the Holocaust once the witnesses of the time are no longer alive, has become increasingly pressing. It has become clear that, over the past few years, historical attestation in connection with National Socialism has entered into a new phase. There are ever-fewer eyewitnesses able to report on the acts of violence in the camps from their personal perspective. It is foreseeable that, in a few years, all of the eyewitnesses capable of giving personal accounts of their suffering will be dead. Then, at the latest, the question of which media will be used to support reports on the camps will become relevant. Will narrative, autobiographic reports be replaced by fictive, literary reports such as have already been diagnosed in connection with Jonathan Littell’s novel *Les Bienveillantes* (The Kindly Ones)?¹⁰ Will the historians’ reconstruction ultimately take over the place of real witnesses? Is photography the medium to replace the vivid reminiscences of the eyewitnesses? Recently, these questions have increasingly been the subject of discussions. And they play – even if it is implicit – and important role in the debate on the photographs from Auschwitz.

National Socialist crimes were recorded photographically at an early stage. However, not until the past two decades have the circumstances surrounding what they show and how they were preserved, the social environment and political use of these photographs, been seriously

investigated. One recognizes that photography is not merely a simple mirror of events but an extremely complex structure of depiction and staging, representation and image. One sees that photographic images can be used in many ways, ranging from a simple illustration to providing evidence. The heated debate over the exhibition on the role of the German Wehrmacht in Hitler's campaign of destruction 1941–1945,¹¹ which was shown in many European cities after 1995, had a wide-ranging impact on the historical dealing with photographic documents. A new sensitivity found its way into museum and exhibition projects and historical works. The, previously naïve, illustrative use of photographs in reconstructing National Socialism was seen as being increasingly problematic. Some historians kept their hands away from the subject of photography and National Socialism which had become too hot to handle, whereas others, armed with more refined theoretical and practical instruments, started to deal with the photography of the Holocaust once again. The results of these efforts led to a number of new discoveries. New pictorial material came to light, well-known pictures were subjected to a critical re-interpretation. The exhibition *Mémoire des camps*, organized under the leadership of the French photo historian Clément Chéroux and shown after 2001, was a pioneering work. This exhibition systematized the photographic records from the camps for the first time and placed these in a broader historical context, interpreted them and, in this way, played a decisive role in creating a more discriminating picture of the camps. The essay Georges Didi-Huberman contributed to the exhibition's catalogue follows in the line of this new attitude towards historical pictorial criticism. It is, therefore, surprising that the critics almost solely singled out his positions to attack, whereas the show's curator Clément Chéroux and other catalogue authors were only peripherally involved in the debate.

Just why did Didi-Huberman's theories seem so objectionable whereas the rest of this historical project escaped relatively unscathed? The reason could definitely (also) be found in the selection of the photographs the author dealt with. The majority of the photographs from the camps were taken from the point of view of the transgressors or the liberators but Didi-Huberman handled photographs taken by the victims. As the author stressed, to the best of our knowledge, only these four photographs from the innermost area of the camps, near the crematorium, exist. Therefore, he positioned the uniqueness of these visual testimonies at the centre of his book. He seeks ever-new approaches to the pictures that, as he emphasizes, are radically different from other pictures from the Holocaust. He makes great efforts to bring out the special form of evidence they provide. For Didi-Huberman, these photographs, taken under extreme danger by members of the Jewish special commando and then smuggled out to provide irrefutable proof of the crimes, show more of the "hell" that was Auschwitz than many others – irrespective of how wobbled and unclear they are. He argues that, not only the content of the pictures – what they show – invests them with the status of a testimony. For him, the act of taking a picture at a site where this was absolutely forbidden is a sign of the utmost resistance. The gesture of photographing, in the face of the gravest danger, the decision to smuggle a camera into – and the negatives out of – the camp, all of these rebellious actions are captured in these

fig. 3 *Women on the way to the gas chamber*, taken secretly near Crematorium V by members of the Jewish special commando a few days before 4 September 1944. Contact copy from a 6 x 6 negative. Auschwitz Birkenau, States Museum.

fig. 4 *Trees near Crematorium V in Auschwitz*, taken secretly by members of the Jewish special commando a few days before 4 September 1944. Contact copy from a 6 x 6 negative. Auschwitz Birkenau, States Museum.



3



4

pictures. Not only technically successful pictures, but also pictures which are out of focus and blurred, which seem to show nothing one can recognize – precisely these – are documents of resistance.

Georges Didi-Huberman correctly drew attention to the fact that the photos had only been shown in a mutilated form – namely, cropped – for a long period of time. The black border which show “nothing” were simply eliminated to, supposedly, draw more attention to the subject matter of the pictures: the women getting undressed and going to their deaths a moment later, the men of the special commando, burning corpses in ditches. But, he stressed, not only their content made the photos testimonies, the black edges were also important: they marked the opening of the crematorium from where the photographer took some of the pictures. The black border indicates – in the negative, in a manner of speaking – the place which stood at the end of a long chain of crime: the gas chamber. Paradoxically, the photographer was standing in the interior when he took the pictures. He sought shelter where his fellow sufferers had perished before and would continue to do so.

The history of the pictures after 1945

In his book, Georges Didi-Huberman deals with all of the details of the four pictures; however, strangely, he does not pursue one aspect – the history of how they were passed on *after* September 1944. For him, these visual witnesses are outstanding historical documents from the camp, signs of resistance, gestures of humanity in the midst of the most extreme inhumanity. But, at the same time, they are shown as surprisingly faceless pieces of evidence. Whereas the conditions surrounding their creation are described in the greatest detail, the attention paid to them ends precisely at the moment they leave the camp. Didi-Huberman does mention the name of the person they were addressed to – Teresa Lasocka-Estreicher, originally from Krakow, and a member of the Polish resistance under the code name of “Tell”. She not only received the photos, but also messages several times a week in August and September 1944. However, Didi-Huberman merely mentions her in a footnote¹² and does not even ask the question of what subsequently happened with the pictures. He concludes his historic reconstruction in September 1944 at a time when he considered that their mission had been accomplished. But, there is also a story beginning *after* September 1944.

It is surprising that none of the pictures were published during the war. The pictures obviously never reached the doubting foreign countries where they were intended to provide photographic proof of what was happening in Auschwitz. The reasons for this have not been explained to this day. The pictures did not resurface until after the end of the war. One of the photographs was shown at the first exhibition in Auschwitz in 1947.¹³ Some of the pictures were published after the mid-1950s – originally in Polish legal newspapers and then in illustrated books. In 1956, one of the photos could be seen in Alain Resnais’ film *Nuit et brouillard* (Night and Fog). In 1957, the Polish examining magistrate Jan Sehn published a book on Auschwitz-Birkenau with two

of the photographs as illustrations: here, however, cropped, enlarged and retouched.¹⁴ A few years later, in 1960, the pictures – also cropped and retouched – were included in Gerhard Schoenberger's book *Der gelbe Stern* (The Yellow Star).¹⁵ Both works were published at a time when the legal appraisal of NS crimes appeared to be coming to a standstill and the apologists in favour of "closing the matter" were arguing in favour of the crimes coming under the statute of limitations. To summarize the situation: The photos that had been taken in September 1944 were known after the end of the war but it was not until the late 1950s and early 1960s that they came to the attention of a wider audience in Poland and Germany. At the time, none of the authors of the illustrated books would have thought about singling out these photos from the mass of preserved (perpetrators') pictures. It was only a decade later, in 1985, that the photos became known in their non-cropped, non-retouched form. In that year, the non-cropped contact copies were handed over to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. They had been in the possession of Władysław Pytlík, who had been a member of the Polish socialist resistance during the war. Following his death in 1985, Danuta Pytlík, his widow, presented the museum with seven contact copies from four various negatives. In the same year, 1985, additional eyewitnesses, members of the Jewish special commando who had taken part in the photo action, came forth.¹⁶ With the help of their statements and the photographs, it became possible to reconstruct the sequence of events, relatively exactly, for the first time.

Victims' pictured vs. perpetrators' pictures?

In spite of all their differences, Claude Lanzmann's and Didi-Huberman's arguments are similar in one respect: both deliberately limit their analysis to the period of the National Socialists' policy of annihilation. In an interview, Lanzmann stressed that he had only been interested in those Jews "who reached the last stage of the process of destruction; namely, those in the special commandos who worked directly in the crematoriums or gas chambers. Together with Germans, they were the only witnesses to the death of their people."¹⁷ Didi-Huberman also did not deal with camp photographs in general but only with those pictures taken of victims in the immediate vicinity of the gas ovens. By constricting their point of view so extremely to focus on the core of the annihilation, the crematoriums, both – the filmmaker and the scientist – approach the limits of what can be known and expressed. They deal with the centre of the industrial mass murder, the system of the gas chambers. The testimonials they employ, however, are different. In Lanzmann's case, they are filmed, verbal reports made by surviving Jews who saw the annihilation machinery with their own eyes. Didi-Huberman makes use of photographs taken by prisoners who were also witnesses of this annihilation. Both authors, therefore, deal with pictures of the Shoah – albeit from differing viewpoints. The one, Claude Lanzmann, confronts filmed eyewitness reports with the dogma of what is ultimately a pictureless Shoah, but he is vehemently contradicted by the other, Georges Didi-Huberman. For him, pictures of the Shoah exist and the four photographs from Auschwitz are the best examples. Both authors elevate the testimony given by the victims above the mass of reports and confront them, virtually dichotomously, with the testimonies of the perpetrators.

We could then ask whether this extreme form of fixation on the pictures and reports of the victims makes sense. Can we only comprehend the system of annihilation by diametrically countering the victims' documents with those of the perpetrators? And finally: Is the assertion which both authors seem to implicitly share – that namely the surviving victims and their documents give more immediate, and possibly more reliable, insights into the system of annihilation than those of the perpetrators – true? Of course, in no way did the Holocaust as a whole remain without its pictures. A good twenty years ago, the well-known American photo-historian and Holocaust researcher Sybil Milton estimated the number of documentary photos taken in or of the camps at 1.5 million.¹⁸ Photos were also taken in Auschwitz itself – and there, in substantial numbers: There were official photographic departments which could legally take pictures – the so-called “records service” and the so-called “site supervision”.¹⁹ In spite of their attempts to leave no photographic traces of the crimes behind them, numerous photographs from both organizations have been preserved. These pictures were taken from the perpetrator's viewpoint. They show the mechanism of annihilation from the frigid distance of the National Socialist administration. These are countered by the four photographs taken by the prisoners. Georges Didi-Huberman deals with them alone.

However, the clear dichotomy of the perpetrators' and victims' pictures can only be upheld at the cost of an extremely limited perspective restricted to the camp. If we place the history of the eradication of the Jews in a broader historical context, this rigid comparison crumbles. The National Socialist “final solution” did not begin behind the camp fence, but much earlier. The trains with the deportees all led to Auschwitz, Treblinka and the other extermination camps,

- 1 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Bilder trotz allem*. Translated from the French by Peter Geimer, Munich, Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 2007, 15. The book was published in French in 2003 (Les Éditions Minuit) and will be published in English as *Images in Spite of All* by University of Chicago Press, in autumn 2008.
- 2 Clément Chéroux (ed.), *Mémoire des camps. Photographies des camps de concentration et d'extermination nazis 1933–1999*, Paris: Marval 2001. A brochure with the German translation of the texts was published for the exhibition in the Fotomuseum Winterthur.
- 3 Claude Lanzmann, 'La question n'est pas celle du document, mais celle de la vérité' (Interview with Michel Guerrin) in: *Le Monde*, 19 January 2001, 29. See Didi-Huberman's reaction 2007 (note 1) 136ff.
- 4 Gérard Wajcman, 'De la croyance photographique', in: *Les temps modernes*, LVI, 2001, no. 613, 47–83, 47. In: Didi-Huberman, 2007 (note 1) 89ff.
- 5 Didi-Huberman, 2007 (note 1) 98f.
- 6 Didi-Huberman, 2007 (note 1) 99.
- 7 Carlo Ginzburg, *Die Wahrheit der Geschichte. Rhetorik und Beweis*, Berlin: Wagenbach Verlag 2001, II, 32, 34, cited here from Didi-Huberman, 2007 (note 1) 150.
- 8 Didi-Huberman, 2007 (note 1) 55.
- 9 Didi-Huberman, 2007 (note 1) 56.
- 10 See the discussion led by Jürg Altwegg on the occasion of the publication of the German edition of Jonathan Littell's novel *Die Wohlgesinnten*. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 November 2007.
- 11 The first Wehrmacht Exhibition was shown from 1995 to 1999: Hannes Heer, Klaus Naumann (eds.), *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944*, Hamburg 1995. Following the vehement controversies, the first exhibition was closed and a second, reworked, prepared. It was shown from 2001 to 2004: Hamburger

but they did not come from nowhere. There were many onlookers at the train stations where the human freight was loaded and witnesses along the route. Many of them played along with the perpetrators, but there were exceptions. One of them was Hubert Pfoch. He really does not fit into the offender-victim scheme. Pfoch came from Vienna; as a young man, he was a member of the (illegal) Socialist movement, was recruited as a 21-year-old into the Wehrmacht at the end of June 1941 and sent to the eastern front. After he returned to the front in August 1942 following medical treatment, he kept a secret diary and had a hidden camera with him. On 21 August 1942, he witnessed a deportation train to Treblinka being loaded at the Polish train station of Siedlce. He recorded the brutal treatment of the prisoners in his diary, observed how the Jews screamed for water and observed the indiscriminate shootings which took place on the platform. Together with two other soldiers, he protested to the platoon commando, without achieving anything – except the threat of being sent to Treblinka himself. There was only one possibility for him in this powerless situation: he photographed the scene on the platform with this hidden camera. “Four photos, no more were possible.” (fig. 5)²⁰ Hubert Pfoch did not use his camera as a voyeuristic perpetrator, nor as a victim, but as a helpless spectator who could do nothing more than capture what he saw in pictures. He knew what was waiting for the Jews who were being forced into the cattle wagons. Four pictures leading into the other four which were shot in the summer of 1944.



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Institut für Sozialforschung (ed.), *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges*, Hamburg, second, revised edition 2001.

- 12 Didi-Huberman, 2007 (note 1) 34.
- 13 Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust. Interpretations of the Evidence*, London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004, 117.
- 14 For the history of the photographs after 1945, see the contribution by Miriam Yegane Arani, 'Holocaust. Die Fotografien des "Sonderkommando Auschwitz"' in: Gerhard Paul (ed.), *Das Jahrhundert der Bilder. 1900–1949*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009 (in publication). The author also refers to Polish research including Jonathan Webber, Teresa Swiebocka, Connie Wilsack (eds.), *Auschwitz: A History in Photographs*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1993. Janina Struk, 2004 (note 12).
- 15 Gerhard Schoenberger, *Der gelbe Stern. Die Judenvernichtung in Europa 1933–1945*, Hamburg: Rütten & Loening 1960.
- 16 Jonathan Webber, Teresa Swiebocka, Connie Wilsack, 1993 (note 13) 172–176.
- 17 Conversation with Claude Lanzmann on his film "Shoah" in: *Formen von Erinnerung. Eine Diskussion von Claude Lanzmann. Ein anderer Blick auf Gedenken, Erinnern und Erleben. Eine Tagung*, Marburg: Jonas Verlag 1998, 11–32, 15.
- 18 Sybil Milton, 'Images of the Holocaust – Part II', in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1986, 193–216, 195.
- 19 Sybil Milton, 'Photography as Evidence of the Holocaust', in: *History of Photography*, vol. 23, no. 4, winter 1999 (special issue: Photography and the Holocaust), 303–312, 306.
- 20 Franz Hiesel, *Im Strom der Zeit: Hubert Pfoch, Beschreibung eines Ottakringers zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes 1999, 23, cited after: Sybil Milton, 1999 (note 19) 306.

fig. 5 Hubert Pfoch, *Deported Jews being loaded at the train station in Siedlce* (transport to Treblinka), Poland, 23 August 1942. From Sybil Milton, 'Photography as Evidence of the Holocaust' in: *History of Photography*, vol. 23, no. 4, winter 1999, 306.

Luc Deneulin

25 Leni Riefenstahl The Photographer of the Past

Leni Riefenstahl (1902–2003) is a well-known name in cinema history and especially famous for her films *Triumph des Willens* (1935) and *Olympia* (1938).¹

In the 1970s, Leni Riefenstahl started a second career as a photographer with the publication of her, commercially very successful, photography books. The Nuba tribes of Southeast Sudan are the main theme of the photographs in those volumes. Shortly thereafter, she discovered a new subject for her photography – the world under water – when she started diving at the age of seventy two. This also resulted in the world-wide publication of her photographs.

Hitler on Ice

Going back in time to the very first information about Riefenstahl making photographs, one arrives at 1932. Leni Riefenstahl had just met Adolf Hitler, at her own request, and was working in Greenland with the director Arnold Fanck, the father of the German “mountain film” genre of the 1920s and 30s. She had first worked as an actress in his 1926 film *Der heilige Berg* and the role she played in the film, set in Greenland, called *SOS Eisberg* was her sixth and last collaboration with Arnold Fanck. Shooting took almost a year and the Germany Riefenstahl left in 1932 had completely changed when she returned in April 1933. The context in which Riefenstahl attended the premiere of this film in August 1933 was completely different from what it had been for the premieres of the previous films she had acted in. After the film had been shown, she announced that she was very honoured: the Führer had asked her to make an artistic film about the National Socialist Party Rally that was to take place one month later. She made a Nazi salute on stage and that was the beginning of the Riefenstahl-Hitler association that exists to today.

It was during this film shooting in Greenland that Riefenstahl made rather strange photographs. Since filming was progressing very slowly – Arnold Fanck could wait for days, even weeks for the right light or right weather – there was a lot of free time. Besides her reading *Mein Kampf* to others – she had received a copy from Hitler just before her departure to Greenland – she was sometimes seen for hours putting photographs of Adolf Hitler in different positions on ice walls and then photographing them.²

fig. 1 Leni Riefenstahl (?), *In the Stadium of Delphi*, 1936.
Vintage silver print, 21.8 x 28.6 cm. Courtesy Gallery
Johannes Faber, Vienna.



Leni Riefenstahl: photography lessons for Heinrich Hoffmann and presents for the Führer

In 1932, Leni Riefenstahl co-produced and co-directed a film in which she played the leading part. One year later, in the Third Reich, the names of the other persons involved were removed from the credits and the film became a “Leni Riefenstahl Production”. A stills photographer, Walter Rimml, had been appointed to make photographs for the press. However, in her Memoirs, published in German in 1987, Riefenstahl describes herself, all of a sudden, as having been a photographer from the early years. Hitler admired *Das blaue Licht* as well as the photographs – which Riefenstahl had presented as her own – so much that he asked Riefenstahl if he could come and visit her with his experienced personal photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. He thought that Hoffmann could still learn quite a lot from Riefenstahl’s photography. Other persons who were present gave a slightly different version: Riefenstahl supposedly asked whether Hoffmann would not be interested in seeing “her” photographs. In any case, in the early thirties, Riefenstahl became the photographer of photographs she had, in fact, neither made herself nor even financed.³

In 1934, some months after the very successful release of her *Der Sieg des Glaubens*, she postponed her projected feature film *Tiefland* to make *Triumph des Willens*, *Tag der Freiheit* and *Olympia* as well as war footage in Poland and only started working on it again in 1940. She was not the only director, a lot of names were mentioned in the press during wartime but, later, Riefenstahl took all the credit for herself.⁴ A stills photographer, Rolf Lantin, was appointed and made quite impressive photographs using special filters during the shooting in Bavaria. His photographs were published regularly after 1940 in the German press to keep the interest in the film – and Riefenstahl – alive. A set of photographs, in a luxury binding inscribed “A present to my Führer for his birthday, 1943 – Leni Riefenstahl” was found a few years ago. They were presented and signed “Photographs by Leni Riefenstahl”. Today, some other photographs taken by Rolf Lantin on the set of *Tiefland* are still considered to be photographs made by Riefenstahl and are published as such.⁵

With the photographs that were made during the shooting of the only two feature films she ever co-directed, Leni Riefenstahl added some fiction to reality for the sake of being admired by the Führer as a photographer.

The beginning of a career as a photographer: what’s in a name?

With her name still linked to the Third Reich and Adolf Hitler, and with never-ceasing press coverage due to her, sometimes provocative, sayings like “Canaris was a traitor” or “*Triumph des Willens* is a film about peace”, Riefenstahl remained very well known in Germany in the decades after the end of the war.⁶ In the seventies, she had an unexpected comeback when her books with photographs of Nuba tribes in South Sudan appeared: *Die Nuba, Menschen wie von einem anderen Stern* (1973), *Die Nuba von Kau* (1976) and *Mein Afrika* (1982), all published

in various languages and reprinted to this day, sometimes in very luxurious editions like *Africa* (which contains the photographs of the three books and some extra material) published by Taschen in 2002. This extremely large and heavy book was issued in a limited edition of 1250 signed and numbered copies and sold at a price of 2500 Euros.

The path to getting the photographs she made in Africa in the late fifties and early sixties published was, in fact, quite thorny. In the early sixties, she went to almost all of the editors of major German magazines who, fearing that the name Riefenstahl would give rise to protest, refused to publish any of her hundreds of photograph. The first magazine she found willing to publish a few photographs was *Kristall* in 1964; however, the magazine neither sold well nor was it well-known in Germany. But, Riefenstahl was not the kind of person to give up so easily. At long last, in 1969, the famous *Stern* magazine agreed to publish a few Nuba photographs – one, even on the cover with the title: “Photographs that nobody has ever seen”. Other magazines followed, even abroad, and the name Riefenstahl became linked to photography. This gave her the opportunity to make a few photo series for *The Sunday Times Magazine*.

One was a series of photographs about the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972. The expectations were very high, given the qualities attributed to her film about the Olympic Games of 1936. Although called “Leni Riefenstahl’s Second Olympics”, the colour photographs are similar to enlarged frames from the film *Olympia* and are (with Riefenstahl having less opportunities in the stadium than in 1936) rather disappointing. It is easy to see that the use of colour for a sport event was not yet one of Riefenstahl’s aptitudes. It must have been clear to her as well; the photographs were never republished nor shown in the many photograph books and exhibitions that were, and are, organized all over the world.

Another assignment came from someone Riefenstahl had never heard of, but who was a fan of her films: Mick Jagger. When he married, he could think of nobody else than Leni Riefenstahl to make photographs of himself and his wife. She accepted and went to London where she made several series of photographs; some were published in *The Sunday Times Magazine* in 1974. The colour photographs, just like the ones of the 1972 Olympic Games, were neither published nor exhibited again.

Although the German press was rather negative when the first book with photographs of Africa was published, sales were unexpectedly good and the book, including a translation of the introduction written by Riefenstahl about the Nuba tribes, was published in several countries.

The English version, *The Last of the Nuba*, drew the attention of Susan Sontag who wrote an article with the exquisite sounding title of *Fascinating Fascism*.⁷ According to Susan Sontag, the photographs made by Riefenstahl form the third panel of her fascist triptych, the first being the mountain films and, the second, the films she made during the Third Reich. These three parts also belong to “fascistic aesthetics”.

The way from the documentaries Riefenstahl made during the Third Reich to her photographs can also be seen as a rather accidental one; one objection against Susan Sontag's theory of a logical "triptych" is the fact that more than half of the work of the so-called first and second panel was considered lost until the 1990s and cannot have been seen by her.⁸ Watching this work contradicts various elements of Susan Sontag's theory.

Leni Riefenstahl had been longing for a career in the movies since the early twenties. She acted in six mountain films but was, in fact, quite unhappy with that kind of role which was almost like being an extra: the real characters in these films were the mountains themselves. Riefenstahl had dreamed of working with Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, Joseph von Sternberg, Georg Wilhelm Pabst and so on, but no one seemed interested in working with her. When it became clear that no director would hire her, Riefenstahl co-directed a film with Bela Balasz, *Das blaue Licht*, in which she took the leading role. The press was not enthusiastic and, for Riefenstahl, the "Jewish press" was not honest; she amazed her Jewish friends and collaborators with statements like "As long as the Jews control the press, I will never be successful". A few months later, Hitler came to power and that was to mean success for Riefenstahl; the first film she made for him, *Der Sieg des Glaubens*, was the most viewed film in the 1933–1934 season and the Nazi press had no doubts: Germany had a film director who was at least as important as Sergei Eisenstein. More commissioned films – and more success – followed.

A few years after the end of the war, she tried to make a new film about modern slavery, *Schwarze Fracht* (Black Cargo). She went to Africa with a small crew but did not find the extras she had in mind; very beautiful, tall, strong, black men. According to members of that crew, she actually had no script, no concrete plan and no clear concept although she has explained, over and over again, that she could not make films anymore because producers boycotted her for what she called "the few months I worked for Hitler". The persons who were with Riefenstahl on that film saw how she worked and were not amazed that producers withdrew from the project: without the exceptional infrastructure, financial means and unlimited number of collaborators she had had at her disposal for films during the Third Reich, film making was not an easy thing for her.

However, a few months later she saw a photograph made by George Rodgers in the late forties portraying two African wrestlers in a magazine and these wrestlers were exactly the men she had imagined for her *Schwarze Fracht*. Although that project had been cancelled, Riefenstahl thought: "Why not make a film about the tribe these men belong to?" What she never mentioned, however, is that first she wrote to George Rodgers to ask him where she could find these Nuba wrestlers. George Rodgers, who had photographed concentration camps in Bergen-Belsen at the end of the war, wrote a rather polite answer to Riefenstahl: "Given our very different backgrounds, it is best that we do not have any contact". Riefenstahl decided

to search for them in Africa; at least she knew that they were in Southern Sudan. Riefenstahl describes how dangerous, and especially how hard, it was to find the Nuba tribes and how she “discovered” other Nuba tribes but, according to anthropologists, this is all much exaggerated.⁹ Making a documentary about these tribes also did not seem to become her with the limited budget; it was all in contrast to the facilities she used to have in the Third Reich. It is then that she started making photographs instead of a film; photographs that would be spread throughout the world and which give her a name in the history of photography.

Many photographers and anthropologist have made photographs of the Nuba, yet their work is less known. And, according to one of them, James Faris, it was also meant to be: too much publicity about these tribes could lead to mass tourism that would dramatically change their lives.

The photographs of the Nuba are a lot more sensational than photographs made by others, sometimes long before or after her. Riefenstahl’s photographs are staged, certain rituals that no longer existed were performed just for her photographs; she provided the people with cream for their bodies so they would look better in the photographs and would even pay for “blood”. Some elderly people still had ritual scarring, sometimes on whole parts of their bodies, as decoration. By the time Riefenstahl was with the Nuba, this was no longer a tradition, but she paid people to do it and made many photographs of the making of these body decorations, which involved a lot of blood.

Nuba specialist James Farris has described the texts in her books, which give the impression of being anthropological, as pure nonsense.

To describe the Nuba as people who knew no money, no clothes, only lived with nature and for beauty, the beauty of the body, is more than exaggerated – it is simply the impression she tried to create.

As Riefenstahl described so often, the time she spent with the Nuba was the happiest in her life and the friendship with some of the Nuba the most noble she ever experienced. Yet, her so widely spread photographs had the consequence that the different Nuba tribes became popular tourist attractions in the seventies and eighties leading to a complete change in their way of living.

Leni Riefenstahl went back to the Nuba in the 1970s but found them changed and no longer interesting: “civilization had taken its toll”. She continued scuba diving and photographing – and even started filming – under water and this was to result in the film she presented at her hundredth birthday, *Impressionen unter Wasser*. Her first book about life under water, *Korallengärten* (1978), was almost as successful as the Nuba books but this must have been more due to the name Riefenstahl, and the fact that it was a photography book with almost

no text, than to the quality of the photographs: it is not difficult to find, albeit in a smaller format, numerous similar photographs in books and magazines made by scientific researchers whose names are less well-known. Another point that created a feeling of sympathy for these photographs is the admiration that existed for this woman who continued scuba diving until her death, being the oldest person to do so.

A second book with photographs was published in 1990, *Wunder unter Wasser*. There seemed to be something new in those photographs: they were very clear, such a contrast was hardly ever seen in underwater photography, the colours were extremely lively and the background was uniformly dark instead of being hazy which was usually the case with photographs of the kind at the time. The framing seemed almost perfect. However, when her film was released, it became clear for the viewer who could analyze the film frame by frame that most of these photographs were, in fact, enlarged frames from the film and not real photographs.

By the beginning of 1990s, exhibitions of her work were being organized; one of the first was a very big show in Tokyo in 1992. The Nuba and the underwater photography were in the foreground and one could see references to what seemed to be an overview of her artistic work in pictures: the mountain films and Olympia. All references to the Third Reich, and especially the National Socialist Party rally films, were covered over. Similar shows started taking place in other parts of the world. With the success abroad, an exhibition was organized, at long last, in her own country, in Hamburg in 1997. This was not without protest: a large crowd of people was waiting to boo Riefenstahl who, when notified of this on her way to the opening, went back home.

With each exhibition, a certain collection of photographs was taking on more and more importance: photographs of the Olympic Games in 1936. They were very much admired and the Camerawork Galerie in Berlin organized an exhibition of Olympic photographs in 2000.¹⁰ There was some protest, such as “In 1936 propaganda, now money” but much admiration as well: “Photographs over 60 years old that look so artistic”. There had been an evolution in the acceptance of Riefenstahl in the meantime and she was able to attend the opening. Sales of the “silver gelatine photographs” were unexpectedly high. Similar exhibitions were held in the United States and, later, in other countries. Online sales of signed portfolios containing similar photographs also started.¹¹

In 2000, Taschen published *Leni Riefenstahl. Fünf Leben*, which contained some Olympia photographs, as well as *Leni Riefenstahl. Olympia*, seemingly a reprint of a book that had been published in Germany in 1937. This book, with almost no text, consists of images of the 1936 Olympics and the making of the film *Olympia*. Many of the photographs that were for sale are identical to the ones in this book.

On Leni Riefenstahl's website, which she kept up-to-date until her death (one would wish it was not in red, white and black), one will not find the Olympics she photographed in 1936 under "photographs" but a whole series from 1936; most of them can be seen in the book *Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia*.¹²

The protest, as well as the admiration, actually removed attention from one important question: When and how did Leni Riefenstahl make these photographs?

The film *Olympia*, premiered on Hitler's birthday in 1938, stands as one of the best sport documentaries ever made. The credits of the film are limited to "Directed by Leni Riefenstahl, Music: Herbert Windt". But, in fact, the film was made by cameramen like Willy Zielke who were often talented filmmakers. The film was extremely innovative in sport filming, and is still impressive today for its technical aspects and artistry; however, this was hardly the work of Riefenstahl herself. With all the admiration going to Riefenstahl, the film finally led to some bitterness as well: Willy Zielke who, in 1938 film brochures, was credited with having made the whole prologue (fig. 1), quickly saw his name disappear. The same applies for Hans Ertl who made the most innovative shots.

With her travels abroad and with only one name on the film – hers – Riefenstahl, as a young woman, was admired as a first-rate filmmaker, and sometimes still is for this film. Yet, her role was rather that – thanks to her position in the Third Reich – she could have unlimited financial means and, above all, the talented people she wanted, even when some were reluctant to work for her; however, refusing Riefenstahl was like refusing Hitler.

While Riefenstahl was editing the film with several assistants in 1937, a book, almost entirely of photographs, was published, *Leni Riefenstahl. Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf*. This book contains exactly the same images as the book Taschen published in 2000. However, even if a seemingly exact reprint of this book was published in Germany in 1988, it is very interesting to consult the 1937 edition in order to understand when, and how, Riefenstahl made those photographs. On the very last page of the 1937 book, one finds a few lines that were omitted in 1988 (and also in other versions, such as the Taschen publication). Credits are given to a certain number of people for having chosen frames from the Olympia film and processed them into enlarged frames: "The choice of the frame enlargements from the film was made by Guzzi Lantscher. The work to make the enlargements was done by Gertrud Sieburg and Rolf Lantin."¹³

Yet, an enlarged frame is by no means a photograph.¹⁴ A famous frame published in this book, and one of the first to be sold out at the Galerie Camerawork, is *Der Speerwerfer* (The Javelin Thrower). While running, both of the athlete's feet are above the ground. This could only have been made with a film camera since this is too rapid to be seen by the human eye – not

even in the film. By looking at this excerpt frame by frame, however, one can see the detailed movements of this athlete, almost in Muybride-style. It is even less a photograph by Riefenstahl, since she did not do the camerawork. Moreover, one should consider that *Olympia* was not even her property after the war. In Leni Riefenstahl's last denazification session, the film was described as propaganda made with or without the intention of being so. A company, "Transit-Film", had been created for films of this kind made during the Third Reich and it became their owner. Riefenstahl, however, was the only filmmaker to go to court, claiming that *Olympia* (and also *Triumph des Willens*) was her exclusive property. She did not win the trial but, after several attempts, was granted a percentage of the rights to these films.

One should emphasize that real photographs were made during the Olympics, for publication not only in newspapers and magazines but also in books, including *Was ich bei den Olympischen Spielen 1936 sah* by Dr. Paul Wolff.¹⁵ These photographs are, indeed, of better quality and much sharper than the enlarged frames from *Olympia*; moreover, it is a pity that they have been forgotten in favour of the fake photographs as there is no doubt they can withstand an aesthetical comparison with them.

- 1 Other films are: *Das blaue Licht* (co-directed by Bela Balasz) released in 1932, *Der Sieg des Glaubens* in 1933, *Tag der Freiheit* in 1935, *Tiefland* in 1954 and, finally, *Impressionen unter Wasser* in 2002.
- 2 Based on the research for my book *Leni Riefenstahl: Bergkristallen en Hakenkruisen*, Brussels: A.S.P. 2009.
- 3 The film would never have been realized without the financial help of Harry Sokal. When Hitler came to power less than a year after the release of *Das blaue Licht*, Harry Sokal, a Jew, fled from Germany. After the war he was very bitter about Riefenstahl, because he had supported her in her dancing career as early as in 1923. He had been struck by her anti-Semitism and her admiration for Hitler as from April 1932, which was, for him, the main reason why Nazism attracted her. At that time, however, he was convinced Riefenstahl would change; she had so many Jewish friends, some of them communists, like Bela Balasz. According to him, in April 1932, hardly any of his Jewish friends really thought Hitler would play any political role in Germany. Source: see note 2.
- 4 A few names of directors who worked on *Tiefland*: G.W. Pabst who returned unexpectedly to Germany in 1943, after having left in 1933, Arnold Fanck and Hans Reinl.
- 5 In *Leni Riefenstahl. Fünf Leben*, Taschen, Cologne 2000, we find a mixture of still photographs made by Rolf Lantin and enlarged frames from the film *Tiefland*. They are all presented as photographs by Riefenstahl. The heirs of Rolf Lantin, the family Naundorf living in Paris, are still in court against the "Leni Riefenstahl Produktion" company. Source: letters from C. Naundorf 2005, 2007.
- 6 For an impression of the numerous articles that were published about Leni Riefenstahl, see the bibliography I am still working on and which is growing every month: <http://users.skynet.be/deneulin/books.html> (choose "articles").
- 7 First published in *The New York Review of books*, February 6, 1975, later in a slightly different version in Susan Sontag, *Under the Sign of Saturn*, New York: Picador 1980, 73–105.
- 8 Fanck's two films *Der heilige Berg* (1926) and *Der grosse Sprung* (1927), the original version of *Das blaue Licht* (only rediscovered in 2002), *Der Sieg des Glaubens* (1933), *Tag der Freiheit* (1935). Although the footage Riefenstahl made in Poland during the war for newsreels is still missing, numerous photographs have been found, as well as

Riefenstahl had been able to sell photographs that were really not photographs, she signed them, she gave them an exclusivity aspect like 1/10 or 1/20 and was highly acclaimed for them. However, they are not very exclusive: in one second of film, there are 24 frames, and two frames that follow each other are only very, very slightly different. If the frame following one considered by Riefenstahl as a photograph is taken and enlarged, one gets an almost identical image, which can be presented again as a Leni Riefenstahl photograph and get a 1/20 exclusivity mark.

On all the existing “photographs” still for sale in 2008, the number of prints, as well as the title of the “photograph” (eg. *Der Speerwerfer*), is handwritten by Riefenstahl who then added her signature to make it complete.

Much more than the link Riefenstahl-Propaganda, another link must be made: Riefenstahl-Fake. The example of the Olympic photographs is only one of many, of Riefenstahl claiming credit (and money) for something that was not, or not really, made by her.

documents about the shooting. Susan Sontag also considers *Tiefland* as a pure Riefenstahl product which it is not.

- 9 James Faris, “Leni Riefenstahl and the Nuba” in: *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, no. 13, Oxford 1996, 95–97.
- 10 The Camerawork Gallery sells photographs by people of the calibre of Diane Arbus, Alfred Eisenstaedt, Man Ray, Helmut Newton and Robert Doisneau, to name only a few.
- 11 Olympia photographs are still for sale in the United States; in Gallery Fahey-Klein (Los Angeles) for about \$ 10,000.
http://www.faheykleingallery.com/featured_artists/riefenstahl/riefenstahl_option_frames.htm (August 08).
 See also: <http://www.daco-verlag.de/catalog/fotoeditionen.htm> (August 08).
- 12 Leni Riefenstahl’s site: <http://www.leni-riefenstahl.de/> (August 08);
 Olympic Photographs on that site: http://www.leni-riefenstahl.de/eng/photo/p_olym.html (August 08).
- 13 According to the same source, the book contains some real photographs about the making of the film, mostly with Leni Riefenstahl in the centre of them. Arthur Grimm and Rolf Lantin made them.
- 14 As David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson point out, frame enlargements are of lesser quality than still photography, which is “real” photography. There is often confusion between (production) stills and enlarged frames. Bordwell and Thompson define a still from a film as a photograph taken during the filming; hence, the references in the credits to the person specialized in still photography, the stills photographer. A still will never be exactly the same as an enlarged frame; the conditions should be that they are taken at the same time from exactly the same point of view, which is impossible. If taken just after the shooting a still can be quite similar to a frame of the shot, depending of whether anything has changed to the filmed matter, light, film stock used, etc. See: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art, an introduction*, New York: McGraw Hill 1997, 37–38.
- 15 Paul Wolff, *Was ich bei den Olympischen Spielen 1936 sah*, Berlin: Karl Specht Verlag 1936. It was also published in English under the title *Sport Shots*, New York: William Morrow & Company 1937.

Tamara Berghmans

26 Belgian Identity and Style in the Photography of the Fifties

Introduction

From its very establishment, Belgium has always been a crossroads of different nationalities and cultures. One only has to think of the successive occupations and the impact that neighbouring countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and France, have had on it. In addition to these various influences, Belgium itself is made up of two different cultures with Dutch-speaking Flanders in the north and French-speaking Wallonia in the south. In the field of photography, Belgium was an early adopter of new techniques. In the period between 1950 and 1965, it is clear that modern Belgian art photographers were inspired, consciously or not, by what was happening in photography in the surrounding countries. *Subjektive fotografie*, started by the German photographer Otto Steinert (1915–1978), was a strongly international movement in which Belgian photographers played a distinct role. *Subjektive fotografie* can be defined as a concept, first used by Steinert in 1951, which was a driving force in modern art photography throughout the 1950s. It was not a style as such, but encompassed different sorts of photography: from camera-free experiments to more aesthetic reportage and ranged from figurative to abstract. Experimentation, as well as the photographer's creativity, the importance of the individual, the strong formal viewpoint and the use of specific photographic techniques was central to the movement. The modern photography of different countries had many things in common, but each displayed its own specific identity.

This article will examine, in more depth, the specific identity and style that distinguished modern Belgian art photography in the 1950s. *Art photography* is taken to mean photography specifically intended as art (as opposed to applied and / or reportage photography) thereby rebelling against traditional pictorialist salon photography. The term *modern* is used here in the sense of current, progressive, forward-looking and moving with the times. Modern Belgian art photography of the fifties allied itself to the concept of *subjektive fotografie*. The most representative Belgian photographers of this period were Robert Besard (1920–2000), Pierre Cordier (*1933), Julien Coulommier (*1922), Gilbert De Keyser (1925–2001), Antoon Dries (1910–2004), Marcel Permantier (1918–2005) and Serge Vandercam (1924–2005).¹

fig. 1 Pierre Cordier, *Hommage à Nonyme*, 22/1/76 l.
Chemigramme, 59 x 47.8 cm, signed.
Privat Collection Anna Auer, Vienna.



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Themes and techniques

There is a considerable overlap between the themes of *subjektive fotografie* and the subjects chosen by the Belgian photographers. The emphasis was on nature studies, abstraction, studies of materials and portraits. Subjects such as documentary reportage, architecture, industry and still-life are either absent or infrequent. The modern Belgian art photographers also made notable use of all the techniques of *subjektive fotografie*. This meant that they took pictures from unusual viewpoints and used fragmentation, close-up, selective focus, camera blur, and camera-free photographic techniques such as photograms, cliché-verre and luminograms. In the darkroom, they applied both high black-and-white contrast and more extreme techniques such as solarisation, negative prints, bas-relief, and photomontage or double exposure.

Despite their common styles and themes, the seven photographers are all different: Besard showed a sombre and melancholic world through the portraits of his son; Cordier discovered a new medium in the chemigram (fig. 1); Coulommier brought a unnerving world of plants to life; De Keyser evoked personal emotions through close-ups of materials; Dries explored his vision of the medium through his images of nature; Permantier concentrated on darkroom techniques (fig. 2) and Vandercam's fascination with vision led him to discover a plasticity in everyday objects. As to their quality, it can be said that, viewed in the national context, Cordier, Coulommier, De Keyser, Dries and Vandercam were in the avant-garde, while Besard and Permantier produced interesting work in response to their innovations. In an international context, Cordier, Coulommier and Vandercam could stand alongside avant-garde photographers such as those of *fotoform*, while the others were stronger or weaker followers of the trend and some little more than imitators.



fig. 2 Marcel Permantier, *Visages II*, 1956.
Gelatin silver print, 28,5 x 39 cm. Courtesy of the
artist, Foto Museum Provincie Antwerpen.

Belgian identity

A poetic and emotional tendency was central to modern Belgian art photography in the fifties. The photographers used plants and materials to create a particular sense of alienation. A clammy, melancholic, sombre feeling pervades their images. They were no great theorists but, rather, poets with cameras. They were inspired by Surrealism, but this did not mean that they made surrealistic photographs. They looked for their subjects close to home, in the personal and intimate world of their own gardens and surroundings. Their photographs are often warm images, in which they played with the vagueness of blur and a narrow tonal spectrum. By contrast, the German photography of *fotoform* is more formal and even more experimental. It is more theoretical, colder and more constructed. The influence of the Bauhaus and *Neue Sachlichkeit* is more obvious.

Modern post-war photography in the Netherlands, Italy and France places man at its centre. Although the images were high contrast and formal compositions, they were often photographs of everyday reality. In comparison with Belgian photography, the work of Italian photographers tended to be less experimental and more figurative with an emphasis on the human figure. France was dominated by humanist photography. The camera, the Leica, was an extension of the eye and showed a world in which the engagement and empathy of the photographers was obvious: they wore “their hearts in their eyes”. Despite their formal qualities, the focus was still on reality in both French and Italian photography. It had a clear documentary value, while the Belgian photographers stepped back from everyday reality and their work had no documentary value at all.

André Bazin was responsible for the view – dominant for a long time – that photography was not art. His ideas about the correspondence between the photographic image and reality, the objective quality and the truthfulness of the image, were central to his argument. Bazin’s rather one-sided and undifferentiated way of thinking was diametrically opposed to the view of the modern Belgian art photographers who were trying to create a new world in place of the old. It was not the camera that was paramount in the taking of a photograph but rather the open vision of the photographer; the way in which he saw the world.²

In the Netherlands, there were two movements in photography in the 1950s, represented by the *Nederlandse Fotografen Kunstkring* and the *Vereniging van Beoefenaars der Gebonden kunsten*. Although Dutch photography was open to experimentation – think of Pim Van Os and Livinus van de Bundt – the preference was still for realistic photography. This was in sharp contrast with modern Belgian art photography, in which people hardly figured (apart from a few portraits). Daily life was not documented as it was in the neighbouring countries.

The American photography of Minor White and Aaron Siskind was more in line with *subjektive fotografie* and that of modern Belgian art photography. A clear difference was that the

American work was more spiritual than the Belgian or the German. Like White, the Belgian photographers made emotional and abstract images, in which experimentation played an important role, although White worked in a more theoretical way.

Abstraction

Unlike a painter, who always adds something to his blank canvas, the photographer abstracts images from reality. That is why we can say that every photograph is an abstraction. Even so, there is such a thing as abstract photography. Gottfried Jäger identified three levels: Abstraction of the Visible, Visualization of the Invisible, and Materialization of Pure Visibility.³ By means of specific printing and photographic techniques, such as close-up, selective focus and unusual framing, the Belgian photographers created abstract images in which it was not easy to determine what the original subject might have been. In Coulommier's *D'Ici au vide* for example, a banister rail becomes a many-legged insect from some future industrial era. Dries also worked with close-ups and selective focus to distance his subjects from reality; he played with the structure of objects. De Keyser used the same techniques in his studies of materials (fig. 3). Besard used camera movement and strong simplification obtained by drastically increasing the black / white contrast in printing from the negative and by solarisation (fig. 4). Vandercam played with close-up and with light and shadow to achieve abstract compositions. In most cases, it is still clear what he had photographed but, through the overwhelming plasticity of his images, the original denotation was replaced by a new reality.

Many of the Belgian photographers' pictures were imbued with a sense of dejection. These emotions recur in contemporary painting and music, reflecting the existentialist mood that was a cult among many artists in the fifties. The feelings of loneliness and fear expressed by the images were emphasised by the titles given to the photographs. Belgian abstract photography was part of the much broader post-war modernist movement. Abstraction was an international phenomenon that responded to a particular mood under the call for change after the war.

Some modern Belgian art photographs looked like abstract paintings of lyrical or geometric abstract schools. For instance, Permantier's *Stellage* is a strongly geometrical composition, in which the photographer has played with the rhythm created by a network of intersecting horizontal and vertical lines. However, most abstract compositions still tended towards lyrical abstraction. Photographs, such as De Keyser's *Eclatement* and Coulommier's *L'Image qui avance*, looked like abstract structures leaping off the canvas.

Experimentation

Experimentation means that the artist wipes the slate clean of what previously existed and invents new methods. Here, it is important for the artist to have the freedom to do what he wants. As Christian Dotremont said, an experiment is "the meeting, on the development



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table, between the object, the apparatus, light and the photographer.”⁴ Experimentation was paramount for the avant-garde of the fifties, as it had been for the avant-garde of the inter-war years. Manipulation of images in the darkroom played an important role for many modern Belgian art photographers. Sometimes the boundaries between photography and other disciplines were blurred by the use of various printing methods. Cordier, with his chemigrams, is the prime example. They combined the physics of painting (varnish, oil and wax) with the chemistry of photography (light-sensitive surfaces, developers and fixers). Cordier was neither a photographer nor a painter and used the medium on a meta-level. He used two main strategies; camera placement and lighting⁵ and employed the basic materials of photography in a completely new way. His approach to the photographic process was so drastic that the end result was no longer a photograph. By systematically experimenting, he arrived at a medium of which he was the complete master. The chemigram was also a good example of the interaction that takes place between the material and the artist. In 1950, Dotremont described a number of stages in the evolution of these experimental photographic techniques. The first had been the double exposure. The most recent was frottage.⁶ The material itself became an actor in the creative process. It went into a chemical bath and created better pictures than would have been possible with a lens and the imagination of the photographer. Because, said Dotremont, these materials start from nothing and from that nothing create something new. The photographer and the photographic processes are both active participants in the creation of the image. Instead of just pressing a button, the photographer plays with the processes to create the image. The chemigram can be seen as the next step in this development. In Cordier’s process, the material

fig. 3 Gilbert De Keyser, *Surgissement*, 09.10.1955. Gelatin silver print, 49 x 59.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist, Musée de la Photographie Charleroi.

fig. 4 Robert Besard, *Beweging*, 1955. Gelatin silver print, 39.5 x 30 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

always remains active: "... the material in turn activates itself, it goes into the developer and can create images just as well as the camera lens or the photographer's mind ...".⁷ Cordier handled photographic materials in such a radical manner that they became a new medium.

Vandercam's experimentation lay, largely, in his fresh and graphic way of looking at the world. It occurred mainly during the taking of the photograph. In the spirit of Cobra and Gaston Bachelard, Vandercam felt drawn to physical materials, which he allowed to speak for themselves. These materials became an active ingredient in the photographic process and played a major role in his photographic vision.

The other photographers were principally artists who staged their subjects. They experimented with their cameras but were not truly innovative. They used techniques that had been developed and used earlier, but did not bring anything new to the process. They gave pride of place to their own expressive imagination; for them, the photographer was someone who tried to convey a personal message through the use of specific photographic techniques.

Surrealism

After the war, there was a resurgence of Surrealism in Belgium. It was more deeply rooted in Belgian culture than in that of some other countries such as Germany and Sweden. Nobody in the Belgian art world could escape the conscious or unconscious influence of Surrealism. Whether there were actually any surreal photographs is another question.

Through his friendship with Dotremont, Vandercam was drawn into the Cobra group and became part of the avant-garde art world. His photographs can certainly be seen as reflecting Surrealist ideas like *écriture automatique* (automatic writing) and the exploitation of the accidental as in *hasard objectif* (objective chance). Through the use of such techniques, Vandercam captured the non-rational in his photographs. His spontaneous images evoked associations and created new worlds.

Coulommier was aware of Surrealism from André Breton's manifestos amongst other things. Another important contact was Marcel Broodthaers who, in 1958, supplied titles for a number of Coulommier's works, of which *Le Jardin de la Prison* (fig. 5) is the best known. In this work, it is precisely the interaction between the text (the title) and the image that give it its surreal quality. Broodthaers strengthened Coulommier's photographs by summoning up a surreal world. The other photographers were undoubtedly inspired by Surrealism. For instance Besard's photograph *Entre l'être et le Néant* was making a direct reference to the book by Jean-Paul Sartre. However, the link with Surrealism was not usually made on a theoretical or mental level. It was more popular and easier to resort to 'typically Surrealist' techniques such as solarisation and double exposures.

fig. 5 Julien Coulommier, *Le Jardin de la Prison*, 1954. Gelatin silver print, 38.6 x 30.1 cm. Courtesy of the artist.



Anthropomorphism

Modern Belgian art photography showed a strong preference for nature, vegetation and the organic. However, plants, animals and objects (organic or otherwise) were often given human features in these pictures and made to seem animate. This anthropomorphism can also be found in literature (fantasy or otherwise). For instance, in *Photography* (1959), Coulommier refers to Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* (1915) in connection with the photograph *Le Signal de la plaine*. In Kafka's story, Gregor Samsa turns into a giant insect. The gnawed corn cob in Coulommier's picture becomes a frightening insect covered with spines and sharp edges. The title given to the work also stresses its human qualities. Association was an important factor. Coulommier often photographed maize stalks and felled trees from a low viewpoint and with selective focus, which made them look threatening and frightening. Vandercam photographed more inorganic materials (iron and rock) or *found objects*. Here the plastic quality of the object itself plays a crucial role.

The other photographers made less use of anthropomorphism. In the works of Besard, De Keyser and Dries, the photographed objects represented other things, but they were not human. Nature, materials or humans were more likely to be used in their images to express a particular feeling, such as fear, loneliness, anger or power.

Materials

The modern Belgian art photographers' concentration on materials was remarkable. This is evident through their use of close-ups and choice of subjects; natural materials such as earth, plants, stone, wood and metal. These were substances with an unusual texture and structure that opened up a new world when viewed in close-up. These, often organic and transitory, materials were imbued with a symbolic significance of life, movement, change and death. They represented the life cycle of all organisms: birth, life and death.

For Bachelard, these materials were the basis onto which he imposed each form. There was a need to separate things from their objective appearance; that is to say to separate the images from their concrete reality. The image of the object was dynamic in that it led to the creation of new and different images. The image must cause an explosion of new images invoking a completely imaginary world. In other words, the material played an active role in inspiring the photographer to manipulate the visual world.⁸ Vandercam allied himself with the ideas of Bachelard through his theory of *la tache* (the stain). This stain was formless and was brought to life by the imagination. In photography, the stain was the image revealed to the human eye by the photographic plate. For Vandercam, imagination was the gift of manipulating images rather than simply recording them.⁹

Engagement

In contrast with social reportage, humanist photography and the avant-garde photography of the inter-war years, the work of the modern Belgian art photographers rarely, if ever, displayed any overt social engagement or political preference. There is no explicit social criticism. They

were not reacting against society; their criticism was primarily directed at traditional salon photography. If Steinert's *subjektive fotografie* was a tamed avant-garde movement, then the same can be said of modern Belgian art photography. It lacked the sharp edge and political colouring of the true avant-garde. Even so, the photographers required viewers to abandon their habitual viewpoint. They were reacting against traditional and predictable art. Their view of the world can be seen in the context of the prevailing existentialism of the fifties, to which intellectual and creative processes were subordinate.

Conclusion

Modern Belgian art photography of the fifties is distinctive for its obsession with abstraction, its relationship with abstract art, its emphasis on experimentation, its tradition of Surrealism, its preference for plant life and accompanying anthropomorphism, its interest in materials, and its lack of social engagement. In comparison with their peers in other countries, the Belgians were not theoreticians, but rather intuitive and sensitive photographers who averted their gaze from the everyday human world to concentrate on strongly abstract images which expressed their inner emotional world. They produced dark and melancholic images. Their work displays alienation, fragmentation, subtle creation of mood, and a concentration on textures and materials. Their work employed an autobiographical and subjective approach; they used metaphorical images with a strong formal and aesthetic character. They were inspired by, and admired, Otto Steinert's *subjektive fotografie* but applied this concept in their own individual ways. The modern Belgian art photographers were innovative in their own country and paved the way for a new generation of photographers who could tread the path of art photography, unencumbered by pictorialist traditions.

- 1 This article is based on a part of my research for my PhD dissertation *Research on the Mission and Organisation of Belgian Modern Art Photography between 1950 and 1965. History and Interpretation of Seven Combative Photographers between Tradition and Innovation*, Vrije Universiteit Brussels 2008.
- 2 André Bazin, 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image' in: Alan Trachtenberg (ed.), *Classic Essays on Photography*, New Haven: Leete's Island Books 1980, 237–244.
- 3 Gottfried Jäger (ed.), *Die Kunst der Abstrakten Fotografie*, Stuttgart: Arnoldsche 2002, 33.
- 4 '... la rencontre, sur la table de développement, de l'objet, de l'appareil, de la lumière et du photographe.' Christian Dotremont, 'Les développements de l'oeil. A propos des photographies de Raoul Ubac, Roland d'Ursel et Serge Vandercam', *Points de repère*, no. 1, 1950.
- 5 Andreas Müller-Pohle, 'La Dimension Photographique. Stratégies artistiques contemporaines' in: *Paris Photo. Regards Croisés*, Paris 1997, 14–15.
- 6 Frottage is a technique in which the picture medium is placed on an irregular surface and rubbed with a pencil or wax crayon whereby the texture of the surface creates an effect. In chemical *frottage*, this is done with chemicals.
- 7 '... la matière à son tour s'active, elle entre dans le bain, elle imagine aussi bien que l'objectif de l'appareil et que la tête du photographe...' Dotremont, 1950 (note 4).
- 8 Anna van Waeg, *De Cobrabeweging (1948–1951) en de theorie over de materiële verbeelding van Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962)*, unpublished master degree thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven 1990, 52–58.
- 9 Michel Draguet, *Serge Vandercam ou le regard nomade*, Heerlen: ABP Public Affairs 2002, 11.

Margit Zuckriegl

27 On a New Aesthetics of Terror Photography regards the Pain of Others¹

When the Museum der Moderne Salzburg presented an exhibition with photographs by Joel Meyerowitz from the Jeu de Paume in Paris² focussing on the photographer's work from the 1970s, the show was enlarged by a set of photo-works with the title of "Aftermath".

This was not only to increase the scope and size of the exhibition, but also to demonstrate the wide horizon of a photographic oeuvre that tends to be characterised as "typically American". What could be more "American" in our days than the topic of how to cope with terror and the topography of the visual imagery of terror after 9/11? Or – can there be a discussion on these issues without an "American" contribution?

What started out in the 1970s as an extremely sensitive body of work, sensitive to the sociological changes in society, newly established leisure-time strategies, the increasing role of privacy – namely of the private vehicle in everyday life – found its development in the impressive panorama of Ground Zero depicted by Meyerowitz in the months immediately after the terror attacks on the Twin Towers (fig. 1).

He entered the rigorously restricted zone and gazed at it as if looking at a wounded body. He was convinced that he was following the mission of having to show these pictures to his compatriots, to the people of New York City, to the world. He wanted to create a visual monument, a *memento mori*³ of our time, visualizing the images of the disaster and also conserving them for the future – to ensure that a catastrophe like this could never be forgotten.

In the Salzburg show, the set of large-format colour photographs looked extremely impressive: big, colourful, shiny and pure, presented in a clearly-formulated artistic context; none of the viewers made any comments concerning voyeurism – nobody felt hurt in his or her ethical feelings. But, nevertheless, two issues came up which need to be discussed in detail: Do images of terror have the right to be *nice*; can they be allowed to be *beautiful*? And: Should images of terrible impact be presented in museums and art institutions rather than published in magazines and newspapers?

fig. 1 Joel Meyerowitz, *Grapplers daisy-chaining debris out of the pile at the North Tower*, 2001. C-Print.
Courtesy Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York.



With the provocative statement that “photography (can be) a shock-therapy”⁴ and the quotation of “Krieg der Kriege”⁵ from 1924, the American novelist and photo-historian Susan Sontag poses questions like those mentioned above in her latest book:⁶ How can we cope with the moral impact of cruel and painful pictures. She mentions the example of the Spanish Civil War and, especially, the symbolic fate of the village of *Guernica* to underline the use, or abuse, of (photographic) pictures in the ideologically motivated strategies of a *mise en scène* or tricks of propaganda.

Comparing these issues with the theories in her famous book from 1977 *On Photography*⁷ Susan Sontag poses a central question once again: Are images (war-images) able to stir up the viewers or is the repeated depiction of cruelty more likely to neutralize their feelings? And – can war be abolished in general?

‘Regarding the Pain of Others’ is an essay on photography and photography’s part in the pictorial transmission of war, terror and brutality. It is not astonishing that this text appeared precisely at the moment of the USA’s invasion of Iraq and its attempts to explain their decisiveness to take action, followed by an intended speedy victory, to the world: the old stereotypes of (so-called, necessary) cruelty and legitimate warfare were adopted once again and mobilized with great resolution.

Susan Sontag returns to her initial thesis, asking if images of cruelty can help stop war or – even more generally – avoid future wars. To be brief and honest: the answer is no!

Then, why are war pictures taken? What is the deeper meaning and the purpose for distributing them, publishing them and combining them to form the construction of imagery that is known today as the “mediality of war”? And – probing deeper into the matter – which kind of images are being used for these purposes?

The Imagery of War

War photographs have been taken as long as photography has existed. It has always been the intention to use the most authentic medium available for these kinds of images. Documentary photography seemed to be the medium to be trusted totally to deliver the most “realistic” impression from the war site. A crisis seemed to develop with the discovery that famous photographs had been staged for the shot. This is where a process that drastically anticipated the incommensurability of motive and intention of the digital era began. In times when there

was still trust in photography, everything seemed to be clear: what one saw on a photograph had to be real (or, had to have been real at a certain time). Therefore, this medium could be used, without any scruples, to transport the ideological strategies behind the war-intention: images can be used PRO or ANTI war; they can be part of a programmatic persuasion, but also the basis for campaigns against war.

In art history there is the traditional topos of the “heroic” image: Images of war integrate themselves into the long chronology of war monuments; they could be in the form of paintings, sculptures, architecture, propaganda films and – of course – photographs. History has been written with the never-ending chain of war-pictures, starting in ancient times with the mosaic of the battle of Alexander the Great, up to the statues of victorious generals and military leaders. In history, the face and physiognomy of war has changed along with the changes in society and the place of the individual in a new society. Until the French Revolution, there was no interest in the personal fate of the individual participants in battles and wars; a thoroughly *modern* approach to belligerent activities started with the German-French War of 1870–1871 which led to the awareness of the combatant as a human being. This position (perceptible until World War I) led to a complementary species of war-pictures. Those of interest for Susan Sontag’s essay and similar research depict war as a catastrophe for mankind, show misery and poverty, refugees and the wounded, corpses and tortured bodies. The most famous examples for this are the series of graphic art by Francisco de Goya and Otto Dix – both describing relevant war situations from the past and utilizing these events to anticipate new cruelties in the wars to come: there is always an implication of the previous war in the next one.

The tradition of anti-war images reached its peak with the first global anti-war movement in the 1960s. The Anti-Vietnam activities led to a world-wide protest potential that created its own sociological parameters using slogans such as “Make Love not War” and the typology of the heroic image was transformed from the national war-hero into the brave struggler against the authorities.

The impact of moral responsibility increased and new issues gained in importance: solidarity with underprivileged and oppressed people, ethnic groups and nations developed into a political (not national) category.

Images of war are images of victory or images of defeat; they are images of heroes or images of

victims – and they are means of propaganda FOR war or for enlightened strategies AGAINST war. Anti-war images made a decisive and crucial impact during the Spanish Civil War, for the first time, and later even helped end the Vietnam War.

Susan Sontag characterises the Spanish Civil War as the first conflict in which photography had a central position, not only in respect to the documentation of events and circumstances but, much more important, also in connection with international solidarity and the involvement of intellectuals from western countries. The author explicitly cites an icon of photo-history: Robert Capa's *Cordoba front, 1936*. Although it has already been proven that this photograph was posed in front of Capa's camera, Susan Sontag still tends to stress the importance of the image as an authentic document and remarks that it would lose its meaning if declared as having been staged.

But, could it not be a relief to perceive this photograph simply as a photograph without all the implications behind it? Still, it has to be stated that it was manufactured for a definite purpose: Images like this are spread to arouse the viewer, to create a certain disturbance, to trigger indignation and anger. And – as Susan Sontag vaguely hopes – possibly to make people more sensitive when confronted with the distress of others.

However, that requires a morally responsive recipient. The simple stimulation of voyeuristic intentions is a thoroughly negative development (that, by the way, has generated an enormous business executed by those “specialist business tourists, called reporters”, as Susan Sontag calls them). “Regarding” the pain of others is, therefore, not the same as “watching” the terrified victims, creating shocking images is not the same as telling us about helplessness and dismay.

Aesthetics of Terror

Images of disasters and terror can be seen in the galleries of the Prado and Louvre and no-one has any qualms about them being exposed to a non – or barely – informed audience.

The fundamental distinction between painted or drawn and photographic images can be observed in this fact: painted images of cruelty and terror are primarily perceived as artworks (neglecting their content), photographic images are primarily part of a so-called “realistic documentation” and, therefore, connected with psychological categories including morality, shame and obscenity.

Susan Sontag may have been the last one to demand a separate space for the contemplation of horror photographs. She postulates a certain devotion when confronted with painful images,

because they function as something like a “memento mori”. She rejects the banal display of this sensitive type of image in art magazines, galleries, museums, on billboards, at airports and in vestibules.

One way of presentation – which has made itself felt and, that, not only today – has the completely contrary intention: public images have a broader audience, art galleries guarantee a wider discourse, articles and published images can create something like a network against abuse and injustice. Visual artists, in particular, want to use these forms of presentation to introduce their issues to a broad public.

Joel Meyerowitz also created his own typology of showrooms for the “Aftermath” photographs: first of all, he wanted to exhibit them where everything had happened; an open-air gallery was established at Ground Zero which everybody could walk through and look at Meyerowitz’s images. The photographer created a monument against forgetting; he established an imaginative document that evolves from something into nothingness with all its consequences: at Ground Zero, there was nothing left to look at, it had been turned into a complete *tabula rasa*. People could look at the photographs to reconstruct the remembrance of the buildings that were once there, to ponder the life that had been lost and the horror that had occurred. But Meyerowitz also exhibits his series in galleries and art museums and this leads to a completely different aspect: May pictures of evil and cruel things be beautiful?

The argument that well-made, aesthetically satisfying images could minimize the *shock* inherent in them, or be considered frivolous, opens a broad platform for discussion. In his “Black Box” installation,⁸ William Kentridge erected a veritable “theatre of horrors”: in the middle of the installation was a miniature stage on which drawings, objects, writings moved like actors and transported the sad and cruel story of a genocide. Perceiving the *beauty* of the scenography and the setting, the viewer was overcome by the monstrous and dreadful account of the story. With works like these, we leave the arguments of Susan Sontag behind us; they concentrated on preventing painful pictures from being shown in a commercial or cynical context. Artists like Kentridge and Meyerowitz comment on the *unspeakable* with the *un-showable*: they do not just deliver a (shocking) documentation; it is their aim to leave an enormous field open for the viewers to draw on their own experiences, sorrows and vulnerabilities.

New images of terrifying situations are no longer simply documentations of realistic events (we have already mentioned the crisis of trustworthiness and the parallel crisis of an excess of

documentation) but tend to appeal to a more complex mode of perception: Agnes Matthias⁹ found out that new images of cruelty and war are no longer pictures that reveal cruel deeds or the horrifying face of war but function as a *void*, a mental space that can be filled by the viewer's thoughts and are intended to involve the viewer's personal spiritual processing.

No more heroes

Modern epic war literature no longer knows any heroes or victorious scenarios. The former juxtaposition of winners and victims was based on a Christological iconography: western philosophy and the western religious systems favoured the identity of pain and redemption. Man, with his worries and distress, will find relief in the Lord, the images of martyrs and the suffering God promise help in desperate situations, the corpse of the tortured and defunct Christ promises a better life in the hereafter.

These images have the potential for sharing suffering, so-called "compassio"; can we adapt this category to photographic images of terror?

What may be transferable is the ability of photographs to involve the viewer directly and create an identity of narration and intention: images of war can stimulate the viewer's reflection on

the passion of mankind. And, especially in the artistic context, photographs are perceived as allowing a more complex approach: Jeff Wall's *Dead Troops Talk*¹⁰ is called a "War Fantasy" as it does not tell stories about a specific situation or document a certain event. It is a virtual panorama of the misery of man involved in war and the hopelessness of the individual: trenches, almost like graves, appear in the clearance.

The soldiers are no longer heroes and death is omnipresent. How can something like this become an image? Photography not only has the potential to alter and manipulate situations (as in the mentioned *lying* pictures) but also the possibility of creating atmospheres between the image-immanent objects. It works with, and adopts, the iconographic and iconological patterns of the whole repertoire of the history of art and photography. With these strategies, photographic images can allude to pictorial topoi that are part of our cultural heritage, on the one hand, and deconstruct these systems by importing new categories, on the other. The icy breath of peril is perceived in Jeff Wall's *valley of death*, a deep sadness accompanies Joel Meyerowitz' mournful images. And yet, they are images of the most profound terror: photographs which are more than just documents. They document a hybrid sense of reality in our globalized media-world, where we are more likely to believe an image that definitely does not (only) show reality.

1 The title alludes to the book by Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, New York 2003.

2 Joel Meyerowitz, *Out of the ordinary 1970–1980*, Paris 2006, Salzburg 2007.

3 *Memento mori* (lat.): be aware that you are mortal, from medieval and mannerist iconography.

4 Susan Sontag, *Das Leiden anderer betrachten*, German edition, Munich, Vienna, 2003 (note 1) 21.

5 Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege*, 1924, Munich 2004.

6 Susan Sontag, 2003 (note 1).

7 Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, New York 1977.

8 William Kentridge, *Black Box / Chambre Noir*, Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin, Museum der Moderne Salzburg, 2005–2006.

9 Agnes Matthias, *Die Kunst, den Krieg zu fotografieren*, Marburg 2005.

10 Jeff Wall, *Dead Troops Talk* (A Vision after an Ambush of a Red Army Patrol, near Moqor, Afghanistan, Winter 1986), Slide, Light Box, 249 x 437 cm.

Monika Schwärzler

28 The Rhetoric and Pictorial Logic of Close-ups and their Use in Print Media

In June 2006 George W. Bush was prominently featured on the cover of the Austrian news magazine *profil* (fig. 1). The corresponding heading said, *The Crazy World of George W. Bush. From Alcoholic to US President: How does the leader of the last superpower tick? How fanatic is he really? And how is he viewed by the Austrians?* At that time the opinion of the Austrians seemed to matter because Bush was paying an official visit to Austria and many of the citizens had mixed feelings about his stay. The headline provided a few significant cues concerning Bush's potential image in Austria, but the following analysis will concentrate on the visual presentation of Bush on this *profil* cover.

A close-up of his face was basically crammed into the upper part of the page whereas the headline accompanying the image seemed to be given ample space. His forehead was cropped and superimposed by other verbal messages. In terms of space, the super power's leader appeared severely restricted because he was denied enough space for his presidential authority to fully develop. In that sense, he was indeed "verrückt", which in German can also mean "moved away or pushed out", as in this case of the pictorial center.

The photo was obviously taken in a moment of careless control over his facial features, consequently Bush looked skeptical and clueless. His appearance does not match any expectations of what a dignified statesman should look like. Instead he looks non-probable, not trustworthy, not reasonable. In 19th century psychological studies exaggerated facial expressions were considered an indicator of insanity. Since that time, individuals whose facial body language failed to match behaviour have been viewed as a threat to the concept of autonomous subjecthood.

Along with the psychological impressions of President Bush came of course also a mass of physiological data. The close-up revealed a badly shaved presidential chin, hair growing out of his nose, a downward pointed mouth. There were pores and wrinkles, and due to the uneven lighting, the right half of the face seemed more advanced in terms of aging which further destroyed any impression of symmetry and *good form* or *Gestalt*.

fig. 1 *The Crazy World of George W. Bush*, cover of *profil* no. 25 / 37, 19 June 2006. (photograph: Brooks Kraft / Corbis, Regine Hendrich)

In the print media and news magazines images are of course only one component of an overall strategy to convey a particular message. Visuals are supposed to support the main arguments of the journalistic text and to illustrate the points made there. In that respect the highly polemical view of the American president on the *profil* cover can be accepted as an extra service to the reader. A glance at the frontpage provides information about the general orientation of the articles presented in the journal.

For example, one of the featured stories presents a kind of psychogram of the president. Justine Frank, expert in the field of Applied Psychoanalysis, a discipline which was in the past instrumental in creating psychostudies of enemy statesmen, elaborates on his telediagnosis of Bush. In this article – it carries the symptomatic title *Bush on the Couch*¹ – he contemplates the particular defaults and handicaps of this potential patient. His diagnosis topples the symbolic phallic father figure of a nation and dismantles the formerly upright figure of an important role model. This strategy is pursued on a level of text and image.

In that sense, the objectified and horizontal president on the couch and Regine Hendrich's close-up of the president's face form a perfect match in a journalistic discourse.



Excessive Media Discourse

Instead of concentrating on the polemical aspect of unfavourable close-ups in the print media I want to shift the focus of my attention and attempt a reading that takes the destructive energy behind these denigrating views seriously. My point would be that unfavourable close-ups of the sort described above are not just manifestations of a particular criticism but acts of excess in which journalism celebrates the destruction of its own idols. To support my argument I would like to refer to Georges Bataille² and his understanding of economic and energetic processes. According to Bataille, all systems – and journalism would be a meaning system – are fueled by

the abundance of energy available on earth. They assimilate energy and turn it into production, or growth and expansion of the system. Still, the capacity of any system to bind energy and use it productively is limited. At a certain point, energy as a limitless source that exceeds any possible economical context regains its anarchic, unbound status and creates waste, loss, and destruction. The exuberant energy which can no longer be held at bay by the system eventually subverts it and an orgiastic, liberating type of force is released.

My thesis is that in the case of these distorted close-ups, the media industry decomposes its own fabrications. The destructive energy involved defies cultural sublimation and subsequently creates the abject. The same energy or concern that went into the making of a socially acceptable public image that communicates effectively in the print media now goes wild and turns against its own product. These unflattering close-ups are orgies, the other side of the effort to establish a positive image for well known faces. Something excessive and cathartic seems to manifest itself in this attempt to distort what formally was created. In an act of aggression they are blown up and thrown right into the face of those they were meant to please. Distance is replaced by radical closeness and the logic and laws of consumption seem to undergo an archaic revision. In a cathartic act, the print media apparatus seems to free itself from the restrictions of its own pictorial standards and conventions.

Constructing iconic faces

In order to deconstruct images the media industry first has to build them up. Spurred on by an insatiable need for iconic images, an effort has to be made to deeply ingrain certain portraits in the consciousness of the public. That requires a repetitive act of presenting certain images over and over again and a coordinated effort to make them easily recognizable.

In this connection Claus-Christian Carbon's research paper *Famous faces as icons. The illusion of being an expert in the recognition of famous faces*³ developed at the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Vienna could prove especially insightful. Carbon basically worked with two pools of faces – famous faces and personally familiar faces. The 70 test persons involved were assigned the task to identify these images. As it turned out, the processing of famous faces was quite impressive when the test subjects were confronted with well known and extensively introduced versions of a famous face. A good example of such an image is Alberto Korda's highly popular photograph of Ernesto Che Guevara. When the testpersons were confronted with unfamiliar, less promoted views of a celebrity identification

performance dropped strongly. Images of *Che* with an altered hair style, of Cindy Crawford without her beauty spot or of the pope without his Pileolus posed problems for the persons asked to identify them.

The conclusion that Carbon draws from these results is that “the successful processing of famous faces might depend on icons imbued in society but not the faces as such.”⁴ He points out that although we all consider ourselves experts in terms of face processing we are in fact only good at icon processing which is “for the most part pictorially rather than structurally based.”⁵ With images of personally familiar people the results were significantly different. The participants in the tests recognized these faces even if the identification job had to be done “under very restricted quality conditions”⁶ or very quickly. They recognized the individuals depicted even if the photographs were from different stages of their lives or if the views had been altered. With first hand experience or the corresponding memory of a person, the rate of identification errors turned out to be significantly lower.

It seems to be the job of the media industry to reinforce this iconic identification by etching a particular version of a prominent face into the viewer’s memory. This conditioning of the viewer happens in the form of visual bombardement and an excessive distribution of certain images. At the same time the energy involved seems to fuel a highly selective and restrictive process. To launch iconic images is a very exclusive endeavour and it is essential for its success that the process of dissemination is kept straight and controlled. A great deal of energy seems to be needed to create easily identifiable forms, pictorial and cognitive patterns, but as Bataille would say, once the energy can no more be assimilated, it will subvert the system and break up the medial casts and contrived forms circulating there. My point is that with really well introduced iconic views of famous people the insult of this dismantling is most felt. In the course of this auto aggression of the media industry against its own fabrications the recipient of such unfavourable images cannot but become aware of the constructed nature of any media product.

The formless, the waste, the object of the media system

These crushed and shapeless forms can be compared with Georges Bataille’s *informe*. It is the unassimilable waste created by any system respectively by a surplus of energy which in the long run escapes any structure of giving form or meaning.



fig. 2 Alfred Gusenbauer. *Main Thing Chancellor*, cover *profil* no. 2 / 38, 8 January 2007. (photograph: Georges Schneider)

fig. 3 George Clooney. *Talking Dirty*, cover *International Herald Tribune Style Magazine*, Spring 2008. (photograph: Jean-Baptiste Mondino)

In another example of this process, I will attempt a reading of an Alfred Gusenbauer image presented on a cover of *profil* shortly after he was nominated Austrian chancellor in January 2007 (fig. 2). The headline *Main Thing Chancellor* refers to the fact that the Socialist politician had agreed to many revisions of his original promises in order to ensure his chancellorship through an agreement with the Conservative party. On the title page Gusenbauer looks foolishly happy. If substantial individuals are identifiable by clear facial contours and solidly rendered features, Gusenbauer's face is of almost liquid or fluid nature. There is a certain indeterminacy or vague resemblance with the familiar version of the face that characterizes this close-up. His head that protrudes from a uniform black background is reminiscent of a shallow disc which serves as a surface of random facial performativity. In the headline the question is posed whether the Socialist Party, and at that time Gusenbauer was its leader, "is selling its soul for a big coalition". The fragmented head floating above these lines cannot contain anything because it represents an open form. How could such an individual possibly have a soul, not to mention all the other properties that would guarantee respectable status to a person? The lighting can be described as, what Rosalind Krauss calls, "wild light"⁷, "... producing the subject ... as a stain rather than a *cogito*, a stain that maps itself ... onto the world's picture."⁸ In her elaborations on the formless and Cindy Sherman's work in particular she writes,

"This scattered light, which sometimes takes the form of abrupt highlights on bits of flesh or fabric popping out of an opaquely undifferentiated darkness ... acts to prevent the coalescence of the Gestalt."⁹

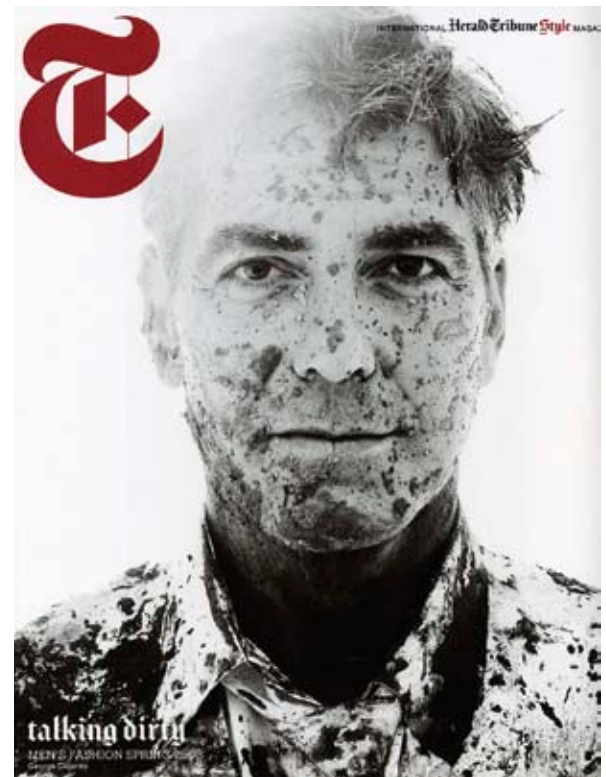
Thus the media practice of creating alienating views of well introduced public figures confuses communication and interferes with identification. This has psychological consequences for the beholder of such images. How does he / she react to this overdetermined form of pictorial rhetoric? In these polemically distorted close-ups, an assault against the positive and pleasant form is launched and a surplus of destructive and image eroding energy makes itself felt. As Rosalind Krauss points out, Gestalt as the "good form" in terms of geometry, morphology, and cognitive unity has always been a construct. The apparently well centered centers the beholder, the so called well-built stabilizes its onlooker, what we agreed to perceive as a whole allows the viewer to become complete. "For no matter how riven the body is, between up and down, front and back, and right and left, and thus how unequal the spatial coordinates, it is the centering of the conscious subject through the experience of the Gestalt itself as centrally organized image that is continually mapped onto the perceptual field."¹⁰

In that sense, images like the Gusenbauer or Bush close-ups destabilize the viewer not just on a surface level of perception but also on a more precarious level of existential balance. Of course, this creates fear, rejection and aggression on the part of the viewer and the print media most efficiently uses these psychological undercurrents to create hostility and aversion against certain people. Visuals are an important component of such manipulative practices. However, from the perspective of Bataille, individuals do not just fear the excess implied in these distorted close-ups but they also desire them and wishfully anticipate the devastating effect that the excessive might have on their framework of normality. To get rid of role models, figures of admiration and the straightjacket of pictorial norms can indeed be liberating and that may also explain the laughter of people as a possible reaction to such unfavourable images.

The digital making of the informe

The Spring 2008 cover of *International Herald Tribune Style Magazin* presents a Jean-Baptiste Mondino picture of the American actor George Clooney (fig. 3). The caption says “talking dirty” and on the photograph there is dirt covering the actor’s face and body. It is dirt that looks like a rash. The dirt particles are reminiscent of an infection that slowly erodes the perfect façade. Uncontrollable organisms seem to grow on him. They invade the facial territory and bite into the smooth façade. Their expansion and exuberant growth are especially disconcerting considering the Clooney face as a perfect projection screen for male beauty.

In Mondino’s version the Clooney portrait deviates strongly from the usual, well introduced iconic images of the filmstar. Clooney as a brand name in film industry stands for a slightly ironical or amused look on his face, perfect hairstyle, and an elegant clothing. On the *Herald Tribune* cover the womanizer’s normally perfectly combed hair is messy, and partly grey. His neck which juts out of a formerly „three-piece white cotton-and-linen suit, made to measure cotton shirt and tie“¹¹ is black with dirt and suggests a dirty job. The lighting is also special because it seems to hit Clooney’s head more by coincidence. It is definitely not the sort of lighting which brings out the best in movie stars. As an outcome of this random lighting, the outlines of the upper right part of his head dissolve and make the perfect oval of this famous face unlimited. Due to the lighting, the actor’s right ear becomes an alienating body part. It is the type of light that Rosalind Krauss relates to the luminosity and gaze structure as developed by Jacques Lacan. In his understanding, the gaze emanates from everywhere and is not



locatable. Lacan compares it to the impartial eye of an observation camera but of course this recording apparatus does not proceed in the manner of a professional photographer. Clooney seems to be unexpectedly captured by this agent of visibility which would mean that he is not in control of his visual rendition and the shaping of his public persona. To those who are familiar with Clooney images this does not feel right. It is not enough that the star is splattered with dirt and that his Ralph Lauren outfit is severely ruined, there is also the prospect that this gentleman might be “talking dirty”. With this heading the sexual connotations of such an excessively deconstructivist view of a filmstar becomes explicit. Everything hints at low level satisfaction and a liberation from the constraints of sublimation. Playing in the dirt, soiling oneself, carrying the physical marks of transgression – this is what the image signals.

As further research on the photographer reveals, Jean-Baptiste Mondino is a master of digital manipulations.¹² In his more recent photo series “mutilations” he digitally transformed some of the highest-paid faces from the world of models and stars. He for instance presented Shalom with a black eye, Nadja with her throat slit and he covered Kristen McMenamy’s body with scars. Apparently most of the models vetoed the publication of these images. In the case of the image featured on the *Herald Tribune Style Magazin* cover, George Clooney most willingly seems to lend Mondino his façade for his digital operations. He fearlessly handed himself over to an experiment that would not hurt or create any bodily discomfort. As Clooney’s self confident posture and the expression of his eyes indicate, he agreed to this digital assault on

one of the outer layers of his persona. Two media professionals cold bloodedly decided to stage something which looks like old fashioned body and soul shaking excess and to generate a possible version of the *informe*.

In connection with my argumentation, I believe the Mondino images of Clooney can be taken as a critical comment on print media practices. They both collaborated on a project of reflection upon the destructive energies which lie at the bottom of all the media attempts to generate appealing and sexy images. It can happen at any time, to a film star, a politician, a society lady. The image producing media machinery can cancel its contract of loyalty and subsequently destroy what it brought first into form. Of course, in most of the cases these distorted close-ups are embedded in a journalistic context which rationally justifies the polemically changed views of a person. My point would still be that there is something highly irrational about the verve with which these pictorial assaults are launched. In these medial fits of boredom and annoyance with its star and idol imagery, a type of energy breaks free which is cathartic. There is more at stake than just polemics. In the course of the demontage of iconic images, pictorial agreements prevailing in our society and conceptions of subjecthood are cancelled and called into question.

In times of digital image production this transgression seems to be easy to achieve – and George Clooney obviously enjoyed it.

- 1 R.M., 'Bush auf der Couch', *profil*, no. 25, June 2006, 117.
- 2 Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writing, 1927–39*, University of Minnesota Press 1985.
- 3 Claus-Christian Carbon, 'Famous faces as icons. The illusion of being an expert in the recognition of famous faces', *Perception*, vol. 37, 2008.
- 4 Carbon, 2008 (note 3) 801.
- 5 Carbon, 2008 (note 3) 801.
- 6 Carbon, 2008 (note 3) 801.
- 7 Rosalind E. Krauss, 'The destiny of the Informe' in: Yve-Alain Bois, Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless. A User's Guide*, New York 1997, 242.
- 8 Krauss, 1997 (note 7) 242.
- 9 Krauss, 1997 (note 7) 242.
- 10 Krauss, 1997 (note 7) 89.
- 11 *International Herald Tribune Style Magazine*, Spring 2008, 8.
- 12 www.lumiere.com/fashion/96/01/mondino/interview.html (06.06.08).

Gabriele Hofer

29

Nature, Culture and the Reflective View on the Landscape Photography of the Becher School

“Art is not as much a sign of nature as it is of art.”¹

“When we ‘see’ a landscape, we situate ourselves in it.”²

In addition to the portrait, the thematic reference to nature and the landscape is one of the central iconographic focuses of contemporary artistic photography. Since the 1990s, the representatives of the so-called new German school of photography around Bernd and Hilla Becher have devoted themselves to the motif of the “landscape” – and, in this way, have initiated a new, media-reflective, discussion on the youngest of the traditional pictorial genres – which, as a reference system in art history, has long become obsolete in contemporary art. The following text is devoted to this phenomenon and attempts to investigate selected artistic positions in respect to their photo-historical points of reference and their underlying landscape concepts.

Depictions of the landscape, particularly photographic ones, must always be understood in their close relationship to a socio-cultural understanding of nature and the respective, historically given and offered, pictorial possibilities. As Manfred Smuda stated: “The landscape is always nature, perceived and depicted through a lens of ideas, values and norms whose origins must be looked for in the historical subject.”³ Modern nature aesthetics defines the landscape as aesthetically perceived nature, whereby the view – the visual sense – assumes a central role. In his essay ‘The Philosophy of Landscape’, from 1912–1913, Georg Simmel wrote: “The dividing and divided view of the person, which creates special entities, reconstructs nature to form the individuality of the ‘landscape’.”⁴ And, he is convinced that “There, where we no longer see the sum of individual natural objects, but really a landscape, we are witnessing a work of art in statu nascendi.”⁵ In this manner, Simmel stresses the pictorial character of the landscape compared with the reality of nature. Landscape, therefore, constitutes itself as a formal phenomenon when a section of nature is observed as a self-contained entity as if bordered by an imaginary frame. In his influential essay, ‘Landscape. On the Function of the Aesthetic in Modern Society’,⁶ first published in 1963, Joachim Ritter analyses the

fig. 1 Axel Hütte, *Portrait #14*, 2004.
C-Print, 110 x 140 cm. Sammlung Essl,
VBK Vienna, 2008.



historical conditions which led to an aesthetic visualization of nature. According to his thesis, the landscape functions as an aesthetic surrogate for the once self-contained, cosmic, world view that conclusively disintegrated in the wake of the objectivization of nature by science and technology that set in at the start of the modern age. Experiencing nature as landscape, therefore, was a result of the dissociation and alienation of modern man and his way of life from nature. Therefore, the fact that the landscape, with all its facets ranging from apparently untouched to cultivated nature, has remained one of the central topics in the arts is in no way coincidental. Werner Flach made the pointed comment that “Something that has its constitutive genesis in fundamental aesthetic principles cannot be alien to art. In a manner of speaking, it must offer itself to be used by art.”⁷

The landscape is of only marginal importance in the oeuvre of Bernd (1931–2007) and Hilla Becher (*1934) whose uncompromising, conceptual work since the early 1960s has played an important role in establishing photography’s place in contemporary art. However, the subject of industrial landscapes is continuously present in their work. In addition to the very famous abstract typologies composed of isolated architectural objects, the artist couple repeatedly created photographic documentations of industrial plants in their entirety. Bernd and Hilla Becher already began photographing industrial landscapes – such as mining complexes and coking plants, embedded in the landscape or urban surroundings – in the late 1950s. In this way, they aimed at establishing the individual objects in their functional and geographic overall context with compositional aspects playing a central role: “There are absolutely specific criteria for the individual objects which make it possible to reproduce the forms accurately. However, the landscape is like a piece cut out of wallpaper that needs to be composed – even when being enlarged after the shooting.”⁸ With their landscape-related, black-and-white, photographs, Bernd and Hilla Becher follow in the landscape tradition of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) of August Sander (1876–1964) and Albert Renger-Patzsch (1897–1964) in the 1920s and 30s – who also created part of their work in the Ruhr area.

Even before Bernd Becher was appointed professor at the State Art Academy in Düsseldorf in 1976, he and his wife participated as the only European artists in the “New Topographics” exhibition, held in 1975 at the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, which proved to be a milestone in the history of contemporary landscape photography. William Jenkins was the curator of this exhibition with the significant subtitle of *Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape* that presented, then young, positions dealing critically with, mostly suburban, landscape forms that had been changed by civilization or industry. Artists, including Robert Adams (*1937), Lewis Baltz (*1945), Frank Gohlke (*1942) and Stephen Shore (*1947), investigated the apparently unattractive, insignificant motifs on unspectacular urban peripheries; everyday, run-of-the-mill functional architecture and industrial waste land. Consciously disassociating themselves from a form of photography that made a hero of, and dramatized, the American landscape – as in the works of Ansel Adams

fig. 2 Thomas Struth, *Paradise 2 (Pilgrim Sands)*
Daintree / Australia, 1998. C-Print, 171 x 217 cm. Courtesy
Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg / Vienna, Sammlung Essl.





(1902–1984) – this young generation of photographers, who were later to become so stylistically influential, oriented themselves on the objective, commissioned American documentary style of photography of the nineteenth century.⁹ In this way, they defined a new view of the American landscape far removed from classically beautiful depictions and the glorification of an, apparently untouched, sublime nature.

Bernd and Hilla Becher became personally acquainted with Stephen Shore – who had worked in colour since 1971 and, along with William Egglestone (*1939), was one of the most influential revivers of artistic colour photography – in 1973. They thought highly of his work and made their early students at the *Düsseldorf Academy* – including Alex Hütte (*1951) and Thomas Struth (*1954) as well as, somewhat later, Andreas Gursky (*1955) and Boris Becker (*1961), who were all to deal with the landscape in their own specific manner – familiar with the developments in America.¹⁰ Stimulated by the Bechers, these young artists, who took on their team of teachers’¹¹ objectively clear pictorial language, as well as a conceptual, reflexive approach to photography, came into contact with an expanded concept of the landscape that included socio-cultural and economic contexts, as well as the varied interactions between man and his environment.

It seems that Andreas Gursky was already aware of contemporary American photography – in particular, the works of Robert Adams – before starting his studies at the *Düsseldorf Academy*; probably through his teacher at the *Folkwang School* in Essen, Michael Schmidt (*1945).¹² Gursky, initially attracted by the subjective photography of Otto Steinert (1915–1978), studied there, with the intention of becoming a photo journalist, between 1978 and 1981. Today, he probably is the most prominent and most successful of Bernd and Hilla Becher’s students on the art market and, with his preference for the individual picture over the production and presentation of self-contained thematic series, was the first of them to distance himself from the strictly serial methods of his teachers.¹³ Andreas Gursky was also the first to devote himself to the landscape – and that, during his studies – whereby he formulated an understanding of the picture through the conceptual and compositional union of nature, man and architecture going far beyond pure depictions of the landscape. Gursky is not concerned with the depicted subject per se, nor with the social or cultural-political aspects which could be associated with it, but with “visual moments of modern validity”¹⁴ and their artistic investigation in the photographic picture. The 1984 landscape *Klausenpass* marks an important turning point in this direction; according to Peter Galassi, it is the artist’s first mature picture. The impressive view of a Swiss mountain saddle shows massive rock formations with a green mountain slope in front being ascended by tiny human figures.¹⁵ This photograph amalgamates the typical future conceptual characteristics of Gursky’s pictures – a wide angle from far away, together with a precise depth of field, a wealth of well-balanced details that are especially effective in large formats, and a compositional balance and clarity – clearly oriented on historical models. As the artist stresses, human figures, usually shown in groups, and their constellations, play a key role in the picture:

fig. 3 Boris Becker, *Lac de Dixence*, 2003.
C-Print, 140 x 235 cm. VBK Vienna, 2008.

“The pure landscape does not stimulate me, but the people appearing in it. ... But, I have always shown the people in such a static moment that makes it possible to observe and reflect on the nature around them through their eyes. That applies to today’s pictures even more than older ones.”¹⁶

Gursky’s pictorial strategies are based on his passionate interest in the modern, mass phenomena of civilization. His coolly constructed civilization landscapes convey an impression of monumentality and an ordered global landscape – even faced with highly complex realities (fig. 4). However, they always necessitate a reflection on the graphic nature and status of the picture. Jeff Wall (*1946), whose work was intensively studied by Gursky, takes a similar outlook when he states that: “I make landscapes, or cityscapes as the case may be, to study the process of settlement, as well as to work out for myself what the kind of picture (or photography) we call a ‘landscape’ is.”¹⁷ Essays on Gursky’s work repeatedly deal with the connections between his pictorial concepts and models from the history of art – in particular, landscape pictures from German Romanticism, such as those by Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), as well as works by abstract and minimalist artists including Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), Barnett Newman (1905–1970), Donald Judd (*1928) and Gerhard Richter (*1932). According to Gursky, the analogies are more coincidental than planned because “a general stock of pictures exists in the history of art which everyone, consciously or subconsciously, falls back on.”¹⁸ His work could, therefore, be interpreted as a reflection on the theory that the conception and perception of the landscape is fundamentally formed by pictures from the history of art and the media. As his work developed, Gursky’s desire for abstraction has become increasingly radical – amplified by the possibilities of digital processing, which he has used intensively since 1992. In this connection, one of the most radical examples is the 1999 landscape picture *Rhine II*.¹⁹

Boris Becker, one of Gursky’s fellow students between 1984 and 1987,²⁰ is also predominantly interested in abstract pictorial concepts. Following photographic works dealing with architecture, such as the typological *High Bunker* series and depictions of urban residential and commercial buildings – the latter being the first in colour – Becker turned towards landscape motifs for the first time in 1994 with the *Fields* series where he focussed on the individual picture. Here, the depiction of topographically identifiable locations does not stand at the core of his pictorial approach but the investigation of purely formal structures. Becker’s practice of abstracting elements of colour and the surface and condensing them to, sometimes radically, abstract compositions is evidence of an understanding of the picture going far beyond the category of the traditional portrayal of the landscape. For Boris Becker, “in a certain way, the motif of the picture is only a secondary constructional element in the picture.”²¹ He is much more concerned with exploring “the tense relationships between a depiction of everyday reality and its figurativeness.”²² And, the motifs, devoid of human life, in the *Fields* series really do appear to be everyday – in the sense of being banal and sober. Harvested grain fields, furrowed acreage and snow-covered pastures – in short, agricultural natural spaces, usually with traces of

fig. 4 Andreas Gursky, *Rimini*, 2003.
C-Print, 292 x 201 cm. Sammlung Essl,
VBK Wien, 2008.



being worked by man – are shown using a reduced palette of colours. The pictures, with their extreme depth of field, strong cropping, usually *allover* shots without a horizon, are evidence of the artist's reflexive, analytical position. In his recent works, Boris Becker brings his decisive confrontation with the subjects of architecture, construction and nature – which is never pristine – together. The series of photographs of Swiss mountain landscapes created in 2003 reflect on the meshing of alpine nature and technical advances – such as ski lifts and dams – without tending towards any form of criticism of civilization.²³ (fig. 2)

The conceptual confrontation between natural and architectural spaces also plays a central role in the early landscape pictures of Axel Hütte. After 1988, Hütte – one of the Bechers' earliest students²⁴ – created a series of Italian landscapes in which the architectural set-pieces – especially framing elements such as cut walls, columns or views through a window – and the agricultural environment are placed in a reciprocal relationship to each other. In keeping with his aim of creating pictorial spaces to investigate the experience of seeing, these works must be regarded as a reflection on fundamental notions of modern nature aesthetics on the constitution of the landscape. Here, Axel Hütte quite consciously draws on models from the history of art, on pictorial concepts developed in the Renaissance. The artist's tendency to empty his motifs and devoid them of spatiality, always coupled with the intention to irritate accustomed patterns of perception, can be seen especially clearly in his handling of the pure landscape. For Hütte, it is important to capture “the uniqueness and aura of a landscape”²⁵ and he has visited all continents since the 1990s²⁶ in order to develop the greatest number of viewpoints and pictorial structures possible for the widest range of landscape forms. The spectrum of his motifs ranges from seemingly virgin mountain formations in high-alpine regions and rugged icebergs to tropical rainforests and barren desert areas. In the literature, a connection is often made between Axel Hütte's works, with their extremely subtle colouration and composition, romantic landscapes of inner life and a sense of the sublime.²⁷ Guido de Werd's description of this is especially apt: “His contemporary way of seeing things finds expression in works which oscillate between realistic understatement and Romantic exaggeration.”²⁸ Hütte has achieved an enigmatic, poetic overlapping of the landscape, portrayal and reflection in his new series entitled *Portraits* (fig. 1). Here, once again, the examination of visual methods of perception and the resulting reflective approach to the picture and reproduction stand at the heart of the matter.

Not only Hütte's sublime landscapes are characterized by the absence of any socio-cultural references, this is also especially noticeable in Thomas Struth's series *Paradises*.²⁹ This group of extremely large-size works has been created in Australia, China, Japan, Brazil and Germany since 1998 and must be seen as a further development in his confrontation with depictions of the landscape and plants which began in 1991/93 and was principally aimed at a reflection on the common pictorial conventions of the genres. In his *Paradises* pictures (fig. 3), Struth concentrates on portraying convoluted, labyrinthine jungle and forest sequences in

fig. 5 Elger Esser, *Beg er Lan, Frankreich*, 2006.
C-Print, 140 x 181 cm. Sammlung Essl,
VBK, Wien, 2008.



a concentrated formal-aesthetic all-over structure. The artist himself, working here with the topos of an unspoiled nature, interprets these impenetrable, chaotic paradises as “unconscious places” thereby creating a connection to his early pictures of the architectural landscape of large cities.³⁰ This shows that Struth’s concept is far removed from any romantic escapism or exoticism. His creations are much more characterized by a contemporary spectrum of motifs that – explicitly or implicitly – repeatedly reflects on the landscape and the interrelationship between nature, man and culture.

Elger Esser’s (*1967) landscape pictures, on the other hand, eliminate pictorial elements that indicate the present as far as possible (fig. 5). The confrontation with the traditions of the classical genres of the veduta and landscape in the history of art and photography forms the core of his work. In this respect, the artist – a member of the most recent generation of Becher students³¹ – is interested in imparting a sense of being beyond, or outside of, time which he achieves through classical compositional forms and subtly, faded colouration. Since the late 1990s, he has mainly created large-format photographs of lakes, city scenes and the natural environment on his extended journeys through Italy, France, Scotland and the Netherlands. The artist states that: “I try to capture them in their particular tone, that in terms of mood, smell and sound they correspond to my feeling for this particular place”³² and, in this way, makes it clear – completely in the sense of romantic concepts – that landscapes are always the conveyors of a mood. Elger Esser is interested in literary, philosophical and art-historical texts on the perception of nature and the landscape and indulges in a lyrical pictorial language. His method is less documentarily than pictorially creative. And, even if it seems paradoxical, it is precisely this so aggressively executed construction of a picturesque romantic atmosphere that reveals Esser’s connection to the Becher School: “Traces of the project that Bernd and Hilla Becher began in the 1970s as objective, documentary photography live on in the form of pin-sharp, precisely composed, panoramas which appear unreal – as if dreamed.”³³ In his recent work, the artist mainly draws on his collection of French picture postcards from the early twentieth century to refer to mass-produced reproduction of landscape motifs. He greatly enlarges details of these hand-coloured picture postcards, produced using heliography or photogravure, digitally and, in this way, introduces a media-reflective investigation on the representation and status of the picture.

References to the spectrum of motifs of the landscape also play a central role in the work of the younger protagonists from around Bernd and Hilla Becher. Simone Nieweg (*1962) has consistently dealt with the unpretentious photographic recording of gardens, meadows, fields and woods in the vicinity of her hometown of Düsseldorf and in France since the late 1980s.³⁴ The artist not only aims at depicting unspectacular agricultural acreage, but also at an examination of the “cognitive possibilities of the medium itself”.³⁵ Depictions of the landscape form the central foil on which Bernhard Fuchs’ (*1971) objective, dignified portraits of people living in the countryside develop.³⁶ He deals with parked vehicles in a similar manner in his – still incomplete – series of *Autos* (fig. 6). In a succinct way, Fuchs captures parked cars

fig. 6 Bernhard Fuchs, *Blauer Passat, Herzogsdorf*, 2004. C-Print, 40.4 x 50.7 cm. Landesgalerie Linz, öö Landesmuseen, Bernhard Fuchs.



6

in the context of their specific landscape environment leading to an interrelationship that is not without a degree of gentle irony. On the other hand, Michael Reisch (*1964), who studied with Bernd Becher in 1991,³⁷ has made the virulent field of tension between construction and the reality of the landscape the real subject of his work. Using computer processing, he creates a hyper-real, deserted natural environment that scrutinizes the imaginary, ideal pictures of apparently unspoiled landscapes spread by the media, in an irritating fashion.

Summing up, it can be determined that the spectrum of motifs of the landscape – no matter how dominant it is in the work of individual artists – is never an end in itself but always a point of departure for a reflexive appreciation of the picture and media. The discussed positions all explore the problems of photographic figurativeness and, at the same time, reflect on the landscape as a cultural artefact, no matter whether they devote themselves to the depiction of cultivated or natural landscape forms. From that point of view, the works presented here can be interpreted as artistic reflections on landscape theories completely in accordance with Max J. Friedländer's statement that: "The land is 'the thing itself', landscape its appearance."³⁸ In addition, precisely the theme of the landscape demonstrates the range of the individual differences in the work of the group of artists from the circle around Bernd and Hilla Becher who are, much too often, considered to be homogeneous.

- 1 Hans Belting, 'Die gemalte Natur' in: Christian Beutler, Peter-Klaus Schuster, Martin Warnke (eds.), *Kunst um 1800 und die Folgen. Werner Hofmann zu Ehren*, Munich: Prestel 1988, 176.
- 2 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1972, 11.
- 3 Manfred Smuda (ed.), *Landschaft*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1986, 8.
- 4 Georg Simmel, 'Philosophie der Landschaft' in: Rüdiger Kramme, Angela Rammstedt (eds.), *Georg Simmel. Aufsätze und Abhandlungen 1909–1918*, vol. I, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2001, 472.
- 5 Simmel, 2001 (note 4) 477.
- 6 Reprinted in: Joachim Ritter, *Subjektivität*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1974, 141–166.
- 7 Werner Flach, 'Landschaft. Die Fundamente der Landschaftsvorstellung' in: Smuda, 1986 (note 3) 22.
- 8 Susanne Lange (ed.), *Bernd und Hilla Becher. Industrielandschaften*, Munich: Schirmer-Mosel 2002, 10.
- 9 Cf. Thomas Weski, 'Gegen Kratzen und Kritzeln auf der Platte' in: Thomas Weski, Heinz Liesbrock (ed.), *How you look at it. Fotografien des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Cologne: Oktagon 2000, 34–35.
- 10 Cf. Rupert Pfab, *Studien zur Düsseldorfer Photographie. Die frühen Akademieschüler von Bernd Becher*, Weimar: VDG 2001, 101.
- 11 In keeping with the North Rhine-Westphalian university legislation, a professorship can only be held by a single person. However, Bernd and Hilla Becher actually taught their students jointly. Cf. Daniel Spanke, 'Das Museum der Wirklichkeit. Eine Typologie kompositorischer Bildstrukturen der Werke von Bernd und Hilla Becher und der Düsseldorfer Schule' in: Achim Sommer (ed.), *Zwischen Schönheit und Sachlichkeit*, Emden: Edition Braus 2002, 31.
- 12 Cf. Peter Galassi, 'Gurskys Welt' in: The Museum of Modern Art New York (ed.), *Andreas Gursky*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje-Cantz 2001, 13.
- 13 Cf. Pfab, 2001 (note 10) 65.
- 14 Andreas Gursky, 'Das Eigene steckt in den visuellen Erfahrungen. Ein Gespräch von Heinz Norbert Jocks' in: *Kunstforum International*, vol. 145, May-June 1999, 258.
- 15 Illustrated in: The Museum of Modern Art New York, 2001 (note 12) 47.
- 16 Gursky 1999, (note 14) 256.
- 17 Jeff Wall, 'About making landscapes' in: Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (ed.), *Jeff Wall. Landscapes and other pictures*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz 1996, 9.
- 18 Gursky 1999, (note 14) 265.

- 19 Illustrated in: Thomas Weski (ed.), *Andreas Gursky*, exh. cat, Haus der Kunst Munich, Cologne: Snoeck 2007, 66–67.
- 20 Becker studied under Bernd Becher at the Düsseldorf Academy from 1984–1990; Gursky 1981–1987.
- 21 Boris Becker, 'Die Bilder waren schon da' in: Ferdinand Ulrich, Hans-Jürgen Schwalm (eds.), *Boris Becker. Artefakte*, exh. cat., Kunsthalle Recklinghausen 2007, 4.
- 22 Stefan Gronert, 'Bild – Feld. Zur Landschaftsfotografie von Boris Becker' in: *Boris Becker. Territorien*, Cologne: Wienand 1998, 13.
- 23 Cf. Boris Becker, *Mountains*, Cologne: Private printing venture by the artist 2005.
- 24 Studied at the *Düsseldorf Academy* under Bernd Becher between 1973 and 1981.
- 25 Axel Hütte, 'Ein guter Mann aus Hollywood zaubert einfach besser als Cindy Sherman. Ein Gespräch von Heinz-Norbert Jocks' in: *Kunstforum International*, vol. 142, October–December 1998, 295.
- 26 See: Axel Hütte, Cees Nooteboom, *Kontinente*, Munich: Schirmer-Mosel 2000; Axel Hütte, *Terra Incognita*, Munich: Schirmer-Mosel 2004; Axel Hütte, *North/South*, Munich: Schirmer-Mosel 2006.
- 27 Including: Ute Riese, *Landscape. The Trace of the Sublime*, Kiel: Kunsthalle zu Kiel 1998, 15.
- 28 Guido de Werd, 'Foreword' in: Axel Hütte, *Fecit*, exh. cat, Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Düsseldorf: Richter 2000, 4.
- 29 Thomas Struth studied painting under Gerhard Richter in Düsseldorf from 1973–1978 and photography under Bernd Becher from 1976–1980.
- 30 Cf. Hans Rudolf Reust, 'A Thousand Words: Thomas Struth' in: *Artforum*, vol. 9, May 2002.
- 31 Elger Esser studied under Bernd Becher between 1991 and 1997.
- 32 Elger Esser, *Vedutas and Landscapes 1996–2000*, Munich: Schirmer-Mosel 2000, 91.
- 33 *Texte zur Kunst*, vol. 33, March 1999, 116.
- 34 Simone Nieweg studied at the *Düsseldorf Academy* from 1984–1990.
- 35 Julia Pascual, 'Naturräume' in: Stephan Berg (ed.), *Unschärferelation. Fotografie als Dimension der Malerei*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje-Cantz 2000, 76.
- 36 Bernhard Fuchs studied under Bernd Becher at the *Düsseldorf Academy* from 1993–1997 and under Timm Rautert at the *Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst*, Leipzig, from 1997–1999.
- 37 Studied photography and sculpture at the *Gerrit Rietveld Academy* in Amsterdam from 1986–1991.
- 38 Max J. Friedländer, *Über die Malerei*, Munich: Bruckmann 1963, 27.

II

Models, Concepts and Strategies in the Private and Public Collections of Photographs

30

The Collection Fotografis and its Roots

Interview between the Collection's founding Director Anna Auer and Lisa Kreil ¹

Kreil: Where does your personal interest in photography come from?

Auer: In 1963, I became a close friend of a student of informatics at the Technical University of Vienna whose great passion was photography. I actually come from the performing arts; I studied acting and directing at the Mozarteum in Salzburg in the mid-1950s. I originally wanted to be a stage director. ²

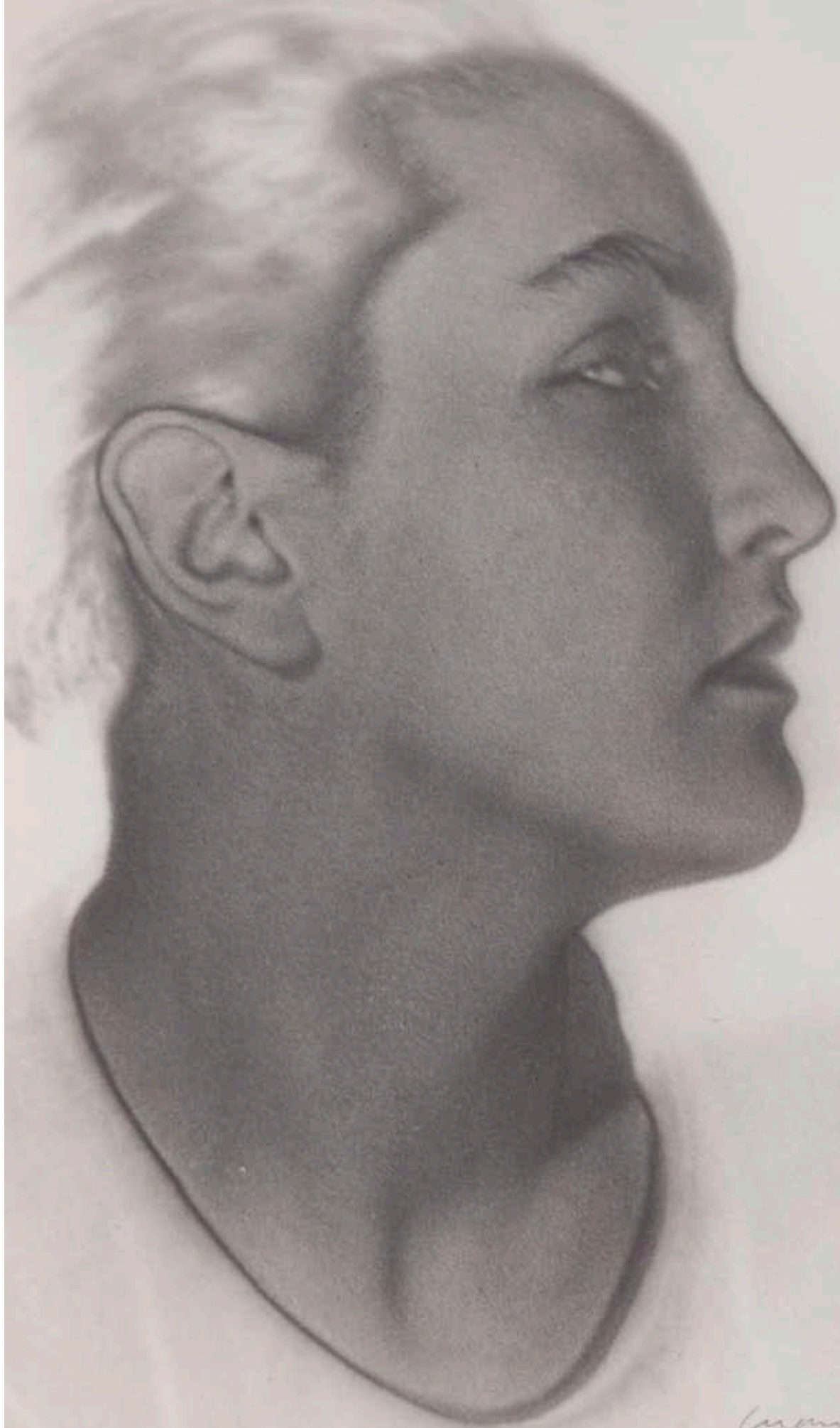
Kreil: In your book *Die Wiener Galerie Die Brücke – Ihr Weg zur Sammlung Fotografis* (The Viennese Gallery *Die Brücke* – Its International Path to the Collection Fotografis), ³ you state that, along with Werner Mraz, you decided to remedy the lack of the information on photography in Austria in 1968.

Auer: Right.

Kreil: What did you do to remedy that?

Auer: I had spent some time in Paris in the late 1950s. Seeing that we did not merely want to run our future gallery as a hobby, but professionally, I went to Paris in the autumn of 1969 to have a look around; armed with a list of photographers. However, I was only limitedly successful. Most of the photographers I spoke to, including Jean-Loup Sieff, Frank Horvat, Guy Bourdin and William Klein, didn't really believe in the intermediary role of a photo gallery. This was not the case with Jean-Pierre Sudre (1921–1997). The Galerie *La Demeure* had its spacious rooms in a beautiful house on Place Saint-Sulpice where, at the time, Sudre's abstractions with camera-less photography entitled *Apocalypse* (Matériographics) were on display. The structure of the surfaces of his pictures was more reminiscent of the dry-point technique of graphic arts than photography. On the same day, I met Sudre in his apartment at 9 Rue Val-de-Grace (this was also the house where Alphonse Maria Mucha had had his studio at the end of the nineteenth century). It was from Sudre that I first learnt about the *Bauhaus*

fig. 1 Man Ray (Emmanuel Rudnitzky), *Portrait of Meret Oppenheim*, 1933. Half-solarisation, 28.6 x 21.2 cm.
Collection Fotografis of Bank Austria AG, Vienna.



Anna R. - Paris
1933

and the *fotoform* group under Otto Steinert who was a close friend of Sudre's. We discussed Sudre's artistic collaboration with Denis Brihat, Jean Dieuzaide and Pierre Cordier and he showed me some examples of their pictures. On that afternoon, Sudre tried to give me a kind of crash course to explain what I should pay particular attention to as a future photographic gallery owner and also touched on the notion of originality and the problems of print runs. Another landmark meeting I had on that visit was with Jean-Claude Lemagny, the then curator of contemporary photography at the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris, who enthused to me about some young French photographers. He told me the story about the foundation of the photographic collection that had been in existence since 1850 while showing me its treasures. Lemagny reinforced me in my determination to establish a photo gallery in Vienna. Armed with a minimum of knowledge, I returned to Vienna and, together with Werner Mraz, opened the first European photo gallery on 6 March 1970 – barely a year after the opening of the *Lee D. Witkin Gallery* in New York.

Kreil: Does that mean that your gallery had an international programme as its aim from the very beginning?

Auer: Yes; there were three main factors that convinced us to pursue this course. In 1971, we took part in a photo fair for the first time and presented five Austrian artists/photographers – Herbert Bayer, Franz Hubmann, Branko Lenart jr., Felix Weber and Werner Mraz – in Milan. In addition, we had been deeply impressed by the Edward Weston retrospective in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. And then, a dinner in the apartment of Lanfranco Colombo, the then head of the Milan Galleria Il Diaframma (he was manager of a large steel company and ran his gallery more as a hobby and company tax deduction) played another major role in strengthening our ideas about how we wanted to run our gallery. As far as I can remember, the following people were present: Jean-Claude Lemagny from the *BN*, Pier Paolo Preti editor-in-chief of *Popular Photographia Italiana*, which reported every month on the rapidly expanding European photographic scene, Daniela Palazzoli, the Italian art historian, as well as Ann and Jürgen Wilde from Cologne, who founded the third European photo gallery at the beginning of 1972, and, finally, Sue Davies from the London *Photographer's Gallery* – Europe's second photo gallery which had opened in January 1971.

Kreil: Looking back, how important was the professional experience made in your gallery for *Fotografis*?

Auer: Very important. As I already mentioned, the *Graphische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt* had a collection of studies with a somewhat sketchy catalogue for which no archival and conservational measures were taken in addition to its library. It was not open to the public. Vienna was a long way from accepting the importance of photography as a significant part of our common cultural assets. This meant that the new collection activities only gradually

received recognition as simply everything was lacking: there were no trained theoreticians, photographic historians and no competent culture journalists. To remedy this unfortunate situation, we started holding photo workshops at the Technical University and *America House* – on our own initiative – between 1971 and 1974. Allan Porter, the longstanding editor-in-chief of *Camera* in Lucerne, the photographers Dick Arentz from Phoenix, Arizona, Ron Stark from Washington, DC, and Howard Bond from Ann Arbor, Michigan – all Americans – were among those we invited.

The second important phase in our later success was linking a photo bookshop to *Die Brücke* Gallery. For many years, this was Austria's only specialized bookshop dealing exclusively with photographic literature.

However, the decisive decision to progress from pure dilettantism into a professional gallery came with our participation in the *Art'4* in 1973. Never before had a gallery that specialized entirely in photographs dared to venture into the international field of art and collecting – and that was what the Art in Basel represented. This was where we made most of our contacts that later proved to be extremely beneficial for the *Fotografis Collection*.

Kreil: How did the foundation of the *Fotografis Collection* come about?

Auer: It will come as a surprise to you, but it was the *Österreichische Länderbank* that took the initiative by making us a cooperation offer. On 9 April 1974, Ivo Stanek, who was later to become the *Österreichische Länderbank's* advertising and marketing head, came into the gallery along with Dr. Teichgräber, one of our regular visitors. Stanek surprised us with the idea of organizing a series of temporary exhibitions to be shown in the branch offices of the *Länderbank*. According to Director Stanek: "A concept organized along these lines would definitely result in the awareness of the Federal Ministry for Education and the Arts, as well as museums, and give photography the recognition as an art form it deserves." At the time, there was no talk about establishing a collection. We were already able to present Stanek with the desired concept on 22 April 1974. However, it was the visit of Van Deren Coke, the American artist, art historian and later director of the Photographic Department of the *Museum of Modern Art* in San Francisco, that really set the ball rolling. As the outcome of a meeting between Stanek, Van Deren Coke, Werner Mraz and myself, a written exposé setting out the guidelines for the development of a photo collection was laid down on 18 May 1975. This concept included the following activities: Development of a photo collection, series of exhibitions, lectures, seminars and symposiums, as well as our own publishing activities. However, the hitch was that this concept was based on the idea of a foundation, meaning that the *Fotografis Collection* would have to be firmly tied to such an organization – this was scrapped because, following discussions at the bank, Ivo Stanek saw little chance for this project being successful.

Kreil: Was the prospect of having a post at the bank as the collection's curator (founding director) more attractive than the work in the gallery?

Auer: I never aimed at having a fixed job in the bank and worked as a freelancer. My official title at the time was consultant. However, I would classify myself as being the founding director of the *Fotografis Collection* because of the quite complex nature of the task. There was a clear division of responsibilities. As commercial manager, Ivo Stanek was directly responsible to the Bank's board, whereas my task was to take care of the conceptual and content-related direction of the collection. It is clear that the activities involved in developing a new historical photo collection – satisfying international standards – were much more rewarding than the everyday, routine work in a gallery could ever be; especially seeing that no such collection existed in Austria – with the exception of the studies in the *Graphische* (today, on permanent loan to the *Albertina* and available to the public).

Kreil: How did the name *Fotografis* come about?

Auer: I recall that selecting a name was extremely difficult because many people in the advertising department of the *Länderbank* were involved in it. The idea for the name “*Foto-Grafis*” is based on the consideration that there are photographic techniques which are very similar to graphic techniques, albeit based on a purely photographic process, such as is the case with generative photography (Gottfried Jäger, Pierre Cordier and Jean-Pierre Sudre) for example.

Kreil: What was the initial situation of *Fotografis* like?

Auer: In the first years, it wasn't easy for Director Ivo Stanek, as the official representative of the bank and commercial manager of the *Fotografis Collection*, to arouse the same degree of enthusiasm in the *Laenderbank's* board members as he, himself, had. There were many reasons for that, including the appointment of a new general director – which often led to changes in the board and also led to things coming to somewhat of a standstill. This was the case with the first acquisitions in 1975 and 1976. They took place under extremely dramatic circumstances. Precisely in the decisive phase when a written agreement on the establishment of the *Fotografis Collection* was to be settled, the then director of the *Länderbank* Dr. Franz Ockermüller died. In order not to lose the important (already reserved) basis for the collection we were establishing, I finally followed Director Stanek's advice and took out an interest-free loan for around € 22,000 from the *Merkur-Bank* (one of the *Länderbank's* affiliated institutes) and bought the pictures myself.

Kreil: So, you financed the *Fotografis Collection* in advance?

Auer: Yes, you could say that.

Kreil: What was the first work you bought for the *Fotografis Collection*?

Auer: The first purchase, which took place on 28 October 1975, was the portfolio *Eugène Atget, Anniversary Portfolio no. 89* by Berenice Abbott from 1956. Additional pictures followed on 20 May and 30 September 1976 including works by David Octavius Hill & Robert Adamson, Julia Margaret Cameron, Lewis Hine, Emil Otto Hoppé, Edward Weston, the portfolio by Judy Dater, Diane Arbus' portfolio, as well as an *œuvre* by Margaret Bourke-White and Duane Michals' Things are queer series.

Kreil: What was the collection's concept? Were there any models?

Auer: Yes, there was one. We had had close correspondence with Beaumont Newhall,⁴ who had congratulated us on our Herbert Bayer exhibition in the *Die Brücke*, since 1971. He was the first person we asked for advice when the idea of founding a photo collection was coming ever closer. Newhall informed us about the similar initiatives he and his wife Nancy had undertaken in 1966. At that time, the two art historians encouraged the National Bank in Chicago to found a photographic collection with the simple, but convincing, argument "... to contribute to the influence of photography on all aspects of life and for the wellbeing of the city and its population." Samuel W. Sax was then general director of the Exchange National Bank and president of *Photographic Art & Science* in the USA and took up this idea immediately. Referring to the fact that a large American banking institution was involved in collecting, made our task with the Länderbank somewhat easier – although the name of Beaumont Newhall was completely unknown here at the time.

Naturally, we knew that, in Austria, it was much too late to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of photography. That is why we recommended that the bank concentrated on a maximum of three – extremely important – eras in the history of photography, namely: *Early Photography, Pictorialism, New Objectivity – Experimental Photography*.

In addition, we suggested including individual achievements from the realms of social, portrait, reportage and documentation photography in the collection and, as a complement, successively integrating Austrian photography into the collection and exhibition programmes.

Kreil: What were the criteria for selection?

Who made the decisions for purchasing in the Bank?

Auer: I always put the lot of photography which was planned to be bought aside for appraisal (Werner Mraz was only involved until 1977). In the beginning, many distinguished curators and photo historians came to Vienna for the annual *Fotografis Collection* symposiums. I usually took this opportunity to ask them for their estimation of the pictures. This frequently led to quite intense discussions about the pros and cons of certain *œuvres* with Beaumont Newhall (University of New Mexico, Arizona), Helmut Gernsheim (Lugano), Van Deren Coke (University of New Mexico) and Weston Naef (the then curator at the *Metropolitan Museum*, New York, who retired from his longstanding duties at The *J. Paul Getty Museum*, Los Angeles

in February 2008) among others. Heinz K. Henisch (Pennsylvania State University), founder of *The History of Photography* journal, also gave us a great deal of valuable advice. However, they did not always agree with each other. You might well ask why we did not resort to an expert from Austria. The answer is simple: In 1975 / 76 there was not a single person with the necessary international know-how in this country. That did not improve until January 1979 when Gert Rosenberg took over the newly-founded photo department at the Viennese *Palais Dorotheum* auction house. From this time on, Rosenberg occasionally provided expertises for the Collection's purchases. Peter Baum also acted as an adviser from time to time. Ultimately, the final purchasing decision was in the hands of Ivo Stanek, the commercial manager of the *Fotografis Collection*.

Kreil: How large was the acquisitions' budget?

Auer: The annual total budget varied between € 22,000 and a maximum of € 32,000. From today's point of view that appears somewhat modest. But you must bear in mind that, thirty years ago in Vienna, there was not a single institution – with the exception of the *Länderbank* – that had a concept for collecting photographs. This, then, represents a relatively significant sum of money and included the costs for the annual symposium and honoraria, travel and hotel fees for the lecturers.

Kreil: How many purchases could you make a year? If you had to choose the ten most central photographs in the collection, which would they be?

Auer: That all depended on the budget and the importance of the work we wanted to buy. If I had the choice, I would select at least fifteen works: Francis Bruguière, *Flowers of White Light*, 1925; Julia Margaret Cameron, *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth*, 1867; Frantisek Dritikol, *Akt mit Vase* (Nude with Vase), 1928; Trude Fleischmann, *Alban Berg*, 1932; Lotte Jacobi, *Photogenic. Flight No 6*, c.1950; Mario Giacomelli, *Scanno*, 1963; H.P. Horst, *Dame Edith Sitwell*, 1948; Heinrich Kühn, *Alfred Stieglitz*, 1904; Heinrich Kühn, *The Mirror*, 1907; Angus McBean, *Vivienne Leigh*, 1935; László Moholy-Nagy, *Zwischen Himmel und Erde* (Between Heaven and Earth), 1927; Paul Outerbridge, *Inkwell and Stamp Holder*, 1924; Man Ray, *Meret Oppenheim*, 1933; Alexander Rodchenko, *From W. Majakowski 'Pro Eto'*, 1923; William Henry Fox Talbot, *View of Loch Katrine*, c.1845 and *Shell* by Edward Weston, 1931 (reprint by Cole Weston, 1973–1975).

Kreil: Where was the collection stored during your time?

Auer: In the first years, the collection was stored on the premises of the bank's branch at Rotenturmstrasse 13 in the first district of Vienna. The pictures were kept in lockable map cabinets; the books, including a small number of antiquarian volumes⁵ were kept in two metal cupboards.

Kreil: How did the Austrian press react to the activities of the *Fotografis Collection*?

Auer: Very positively.

Kreil: Was there also criticism of the international focus from the Austrian side?
Was there the notion of placing more stress on Austrian positions?

Auer: Yes, there was criticism. Of course, we thought of including contemporary Austrian photography in the collection; however, it should stand in the context of the overall concept and fit in with our collecting policy. The bank expected me to provide them with detailed arguments and sufficient documentation – with international price comparisons – for each acquisition. Nothing was to be left to chance. Occasionally, donations were made and some pictures found their way into the collection as the result of charity auctions organized by the bank. It only occurred very rarely that those on the ‘top floor’ (the Executive Board) hinted that they would like certain pictures to be included in the collection; however, this was in no way detrimental to the basic concept. And, don’t forget, the *Fotografis Collection* was attempting to make up for something the Austrian museums had overlooked for decades: Building up a basic stock of international photography from its 150 years of tradition. In the mid-1970s, there was hardly anyone else in Austria with as good a network of international connections as we had developed as a result of our gallery activities in the *Die Brücke*. It was only these numerous international contacts and recognition that made it possible for me to show the first presentation of contemporary Austrian photography in the USA. I assembled an exhibition especially for New York; this was later shown in Minneapolis, Minnesota but, unfortunately, not in Vienna.⁶

Kreil: Why were no more symposiums held after 1981?
Were the exhibitions consciously planned to arouse discussion?

Auer: Yes, the symposiums⁷ were only planned to be held until another institution would take over this exceedingly complex work.⁸ It was similar with the exhibitions. That is why I purchased portfolios by internationally famous, contemporary photographers from the very beginning. This material made it possible for me to quickly organize first-rate exhibitions for the bank’s branch offices. There were occasional cooperation activities with museums, either with loans from the collection or financial support for important exhibitions as was the case with the major travelling exhibition *The History of Photography* in Austria in 1983. I was also the first to deal with the subject of the emigration of Austrian photographers.⁹ As early as in 1982, I was able to present the first major Trude Fleischmann retrospective (in the main hall of the Bank’s headquarters).

Kreil: How difficult was it to find such highly-esteemed art historians, theoreticians and photographers for the lectures?



fig. 2 Alexander Rodchenko, *The Jazz Band*, from:
W. Majakowski, Pro Eto (For her and for him), 1923.
 Photo collage, 17.1 x 11.2 cm. Collection Fotografis of
 Bank Austria AG, Vienna.

Auer: It wasn't at all difficult for me to find renowned art historians and theoreticians. *Fotografis* was able to draw on the large reservoir of the *Die Brücke*. In addition, there was an exceptionally positive response to the *Fotografis* symposiums in the European press – even the USA paid particular attention to the activities of the *Fotografis Collection*.

Kreil: What were the criteria for establishing the library?

Auer: There was the intention of creating a study and documentation centre in addition to the photographic archive. The headquarters of the *Österreichische Länderbank* (today, *UniCredit Bank Austria AG*) is located in the centre of Vienna. The original plan of organizing a documentation centre and photo library open to the public along with a special exhibition room for *Fotografis* fell through the moment the decision was taken to renovate the beautiful old ceremonial hall at Renngasse and establish the *Kunstforum Wien*. That is why I had two public consultation days every week in the Rotenturmstrasse branch office which were eagerly accepted by those interested in photography.

The basic stock of the *Fotografis* Library consists of monographs, rare photo books, lexica and a small – but exquisite – selection of antiquarian books including a complete 1969 reprint edition¹⁰ of Alfred Stieglitz's legendary journal *Camera Work*. I took over the system used at the *Graphische* for cataloguing the library. In addition, I had collected an extensive archive of tapes and cassettes (including interviews I had made with Tim Gidal, Trude Fleischmann and Fritz Henle). There are magnetic tape recordings of most of the symposiums organized by the *Fotografis Collection* (1976–1981) and various recordings of radio and television reports on photography. The wide range of information provided also includes one section I always vehemently called for: A collection of lists of dissertations on photography. In the meantime, this important task has been taken over by the *European Society for the History of Photography* (*ESHPH*). All dissertations written on photography in Austria since 1976 have been collected by our society, listed by name and, since 2006, can be downloaded free-of-charge from the *ESHPH* website.¹¹ This list of names has now grown to include the impressive number of 300 authors.

Kreil: How was your working relationship with Director Stanek?
What did you particularly admire about his work?

Auer: Director Ivo Stanek (1936–2006) was an artistically gifted man, interested in a wide range of cultural matters. When he was young, he played the trumpet; later, he took up photography and wrote short stories. Stanek introduced the *Länderbank's Music after 6 p.m.* series at the beginning of the 1970s – this was especially popular in Vienna. In addition, he had an infallible eye. I can remember how surprised I was when he visited our gallery for the first time in April 1974 – he always remained standing in front of the highlights: Ansel Adams, Herbert Bayer, Francis Bruguière, J.M. Cameron, H.P. Horst, Heinrich Kühn and Edward Weston. It was always a real pleasure to present Stanek with a selection of photographs because

he was immediately able to recognize the value of a picture; providing the board with the required documentation was then merely a necessary formality for our own protection. It was definitely a lucky coincidence for the Länderbank and me to have somebody with so much artistic feeling and diplomatic tact on board – with his talent and rhetoric skills (he was fluent in five foreign languages) he was always able to provide magnificent support for the issues he was asked to deal with.

Kreil: What were the reasons that you were relieved of your duties as the collection's curator in 1987?

Auer: A new change on the board in 1984 also led to significant changes for *Fotografis*. The collection was integrated into the *Kunstforum* that had recently been founded by Dr. Albrecht Schröder. Director Stanek was released from his duties with the *Fotografis Collection* and commissioned to perform delicate special activities in the Bank's foreign business area – somewhere, where great tact and diplomatic skill are always required. It could not be ignored that Schröder preferred the, so-called, fine arts more than photography. In a frank discussion in 1985, Schröder attempted to make it clear that he would have to set certain priorities and that the collecting activities of *Fotografis* could no longer be carried out as before. It already became apparent during the preparations for the exhibition celebrating *Fotografis*' ten-year anniversary that an important chapter in the history of photo collection in Austria was approaching its end. This became particularly noticeable not only through the successive cut-backs in my acquisitions budget but there was also a new atmosphere in the marketing department. It might sound a little strange today, but that actually fit in quite well with my wishes for new, professional challenges. I had always wanted to do research but, due to time restraints, that was quite simply not possible because *Fotografis*' regular exhibition activities in the Austrian branch offices (a new exhibition every month) had to be supplied. In spite of that, I managed to acquire several important oeuvres for the collection, of which I am still proud today, in time for the 1986 exhibition *Masterworks of International Photography from the Fotografis Collection*.¹² They included: the photo montage, *L'Enigme*, 1946, by Raoul Hausmann, Talbot's 1845 *View of Loch Katrine*, Alexander Rodchenko's photo collage *Pro Eto* from 1923, the photogramme montage *Strenges Ballett* (Strict Ballet), 1949, by Otto Steinert, Karel Novak's still-life *Kyba* from 1926 and *Auf der Bühne* (On Stage), which Maurice Tabard created in 1929.

Kreil: Did you still had contacts with Director Ivo Stanek after the end of your activities?

Auer: Yes, there were contacts, but not until many years after I had left the bank. Once in spring 1999 when I published my book *Die Wiener Galerie die Brücke – Ihr internationaler Weg zur Sammlung Fotografis* and again in 2002 – I was already President of the *European Society for the History of Photography (ESHPh)* at the time. I took the opportunity to present Stanek with my

two books *Fotografie im Gespräch*¹³ and the *ESHPH* symposium volume *Photography and Research in Austria. Vienna the Door to the European East*.¹⁴ When we met, we both expressed our great concern about the uncertain fate of the *Fotografis Collection*. The last contact for a joint project occurred in 2004 when I asked him to accept the position of auditor of our society – he carried out this work until his, much too untimely, death in 2006.

Kreil: Seen from today, do you consider the fact that the *Fotografis Collection* is completed an advantage or disadvantage?

Auer: Naturally, as an advantage. I had reached my goal in 1986: I had been able to establish a photo collection in Austria at a time when pictures of this quality were still relatively affordable. I drew particular attention to that fact in my 70-page final report to the board in 1987¹⁵ where I attempted to make a projection of the development in the prices of some of the pictures. I imagine that many of the oeuvres I purchased have greatly multiplied in value in the past thirty years. And, you should not forget that the first international photo symposiums in Europe were held in Vienna in 1976! And, that the discourse on photography, initiated by *Fotografis* in the mid-1970s, has continued undiminished!¹⁶ Just look around: Today, there is hardly a single major city in Europe where photography is not intelligently discussed and reported on.

Kreil: What do you feel about the situation of photography in Austria today? Are there areas where we still need to catch up? Who do you personally think is carrying out pioneering photographic work in Austria (museums, galleries, scientists)?

Auer: Permit me to only give a general answer to those questions. Of course, there is a wide range of information, for all tastes and directions, in Austria today. First-rate publications, such as *Eikon* and *Camera Austria*, have come into being and there are occasionally exhibitions of an amazingly high standard in the *Albertina*, the *Kunsthalle Wien*, the *Künstlerhaus*, the *Westlicht Museum*, and the *Fotohof* in Salzburg – to mention just a few institutions. For example, the *Gallery Johannes Faber* in Vienna, with its excellent classical modern programme, has been attempting to expand its clientele for many years. But, as was always the case, there are more possibilities for commercial success abroad and at art fairs. The *Albertina* has shown a few striking photo exhibitions since its re-opening in 2003 and is now attempting a series of theoretical lectures to complement its photo edition *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Fotografie in Österreich* (Contributions to the History of Photography in Austria) – the first three volumes were already issued in 2005. The *Austrian Photography Collection* in the *Museum der Moderne* Salzburg, opened by Otto Breicha in 1983 and headed by Margit Zuckriegel since then, also does absolutely splendid work. As early as in 1980, Otto Breicha, in his role as an adviser to the *Fotografis Collection*, reflected on the extent to which it would be relevant for Austria to organize a collection consisting only of photographs by contemporary Austrian authors – in addition to the international concentration typical of *Fotografis*.¹⁷ That has since happened. In

general, I still find the idea of establishing a counterpart to Vienna in Salzburg very interesting. However, that should not obscure the fact that there is still not a chair of photographic history in Austria and a photo museum, stressing photographic culture more than technique, similar to the *Photomuseum* in Bad Ischl founded by Hans Frank in the 1970s, is still missing even though this has been appealed for in many places for decades now. I am really sorry that there is no “*European House of Photography*”, with space for both contemporary and classical modern photography, in Austria. *La maison Européenne de la Photographie* in Paris shows that such a symbiosis can work. I ask myself why something like that should not be possible in Austria? It can't simply be a matter of money!

Kreil: What do you expect from the *Fotografis* exhibition in the *Kunstforum*?

Auer: A beautifully arranged presentation – and an informative, intelligently written catalogue.

- 1 The *Fotografis Collection* was founded in Vienna by the Österreichische Länderbank in 1975 and has been part of UniCredit Bank Austria AG since 2007. The collection has been on loan to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg since 2008 where it is archived. See: Ingrid Brugger (ed.), *FOTOGRAFIS Collection reloaded*, exh. cat., Bank Austria Kunstforum, Vienna, Salzburg: Jung & Jung 2008, published on the occasion of the exhibition of the same name held from 11 September to 29 October 2008. The interview took place on 6 June 2008. Lisa Kreil is exhibition manager at *Bank Austria Kunstforum*.
- 2 Anna Auer, *Meine Jahre am Schauspielseminar Mozarteum Salzburg (1954–1957)*, Passau, 2007.
- 3 Anna Auer, *Die Wiener Galerie Die Brücke – Ihr internationaler Weg zur Sammlung Fotografis*, Passau, 1999.
- 4 Werner Mraz and I had long been obsessed with the idea of bringing out a German edition of Beaumont Newhall's *History of Photography* from 1964 and were in touch with the Residenz-Verlag publishing house in Salzburg several times concerning this project.
- 5 J.M. Eder, *History of Photography*, New York 1945; the catalogue of the *Internationale Ausstellung Dresden 1909*; Albert Renger-Patzsch, *Die Welt ist schön*, 1928; Alfred Stieglitz, *Camera Work* XVI, 1906, as well as several complete years of *Das deutsche Lichtbild* (1929–1938); Alfred Stieglitz, *Camera Work* (complete), Kraus Reprint, Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1969, are among the works in the collection of antiquarian books.
- 6 *Austrian Photography Today. A Selection of Contemporary Photographs*, exh. cat., Österreichische Länderbank AG, Vienna 1982. This exhibition was shown at the *Austrian Institute* in New York from 9 September to 15 October 1982.

Kreil: What did you think when you heard about the planned exhibition?

Auer: As I am always eager to learn new things, I am naturally interested to find out if the collection has grown in the meantime. And then, I will be interested to see where the accents are placed today. Is the collection more aimed at contemporary photography or are the pictures still grouped around *Fotografis*' three core areas: *Early Photography*, *Pictorialism* and *New Objectivity – Experimental Photography*? Maybe there are even contemporary equivalents that create an exciting complement to the collection's basic stock. Those were, more or less, my considerations.

- 7 Ivo Stanek (ed.), (text editing: Anna Auer, Rudolf J. Wojta), *Zusammenfassung von Vorträgen der Sammlung Fotografis von 1976–1978*, Vienna 1979; Ivo Stanek (ed.) (text editing: Anna Auer); *Zusammenfassung von Vorträgen der Sammlung Fotografis von 1979–1980*, Vienna 1981; 6. *Internationales Symposium der Sammlung Fotografis Länderbank 'Kritik und Fotografie, 2. Teil'*, 1981 in: *Camera Austria* Nr.10/1982, Graz 1982 (special edition).
- 8 In Graz, the first photo symposium was held in Forum Stadtpark, in autumn 1979.
- 9 Anna Auer, *Übersee. Flucht und Emigration österreichischer Fotografen 1920–1940*, Kunsthalle, Wien 1998.
- 10 See note 5.
- 11 Website of the *European Society for the History of Photography (ESHPh)*: www.donau-uni.ac.at/eshph.
- 12 Klaus Albrecht Schröder, Österreichische Länderbank Aktiengesellschaft (ed.), *Fotografis. Meisterwerke internationaler Fotografie der Sammlung Fotografis Länderbank*, Wien 1986.
- 13 Anna Auer, *Fotografie im Gespräch*, Passau 2001.
- 14 European Society for the History of Photography, *Photography and Research in Austria – Vienna, the Door to the European East, Symposium 2001 in Vienna*, Passau 2002.
- 15 Anna Auer, *Sammlung Fotografis Länderbank, Abschlussbericht*, Wien 1987.
- 16 The foundation of the journal *Camera Austria* was announced by Christine Frisinghelli and Manfred Willmann at the 5th International Symposium *Kritik und Fotografie*, 1. Teil, in Vienna, organized by *Fotografis*, in 1980.
- 17 See: *Zusammenfassung von Vorträgen der Sammlung Fotografis von 1979–1980* (note 7) 40.





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fig. 3 Horst P. Horst, *Dame Edith Sitwell*, 1948.
Gelatin silver print, 34.5 x 26.7 cm. Collection Fotografis
of Bank Austria AG, Vienna.

fig. 4 Paul Outerbridge, *Inkwell and Stamp Holder*, 1924.
Gelatin silver print, 8.1 x 8.3 cm. Collection Fotografis
of Bank Austria AG, Vienna.

fig. 5 Francis Bruguière, *Flowers of White Light*, c.1925.
Photogramme, 23.2 x 18 cm. Collection Fotografis
of Bank Austria AG, Vienna.



fig. 6 William Henry Fox Talbot, *View of Loch Katrine*, c.1845.
Talbotype, 17.3 x 20.8 cm. Collection Fotografis of Bank
Austria AG, Vienna.



fig. 7 Bisson Frères (Louis-Auguste; Auguste-Rosalie),
Fontainebleau Forest, France, 1854–1860. Albumin print,
23.9 x 32.9 cm. Collection Fotografis of Bank Austria AG, Vienna.





fig. 8 Henry Peter Emerson, *The Reed Cutter at Work*, 1886, from: *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*. Platinum print, 20 x 28 cm. Collection Fotografis of Bank Austria AG, Vienna.



fig. 9 Edward Weston, *Shell*, 1931 (AR Cole Weston 1973–1975).
Gelatin silver print, 18.8 x 23.5 cm. Collection Fotografis of Bank
Austria AG, Vienna.



Uwe Schögl

3I

Raoul Korty's Collection and his Atelier Georgette. The Photographic Image as a Projection Screen between a Collecting Mission and Creative Will

The phenomenon that photo collectors were also active as studio founders and / or photographers, leading to a (productive) correlation between understanding and depicting the image, is not at all uncommon in the history of photography. From the 1920s to 1939 when he was expropriated by the National Socialists before being murdered in the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1944, Raoul Korty was recognized in Vienna as having one of the largest and most important photo collections in the German-speaking world. His passion for collecting focussed on portrait photography which he both treasured as a connoisseur of the genre and, at the same time, used as a private person for commercial purposes. Korty ran the *Georgette* portrait atelier parallel to his collecting activities; he founded the studio in 1919 but excessive debt forced him to dissolve it in 1929. After his photo collection, as well as the photography from the *Atelier Georgette*, had been confiscated by the National Socialists in 1939, they were stored – as they had been packed and unavailable to the public – in the depot of the Portrait Collection of the Austrian National Library under the classification of *Sammlung Raoul Korty* (Raoul Korty Collection). As a result of the restitution of the collection to its rightful owner, Raoul Korty's daughter in 2005, and its subsequent legal repurchase by the Austrian National Library, it became possible to present the collection and the history of its restitution to the public for the first time in an exhibition and publication in 2008.¹

This contribution intends to search for evidence of similarities between the thematic characteristics of the photo collection and the personal 'signature' of the operator of the *Atelier Georgette* for the first time. I intend to demonstrate – using Korty's favourite motif, female portraits, as examples – the connections between his work methods and motivation as a collector-photographer (studio operator). This will provide the first comparative introduction to the pictorial language of the *Atelier Georgette* based on verified photographs by Raoul Korty. The basic thesis behind this investigation is that Raoul Korty's notion of portraiture was

established and developed through his activities as a collector and as *Georgette's* founder and active photographer. It is well-known that archives established on the initiatives of private persons reflect their scientific methods, mindset and preferred fields of research.² Korty always perceived his collection of historic and contemporary portrait photography by way of their content. He developed the structure of the principal areas of concentration of his collection based on an iconographic view of things and not on formal aesthetic criteria.³ There is little source material on Korty's photographic activities and what we have is disparate – not to forget the major losses that occurred during the Second World War. Of the reported 250,000 prints in the photo collection,⁴ only 36,000 have been preserved to this day and his life history, as well the circumstances of his Austrian-Jewish biography, can only be fragmentarily reconstructed. This contribution is intended to make an additional contribution to the overall picture of the photographic developments taking place in Vienna between 1920 and 1938 by depicting the contextuality of the collector and photographer and taking the circumstances of his life and his clients from the circle of the liberal Jewish upper-classes of Vienna into consideration.

The focus of the Raoul Korty Collection – both in terms of content and structure – can be explained in the context of its creation and was determined by its intended purpose. Raoul Korty, who was born in 1889 and grew up in a bourgeois, well-off, Jewish family that, due to the commercial interests of his father, had done away with the family name of Kohn in 1896 in favour of Korty, developed a permanent passion for collecting – especially portraits – as a child.⁵ As the owner of 'Korty Hermann & Co.' on Liechtensteinstrasse 3 in Vienna, Raoul's father Herman was a successful banker and supported his son's cost-intensive collecting passion. Young Raoul was greatly fascinated by the military and this led to him soon giving up his studies at the Viennese Art Academy. He was initially a one-year volunteer in the Imperial

Army but, after Austria-Hungary's declaration of war against Serbia on 28 July 1914, served throughout the entire First World War. Korty continued collecting during this period and developed the pronounced interest in the military and monarchy that was to play an important complementary role to portrait photography. Raoul left the army after the end of the War in March 1919 and it was his father's intention that his son be given the possibility to lead an orderly, bourgeois life through the establishment of *Georgette, Atelier für moderne Bildniskunst* (Georgette, Studio for Modern Portraiture). From that moment on, running the studio and collecting photographs became the purpose in life for the person of independent means – a lifestyle that Raoul Korty displayed conspicuously (fig. 1); his father did not really appreciate this but continued to provide his son with financial support.



1

Raoul Korty was particularly interested in portrait photography and this formed the core of his collecting activities: He amassed portraits of the nobility and members of the European imperial houses, of Austrian and German military personalities, in addition to pictures of actors in private life and on the stage, as well as photographs of politicians and scientists. The collection reflected the Viennese studio scene between 1870 and 1920⁶ with many depictions in *carte-de-visite* and *carte-de cabinet* format. Korty was not interested in landscapes and vedute and these are missing in his collection. His accumulation of portraits includes a small number of albums with pictures of members of the Austrian imperial dynasty and a – quantitatively modest – number of pictures taken after 1918–1920 showing social events such as weddings of the aristocracy. With the inclusion of the last mentioned subject in his collection, Raoul Korty painted a picture of society absolutely in keeping with Pierre Bourdieu's interpretation that photographs do not depict individual personalities but representatives of individual social classes.⁷ The *symbolic form* of the interaction between reality and its representation turned up later in the photographic role image of the *Atelier Georgette*.

Korty incessantly (quantitatively) increased the inventory of his collection on a grand scale through the purchase or takeover of estates in Vienna as well as acquisitions made in Berlin, Munich, Paris, Budapest and Prague.⁸ The aspect of quantity was to form the foundation for an encyclopaedic, thematic depiction of photographic history: "... to put it simply, there is not a single discipline available to the camera, for which my collection cannot provide a historic sample."⁹ If one inspects the organizational structure of Korty's collection, which is arranged thematically, it must be regarded as being traditional and, to a large extent, conventionalized. Individual subjects such as "ladies-in-waiting", "unknown photos of well-known people", "the imperial family", "theatre", *etc.* were stored in hundreds of photo cabinets in three rooms of his apartment.¹⁰

fig. 1 Atelier Georgette, *Portrait of Raoul Korty*, Vienna December 1919. Gelatin silver print, 21.5 x 15 cm. Austrian National Library Vienna

Private photographic archives and scientific instructional collections (phototeques) devoted to collecting and cataloguing under individual general themes have existed since the beginnings of photography.

In this instance, iconographically oriented, systematically organized, institutions such as the *Warburg Institute* in Hamburg with the Aby Warburg's mnemosyne atlas dating from 1920, the *Witt Library* in London with its iconographic catalogue and the *Bildarchiv Foto Marburg* (founded by Richard Hamann in 1913 as the *Photographische Gesellschaft*) with the iconographic classification of the *Marburg Index*, probably acted as models for the artistically inclined Korty.¹¹ Although these scientific institutions, which were founded in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, all have individual origins, they stand in the historical context of the pictorial understanding of photography from around 1850–1860 that was characterized by looking at photography from the viewpoint of painting. The genesis of these photo archives has not been comprehensively investigated, but the historical influence of the project Hermann Krone initiated in 1870 and published in 1893 *Historisches Lehrmuseum für Photographie* (Historical Educational Museum for Photography) is incalculable.¹² The project that was initiated at the *Dresden Polytechnikum* (today's Technical University) was a unique plan to develop a history of photography and its applications in everyday life, in science and business, in the nineteenth century. One of Raoul Korty's goals was to organize his collection as an instrument for documentation and analysis even though it never followed the path of institutionalization or satisfied the artistic-scientific requirements of a university or library. However, it did not remain a secret but became well-known to the public when pictures from the collection were printed in books, magazines and illustrated volumes during his lifetime. His sideline journalist activities for various Viennese magazines in the fields of theatre and opera,¹³ and the consultation he provided for exhibitions, were also those platforms where reproductions of his photographs were used.¹⁴ Korty's main interest was in the Austrian imperial dynasty; that had a profound influence on his collecting activities and he devoted an individual book to the subject.¹⁵

A photo-historical approach had little importance for him as can be seen in his generous loans for the exhibition held in the Upper Belvedere in 1928 *Art in the Early Period of Photography 1840–1880*. With his portraits of European rulers in *carte-de-visite* or cabinet formats, Korty provided around one third of the 140 photographs presented.¹⁶

The curator, Heinrich Schwarz, had placed the work of David Octavius Hill in the centre of an art-historical reflection and, for the first time, liberated the medium of photography from being regarded from a technical perspective.¹⁷ The fact that David Octavius Hill was held in great esteem by the members of the *Wiener Amateurphotographen-Klub* (Viennese Amateur Photographers Club) hardly impressed Raul Korty even though he was as a "full member".¹⁸

We have very little information on the photographic *Atelier Georgette* and the significance of its name is also unanswered. The entrance in the company register *Georgette, Atelier für*

moderne Bildniskunst Ges.m.b.H. (Georgette, Atelier for Modern Portraiture Art plc) with its headquarters at Reisnerstrasse 16 in the third district of Vienna is dated with 25 June 1919.¹⁹ The Viennese photographer Vinzenz Cunz acted as second manager for a brief period because Raoul Korty was not in possession of a commercial license for the photographic trade. Korty primarily ran the atelier to satisfy his personal interests and was less concerned with commercial success than in developing his photo collection. There are no records of the extent of the spectrum of his activities. Most of the people photographed were Korty's acquaintances or well-known personalities from his circles who cannot be classified as paying clients. The company was dissolved as of 1 January 1929 on account of its high tax debts and Raoul Korty's father took care of the outstanding amount of 20,000 crowns.

There are approximately 100 vintage prints in various formats and complex printing techniques which are undisputedly assignable to the *Atelier Georgette* on account of their blind stamps or signature on the mount. It appears likely that Korty passed on the commissions for portraits to several other photographers whose names can no longer be determined today. Those prints classified with the designation "Korty" were probably made following his instructions.²⁰ Seeing that, to date, no other prints or negative plates from *Georgette* could be traced and that no pictures are known to have been shown in any of the many "amateur photographer" exhibitions held during Korty's lifetime, the holdings of the Austrian National Library provide the only record of the *Atelier Georgette*.

With the designation 'modern portrait art', Korty announced a studio specializing in portrait photography that could be seen in connection with the other *new* portrait studios that had spread across Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century including those of Nicola Perscheid (in Leipzig and later in Berlin), the *Atelier Elvira* in Munich, Rudolf Dührkopp's studio in Hamburg and the *Atelier d'Ora* (Arthur Benda, Dora Kallmus) in Vienna. These studios did not have the *old* aristocracy as their target but followed the paths leading to the world of the theatre, the ateliers, and literary and political circles. The time when Korty established his studio was characterized by two erosions: the First World War had led to a worldwide economic depression that, in Stefan Zweig's reminiscences, triggered an atmosphere of "a sudden change in the climate of values"²¹ while, at the same time, an intellectual, political and ethical renaissance developed in the area of portraiture that assumed a central form in new realism with its roots in Germany.

The tense economic situation influenced the artistic orientation of the *Atelier Georgette* in as far as it had to correspond with the taste of the times in order to bring in commissions. The bourgeoisie's need for representation – trained on the aesthetic reform movement that reconciled art and life by way of an aestheticization of everyday life – assured a solid combination of a social mission with economic returns. Professional photographers, who produced portraits almost as if on a conveyor belt and without taking the individual requirements of those being portrayed into consideration, no longer did any business and

fig. 2 Atelier Georgette, Countess Maria Esterhazy, Vienna c.1919–1920. Gelatin silver print, coloured, 22.3 x 16.2 cm. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

were forced to undergo an aesthetic reorientation which, today, is regarded as an important achievement of the amateur movement. The aesthetic pictorial language of the *Atelier Georgette* had an extremely close relationship to the contemporary 'amateur photographer' movement. Raoul Korty socialized in their circles and elegant clubs where he was successful in finding clients.

In the years between the wars, the recently-introduced pictorial language of "new vision" had not had a decisive influence on the Viennese photographic studios. Although ateliers with a modern pictorial language (Madame d'Ora) developed no impact, Vienna was not a city that only stuck to tradition.²² The 1920s witnessed a "concurrence of phenomena in the field of tension of traditionalism"²³ and the avant-garde of "new vision". This situation provided Raoul Korty with the possibility for experimenting.

The portrait photograph of Countess Maria Esterhazy, created around 1919/20, shows a lady from the noble Viennese circles in an erotic pose. (fig. 2) At the time the picture was taken, the Countess was 30 years old and unmarried.²⁴ Here, the creative orientation must be investigated from several viewpoints. Older methods, such as the amalgamation of painting and photography through the colouration, typical of pictorialism, still play a role. The "artistic" effect of soft-focussing supports the sensuality of the motif and must be seen as an artistic means of expression. However, the type of picture that arouses the viewer's curiosity by sending erotically direct signals, without any hidden symbolism, is in no way characteristic of the artistic aims of pictorialism. Raoul Korty stages the lady as a charming seductress in the 'glamour look' of the time in a manner anticipating the new glittering world of fashion and star photography of the 1930s. The (erotic) pose and the symbolic display of the gemstone on her ring finger (showing Countess Esterhazy as being single) presents us with an independent woman – something which her contemporaries must have considered a provocation.



The 1920s made new depictions of femininity possible ranging from liberating nakedness to its counterpart, voyeurism. Korty used his atelier for experimenting artistically with models of femininity. (fig. 3 and 4) The staging of the *Atelier Georgette*'s female portraits aimed at creating a feeling of ambivalence, ambiguous in both offering oneself and being in self-control, between being active and hesitant. The women face the camera but, at the same time, appear to be turned away. There is a fine line between depicting the female body and, at the same time, protecting it from the viewer's, possibly voyeuristic, gaze. In contrast to pictures of women from the turn of the century – the "femme fatale" uniting disguise with mystification – role plays and masquerades became attempts at expressing self-perception in the nineteen-twenties.²⁵



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previous pages:

fig. 3 Atelier Georgette, *Portrait of a Lady*, Vienna c.1919/20. Gelatin silver print, 22.2 x 16 cm. Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 4 Raul Korty, *Portrait of a Lady*, Vienna 1916. Gelatin silver print 22.3 x 16 cm, signed and dated "Korty 1916". Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 5 Suse Byk, *Portrait of a Lady*, Berlin c.1911. Gelatin silver print, coloured, 20 cm (vertical oval format). Austrian National Library, Vienna.

fig. 6 Raul Korty, *Portrait of a Lady*, Vienna 1910. Gelatin silver print 21.6 cm (vertical oval format), signed and dated "Korty 1910". Austrian National Library, Vienna.

The veil and mask (the wig, in the case of Esterhazy) were not used to disguise the self but, much more, as an expression of flair and playfulness. In the other portraits made by the *Atelier Georgette*, it can be observed that the models of femininity change, from fashion shots and pictures in roles (transformation as a symbol of liberation) going as far as nudes. This is a parallel to the film theory which the Weimar Period saw as a phase of continuous testing the limits of roles, of gender and sexuality to see how far one could go.²⁶

The foundations for Raoul Korty's experimentation with the organization for the *Atelier Georgette's* depictions of femininity were already laid when he started collecting around 1910. Here, he was probably motivated by a typification based on formal aspects of female portraits. Two portraits of unknown women by the Berlin photographer Suse Byk, taken at around the same time and in similar poses, and one dated "Korty 1911" were placed immediately next to each other in Korty's archiving system. (fig. 5 and 6) The connection between these two pictures is not at all coincidental as it appears that both were later coloured by Korty. The type of the two portraits is in keeping with the notion of the portrait of a person as an expression of a well-balanced personality. It seems likely that Korty was stimulated to this portrayal after he had acquired a similar subject from Suse Byk. Suse Byk is considered to have been the first professional female portrait photographer in Berlin and ran an atelier at Kurfürstendamm 14/15 III from 1911. She came from a cultured, conservative-national, Jewish family. Byk's father was the founder of the *Byk-Gulden-Werke* chemical factory that, after the First World War, specialized in the production of photo chemicals that were sold worldwide and held in great esteem by amateur photographers.²⁷ Suse Byk became famous as a dance photographer after she had been forced to emigrate to New York, by way of London, in 1938. There is no proof that Raoul Korty and Suse Byk ever met in Berlin although he was often there. However, Korty followed the *model* of Suse Byk in the complex way of making prints using elaborate technology. Korty's collecting activities led successively to the development of a photo-aesthetic image of the woman that he tried to confirm through his purchase of numerous

female pictures from various Viennese ateliers, including some with Jewish owners. Here, the aesthetics of ‘amateur photography’ set the tone.

The female image of the 1920s must be regarded as a subject of the self-discovery of the woman that was typical of the time,²⁸ and closely connected with the new mass media of film, revues and popular illustrated magazines. The picture of the “new woman” was suitably transmitted by the visual language of the photography which was being established in new magazines: the established taboos were done away with, the pleasure of the grotesque, intimate and erotic stressed. In fashion photography, as well as in portraiture, the female persons appeared as beings formed out of elements of experienced reality and fantastic projections. The *Atelier Georgette* limited the way the woman was to appear to the chic and fashionable and the subdued, frivolously erotic. The aesthetic influence of an eye trained through his own photo collection played a key role in this respect: on the other hand, Raoul Korty could increase the commercial value of his portraits by catering to the type of woman who matched the taste of the times.

The closing of the *Atelier Georgette* in 1929 also meant the end of Raoul Korty’s photographic investigation of the image of woman. In his financially difficult situation, he increasingly devoted himself to the iconographic development of his collection and portraits of members of the House of Habsburg which he loaned and which were also reproduced in various publications. That which Erwin Panofsky, the founder of iconography, still considered a problem of the aesthetics of film and photography – namely, that they were created oriented commercially on advertising agencies and magazine editorial offices – was no barrier for Raoul Korty. Korty did not want to be at the mercy of the danger that Panofsky described so drastically “that non-commercial art is always in peril of ending up on the shelf.”²⁹ The National Socialist’s assumption of power in 1938 meant that Raoul Korty was forbidden to work and, consequently, his financial ruin: The interaction between the collector and photographer and atelier operator was abruptly and cruelly terminated.

- 1 Michaela Pfundner, Margot Werner (eds.), *Zur Erinnerung an schönere Zeiten. Bilder aus der versunkenen Welt des jüdischen Sammlers Raoul Korty*, Vienna 2008.
- 2 Petra Roettig, 'Das verwilderte Auge. Über Fotografie und Bildarchiv in der Kunstwissenschaft' in: Matthias Bruhn (ed.), *Darstellung und Deutung. Abbilder der Kunstgeschichte*, Weimar 2000, 67.
- 3 Photographs of events or a documentation of the years 1918–1939 and travel pictures from around the world form only a marginal component of Korty's collection and can be neglected here.
- 4 Raoul Korty, *Meine 250.000 Bilder. Leiden und Abenteuer meines Sammelwahns*, unpublished manuscript, c.1920, 1. The information on the size of the collection is based on Korty's own estimation and was even doubted in his lifetime. See: [Hans Habe]: *Der Mann, der in drei Zimmern die Weltgeschichte eingefangen hat*. Unpublished typescript, undated, 4. Due to his financial difficulties, Korty already sold major portions of his collection in 1932. See: Margot Werner, 'Raoul Korty – Der Mann, der in drei Zimmern die Weltgeschichte eingefangen hat' in: Murray G. Hall et al. (eds.), *Geraubte Bücher. Die Österreichische Nationalbibliothek stellt sich ihrer Vergangenheit*, Vienna 2004, 119, especially notes 1 and 4.
- 5 In an interview, Raoul Korty described the beginnings of his passion for collecting: "I didn't have my aunts give me sweets ... I emptied out their woven cassettes of photographs, which were typical then, with the portraits of the adored gods of a Viennese family – Lueger and Kainz, Charlotte Wolter and Emperor Franz Josef – in dramatic, or dignified or theatrical poses, along with pictures of the family." See [Hans Habe], undated (note 4) 3.
- 6 The most represented Viennese ateliers are: Atelier Adèle (Adele Perlmutter), Viktor Angerer, Ludwig Gutmann, Carl Pietzner, Residenz Atelier (Fleischmarkt 1), and the Atelier Herta (H. Winkler) that was located in the same house as *Atelier Georgette*.
- 7 As a sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu was interested in the social "instructions for the use of photography"; for example, its integrative possibilities. According to Bourdieu, individual portraits, as well as family and group photos, do not represent the individual (in the sense of a documentary depiction) "but, the relationship between them that are a reflection of their cultural self-image of the group and its individual members". Pierre Bourdieu, *Eine illegitime Kunst. Die sozialen Gebrauchsweisen der Photographie*, Frankfurt am Main 1981, cited after Thomas Cohnen, *Fotografischer Kosmos. Der Eintrag eines Mediums zur visuellen Ordnung der Welt*, Bielefeld 2008, 140.
- 8 [Hans Habe], undated (note 4) 3.
- 9 Raoul Korty, c.1920 (note 4) 1.
- 10 The journalist Karl Röper described Korty's collection in the following manner: When Mister Korty guides you through his Viennese apartment, it reveals itself as a warehouse within a warehouse with cupboards storing the photographic treasures from former and present times in drawers and boxes. Karl Röper, *Im Reich der Schatten. Besuch beim größten Photographiensammler Europa's*, 1, cited after Pfundner / Werner, 2008 (note 1) 77, note 28.
- 11 Nora Möller Korty, Raul Korty's only daughter remembered that, during his art studies, her father had "soaked up knowledge like a sponge". Personal conversation between Rainer Hasenauer and Nora Möller Korty, unpublished, Munich, 8 April 2007.
- 12 Hermann Krone, *Historisches Lehrmuseum für Photographie: Experiment, Kunst, Massenmedium*, Dresden 1998. See also: Hans-Ulrich Lehmann, *Hermann Krone. Die Photographien, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett*, Berlin, München 2008.
- 13 Korty contributed to the *Wiener Magazin*, *Die Bühne* and other journals, see Pfundner / Werner, 2008 (note 1) 79–81.
- 14 There is evidence of reproductions from Korty's collection being used in the *Wiener Magazin*, a non-political

popular weekly newspaper that was published between 1927 and 1940 as well as for cultural topics in the *Radio Wien* and *Mikrophon* magazines.

- 15 Raoul Korty, *Franz Joseph I. in 100 Bildern*, Vienna 1935. Korty provided numerous exhibits for the *Kaiser Franz Josef Ausstellung* that was held at the same time in Schönbrunn Palace and for the exhibition catalogue of the same name published by the Verein der Museumsfreunde Wien. Gertrude Aretz (ed.), *Kaiserin Elisabeth von Österreich in zweihundert Bildern*, Vienna-Leipzig 1938 used photographic material from the Korty collection exclusively.
- 16 *Die Kunst in der Photographie der Frühzeit 1840–1880*, XII. *Ausstellung im Oberen Belvedere*, exhibition catalogue, Österreichische Galerie Wien, Vienna undated (1928). Raoul Korty's loans are listed under numbers 29 to 76.
- 17 Anselm Wagner (ed.), *Heinrich Schwarz, Techniken des Sehens – vor und nach der Fotografie. Ausgewählte Schriften 1929–1966*, Salzburg 2006, 31–33.
- 18 *Jahrbuch des Camera-Klubs in Wien*, Wien 1910, 15. Raul Korty is listed in the “Almanac”: “Korty, Raoul, art academician, Vienna 1, Opernring 19”, as a full member.
- 19 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, *Akt des Handelsgerichts*, Reg. Nr. 32/137.
- 20 Nora Korty Müller reminisces: “Raul Korty, himself, could also photograph; however, he did not perform this work but was accompanied by photographers and had them do it.” See personal conversation between Rainer Hasenauer and Nora Möller Korty (note 11).
- 21 Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern, Erinnerungen eines Europäers*, Frankfurt/Main 1994, 383.
- 22 To regard this diction as being in opposition to the situation in Berlin does not do justice to the varied situation in Vienna: Monika Faber, Janos Freccot (eds.): *Portrait im Aufbruch. Photographie in Deutschland und Österreich 1900–1938*, Ostfildern 2005, 13.
- 23 Claudia Gabriele Philipp, ‘Out of Focus: Von Julia Margaret Cameron zum Piktorialismus’ in: Cornelia Kemp and Susanne Witzgall (eds.), *Das Zweite Gesicht. Metamorphosen des fotografischen Porträts*, Munich et al. 2002, 17.
- 24 Countess Maria Esterhazy, born on 18.11.1886 and died on 12.12.1977, remained unmarried throughout her life and lived, close to Korty's studio, at Rennweg 2 in the third district of Vienna. *Genealogischen Handbuch des Adels (GHdA), Gräfliche Häuser*, vol. 10, (1981) 149.
- 25 Joan Riviere, ‘Womanliness as a Masquerade’, reprinted in: Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek (ed.), *Psychoanalysis and female Sexuality*, New Haven 1966.
- 26 Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales. Feminism, Film Theory and Psychoanalysis*, New York 1991, 143, quoted after: Sabina Leßmann, ‘Weiblichkeit ist Maskerade. Verkleidungen und Inszenierungen von Frauen in Fotografien Madame d’Oras, Marta Astfalck-Vietz und Olga/Adjoran Wlassics’ in: Katharina Sykora et al. (eds.), *Die Neue Frau. Herausforderung für die Bildmedien der Zwanziger Jahre*, Marburg 1993, 150.
- 27 Christiane Kuhlmann, ‘Bewegter Körper – Mechanischer Apparat. Zur medialen Verschränkung von Tanz und Fotografie in den 1920er Jahren an den Beispielen von Charlotte Rudolph, Suse Byk und Lotte Jacobi’ in: *Studien und Dokumente zur Tanzwissenschaft*, vol. 4, Frankfurt/Main et al. 2003, 102.
The so-called Byk papers bore names such as Gatos, Telobyk, Telos and Bromobyk.
- 28 Universal suffrage came into force in 1918 and, with it, equal rights for women that had a major influence on their self-confidence.
- 29 Erwin Panofsky, ‘Stilarten und das Medium des Films’ in: Silbermann, Alphons (ed.), *Mediensoziologie*, vol. 1: Film. Düsseldorf, Vienna 1973.

Katalin Bognár

32 A Repository of Socialism The Photographic Postcard Archive of the Hungarian Art Foundation's Publishing House

The Art Foundation (Képzőművészeti Alap) was founded by the Hungarian State in 1952, with the aim of providing legal protection and financial support for artists, and maintaining collective studios, studio apartments, and creative retreats. Having been founded during the peak period of power of the Communist Party and its leader Mátyás Rákosi, it was also an institutionalized means of complete state control over artists. The organization's publishing house was set up in 1954, with picture postcard production as its main objective. The company possessed the nationwide concession for the publication of postcards. After almost four decades of work, the Publishing House ceased production and handed over its photographic postcard archive to the Hungarian News Agency in 1993. In 1999, this collection of more than one hundred thousand photographs (paper prints, negatives, slides) and produced postcards was donated to the Hungarian National Museum. The unit was then divided and put into two different departments of the museum: the produced postcards are housed at the Small Prints Collection of the Historical Department while the paper prints, negatives, and slides that had been used to design the postcards are safeguarded in the Historical Photographic Collection.¹

The name of the Divald family has to be mentioned as the most important antecedent of photographic postcard publishing in Hungary. Károly Divald (1830–1897) opened his photographic studio in 1863 in the town of Eperjes (today: Prešov, Slovakia). He was one of the pioneers of outdoor photography, taking pictures of the popular holiday resorts in the Tatra from the late-1860s. In 1879, Károly Divald became engaged in the mass reproduction of his photographs using photomechanical processes. He was able to produce three hundred collotypes a day. His son, Károly Divald Jr. (1858–1942) took over the business in 1890. At the turn of the century, the company was the best-known producer of postcards in Hungary. In 1912, Károly Divald Jr. teamed up with György Monostory to photograph all the important sites in Hungary for the production of picture postcards.

fig. 1 Photographer unknown, *Gate of Károlyi Castle at Nagymágocs*, around 1948. Silver gelatine paper print, 10 x 15 cm. Hungarian National Museum.



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From 1927, Ernő Weinstock (1893–1985) developed into an outstanding picture postcard photographer, producer, and publisher in Hungary. Until the nationalization of postcard publishing in 1949, he toured the country and took about 6,500 different photographs of the important and tourist-attracting sights.

In 1949, the Hungarian State founded the National Company of Fine Artworks (Művészi Alkotások Nemzeti Vállalata), which – among other tasks – became responsible for postcard production and publication. The postcards and photographs that poured into the company after the nationalization and dissolution of postcard publishers were classified into two groups, depending on the content and ideological message of the images. A still-acceptable photo could have been republished several times, whereas the outdated photographs and postcards were weeded out and destroyed by the hundreds. One of the photographs curiously surviving this systematic selection represents the gate of the Károlyi Castle's park at Nagymágocs (fig. 1). The writing above the gate, 'Csepeli WM. Munkásüdülő' (Holiday House for the Workers of Manfréd Weiss Works, Csepel), indicates that the photograph must have been taken around 1948 when the factory in the island district of Budapest, Csepel, still bore the name of its founder and former proprietor, Manfréd Weiss.² The industrial complex was nationalized in 1946 and was named Mátyás Rákosi Works between 1950 and 1956.

In 1952, the National Company of Fine Artworks was reorganised and had its name changed to Picture Galleries of the Art Foundation (Képzőművészeti Alap Képcsarnokai); due to the rapid expansion of its activities, it was divided into different art branches in 1954. The publishing house was also founded at that time. Being the only postcard publisher in the country, the Publishing House of the Art Foundation produced high sales until the late-1980s. In 1954, the output reached twenty-eight million postcards (both photographic and graphic), eighty-three

million in 1974, and eighty-seven million in 1982. The majority of these products were greetings cards for festivals (Christmas, New Year, Easter, and Mother's Day) and anniversaries. Of the eighty-seven million postcards produced in 1982, only 20.7 million represented town- and landscapes, and 638,000 were black-and-white³. In addition to the greeting cards and postcards of different locations, the publisher also issued special cards for events of tourist interest (Budapest International Fair, Szeged Open-Air Festival) and several postcards portraying children, Hungarian actors, singers, and foreign places. On average, about three thousand different photographs were added to the archive of the company annually.⁴

The number of photographers employed by the Picture Galleries and then the Publishing House grew from four people in 1952–1955 (with Ernő Weinstock, who had changed his name to Ernő Nagyváradi after World War II, among them) to eight in 1978.⁵ They received a fixed salary, photographic material, cameras and all their travel expenses were covered by the company. Some of the Publishing House's excellent photographers were Béla Bakonyi, Tamás Bakonyi, Lajos Czeizing, Előd Csobaji, Erhardt Dollinger, Csaba Gabler, Zoltán Horváth, István Krasznai, Imre Ripely, Miklós Sehr, László Szelényi, and Ferenc Tulok. Employed by the Publishing House, these professional photographers toured the country for forty years, photographing not only the well-known and popular tourist regions (eg Lake Balaton, the Mátra Hills, Hortobágy) but also more than two-thirds of all the inhabited locations in Hungary. They were given instructions on what to photograph, and the targets were chosen in accordance with the demands of the local branches of the state-owned stationery marketing company (Papír és Irodaszer Nagykereskedelmi Vállalat; PIÉRT). However, after a few assignments, the photographers knew what the preferences of the company were without having to be told. The Publishing House regularly bought photographs from other companies (eg. Hungarian News Agency), museums, and individual photographers. Whenever the company received an offer to buy a photograph, a committee decided on its suitability for publication. The chosen photographs were given an 'accepted' stamp on the back of the paper print and the Publishing House then purchased the negative and/or slide of the shot. Selling

fig. 2 Erhardt Dollinger, *Furniture Department in Vértess Store in Tatabánya*, 1967. Colour paper print, 10 x 15 cm, Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 3 Béla Bakonyi, *Landerhegy Housing Estate in Zalaegerszeg*, 1963. Silver gelatine paper print, 10 x 15 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 4 Zoltán Horváth, *The Cece Council Building*, 7 July 1958. Silver gelatine paper print, 10 x 15 cm. Hungarian National Museum. The graffiti on the fence says 'Long live the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party!'.



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a picture to the company usually also meant granting unrestricted permission for its use in postcard production. Even so, taking pictures for the Publishing House of the Art Foundation paid off very well for the photographers. The Foundation's main aim was to support artists; thus, buying from photographers became an important part of this mission. Consequently, the Publishing House purchased a great number of photos that were subsequently never used for postcards (but, luckily for us, they survived in the archive), and a large proportion of the company's proceeds was spent on copyright fees.

The postcard archive of the Publishing House preserved the products at every phase of production: the slides and the negatives, their contact prints, the 10 × 15 centimetre enlargements and the postcards themselves. The photographs were accurately registered: each picture was given two serial numbers which were written on the paper print, the slide, the negative, the contact and the sample postcard. The first number helps to identify the county where the represented town or village is located, while the other indicates the year the photograph was judged⁶. Stamped dates also frequently appear on the back of the paper prints. From 1954 onwards, the photographer's name was inscribed on almost every paper print, while the photographers of the pictures from before 1954 are seldom indicated.

The photographs in the archive serve as an important resource, both in terms of local history and the history of photography. The pictures recorded the appearance of Hungarian towns and villages in the 1950s which were to change significantly during the decades of socialist rule. The changes are most striking in the case of larger towns which the photographers kept returning to from the early 1950s until the end of the 1980s. The greatest number of photographs was taken of the capital, Budapest, but one of Hungary's major eastern towns, Debrecen, is represented by more than four hundred different photos.

The Publishing House carried on the traditions of picture postcard manufacturing by representing the usual tourist-attracting sights of a given location: views, well-known streets,





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fig. 5 Photographer unknown, *Pioneer Railway*, early 1950s. Silver gelatine paper print, 10 x 15 cm. Hungarian National Museum. Handwritten note on a piece of paper glued to the back of the picture: 'Rákosi picture retouche'.

fig. 6 Photographer unknown, *Pioneer Railway*, retouched, early 1950s. Silver gelatine paper print, 10 x 15 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 7 Photographer unknown, *Soviet Monument, Main Square, Kiskunhalas*, around 1947. Silver gelatine paper print, 10 x 15 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

fig. 8 Zoltán Horváth, *Soviet Monument, Lenin Square, Kiskunhalas*, 1959. Silver gelatine paper print, 10 x 15 cm. Hungarian National Museum.

churches, statues and monuments, hotels, restaurants, museums, artworks, holiday resorts, spas, open-air festivals etc. At the same time, the work of the company also served propaganda purposes. Photographers had been required to record and reflect on the 'beneficial work' of socialism from the early days of communist rule and were constantly warned to continue doing so. By depicting the fruits of the government's welfare projects – new schools, kindergartens, cinemas, housing estates, examination surgeries, parks, paved streets, state-owned holiday houses, department and service stores (fig. 2 and 3) – the company's pictures conveyed the idea of an ever-developing country and a caring state. The objectified forms of the regime: council houses (fig. 4), Lenin statues, and monuments celebrating the Soviet Army's victory at the end of World War II were also inevitable targets for photography. The co-existence of the publisher's two different objectives (representing traditional objects *and* serving propaganda purposes) is perceptible in the case of castle images. Castles had long been popular subjects of picture postcards but, when the Publishing House had them photographed, the descriptions on the back of the paper prints and postcards contained the additional information that these buildings had been turned into state-owned holiday houses for the working class or children's homes. Thus, one is constantly reminded that castles – once the homes of noble families and members of the 'exploiting class' – had been nationalized and given to the people. In some cases, children or holiday-makers can be seen in the castle parks, or an inscription on the building or the park gate is visible to emphasize this idea.

Postcard photography is a distinct genre of applied photography; its pursuers have always been required to have both documentary and artistic intentions. In addition, socialist rule obliged them to fulfil another expectation and photographers had to be able to meet higher demands than simply recording reality.⁷ Setting the stage, retouching and cropping the photographs for aesthetic reasons had been present from the beginnings of photography. The methods of faking reality, however, were used for political and ideological reasons from the early days of communism. In the name of Socialist Realism, photographers had to represent the ideal, the



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desirable future if the present was not yet satisfactory. This aim could be achieved in two ways. One was by arranging reality: moving people and objects to the desired position, omitting disturbing objects. The second way was to retouch the photograph. The most famous examples of political retouching come from Stalin's Soviet Union,⁸ but all totalitarian systems used this powerful means of destroying the memory of real – or alleged – enemies of the state.⁹ The photographers and designers of the Hungarian Art Foundation's Publishing House used both methods of picture manipulation, although the first (arranging the scene to be photographed) is always hard to discern. The scale and political content of retouching was relatively small and it was used to save the time and expense of re-photographing a certain location. It should also be noted that the majority of the Publishing House's postcards were retouched *after* the fall of Stalin's Hungarian disciple, Mátyás Rákosi (1956).

Since the company tried to preserve all the intermediate products of postcard-making, one can see cases of retouching that transformed an imperfect or outdated photo or a picture containing a disturbing detail, into a postcard that suited the taste of the publisher's designers. The public had always wanted 'nice' pictures and, if the represented scene was not 'nice' enough, the company tried to satisfy the demand of the day by retouching. There are several paper prints on which the retouchers, aiming to create a more harmonious picture, painted some clouds; and it was these painted versions that appeared on the postcards. Again, an old tradition of postcard manufacturing. In some photographs of cinemas, the title of a film long since off the programme was covered up on the building; blurred people or view-spoiling electric wires were retouched, or dustbins cut off of other images. There are a number of manipulations of historical interest, too. The communist leader Mátyás Rákosi's portrait was, for example, covered up after 1956 on the picture of a locomotive at the Pioneer Railway in Budapest (fig. 5 and 6). The coat of arms that had been the official state emblem from 1949 to 1956, the so-called 'Rákosi-coat-of-arms', also disappeared from repeated publications of old photos. One of the staff's constant tasks was to check if the contents of the postcards were still acceptable. In

many cases, complaints from the towns and villages warned the Publishing House to change a picture on a postcard.¹⁰ If there had been changes in the appearance of a location, the company could try to adapt the already existing photograph by retouching, or a photographer could have been sent out again to take a new shot.

In the case of two photographs of the small town of Kiskunhalas, taken of the same spot but about twelve years apart, one can study how an old photograph became unsuitable for republishing and a new one had to be made. The monument bearing witness to the Soviet Army's victory over Nazi German troops in October 1944 was erected in Kiskunhalas in August 1946 and destroyed on 26 October during the 1956 Revolution. The insurgents saw this monument as a symbol of the hated communist and Soviet-led rule. After the Revolution was crushed, the new local government had a new monument erected in March 1957 as a symbolic act of the restoration of the socialist regime. One of the paper prints of the old monument bears an editorial note from 1959 drawing attention to the fact that the monument had been reconstructed. It was high time for the company to have the place re-photographed because the building on the right, the local bank, also had an outdated inscription. The Halas Economic Bank was built in 1904 and the lettering 'Halasi Gazdasági Bank Rt' added at the time of the 1932 reconstruction. The inscription became inappropriate after 1 December 1946 when the banks in Hungary were nationalized. Thus, the earlier photograph bore witness to two fallen regimes (fig. 7 and 8).

The collection of negatives and slides provides the opportunity of studying the spread of new photographic processes. The photographers had used gelatine dry-plate negatives and slides until about 1960, colour and black-and-white cellulose nitrate sheet, rolled and narrow films were in use until the mid-1950s when they switched to cellulose acetate and, from the middle of the 1960s, they proceeded to polyester roll and sheet film negatives and slides.¹¹ About ninety percent of the paper prints and negatives in the archive of the company – those from the 1950s–1970s – are black-and-white. In most cases, the colour paper prints from this period have deteriorated. From the late-1970s, a huge number of colour slides entered the archive of the Publishing House but, unlike the case of earlier photographs, no paper enlargements were made of them (fig. 9).

In 1992–1993, when production at the Publishing House came to an end, the future of the huge photographic postcard archive had to be settled. Attempts were made to return the negatives and the slides to the photographers – with little success. It was impossible to locate some of the photographers, others did not answer the company's letters and some had died in the meantime and the copyright holder was unknown. Hopefully, all of them would agree that the archive has eventually found a safe home at the Hungarian National Museum where the public can become acquainted with the images of this huge repository.

fig. 9 Miklós Sehr, *Performers on New Year's Eve at the Club Hotel, Balatonföldvár*, 1980. Polyester colour slide, 6 x 7.5 cm. Hungarian National Museum.



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- 1 This article focuses on the archive's photographs, and is a revised and extended version of Katalin Bognár, 'The Archive of the Fine Arts Fund Publishing House' in: Beatrix Lengyel Cseh, Ilona Balog Stemler (ed.), *New Acquisitions at the Hungarian National Museum III*, Budapest 2007, 148–154.
- 2 The Small Prints Collection of the Hungarian National Museum houses a postcard with this picture from about the same time, publisher unknown. Here I would like to thank the help and useful comments of László Baják, keeper of this collection.
- 3 Tivadar Petercsák, *A képes levelezőlap története*, Miskolc 1994, 23.
- 4 László Tóth (head of the picture postcard department at the Publishing House of the Art Foundation, 1978–1990), personal communication, May 2008.
- 5 László Tóth, personal communication, May 2008
- 6 Munkaköri meghatározás, in: Documents of the Publishing House of the Art Foundation, Documents Archive of the Historical Photographic Collection of the Hungarian National Museum.
- 7 Iván Ibos, 'A levelezőlap-fotográfáról', *Foto*, June 1965, 241–242.
- 8 See: David King, *The Comissar Vanishes*, New York: Metropolitan Books 1997.
- 9 Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Bilder, die lügen*, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag 2003, 20.
- 10 László Tóth, personal communication, May 2008.
- 11 Károly Kincses, *Hogyan (ne) bánjunk (el) régi fényképeinkkel? Amit a régi fényképekről tudni kell*, Kecskemét 2000, 68–73.

Xavier Canonne

33 The Museum of Photography in Charleroi The largest Photography Museum in Europe

The *Musée de la Photographie de la Communauté française de Belgique* (the Museum of Photography of the Belgian French Community) celebrated its 20th birthday in 2007. In 1987, a former Carmelite monastery in Mont-sur-Marchienne (one of the districts in the city of Charleroi) was converted into the French Community's Museum of Photography. It presents around a dozen different exhibitions annually, in addition to its permanent collection (fig. 1).

It is a curious destiny for a building that had long echoed to the sound of the silence and discretion desired by the Carmelite monks. Suddenly its spaces were full of photography lovers, and photography started to enjoy a renaissance with the general public.

The museum's inauguration in a renovated space – using financial means that were inversely proportional to the passion that motivated its founders – was the logical consequence of a series of reflections and projects undertaken during the 1970s. During the crisis caused by the gradual decline of the industrial belt in southern Belgium, Georges and Jeanne Vercheval were conscious of the rapid transformations affecting the landscape that was so familiar to them. They therefore started to create photographic archives, collaborating with a team of photographers who often offered their services on a voluntary basis, and whose work complemented purchases and donations of Belgian and foreign photographs. The *Archives de Wallonie* (Walloon Archives) association was long the driving force behind this sociological and political project that struck a balance between historical and contemporary, as well as between monographic and thematic, exhibitions.

Whilst remaining a non-profit association according to its statutes and therefore benefiting from greater autonomy, the museum started to receive more support from the French Community that has been in charge of culture since Belgium introduced its federal structure.

fig. 1 The Museum of Photography in Charleroi (Belgium).



In 1995, after having acquired the Carmelite monastery buildings, the French Community undertook some construction work, representing the first phase of renovations with a view to improving the property from both a scientific and museum-related point of view. New areas were constructed, in particular to make it possible for the collection, which now includes nearly 80,000 photographs and three million negatives, to be displayed in line with elementary conservation standards. Other areas were revamped whilst remaining true to the building's original style, intimacy, arrangement and paths radiating out around the cloister. The museum then revealed its richness by presenting its collection, embracing 150 years of the history of photography, chronologically and laying claim to an international reputation that many would be quick to envy. Once again, the well known adage, *a prophet is not without honour save in his own country* seemed apposite and the museum was initially recognised abroad, by peers, friends and photographers. The creation of an educational area called the *Discovery Area*, a team of guides (that was recently enlarged but still requires further enlargement), and a library entirely dedicated to photography, completed the museum's range. There was widespread agreement that it was one of the most complete and coherent museums in existence and that it was, therefore, an example to follow.

Georges Vercheval chose to step down at the beginning of 2000. When I succeeded him in March 2000, I had the definite impression that I was taking over a very stable ship but, as the new captain, I lacked sails to set out to sea again; some work remained to be done in dry dock and many changes were required. Although the renovations of 1995 had given the museum a modern appearance, there was still damage that had to be repaired urgently.

The entire roof had to be replaced, the basement had to be drained and the dry rot that was lurking menacingly had to be tackled. My first years as director therefore resembled those of someone who has moved into a property that remains to be finished and for whom each new task reveals a nasty surprise. However, the French Community soon granted me the little house opposite the museum (left vacant by inspectors) to be renovated as an artistic space. This new project enabled me to renew the museum's connection with Olivier Bastin, the architect who had completed the renovation work in 1995.

Georges Vercheval had also left the outline of a project to add a room for displaying contemporary photography, as the current exhibition space did not allow for the satisfactory presentation of new large format displays or the sequences that technical developments as well as the emergence of *fine arts*, had brought into the field of photography.

In my eyes, it fell slightly short of the requirements: I thought that it lacked a cafeteria, a conference room worthy of the name, a more welcoming library adapted to the readers' needs (fig. 2), a shop (an addition that is now essential to any museum) and, above all, access to the beautiful gardens behind the monastery buildings – a trump card that I considered is absolutely essential to play. For those of you who do not know Charleroi – and who does not? – I can say without exaggeration that Belgium's third largest city can hardly be qualified as a tourist magnet. It still bears the aftermath of its prestigious industrial past and suffers from a reputation of being a dangerous and violent city. Liverpool suffers the same fate in Londoners' eyes, as does Chicago in New Yorkers' eyes and Marseille in Parisians' eyes and, although there is rarely smoke without fire, it seems to me that this is rather over the top.

More than just adding a new room, we therefore had to rethink the museum's different functions, the concept behind the way the collection was hung and its arrangement, as well as its function as a port of call, given that the majority of our visitors come from outside the Charleroi region. This was the frame of mind in which I opened discussions with Olivier Bastin and, in agreement with the French Community, in which we presented the museum extension project for *Objective 1* EU-funding, which aims at subsidising cultural projects by 50% if, among other things, they generate employment.

The project was accepted and progressed from around € 800,000 to nearly € 4 million – more than four times the initially predicted sum.

For two years, before the work began on 21 June 2006, we developed the project in partnership with the architecture firm and the infrastructure service of the French Community, questioning



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fig. 2 The educational division of the museum,
The Museum of Photography, Charleroi (Belgium).

fig. 3 View into the permanent collection,
The Museum of Photography, Charleroi (Belgium).

museum staff, users, the site's close neighbours and also the people living in the region, in order to identify the real needs and most suitable solutions.

After two years of work and the inevitable delays caused by particularly bad weather conditions, the museum now benefits from 6,000 m² of space (2,000 m² more than it initially had). Over half of this space is accessible to the public, and that does not even include the entirely re-landscaped gardens. They are now a green island in an industrialised country, making the Museum of Photography an exceedingly tempting destination. In terms of surface area, the museum is now the largest photography museum in Europe.

Now all that remains is for it to become the largest photography museum in terms of interest and reputation. For this, it must rely on its temporary exhibitions (eight to ten a year) that combine renowned Belgian and foreign photographers and that take a punt on new discoveries, as well as on its re-hung and redesigned collections. The extension work freed some space within the monastery building and the permanent collection has greatly benefited from this (fig. 3). There is now not only more space for the 19th and 20th centuries, doubling their presentation potential, but also more space for the contemporary section, a thematic and confrontational exhibition that defies chronological presentation and pushes us to question the entire collection, its acquisition policy, the way it interacts with the public and how new technologies are integrated, at the same time as continuing our scientific work and the in-depth study of our photographic stock. In order to abolish the boundary between permanent and temporary, we intend to re-hang pictures regularly.

This task will no doubt be as long as it is fascinating. We do not have the kind of funds that large American, French and German museums benefit from. Belgium's federal system has not always promoted culture, and the French Community that oversees it is not exactly in a prime position compared to the multitude of operators and subsidised museums. This means that we also need to approach the private sector in order to arrange partnerships and sponsorship schemes. As an educational tool and area open to the general public, the museum should be able to increase its own resources without sacrificing its soul or neglecting the tasks assigned to it: when all is said and done, passion is as important as money.

III

Interdisciplinary Photography **Photography and its Contextualization in the** **Fine Arts (Painting, Film, Video, Concept Art)** **and the Sciences**

Italo Zannier

34 The Myth of Photography. From Panselinos to Daguerre¹

A great many ghosts – not only that of the hero of *Giphantie*, invented by the clairvoyant French doctor Tiphaigne de La Roche (1729–1773), who believed that he could see “the sea” out of the window of the small room where he was held captured somewhere “in the heart of Africa” – add colour to the early history of photography. He soon realized that it was an illusion created by the witchdoctors of an indigenous tribe. They captured the “fleeting images” drawn by the light by fixing them on a cloth using a “very fine, viscous, substance that dries quickly and hardens to produce a picture in the twinkling of an eye”² as one of the protagonists of the little science-fiction novel, which Tiphaigne published in Paris and London in 1760, explained. However, *photo-graphy* was a heralded invention – or at least it had been seen coming for a long time – and not simply “imagined”. This was mainly a result of research in the area of optics and repeatedly-performed alchemistic experiments using materials that were sensitive to light. Among the many legends, there is one dealing with the Dutch alchemist Torrentius (Johan Simoonis Van der Beek) who lived in the period between 1589 and 1640: He was sentenced to death at the stake and burned along with his artworks because some of them were so perfect and true to nature – like “photographs” – that they were regarded as being the devil’s handiwork. (To make things worse, Torrentius carried out his experiments in the obscurity of a cellar, in a ‘darkroom’ – *camera obscura* – which was regarded at the time as resembling the antechamber to hell, making the whole affair even eerier).

However, in much earlier times, the “transfer” of pictures from tangible reality to the wall of a room or the back of a grotto such as Plato’s – even in a very fleeting but surprising manner – attributed to Aristotle and reported by the Arabian astronomer Alhazen who, in his turn, described that around the year 1000 he had “indirectly” used the *camera obscura* to observe the individual phases of an eclipse of the sun so as not to be dazzled by the sunlight. In 1521, Cesare Cesarino described this experiment in the foreword to the first Italian edition of Vitruvius’s *De Architectura*.

fig. 1 Manouel Panselinos, *Children Dancing on a Bridge* (detail from the Baptism of Christ), Mount Athos, Protato Church, 14th century.

fig. 2 Manouel Panselinos, *Personification of the River Jordan* (detail from the Baptism of Christ), Mount Athos, Protato Church, 14th century.



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In 1285, the French astronomer Guillaume de Saint-Claude observed a solar eclipse in the same way by “making an opening in the roof of an enclosed room which allowed that section of the heavens where the spectacle of nature was going to take place to be seen”.

Beginning with Leonardo da Vinci, who was the first to observe the visual phenomenon that was created by a *spiraculus* – a stenopaic hole – and later coined the term of *oculus artificialis* for the “*Lucerna Magicae catoprico-dioptrica* ...” as it was later, in 1685, described in great detail in the book of the same name by Joanne Zahn, a great many scholars and artists become intensely involved in studying the optical phenomenon of the *camera obscura*.

Although the list of researchers who carried out relevant experiments is long, ranging from Barbaro to Cardano, from Gemma Frisius to Della Porta, Kircher and Cellio ... it was Giovanni Battista Della Porta who best described the phenomenon of the *camera obscura* in his work *Magiae Naturalis* which indicated that it is possible “to see things in a dark room that are illuminated by the sun outside of the room”.

In his little-known essay ‘Über die Geschichte der Camera Obscura’ (On the History of the Camera Obscura), which was considered an “important precursor of photography”,³ Heinrich Schwarz⁴ names the Italian mathematician and astronomer Giovanni Giacomo Marinoni (Udine 1676–Vienna 1755), besides Johann Heinrich Schulze, as the author of fundamental, synoptic works. In addition, it seems that he also designed a perfected instrument which was unfortunately destroyed in Vienna where Marioni was in the service of Empress Maria Theresia.

Another personality from the area of the early history of photography who has almost been forgotten – or, rather, completely ignored – is a certain Panselenius of Thessalonica. In a legend, he is even named as already having invented this technology in the fifth century (later, we will see that this legend resulted from his fame at the time).

This exotic legend – which is even quite amusing in parts – is reported most impressively: it includes passages from the rare book by Luigi Borlinetto, a scientist from Padua, with the title of *Trattato generale di fotografia* (National Institute P. Prosperini, Padua 1868) and is one of the incunabula of photographic literature of the nineteenth century; it is difficult to trace and, therefore, hardly studied.

Borlinetto wrote that “the monk Panselenius is the real discoverer of the camera obscura and the pictures produced by this. Panselenius lived in the fifth century It is said that he came from Thessalonica and made his famous discovery on Mount Athos, where he died ...”.

Borlinetto continued his story with the astonishing assumption that – according to the sources at his disposal – “Daguerre supposedly made an excursion [*sic*] to Mount Athos where a valuable manuscript from the year 1032 fell into his hands by coincidence. In it, a monk from the monastery of St. Dionysus described every detail of the important discovery. The manuscript allegedly had a Latin title: It included chemical instructions that the monk

Panselenius wrote down in the February of the year of our Lord 1032 in the monastery of Saint Dionysus. According to this, the discovery had not been recognized until about five hundred years after the monk's death...".⁵

However, that is not everything Borlinetti reported: He describes – albeit, somewhat imprecisely – the miraculous technology developed by the mysterious monk Panselenius and refers to a report that appeared in the magazine *The Camera Obscura. Reports of Progress in Photography*. This was the first specialized journal in the field to be published in Italy, in Milan.⁶ In it, the Manchester *Literary and Philosophical Society* reported that, according to a certain M. Brotiers, it had been proven that “the merit of having invented the camera ottica was not to be attributed to the Italian Giovanni Battista Porta, who lived in the sixteenth century. Our century has also just as little claim to be proud of having discovered photography; it can be traced back much further to the glorious deed of a certain Panselenius, who lived in the second half of the fifth century and died at the beginning of the sixth, and not in Italy, or France, or England, but in the Orient, on Mount Athos...”.⁷

The method was called heliotype and a description of the *apparatus* was also published in *Camera Obscura* without, however, citing any of the similar reports that had appeared in Greek specialized journals – especially, Constantine Simonidis' text in *Pandora*.⁸ Drawing on the description in the *Camera Obscura*, Borlinetto related that:

The apparatus supposedly consisted of a concave, zinc-coated copper sphere covered with a special black colour and with small openings diametrically opposite each other. There is an enlarging lens made of white glass in the centre of the sphere. A clear, copper mirror is attached to the front, two finger breadths away from the lens, and a thin amber sheet covered with gold three fingers behind this. A frog-green glass plate is affixed further away. The entire apparatus is placed on a three-legged stand. ... Not only the camera obscura was reputed to have been invented by the monk but also the silver-plated copper sheets and the two sensitising substances which he used. It is a pity that the names of these substances were written in Greek ...⁹

In the original of the *Camera Obscura* that Borlinetto refers to one reads on that: “silver-plated copper sheets, the same size as the sphere are used. The sheets are stored locked away in a suitable container. Before they are exposed to the effects of the two substances, whose Greek names are indecipherable (Could it possibly be out of professional jealousy?) or cannot be translated (Could they possibly be iodine or bromine? Discovering discoveries is so modern in the world of photography!), the sheet is cleaned before being placed between the amber plate and greenish glass sheet and finally the opening of the sphere is closed. After being immersed in a bath of liquid silver, a copy resembling the original appears in no time.”¹⁰ In any case, “Dr. Konstantin Simonide (a pioneer in the field of Greek photographic history) was not afraid of openly accusing Daguerre of plagiarism...”¹¹

This curious attribution of the invention of photography is similar to many – more or less strange – others that made the rounds in the nineteenth century, not only in Europe but also in Brazil where the Frenchman Hercules Florence coined the word “photographie” in 1832 – seven years before Herschel, who called Talbot’s new discovery “on paper” “photography”. When dealing with Italy, we only have to consider the confused story about Marco Antonio Cellio (1686) which was clarified brilliantly by Count Alexander Cippi of Ravenna in June 1839 – at a time when Daguerre’s process was not yet known.

And, what about Panselenius? This Greek from Thessalonica is definitely not the inventor of photography but, at least, he is an important personality who has been forgotten in spite of the impressive legend – he is not even mentioned by Eder, Lecuyer, Gernsheim, Newall, and Rosenblum in their voluminous histories. However, he really lived and must even be counted as being one of the most important Greek artists. Maybe that is precisely why he was accredited with Daguerre’s invention when this was making its way around the world as “the most wonderful discovery of the century”.

The Panselenius of myth is actually the painter Manouel Panselinos from Thessalonica (I am particularly indebted to the renowned and honoured authority on Byzantine art and architecture Ennio Concina from the University of Venice for a great deal of essential information on this artist). In the twelfth century, he created important frescoes with figural depictions in various monasteries on Mount Athos – mainly, in the Protato Church (figs. 1 and 2).¹² Because of his fame at the time, he was summoned by Dionys of Phourna to carry out these works. From what is known so far, Panselinos was confused with Michael

1 This essay is an updated version of the original paper published in Italian for the first time in 1999: Italo Zannier, ‘Il mito della fotografie da Panselinos a Daguerre’ in: *Fotologia*, Nr. 20 (1999).

Ennio Concina takes up and broadens Zannier’s exposition in: ‘Panselinos e Daguerre. Dialogo con Italo Zannier, di storia della fotografia e storia dell’arte bizantina’ in: Nico Stringa (ed.), *Fotologie. Scritti in onore di Italo Zannier*, Padua 2006, 87–90.

See also Italo Zannier, *Il sogno della fotografia*, Milan 2006, chapter v: ‘Panselinos di Tessalica: prima di Daguerre?’

2 Now in I. Zannier, *Storia e tecnica della fotografia*, Bari 1984, 22.

3 Cf. *Galleria*, Turin, August 1933, 16–17.

4 Heinrich Schwarz, Anselm Wagner (ed.), *Techniken des Sehens: Vor und nach der Fotografie. Ausgewählte Schriften 1929–1966*, chapter III ‘Spiegel und Camera Obscura’, Salzburg: Fotohof edition vol. 70, 2006, 201–256.

5 L. Borlinetto, *Trattato generale di fotografia*, Padua 1868, 4.

Astrapas – who also created frescos in Istanbul and Serbia – for a long time so that there were even doubts that he had ever existed.

Recently, N. Tsigaridas, professor of Christian art and archaeology at the University of Thessalonica, wrote “their radiance resembles that of the moon” in his description of Panselinos’ frescos in the church in Protato that were reproduced in an *Agenda* published by the Community of Mount Athos in 1997.¹³

According to oral tradition, the exceptionally beautiful frescos in Protato, in which Byzantine and modern art unite to form an almost grotesque *dynamic* realism, were created by Panselinos under the patronage of Andronikos Palaeologos (1282–1328) but only *rediscovered* in the eighteenth century when they were even compared with works by Giotto and Michelangelo. This makes it understandable that the legend that this virtuoso (and real) artist was credited with the discovery of photography fulfilling the age-old dream of both scientists and artists of being able to draw reality with only the help of light. And that, even before Daguerre and Talbot (forgetting about all the imperfect attempts made by Davy and Wedgwood in 1802), as well as the heliographs made by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce – an, unfortunately hapless, French inventor – who was the first “to provide art with a scientific instrument that was just as noble as it was unexpected in order to implement this to elevate it to that ideal of perfection which leads from man to God and which mankind is striving for” as Louis Fuiguier,¹⁴ the first historian and champion of photography noted. He also knew nothing about the existence of the legendary Pansilenius, alias Panselinos of Thessalonica, the *artistic shooting star* as he would be named today.¹⁵

6 *La Camera Oscura*, no. 22, Milan 28 February 1865.

7 *La Camera Oscura*, 1865 (note 4) 164.

8 Pandora, vol. I, Athens 1850, 553–555.

9 Borlinetto, 1868 (note 3) 5.

10 *La Camera Oscura*, 28 February 1865, 164.

11 Borlinetto, 1868 (note 3) 6.

12 Cf. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 3, New York-Oxford 1991, 1572.

13 Protato, Manouel Panselinos, *Holy Community of the Holy Mountain of Athos, organization for the cultural capital of Europe*, Thessalonica 1997 (with a text by M. Tsigaridas).

14 L. Figuer, *Sposizione e storia delle principali scoperte, etc.*, vol. 2, Venice 1855, 115.

15 Italo Zannier, published in: *Studi di Storia dell'arte in onore di Luisa Gatti Perer*, Milano 1999.

Willem Elias

35

The Relationship between Painting and Photography as Discussed through the History of the Philosophy of Photography between 1930 and 1980

Photography had already existed for some ninety years when philosophy began to appreciate the value of reflection on the medium. But even then philosophy still remained quite suspicious and even disdainful of the 'superficial' results that this new technology produced. In brief, one could say that if photography coincides with reality, it cannot be art. In opposition, painting can alternate reality in a meaningful way.

This history of thinking is elaborated into schemata and classified in accordance with the different philosophical movements of the twentieth century. *Freudo-Marxism* (Benjamin) distrusts the commercial potential of photography and sees but few exceptions. *Analytical philosophy* (Scruton) considers photography as having no artistic possibilities at all. However, one representative of that particular movement, Gombrich, valued the pictures of Cartier-Bresson as highly as the paintings of Vermeer. *Phenomenology* (Merleau-Ponty) opposes photography to painting by pointing out its inability to summarize movement. The Italian philosopher Brandi estimates the artistic merits of photography more highly, but excludes its being equal to the art of painting. Flusser glorifies photography, not as form of art, but as a means of thinking about reality that offers more perspectives than the linearity of language. It was not before *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Barthes) that philosophical reflection opened up to the double relationship of photography with reality. In addition to connotation as referring to reality, denotation provides a view on reality. This is the core of artistic potentiality in the arts.

For the last thirty years, the interaction between photography and art has changed. Photography has become art, one of a variety of media. This lecture will elaborate on this idea through the work of Marie-Jo Lafontaine, the internationally-acclaimed Belgian artist, who is both painter and photographer as well as a video-artist. Moreover, it will be shown that a profound interaction exists between these media.

fig. 1 Arno Roncada, *Darkroom # 5*, 2006.
C-print, 128 x 100 cm. Courtesy Kraalberg
Art Gallery, Antwerpen.



An analytical approach that intends to examine what photography actually is, without falling back into essences, does not always guarantee that meaningful things are told. Roger Scruton¹ for instance, puts all photography in the same box. He refuses to accept that it could be a form of representation. Between the lines, one could even learn that he considers the “being-a-representation-of-something” as a condition for being classified as art. By the way, this presumption is reinforced by his statement that he agrees with James Joyce’s argumentation that photography is not art if one equates “work of art” with “representation”. In his Paris notebooks, Joyce answered this question in 1904 in the negative because, even though a picture as a sensory perceptible fact can be appropriate for an aesthetic purpose, it is not a “human disposition of sensible matter”. The “non-human” nature of photography then refers to the conviction that a representation has to be the result of a complex pattern of intentional activity, and the subject of highly differentiated reactions. According to Scruton, photography is incapable of this; seeing that photography cannot represent but, at best, transform, it will inevitably be connected to the creation of illusions; namely, lifelike resemblances of things in the world. According to the author, photography is like the art of waxworks: it presupposes some fantasy and, through this, it annuls the requirements of artistic expression.

In the art of painting, the medium’s features not only influence what is seen in the image, but also the way it is seen. Through this, we become part of the artist’s vision. His intention is made visible in the shape. Scruton’s vision is somewhat simple in this case; reducing the understanding of a work of art to the perceptible “intention” of the artist. Furthermore, he clearly is not talking about modern art. As he formulates, we cannot deny that a painted representation initially interests us because of the visual link to the subject. Obviously, the artist not only proposes a way of thinking for us but also a way of seeing; however, twentieth-century art separated the pictorial system from the representation of the subject. The reversed paintings by Baselitz are an extreme example of this.

According to Scruton, photography, in contrast with the art of painting, cannot achieve representation. For this, he starts from what he calls the “ideal picture”. It has a causal connection with the subject and is a copy of its appearance. In the case of the ‘ideal picture’ it is not necessary – and not even possible – that the intentions of the photographer be a serious factor in the determination of how the image can be seen. The picture coincides with reality itself. If there happens to be any representation at all, it does not originate from the medium of photography itself, but from the way the subject is depicted; for example, by putting it on stage. The causal connection between the subject and its photographic reproduction results in the fact that, firstly, the subject must exist, secondly, it is broadly similar to the way it is shown in the picture and, thirdly, it is a depiction of a certain moment of its existence. Scruton postulates that, contrary to the art of painting, in photography the medium has lost all significance: photography confronts us with *what* there is to see, but can not tell us *how* to see it. So photography is transparent to the subject. If it is interesting, then it is because photography is a substitute for what it shows. Scruton is not embarrassed to conclude from this that, if one

finds a picture beautiful, it is because one recognizes something beautiful in the subject itself. A painting, on the other hand, can be beautiful even if it shows something ugly.

The analytical philosopher has clearly become a bit too analytical here. By this, I mean that he has developed a number of concepts and, by doing so, he has also excluded some. He does not leave any room for “semiotic facts”,² through which precisely the formal aspects of the photo produce their own meaning, apart from the intention of the maker of the image – or not. Neither does he allocate a part to the criticism of ideology which connects the beautiful-ugly judgment with the ideology of the spectator.³ In any case, the “ugly” theme is banished – or praised to the skies as commitment – in the art of painting. This is also the case in photography. Of course, here, there is a greater danger of being misled by the reality of the subject – but that is exactly what makes photography and the quality evaluation so fascinating. For, as a spectator, one is compelled to split up this reality into a subject and its photographic image. It is also typical of the untrained spectator that he lets both coincide so that, as Scruton says, the photo is not so much the subject as the subject the photo. This is also shown in his remark that television is “the most ‘realistic’ of all photographic media”, and thus it has the reality value of a mirror. And this, at the same time as media experts point out that precisely television reality, with which a large number of people live, rather leans towards fiction – and that, even in news reports. I could have agreed with Scruton if he had seen an important distinction between photography and painting as follows: if the lack of quality in the design of a painting leads to a feeling that it is a depiction of a completely uninteresting object, a photo without *representation* still remains an interesting document. In painting, a bad *nude* is a visual disaster. In photography, the causal connection with reality can be of comfort to the critic. This has something to do with the aspect of beauty. Scruton, however, is also wrong about the element of ugliness, because he does not breathe a word about the aestheticizing aspect of the medium. How can one explain the phenomenon that it is possible to look at photos of an *ugly* situation (sickness, poverty, atrocities of war, and the like) and even find them beautiful? This can only happen by assigning this medium with a specificity other than the mere transparency for reality.

Henri Cartier-Bresson is one example of a photographer who possesses the strength of visual argumentation and can substantiate the previous sentence. For those who happen to be blind to the quality of this great master’s visual material, I have a verbal testimony by Ernst H. Gombrich.⁴ His way of thinking is based on Karl Popper’s critical rationalism which is a branch of analytical philosophy. At the same time, his vision of putting the observation of art (conventionalism) into perspective strongly coincides with Nelson Goodman’s. He finds the question of whether photography is “an art” or not, simply a waste of ink. The question one should ask is: if it is “an art form, meaning actions or techniques that answer a diversity of questions and sometimes try to become loved and admired for the pleasure they can provide”?⁵ Gombrich emphasizes the word *can*, since no art can please everybody and nobody can be forced to like it. Art forms are just a source of possible pleasure and a joy to those who have acquired a taste for them.

It is Gombrich who, in his paper about Cartier-Bresson, pays unmistakable homage to the photographer as an artist. The world around us transmits meanings that reflect in our mind and we are rarely conscious of this. An artist is needed to draw our attention to the message of reality. According to Gombrich, Cartier-Bresson is an example of this because he has produced numerous masterpieces. His technical mastery is beyond dispute. He lets things speak: their textures, shapes and feeling. The great genre painters are his precursors. Gombrich even gives the example of Vermeer's kitchen maid.

One could expect that this kind of philosophy would show a great deal of openness towards photography. The opposite is true. In *L'Oeil et l'Esprit*, a philosophical ode to seeing, Merleau-Ponty joins in sculptor Rodin's prejudice – namely, that the painting is true and the photo a lie because, in reality, time does not stand still.⁶ Merleau-Ponty finds that, in contrast to the painting,⁷ the photograph does not synthesize time. It is only an instantaneous exposure that registers a temporary moment. The painting on the contrary, does not portray any moment faithfully, but gathers the interval of time. Photography, Merleau-Ponty also says, leaves those moments open that are immediately closed again by the propulsion of time. It destroys the exceeding, the gradual appropriation, the “metamorphosis” (word used by Rodin as well as Merleau-Ponty) of time, that is exactly visualized by the art of painting. In the presentation of a horse, the ‘from here to there’ is very clear. The art of painting does not look for the outside of the movement, but for its secret code.

Merleau-Ponty clearly did not think of Eadweard Muybridge's photos, in which movement is really studied. Nor of that singular picture by Cartier-Bresson showing a man at the Gare Saint-Lazare in Paris jumping to keep his feet dry (1932) (fig. 2). Cartier-Bresson's representative angle of incidence, together with the principle of “the right moment”, stands opposite the synthetic possibilities of painting. Both aspects can only replace the synthesis because, in the eyes of certain spectators (one of them, the photographer), certain angles, at certain moments, show the subject in what is essential for it. The theme therefore becomes an example of its kind. Goodman has called this “exemplification”. Photography's possibility of exemplification is, in my opinion, equal to the synthetic strength of painting.

Besides this, one could ask oneself, as Merleau-Ponty does, why one has to sentence “the fact of leaving the moment open” to untruthfulness. It is precisely this openness that stimulates the imagination. It is an example of polar thinking – such as one encounters more than once with existentially inspired phenomenologists – namely, that two opposite symptoms are divided into a positive and negative characteristic. Painting's possibility for synthesis should not be seen as one of photography's shortcomings, but only as a difference. The distinctive feature of photography is the opposite of synthesis; namely, its ability to analyse. Painting is weaker in this regard. It is of little use to consider the specific qualities of the one medium as being the deficits of the other. The analytical aspect of photography is that it visualizes things by freeing the visual field from the context of moving time. It provides a status quo of the desired focal plane.



2

The question about the essence of photography in relation to painting is treated in an interesting way by the aesthetician Cesare Brandi (1906–1988). Brandi was one of the most important representatives of the phenomenological approach in Italy. However, he did not avoid the encounter with the semiologic and structuralist lines of thought that had had an increasing effect in the field of reflection on art since the sixties.

Keeping the changes in mind, it comes as no surprise that Brandi dedicates a chapter of his book *Le due vie* (1966) to the question of “how one should look at photography”.⁸ The title refers to one of Brandi’s fundamental ideas, that there are ‘two ways’ of criticism corresponding with two attitudes the conscience can adopt towards reality. The first intends to bring the characteristic essence to light through the structure. The second questions the messages that the

fig. 2 Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Behind Gare Saint-Lazare*, Paris 1932. Gelatin silver print, 33.1 x 21.9 cm. Courtesy Gallery Johannes Faber, Vienna.

work of art contains to bring them into connection with history. In the first case, it comprises a presence, in the second it is a sign, something that refers to something else.

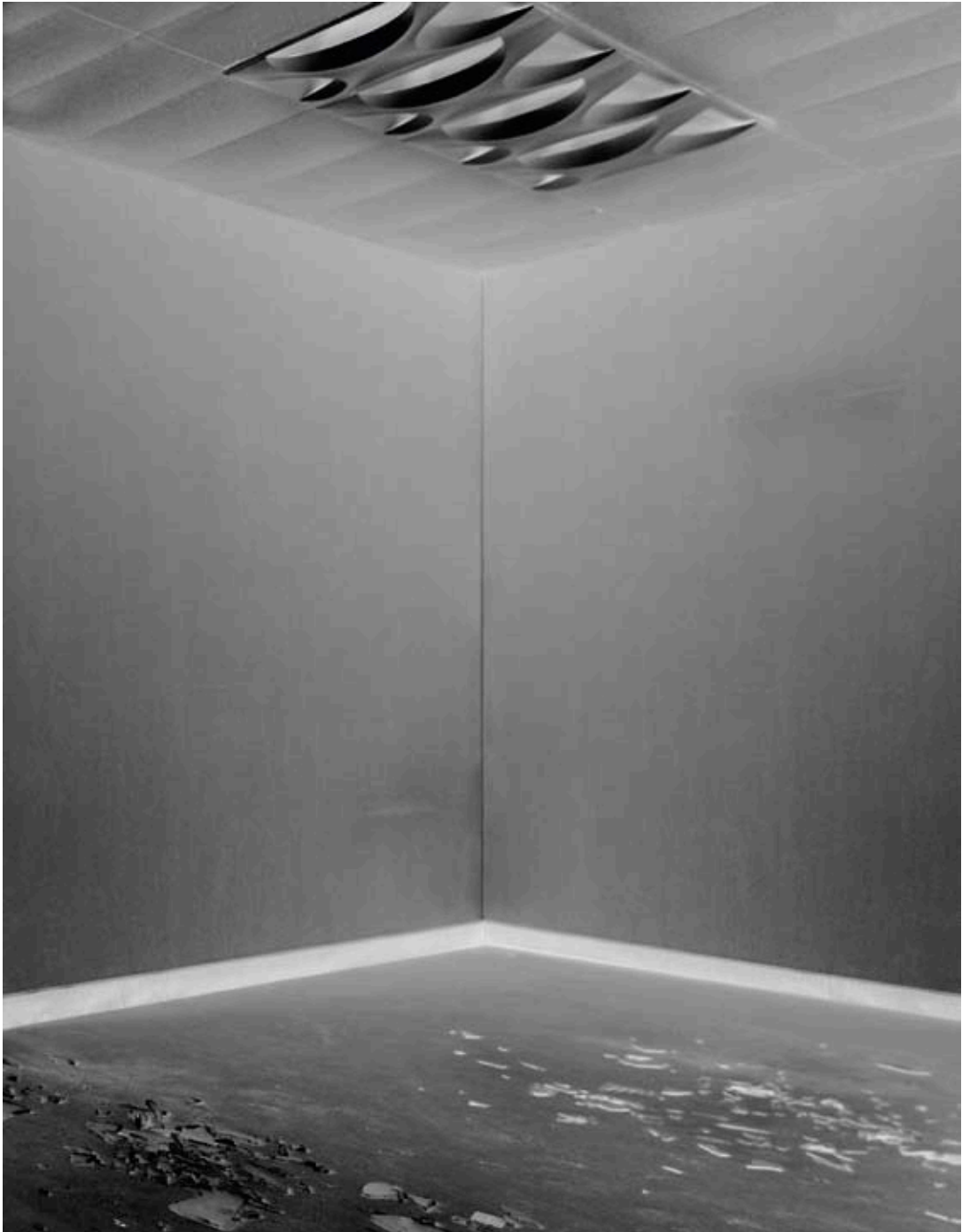
This line of thought clarifies the fundamental difference between a phenomenological approach to the image and a semiotic one. The latter sees the image (and thus also the art) as a sign within a communication system. To the phenomenologist, the object to which someone is intentionally orientated is, in the first place, a *presence*. Brandi uses two terms to distinguish two types of *presence* from each other: “*flagranza*” for the existing reality and “*astanza*” for providing evidence of the “pure reality” as it is constituted in the work of art. On the contrary, the sign refers, by definition, to an absence. Phenomenology neutralizes the reference to the existing reality within the image. This is exactly what one calls the method of putting in brackets, the *épochè*. Umberto Eco disagrees with Brandi that art does not want to be communicative. The *astanza*, as the non-existential presence, which refuses to communicate, does not fit into Eco’s way of thinking. As a communication theorist, he reduces every phenomenon to a transfer of signs. This is precisely what Brandi finds so little interesting; because, everything is a message if one interprets it as a sign. This is an act of understanding, not of perceiving.

However, I am not dealing with Brandi because, now and then, he enters into a dialogue with, or uses, structuralism, but because he dedicates a chapter to photography, in which he investigates the *nature of photography* from a phenomenological view, disconnected from its double-structured message.

A phenomenological investigation has to make the essence and the particular structure of photography appear. Thus, it secures a correct position in relation to painting, without being assimilated into it. The danger of the latter happening is not slight, according to Brandi. After all, the darkroom where photography originated was frequently used in painting studios as a means of conveyance for natural tableaux (fig. 1). Once the image could be fixed, the darkroom still remained the help of the painters. But the relationship does not always have to be regarded as being subservient. There are enough examples of painting art – with Degas as the most famous – that are, to a great extent, a tribute to the photographic shot which then became source of inspiration.⁹

The parallelism that has existed between both since the invention of photography, lies in photography’s striving to become painting and the yearning of art for the immediate, instantaneous aspect of the representation of authenticity. Both can achieve – on the basis of the choice – the position and symbolic identification, “the constitution of an object”, as Brandi calls it. This delineation of what will be the object of creative activity is only the first phase of the process. The essential difference between both is, that photography has to stick with this phase of styling and that painting can go further than this first completion of the form in order to arrive at the “formulation of the image” (fig. 3). This does not mean that photography

fig. 3 Arno Roncada, *Fault Trace*, 2005.
C-print, 90 x 70 cm. Courtesy Kraalberg
Art Gallery, Antwerpen.



is limited to an optical report. According to Brandi, one has to liberate photography from any crafty statute. The symbolic confirmation, linked to the choice and the position, however, is essential to the artist as well as the photographer. The image that has to be fixed flashes through the photographer's consciousness even before it passes the lens. This consciousness is radically different from the one that leads to art (painting). Photography is, as Brandi writes, "a way to bring the intended object to a standstill according to a certain way within the stream of the existence". Contrary to Merleau-Ponty, Brandi does not see this standstill as something static because, if the "existential flux" moves visibly, then the photo is an "extract in motion". In spite of their long joint history, and the fact that photography keeps ogling for the artistic dignity of painting, it is important that they distinguish themselves from one another in a constitutional way, without having to hide the close affinities they have for each other.

The substantial difference between both is, according to Brandi, that painting "formulates" the object, meaning that reality is "disexistentialized" by the painter's intervention, by his way of formulating. And, because he is incapable of this, that the photographer always keeps the position of a spectator *vis-à-vis* his model. Even though the means are often the same (this is also confirmed historically because the pioneers of photography were often painters), they each have their particular vision on the model; and one is of no less value than the other – they are just different. The photographer keeps the status of a spectator. The painter is looking for a way to "consume" the model in order to arrive at his own formulation by which this inner aspect can be exteriorized again. That is the fundamental difference. The photographer's possibility to "interpret" the made photo, which is irreversibly and irreplaceably fixed at the moment of the click, is completely the opposite to the "formulating" of the painter.

According to Brandi, the difference lies in the fact that the painter does not take a position as a spectator when constituting the object, but removes the object from its daily existence by incorporating it into his inner world. The photographer, on the other hand, remains a spectator with regard to his model and does not want to "disexistentialize" it. By the latter Brandi, understands the disposing of its actual existence in the stream of life as if passing beyond consciousness. The photographer wants to be the onlooker of reality without coming to its "formulation". Yet, he considers the object intentionally and this from a psychological point of view (the link to his own way of life) as well as from a formal point of view (the specific nature of light, the division of a surface, the colour, the expression, etcetera, which can symbolize a certain state of mind).

Brandi's way of thinking clarifies the resemblance and the difference between photography and painting. Accentuating the individuality of photography seems important to me. The transfer to the reservoir of art does not make the discussion any clearer; using *art* as a quality label only leads to more confusion. Still, one can ask the question of whether some forms of photography do not cross the line drawn by Brandi; namely, in those cases where it becomes abstract. In the darkroom, one not only has the means for making the individuality evident and interpreting

the outside world from the spectator's viewpoint at one's disposal, one can go much further. This infringement moves strongly in the direction of a 'formulation' of the image where objects are reduced to abstractions, or so deformed that there is no more relationship with the observed object. This is all very close to what Brandi calls the "disexistentializing of the model". Now that film can be replaced by a diskette, there are no limits to manipulation.

In no way do the above-mentioned considerations negate the fact that Brandi's vision is applicable to the largest part of photographic production. All the same, one finds a fine example of how art theoretical opinions can be overtaken by the artistic evolution in his text. In his comparison, he states that neither painting nor photography is dead. The guarantee for them being alive is precisely their difference. The art of painting, Brandi claims, "dies if it attempts to approach photography to the point where it crosses the border with 'non-existence'".¹⁰ "Hyperrealism", which is also called "photorealism", has precisely crossing that border as a target; yet, it is the movement that kept the art of painting alive during the bloom of conceptual art in the seventies. Even if one agrees with Brandi that photography cannot come to a formulation of the image, one has to establish that some styles of painting – for example, photorealism – also do not wish to achieve this. Brandi is aware of this issue concerning his theory. He discusses it as a response to Informal Art, that is said to be very remote from photography, and Pop Art, that tried to approach it again. In a separate appendix, he also takes notice of the relationship with forms of realism in old art, such as 15th-century Flemish art and Dutch art of the 17th century.¹¹ Also, *trompe-l'oeil* replaces the constituent of the object by a copy that is no formulation. Therefore, the painter also sometimes plays the part of a spectator, without wanting to formulate the image through inner processing. The contemporary artist often takes the position of a spectator who creates images encouraging the viewer to co-authorship.

- 1 R. Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding, Essays in the Philosophy of Art and Culture*, London, New York: Methuen 1983, 101–26.
- 2 Cf. J. Mukarovsky, 'Art as Semiotic Fact' in: *Structure, Sign and Function*, Selected Essays by Jan Mukarovsky, New Haven, London: Yale University Press 1978, 82–88; Willem Elias, *Signs of the Time*, Amsterdam, Atlanta 1997, 180–183.
- 3 Cf. N. Hadjinicolaou, *Histoire de l'art et lutte des classes*, Paris: Maspero 1973; Elias, 1997 (note 2) 87–94.
- 4 See the catalogue text of the exhibition on the occasion of his seventieth birthday at the Victoria and Albert Museum: *The Photographer as Artist: Henri Cartier-Bresson*, London, 1978, later reprinted in: E.H. Gombrich, *Topics of our Times, Twentieth-century issues in learning and in art*, London: Phaidon 1991, 198–210.
- 5 E.H. Gombrich, *Ideals and Idols, Essays on values in history and in art*, Oxford: Phaidon 1979, 150.
- 6 M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Oeil et l'Esprit*, Paris: Gallimard, 1964, 80–81.
- 7 For his vision about painting, see: G.A. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, Philosophy and Painting*, Evanston: Northwestern UP 1993; and: Elias, 1997 (note 3) 143–149.
- 8 C. Brandi, *Les deux voies de la critique*, Paris: Marc Vokar 1989, 169–196.
- 9 See also: P. Galassi, *Before Photography, Painting and the Invention of Photography*, New York: Museum of Modern Art 1981; M. Weaver, *The Photographic Art, Pictorial Traditions in Britain and America*, New York: Harper & Row 1986.
- 10 Brandi, 1989 (note 8) 175.
- 11 Brandi, 1989 (note 8) 189–195.

Giuliana Scimé

36

Luigi Veronesi The Essence of Experimental Avant-Garde Art

In order to define Luigi Veronesi, it is necessary to use a multi-comprehensive term: avant-garde artist. As a perfect example of an avant-garde artist of the 1920s and 30s, Veronesi was a photographer, painter, film-maker, stage and costume designer, graphic artist, researcher into the relationships between music and visual art, art teacher, and much more. The realm of arts is so widespread that avant-garde artists such as Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy, Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Rodchenko, and others, incessantly explored different media for expressing themselves and liberating their creativity.

Luigi Veronesi was born in Milan in 1908. He began his art studies as an apprentice to a minor Neapolitan painter, Carmelo Violante, who taught him all the secrets of the art – especially of landscape and figurative painting. Indeed, after graduating from college, he designed textiles for a French firm to improve his income and settled in Paris where he spent most of his time between 1932 and 1939. The Paris experience was of great consequence for the development of his personal style. He met the group *Abstraction, création art non figuratif*, founded by Auguste Herbin, that he joined in 1934 and turned from the figurative to abstraction, becoming the most talented abstract artist in Italy and one of most internationally renowned. In Paris, he had a close relationship with Fernand Léger, Georges Vantongerloo and the Delaunays – in particular with Sonia, the only one to know about his experimental photography. There, he had the opportunity to study the Impressionists and Cubists. Thereafter he studied the work of the Russian and Dutch abstract artists.

His first important exhibition was at the Galleria *Il Milione* in Milan in 1934 where he exhibited abstract etchings together with Josef Albers, one of the Bauhaus masters. He closely followed the Bauhaus principles and intellectual teachings – especially László Moholy-Nagy's graphic designs and systematic colour experimentation. Veronesi undertook similar explorations as part of his ongoing scientific and aesthetic research. In those years, he began to experiment

fig. 1 Luigi Veronesi, *fashion photography*, 1951.
Photomontage, partially solarized, gelatine silver print.
Luigi Veronesi Archive.



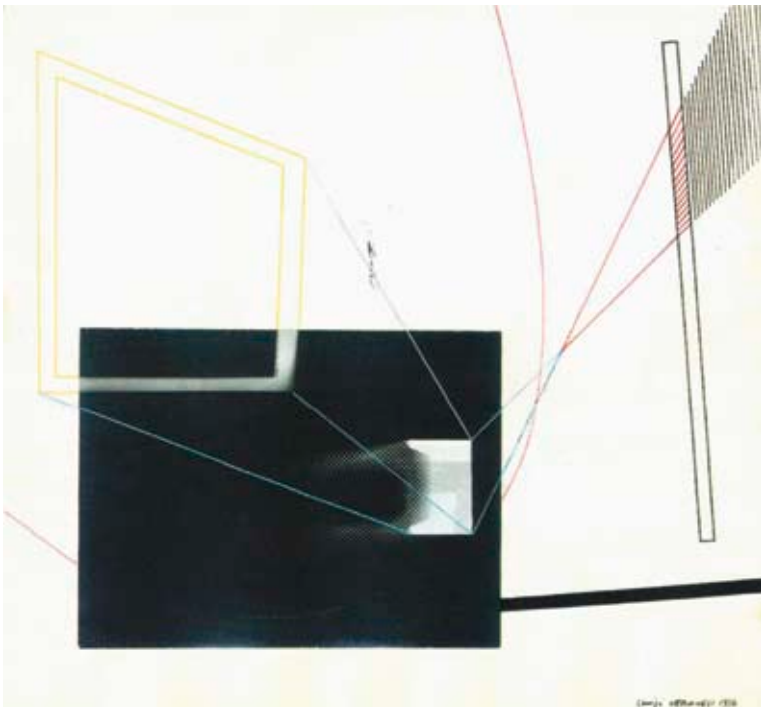
with photography and be interested in the relationships between photography and painting: he painted photographs with watercolour and created collages with photographs and paintings (fig. 2).

Luigi Veronesi used to tell that he had discovered the photogram by chance, a few years earlier in 1925, while helping his father in printing some plates, who was an amateur photographer. He realized that the shadow of a little plant that his mother had placed in front of a window had been impressed on a sheet of silver citrate paper. At that time, the sensitized paper was exposed to sun light. He was charmed by the fleeting lines of leaves and flowers, ignoring the fact that the birth of photography was linked to the experimental success of an ingenious Englishman, Henry Fox Talbot, and that other artists (Christian Schad and Man Ray) were already working using that magical technique followed, a few years later, by Moholy-Nagy.

Veronesi was seventeen years old, still studying at high school and dreaming of becoming a painter in the future, when he discovered the photogram. However, he did not forget this moving experience and later, as a young Italian talent in the field of abstract art, started to use the photogram as well as other experimental photographic techniques such as solarisation, multiple exposures, photomontage and “fotografia cinetica” (kinetic photography) the name he used to define his studies on the attempt to fix the continuum of space-time on an image. Later, in 1975, developing on a text written in 1956, he made the following statement about the photogram: “The photogram, the light image, obtained without the use of a camera, is the secret of photography ... in fact, the photogram was invented by the Creator when He created light, objects and their shadows; later human beings succeed in fixing them on sensitized paper.”

fig. 2 Luigi Veronesi, *Composizione con fotogramma*, 1936. Indian ink and photogram on cardboard 21 x 22.5 cm. Published on *Domus*, n.108, Milan: December 1936, 55.

fig. 3 Luigi Veronesi, *film n°4*, 1940. Photograms painted by hand on the film.



Veronesi's seductive exegesis on the photogram charms me: photography is seen as a gift of God to humankind and, in particular, the photogram is the perfect synthesis of creation, light and the visual interpretation of the real world. Around 1935–1936, he turned away from photographic paper for creating photograms and selected the photographic plate and, later, less sensitive photomechanical ones which permit the better control of the pre-visualization of the image.

Veronesi's extensive use of photography was really anticipatory in the context of Italian culture and in keeping with the goals of the *Bauhaus*. As early as in 1934, he wrote in the *Campo grafico* magazine that “... the photomontage is the only one expression of modern illustration. A book, a magazine, a newspaper which aims at belonging to the contemporary spiritual climate must depend upon photography and the dynamics imposed by the artist on the creation of the photomontage.” (fig. 4). He designed

front covers for several Italian publishing houses as well as posters, layouts and advertising for major magazines including *Casabella* and *Domus* that were the leaders in architectural and interior design. In the 1950s, Veronesi also used photomontage and other techniques, such as solarisation and super-impression, for fashion pictures when fashion photography was still in its infancy in Italy (fig. 1).

Having developed into one of the perfect interpreters of avant-garde art, Veronesi extended his insatiable longing to explore all the media of visual arts to include the cinema. Between 1939 and 1951, he created nine abstract experimental films, painting in colour each photogram by hand. Abstract film – or to put it better, ‘visual music’ – was conceived on the transformation of a form in tune with a musical rhythm. Seven films were destroyed during the bombings of the Second World War. However, two that survived in France, but in too poor a condition to be screened, have recently been restored (fig. 3). In 1980–1981, he created a tenth abstract film which he named ‘*Film n.13*’ because he disliked the numbers 10, 11 and 12, stating that “...(number 13) besides the fact that is the golden number, the 13 is recurrent in my work: the sequences.”

Years ago, during a conversation, I complained that most of the Italian photographic patrimony of 1930s and 1940s had been lost. He remarked that, during a war, artists and people in general had much greater worries than preserving photographs.

Colour and any medium of the visual arts was his constant obsession in researching new visual solutions. Do not forget that black and white is “colour”, in all the ranges from white to black. He made profound studies into the colour theories of Wilhelm Ostwald (born on 2 September 1853, in Riga, Latvia; died near Leipzig on 4 April 1932), winner of the 1909 Nobel Prize for chemistry, “...after his formal retirement in 1906, he dedicated much time and energy to artistic endeavours. His favourite leisure activities were painting, playing the viola, and writing poetry. But Ostwald’s interest in the arts was not incidental to his scientific and philosophical theories; rather, the two were interwoven. That is particularly evident in his work on colour, which exerted a marked influence on the industry and fine art of his own period. Around 1914, Ostwald began to develop a systematic theory of colour, as well as a quantitative colour science, culminating in the publication of several books and publications on the topic between 1917 and 1922. Ostwald’s most important contribution to colour theory was the role he assigned to grey as a key coordinate of ‘colour space’.”¹ Ostwald believed that a scale of perceptually equal steps in the brightness of a colour could be achieved by adding black and white in ratios that followed a logarithmic progression.

This, he said, provides a scheme for achieving perfect tonal balance and harmonious colour composition in a painting. Painters like Klee and Kandinsky show an awareness of the need for harmony to lend unity to their works. However, they were not impressed by Ostwald’s theories when he joined the advisory board of the Bauhaus at Walter Gropius’ invitation in 1927. On the other hand, his colour theory was received rather positively by Piet Mondrian and the *De Stijl* group and he became one of their ‘cult figures’ in the early 1920s. Mondrian’s use of simple



primary colours evidences Ostwald's influence as does Luigi Veronesi's deepening studies on colour applied to painting and the photogram. As a matter of fact, Veronesi made 'colour photograms' not using sensitized paper but a colour negative. He is, most probably, the only artist to have done this.

In 1945, Veronesi published the book *I Colori*² (The Colours) while he was undertaking research on abstract cinema and photography. It is a children's book, but the quality of the graphics and teaching aspects remains incomparable; he was one of the first authors to use photography in literature for children. In the first part of the book, the three primary colours and their complementary colours are associated with everyday objects, while the second part, more suitable to Veronesi's 'abstract rationalism', is dedicated to overlapping colours and creates pages that have become real painting masterpieces. In the same year, he published another book for children *I Numeri*³ (The Numbers), using photographs as well. Once again, its graphic refinement makes this book an art project in itself and much more than a mere children's book. A journey from the abstract to the concrete is gradually revealed through its pages. It is no wonder that he devoted his artistic skill to children: avant-garde artists have always considered childhood an important stage of life when creating objects (*eg.* the *Bauhaus* labs, Man Ray constructed toys, *etc.*) and books that were not only suitable and educational but stimulated the aesthetic senses. He wrote about his poetics, "Art work is, in my opinion, an operation that doesn't reach an end by making a work of art; better to say the work of art is not pointless. It must be a stimulus to the observer; the result of a complex 'modus operandi' that, starting from an idea, renders it in a communicative image."⁴

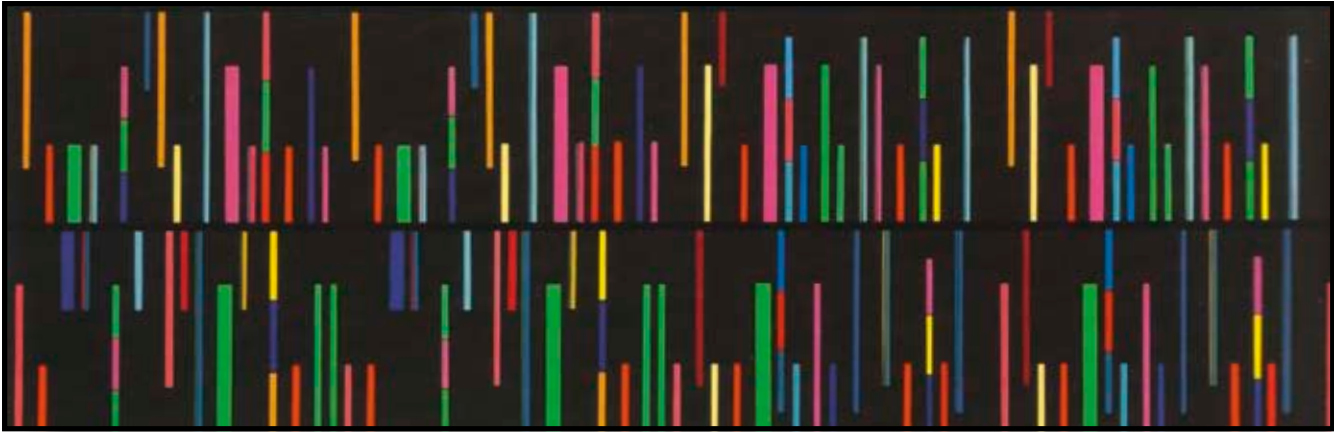
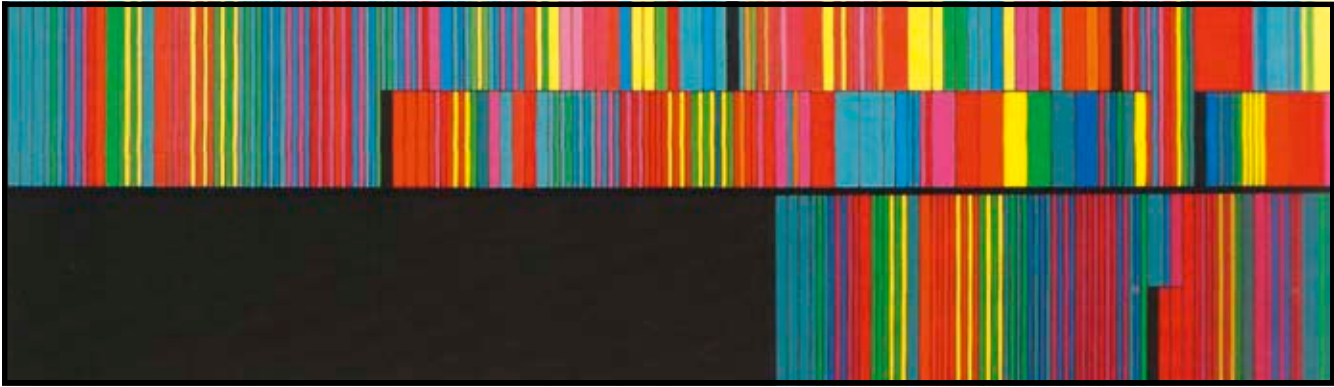
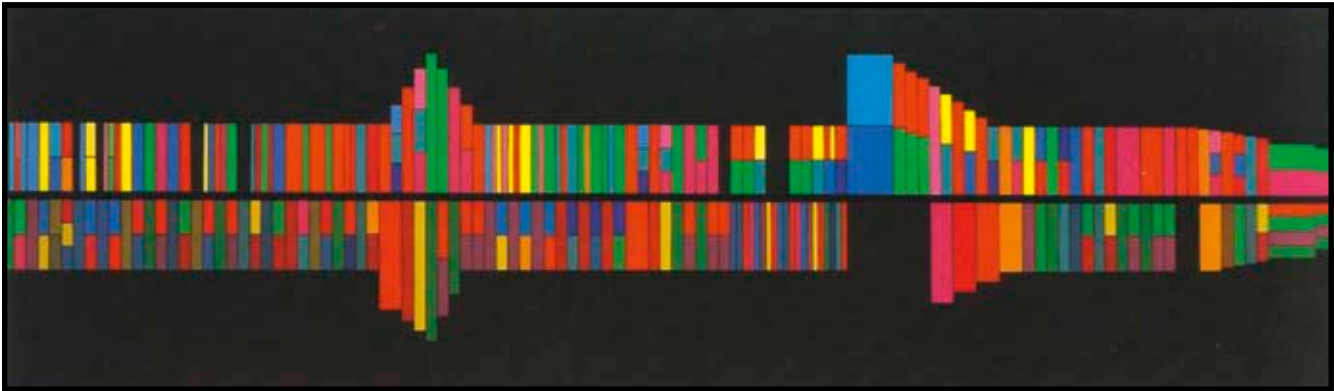
As a further indication of Veronesi's range of interests, in 1939, he published the book *14 variazioni di un tema pittorico*⁵ (14 Variations on a Pictorial Theme) that the musician Riccardo Malipiero had composed the year before.

One might imagine that Veronesi created the pictures based on the music; on the contrary, Malipiero composed his music based on Veronesi's works. When discussing his project 'Mathematics and Art: The Film Series', the mathematician Prof. Michele Emmer, the Italian film director Luciano Emmer's son, wrote:

In *Ars Combinatoria* (1982) another famous Italian artist, Luigi Veronesi, explains his methods for variations: "How did I come to the subject of variations...I took the advice of Léger, the French artist, when I was studying under him in Paris. This was his advice, 'Veronesi, don't stop at a single image, but consider the image you are thinking of, that you have in your mind, as a theme on which to develop variations, exactly like a musical theme. Working like this is the only way to see an image from every side, from every aspect.'" It was advice that I accepted with enthusiasm, so much so, that 50 years later I am still working with the idea of variations. I can say that one of my first positive experiences was the series of *14 variations on a pictorial theme* that I did in 1936 and that the Italian musician Malipiero later set to music. The research

fig. 4 Luigi Veronesi, *untitled*, 1937.
Gelatine silver print, 30 x 20 cm.
Private collection, Milan.





that I have been carrying out for many years is into the relationship between sound and colours, studied on a mathematical basis. Here are some chromatic variations on a rectangle, considered as a minimal element, amongst the least evocative geometrical figures. For me, the rectangle is one of the minimal elements of my compositions, not only in the resolution of chromatic differences between sounds, but also in all my painting. Of course, I do not only use the rectangle; I also use curved lines. In fact there's hardly a picture of mine in which there are no circles and other curved lines, parabolas, ellipses, hyperboles and so on. Sometimes I also use triangles and squares but mostly as a counterbalance to the other figures that make up the composition.”⁶

In addition to his experiences in Paris, the Galleria *Il Milione* in Milan played a major role in developing Veronesi's culture and stimulating his curiosity; apart from the fact that it was the first to recognize his brilliant artistic potentialities. The gallery was an important cultural centre and exhibited artists like Max Ernst, Lurçat, Marcoussis, Léger, Pascin (1932), Seligmann, Kandinsky, Vordemberge-Gildewart, and Albers (1934), displayed magazines including *Cahiers d'Art*, *Cercle et Carré*, *Abstraction-Création* and the *Bauhausbücher*, and was a place where one could listen to music by Arnold Schönberg, Alban Berg, Anton Webern, the exponents of the Second Viennese School, banned from the official concert halls in Italy. The activities of the Galleria *Il Milione* were completely in accord with similar European interactions between abstract painters, musicians and composers. As Johann Goethe said: “... all along, it has been known that a certain relationship exists between colour and sound.”

Luigi Veronesi had been studying chromatology since the 1930s and found a method for measuring the wavelengths of the light vibration of colours and those of sounds. He represented the sound with a rectangular form, according to the fundamental principles of the Gestalt, and the absence of sound with the absence of colour, grey colour which is the perceptive rest of the eye (according to the studies of the physiologist Ewald Hering to the neutral grey corresponds a peculiar rest of the retina). He worked on chromatic transpositions of musical scores, developing a precise mathematical system for expressing the timbre and pitch of sounds in painting. In the 1960s, he used a measuring instrument, the spectroscope, to associate a colour with the wavelength of each musical tone (Fig. 5). In 1977, Veronesi published the results of his research in the booklet *Proposals for research on the relationships between colour and sound* (Siemens Data, Milan) where he underlined: “The results of my research (have to be interpreted) as a reading of a piece of music through a coloured image.”

Luigi Veronesi always thought of art as an instrument involving all aspects of the aesthetic experience. His belief spurred him on to make his substantial contribution to the theatre, drawing sketches for Igor Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol* and Leonid Andreev's *Anatema* (1934), ten costume sketches for Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1935) and collaborating on many other stage works. In 1942, he designed the stage and the puppets for the *Histoire du soldat* by Stravinsky. In the 1980s, he created several stage-designs for the Teatro alla Scala in Milan.

fig. 5 Luigi Veronesi, *three chromatic studies on music*: Erik Satie *La piège de Méduse*, waltzer n.2, 1980; Johan Sebastian Bach *Contrappunto n.2*, 1970; Anton Webern *Variazioni per pianoforte*, 1970. Collage on board, 36 x 101 cm. Private collection, Milan.

As a participant in the activities of the Resistenza (the partisan movement opposing Fascism and Nazism) he was forced to live semi-clandestinely during the Second World War. It is said that, at that time, Veronesi capitalised on his etching skills to make counterfeit money – not for criminal purposes, of course. At the end of the war he restarted his artistic activities in the different fields.

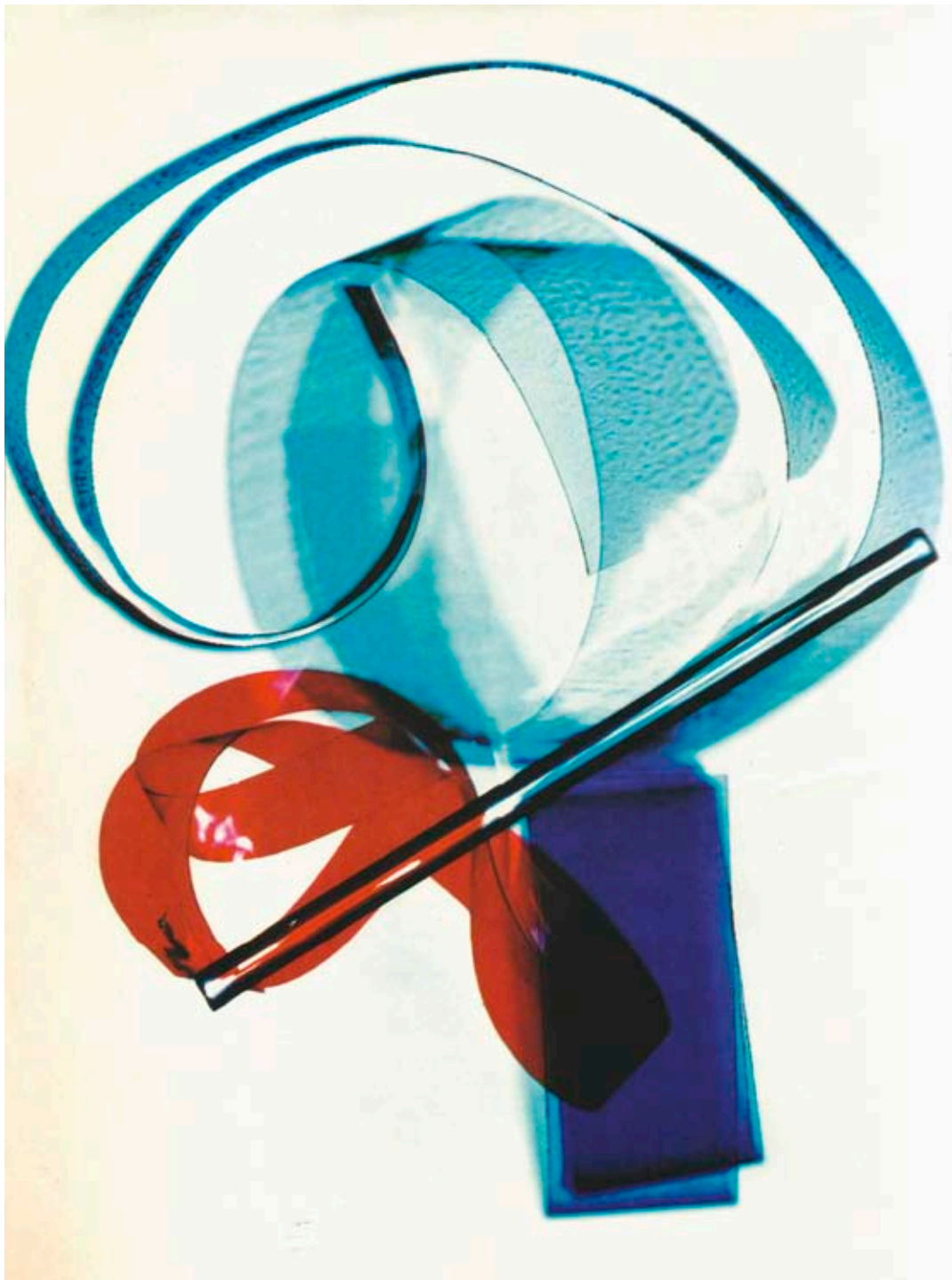
Luigi Veronesi, painter, filmmaker, stage and costume designer, graphic artist, researcher and teacher and - experimental photographer. In 1935, he met László Moholy-Nagy in Switzerland. They had a long fruitful conversation that ended with the first rays of the sunrise. Moholy-Nagy was astonished to discover that Veronesi was making photograms on plates, not on paper, and, in addition, recognized Veronesi's creativity potential. He invited him to join the group of *Bauhaus* masters who had to migrate in the United States after the Nazi regime had closed the school. Veronesi refused to emigrate to the United States, although those were the years of Fascism in Italy although, as we know, he was strongly opposed to such a dictatorship. He probably felt that, overseas, the ground would not be fertile for the European avant-garde heritage which was the consequence of a great number of political situations and intellectual turmoil. (By the way, Moholy-Nagy had serious problems in establishing the *New-Bauhaus*, which was transformed into the well known 'School of Design' in Chicago.)

Veronesi's research into photography is, indeed, an expression of European artistic evolution. And, in his work, there is no visual or conceptual fracture between the different media he used. A much-abused statement by Man Ray is: "I paint what I cannot photograph; I photograph what I do not wish to paint." On the contrary, Luigi Veronesi did not have to choose a tool for expressing his intellectual endeavours: painting and photography were equal. The only selection to be made was between the different photographic techniques. *Dall'irrazionale al razionale* (From the irrational to the rational) is the title of a painting he made in 1973. It depicts the evolution of a form: at the beginning an agglomeration of obscure nuclei that, through various stages, evolves into rigorous geometric and chromatic equilibrium.

It is as though Veronesi wanted to visualize his personal creative process: from the initial idea, still blurred by strong emotive elements, to the purity of the rational mind. Any of his images – painting or photograph – is the result of a "construction", and "construction" is the recurrent title of many of his paintings. He selected the proper technique for representing the idea, the concept he wished to express.

It is even more amazing that Veronesi drew the form that the photograph should represent. Any chance event, such as an involuntary motion or an "accident" in the dark room or working tentatively, is eliminated. He pre-visualized the image that had to correspond to his mental pattern, it could not be approximately similar, but had to be exactly the same. The photogram was particularly seminal for his poetics and he wrote: "The technique of the photogram is simple in itself but very rich in fascinating variations and possibilities. The object finds its primordial expression in the photogram: we can see beyond its real form in images that are true and change instantly with the slightest beam of light." ⁷

fig. 6 Luigi Veronesi, *untitled*, 1964. Colour solarized photogram, cibachrome, 30 x 24 cm. Private collection, Milan.



“The forms are concepts”, said Rudolf Arnheim, one of the most serious theorists of visual arts psychology. And, in his essay, Luigi Veronesi displays brilliant mastery of the two categories of poetry and logic – the spiritual elements that interweave in all his work. With the photogram, Veronesi achieved the magic of an optimal vision: the objective world and the one of appearance are interpenetrated and generate a new and ignored image.

He also created colour photograms that are probably unique in the history of photography. The photogram technique should not be applied to colour but he fixed photograms on negative colour film in his never-ending concern for experimentation. Of course, his colour photograms are, visually, very much like his paintings but, in many works, the lines are more sinuous, soft, I could say entering into the territory of the ‘dream’, a sense of abandon into a dreaming poetic dimension; in other works, they correspond perfectly to his paintings and etchings with a very geometrical shape (fig. 6).

But the photogram was not the only technique that Veronesi mastered. When he was very young, he saw a solarisation in a magazine and also used photomechanical plates for that process because the gelatine coat is thicker and enriches the lines of deeper colour making the tonal contrast more dramatic. Veronesi used solarisation mostly for portraiture, obtaining absolutely unique pictures with evanescent images but although still impressed in the memory recalling a dream. He also combined the photogram and solarisation for nature studies to analyze the structure of leaves and flowers.

Veronesi made a decisive contribution to the almost impossible visualization of the spatial/temporal dimension through his *fotografia cinetica* (*Kinetic photography*), the term he used to define his experimentation using lights in motion – but completely under control. His kinetic photographs are masterpieces of geometrical shapes very similar to his painting and the perfect devolution of his theoretical beliefs. He also made several kinetic photographs in colour.

Photography, with its whole gamut of techniques and processes, is a ductile tool for the artist allowing him to investigate both the real and intangible universes. Intellectually free and conscious, Veronesi made use of all kinds of *transgression* and *violence* on the medium: negative-positive, multiple exposures, super-impression and screening along with the photogram, solarisation, and so on. He made thoughtful, simple photographs far removed from any intent of recording reality. They provide a visual analysis of the structure, studies of the form and of the relationships between different patterns and object/shadow. The photographed objects become suddenly recognizable: the observer is no longer puzzled by their nature and recognizes their status in the context of reality. But the artist extrapolated its intimate essence, creating images that are the abstraction of the objects themselves. Once again, Veronesi’s goal is the structural equivalent of the object, taken back from the most complex form to the purity of plane geometry: square, rectangle, sphere and triangle. If at all, the illusion of the third dimension is created by the object’s shadows projected on the sheet of paper. It is very

interesting to point out that Veronesi only used colour in his photographic work for photograms which were the equivalents of his painting, graphic art and for kinetic photography. Even for direct shots, he only used black and white. One of the principle characteristics of Luigi Veronesi's art lies in the enormous scope of his field of activity and his fervent desire to bring art and life together.

Brief biography

Luigi Veronesi was born in Milan in 1908. He began his art studies as an apprentice to a minor Neapolitan painter, Carmelo Violante. In 1934, Veronesi joined the 'Abstraction, création art non figuratif' group. In the same year he had his first important exhibition at Galleria *Il Milione* in Milan together with Josef Albers. He exhibited his sketches for Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol* and for Andreev's *Anatema* and began a series of studies based on the photogram, abstract photography and solarisation. In 1935, he took part in the first collective exhibition of abstract art in Turin and produced ten costume sketches for Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Alongside his graphic and painting work, he was to continue these stage - design activities until the 1940s. During this period, he collaborated with the Palcoscenico theatre group where Paolo Grassi and Giorgio Strehler made their debuts. He was particularly interested in the relationship between visual arts and music and in the spatial/temporal dimension. Between 1939 and 1951, Veronesi made nine abstract films, painting each photogram by hand, seven of which were destroyed during bombing in the Second World War. He made a tenth film in 1980-1981. In 1947, he joined the photographic group *La Bussola*, founded in Senigallia (Ancona). The group was seminal for the evolution of art photography in Italy. Veronesi's growing interest in all photographic techniques and processes, together with cinema and music, made him the Italian artist closest to the concept of multidimensionality of art conceived as a global project that was typical of the Bauhaus. He played an active part in most of the major exhibitions of the following years, including the historic exhibition of Italian abstract art at the 33rd Venice Biennial in 1954. He worked on chromatic transpositions of musical scores, developing a precise mathematical system for expressing the timbre and pitch of sounds in painting. In the 1960s, he used a measuring instrument, the spectroscope, to associate a colour with the wavelength of each musical tone. His exhibitions in Italy and abroad in private and public spaces are countless. Luigi Veronesi died in Milan in February 1998.

- 1 Philip Ball and Mario Ruben, *Color Theory in Science and Art: Ostwald and the Bauhaus*, Weinheim: Wiley-VCH Verlag 2004, 4842-4843.
- 2 Ed. Denti, Milano 1945.
- 3 Ed. Denti, Milano 1945.
- 4 Ferrania, *Il Fotogramma*, Milano 1945.
- 5 Lucini, *Tip. A.*, Milano 1936-1938.
- 6 <http://arpam.free.fr/emmer.html> (August 2008).
- 7 Foto Veronesi, *Martano Documenti 50*, Galleria Martano, Torino 1974.

Liz Wells

37 Revisiting Photography as Art

In the opening pages of *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, Charlotte Cotton remarks that “to identify ‘art’ as the preferred territory for their images is now the aspiration of many photographers” (Cotton, 2004: 7). Photography now sits alongside painting and sculpture within contemporary art institutions. Commitment to working as an artist has become an accepted career objective for photography students and the gallery has become a destination for photographic imagery. This essay reflects upon photography within the art institution. Here ‘art institution’ is taken to refer to a web of sites, events, practices and conventions that constitute an international nexus which is most visible in the form of publically funded museums and galleries, specialist libraries and publishers, commercial galleries, auction houses, art dealers, collectors and collections, universities and art schools, historians, theorists, curators, critics, and, of course, artists (dead or alive).

My discussion is occasioned by work on the fourth edition of *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (ed. Liz Wells, 1997; 2000; 2004). The book was first developed in the early 1990s, some fifteen years ago. At that time, certainly in Britain, photographs were still more commonly encountered in specialist photography museums, archives, workshops and galleries than in municipal art collections or in modern art galleries.¹ At the same time, since the 1970s photography had been variously incorporated by artists as a medium and focus within post-modern critiques and practices (Levine, Ruscha, Messenger, Boltansky, Rødland, von Hausswolff, Puranen, to name but few). A number of strands of practice could be identified and co-existed. These included: fine art photography with its modernist emphasis on craft and formalist aesthetics (Brandt; Cunningham; Weston); what has now become termed ‘deadpan’ photography (Baltz; Bechers; Höfer); photography as a medium used within contemporary art practices (Chadwick; Doherty; Mahr); photo-media as in itself object for critical interrogation in relation to ideological processes, especially questions of representation (Pollard; Rosler; Sherman) or more ontological explorations of visual languages, realism and narrativity (Burgin; Fontcuberta; Lomax). In re-visiting photographic practices within the context of contemporary art, chapter revisions have to take into account not only shifts in issues and ideas pertaining to photography as an art practice but also changes in contemporary art institutions and practices to which photographic media contributed alongside a range of other socio-cultural forces.

Photography, A Critical Introduction encourages a questioning approach to photography in terms of its generation, circulation and reception across a range of visual cultural spheres. Its overall remit to introduce histories, issues and debates explicitly rests upon the methodological stance that histories are formative and that questions relating to contemporary situations and debates can be illuminated through interrogation of historical developments – including rupture and change. Where are we? How did we get here? Each chapter is geared towards (undergraduate) students coming to historical and critical debates for the first time and therefore aims to introduce ideas and issues, to situate them in terms of theoretical and socio-political contexts, to offer definitions of key terms and, through brief synopses and appraisals, to point students to publications within which debates are further elaborated.² The publication was originally conceptualised as a ‘bridge’ from illusory certainties of information (historical, technical and otherwise) to the difficulties and uncertainties of historical, theoretical and critical *analysis*. It was – and remains - difficult to persuade those new to photography – or, indeed, many of those entrenched within certain sets of assumptions about photo-aesthetics – to settle into Barthes, Benjamin, Burgin and their counterparts. At the time, the early 1990s, French theory remained a dominant force in British intellectual currencies of the Left.³ The conceptual languages and mode of address to ideological and political issues and contexts often seems daunting when first encountered. The discussion aims to entice students towards the pleasures of intellectual engagement and speculation.

Following the format used for each chapter, ‘On and beyond the white walls’, concerned with photography as art and with the gallery as a primary context, situates the contemporary through brief historical overview of debates and developments. The chapter title intentionally references the Modern era in terms of the gallery as an auratic space. The chapter structure distinguishes between modernist pre-occupations with form and aesthetics, and postmodern, conceptual interests in language and representation. First, it briefly comments on the history of debates about photography’s status as art, including discussion of early (19th century) uses of photography by artists, and an introduction to some of the debates surrounding photography within Modernism. This focuses on formalist experimentation, and consists of three sections: first, discussion of the argument for viewing photography as Modern Art (particularly as led

by curators at MOMA, NY); second, review of the acclaim for photography as in itself a new instrument of vision, that is, a 'modern' and radical practice that became wide-spread in Europe, with the example of the Soviet avant-garde; and third, situation of photography within a broader art movement, namely, Surrealism. These rather diverse examples were intended to demonstrate something of the ubiquity of photography even *within* the parameters of modern art movements and institutions.

Chapter revision for new editions poses challenges. It offers the opportunity to introduce new visual examples, especially as the fourth edition will have colour throughout. It is essential to update references and, more particularly, debates. But, given no increase in the overall number of illustrations and limited extra word length, what should be dropped or compressed in order to allow space for new materials? What shifts in ideas and issues should be charted, and which new publications might be summarised and recommended? For instance, the first edition included specific discussion of the role of the British Arts Council but this was dropped in later editions (as this section came to seem parochial when the book became used internationally). The challenge is particularly demanding in relation to the final sections of the chapter relating to the contemporary in part because of developments in perception of the photographic as art, but more particularly because of ways in which 'art' as a field has itself changed in terms of audiences, practices, sites, genres and perceived significance. Such fluidity is hardly surprising, but it contributes an extra layer of challenge in terms of exposition and explanation within the chapter. Furthermore, the operations of contemporary art institutions are markedly international yet inflected within particular national socio-political histories and cultural contexts. Since the publication sells internationally, from North America to Asia, there is a need for sensitivity to cultural difference.⁴ On the other hand, we make no pretence of overview – the project was clearly developed from within a British context as primary determining influence.

Revision of the historical sections is less demanding; it essentially rests on which new publications to reference, and whether new editions of existing publications offer shifts in perceptions that might be emphasised. For example, a chapter within Naomi Rosenblum, 1997, *A World History of Photography* is referenced as a key source for thinking about late nineteenth century Pictorialism. The reference will, of course, be updated to the fourth edition in 2008, but has she further developed this chapter in any way that might influence how discussions are brought to the attention of students? More fundamentally, are earlier publications (Galassi, 1981; Scharf, 1974; Van Deren Coke, 1972) still pertinent within the historical curriculum? Yes, in my judgement - although the style of writing probably now seems alien to students (mostly not born until the 1980s). But their contributions were influential within subsequent debates; it follows that return to such texts helps students to trace histories of ideas, for example, preoccupations with the influence of painterly aesthetics on photography. Also, are there more recent histories of photography that should be included? Given its status as an introductory

textbook it is not appropriate to include reference to monographs – often based upon doctoral research – on the work of individual photographers (except in a few cases of particularly significant photographers such as Cameron, Emerson, O’Sullivan whose work is now central to museum collections). The process of deciding which new works to reference involves very welcome personal scholarly pleasures in terms of browsing catalogues, reading and annotation.

The final sections of the chapter reflect upon contemporary developments from the 1970s onwards, stressing pluralism within post-modern trends and noting the influences of feminism, and of questions of identity, ethnicity and multiculturalism that, as broader social forces, had marked influence within artistic practices. Here, recent debates had been lively, with animated discussions in journals such as *October* (USA) or *Ten/8* (UK) so there was a range of existing material to draw upon, but which addressed photographic media in many respects as ‘anti-art’. In North America the context was particularly inflected by the dominance of abstract expressionism with Modern Art. At this time, in the early 1990s, such postmodern debates notwithstanding, relatively little was being published that critically situated photography in itself as art. Indeed, in Britain debates as to the status of photography within the art gallery had still persisted through the 1980s and the many photography organisations that then existed tended to emphasise photographs as social document.⁵ This was an era in the UK when several specialist photography galleries with varying missions fostered experiments in new colour photography and uses of photography within political, educational or community movements had become common. But it was not until 1989, the 150th anniversary of the announcement of photography, that the Royal Academy of Art, London, hosted its first ever major exhibition of photography, thereby, in effect, acknowledging photography as art. Since photography had also become incorporated within broader contemporary art practices, the diversification of photographic practices in this period was marked.

The art institution itself was changing and continues to change. Several specialist photography galleries have now closed. A number of new factors have come into play. In the 1990s these particularly included the impact of digital media on ontological debates about photography. In addition, the art market for photography has burgeoned internationally. Other developments include the expansion of websites and online information services for which, of course, there is little sense of national or regional boundaries; increased involvement of arts institutions in urban regeneration; cultural shifts within which artists become celebrities and, rather like film stars, politicians or other media players, work to project a particular constructed persona that operates as a form of P.R. Furthermore, thematic preoccupations shift. The final part of the chapter is a case study of landscape practices. Landscape as a genre was chosen as focus in part to complement more people-oriented imagery elsewhere in the book (in chapters on documentary, advertising, and the family album), in part because it is a specific interest of mine, and more particularly because, in the 1990s, landscape was not attracting significant exposure. This has changed. In an era of concern about ecological issues questions of land and

environment figure regularly within gallery practices, even in major urban centres. Updating examples, and situating art practices within broader socio-ecological contexts, is exciting and invigorating given the extent and quality of contemporary work and its exposure.⁶

It is increasingly difficult to single out photography for discussion given the complexities of the broader contexts within which photography and photographers now operate. Nonetheless, some key distinctions offer starting points for students, despite risks of over-simplification. First, there is the 'modern' as opposed to the 'post-modern'. This is explicit in chapter headings, and there does not seem any reason to change this; the chronological structure of the chapter allows exposition of historical debates with which students new to photography may not be familiar. What has developed, though, is the prominence given to the modern archive within the contemporary museum and gallery through display and through specifically themed exhibitions exposing and re-interrogating particular aspects of photography's histories. The opening up of the former Soviet bloc within Europe and the increased interest in and study of photo-histories in other regions, especially parts of Asia (Japan, China, Korea), further enhance a current interrogation of photo-aesthetics. Some note of this is appropriate. Also, in terms of historical research, photographs are increasingly being addressed not only in terms of semiotics, provenance, and socio-historical contexts but also as *material* objects of curiosity.⁷

As is explicit in previous editions, photography as a medium used within contemporary art does not map onto the post-modern in any simple way - except in the literal sense of 'after' the modern - as a range of differing interests, influences and trajectories are in play. Hence specific themes such as 'women's photography' or 'identity and multi-culturalism' are addressed. Indeed, a second distinction remains useful, namely that between 'art photography', and photography as utilised as a medium within contemporary art. The former is, of course, a legacy of modernist emphasis upon aesthetics and photo-eye. The latter seems more complex, perhaps because critical reflection on that which is ongoing inevitably deals with that which is unclear, developments too young to be defined as trends and significance accorded to work that has not had a chance to be tested over time. Introducing *The Photograph as Contemporary Art* (2004) Charlotte Cotton comments that although photography historically has made varying claims for status as art, it was only in the 1990s that photography achieved a confident presence within contemporary art circuits. She accounts for this primarily in relation to two factors: first, the influence of conceptual art from the 1970s onwards within which the photographic often figured. Second, the emergence of colour photography within art practice. Although this can likewise be traced to the 1970s with the work of photographers such as William Eggleston and Stephen Shore, its more general acceptance only dates from the 1990s.⁸ This is important as it contributed to blurring boundaries between art photography with its emphasis on monochromic virtuosity and photographic practices as critical engagement since colour, within what otherwise appeared as 'straight' photography, along with experiments in the grammar of scale in photography interrupted seemingly established distinctions. As Cotton notes, art practices such as the creation of large-scale staged photographic tableaux (Collins, Blee

Luxemburg, Wall), or the deadpan, anti-dramatic scenarios associated in particular with the younger generation of Frankfurt School artists (Gursky, Höfer, Struth) pre-suppose the validity of a colour aesthetic.

Such examples also contrast with earlier uses of photography within conceptualism, particularly in the United States, where a number of artists deployed photographic media (often video, or 'found' photography, that is, images drawn from newspapers and other sources) in critiquing the tenets of modernism (Levine, Ruscha, Sherman). This was not restricted to commentary on art photography but was also intended as an antidote to the inward-looking aesthetic preoccupations of abstract expressionism. In effect photography was embraced as a new anti-art! Certainly the academic critics associated with journals such as *October* seized upon photography as a radical medium through centrally welcoming and reflecting upon the questions of language, representation, traditional art practices and the relation of art to everyday experience that marked conceptual art and thereby influenced new directions in arts institutions (Crimp, Krauss, Solomon-Godeau). But, aside from scale, colour and the gallery as context of communication, such work, very often also influenced by contemporary feminist debates and questions of race and ethnicity, has little in common with, for instance, the deadpan aesthetic of the younger Frankfurt School artists, or the historical reflections that typify contemporary post-holocaust or post-Soviet ruminations (Gerscht; Norfolk). Diversity remains marked. However, these diverse strands of contemporary practice do have in common both a commitment to making art as a means of commenting on the world of experience and an interest in the art market as their economic context of operation.⁹ Within the gallery, it is now the case that art photography, primarily appreciated for formal and technical qualities, may be shown alongside pictures by artists whose primary concerns are more interrogative, to which might be added a raft of work that is socially or politically engaged that for various reasons transcends specific (historical) contexts to make a mark in the gallery (Heartfield; Lange; Sekula; Miller). There are also those who continue to explore the fundamental transformative relation between light and exposure through various, sometimes cameraless, processes (Chadwick; Derges), and, at the other end of the historical spectrum, those for whom the pixel, rather than silver, is a medium for investigation and experimentation.¹⁰ In addition there seems to be increased emphasis on the art market and on selling that, although seemingly paradoxical in some more politically radical examples, points to the hegemonic operations of organisations such as auction houses and private galleries within the cultural field. There is also increased interest in photography and the book.¹¹ The book as a medium for photography is almost as old as photography itself. But arguably the circulation of monographs and themed collections, often with their origins as exhibition catalogues, has become re-oriented as a part of an expanding market for objects and publications for sale at gallery, museum and city-centre shops, as well as of course, online; in other words, publishing has responded to audience demand for gallery mementos and to emphasis within galleries and museums on additional income streams.

Lucy Souttar, lecturer and critic, recently returned us to questions of art and photography through posing questions as to the *value* of art photography beyond the obvious economic (art market) dimension (Soutter, 2007). Referencing discussions with students, she suggests that art photography is supported by some on the grounds of ‘aesthetic, expressive and craft’ values whilst others reject the domain of art as ‘elitist, pretentious, irrelevant, self-indulgent and even misleading – a kind of distortion of photography’s proper function as a vernacular democratic medium’ (Soutter, 2007: 22, 24). This disparity is not new. It does, however, point to dilemmas about mode of address: some will read the chapter with interest, at best with a passion to pick up and follow up the various references; others will be much more detached, reading perhaps only to complete an essay assignment. Familiarity or concern with questions of aesthetics or of the social role of art cannot be assumed.

Nonetheless, the last few years there has been a burgeoning of English-language articles and books relating to photography and art, or photography *as* art (Campany, 2003; Cotton, 2004, Soutter 2007). At minimum this indicates that publishers think there is a market for books on contemporary photography as art practice. For example, Thames and Hudson’s large format guides to contemporary art include *Art Photography Now* (Bright, 2005) centred on double page spreads with sample images and statements by 80 artists. The book jacket claims that it is a ‘comprehensive’ guide to ‘the essential aspects of contemporary photography’ and that the introduction ‘sets out the historical relationship between art and photography from the early nineteenth century’ and ‘discusses the art world’s embrace of the medium in recent decades’. This is a substantial claim, one that the brief introduction (amounting to 7 pages, circa 4000 words) cannot possibly fulfil other than superficially. What the book does offer is a compendium of images, relating to 7 categories of photo-practice: portrait, landscape, narrative, object, fashion, document and city. The categorisation also begs comment; here fashion photography, erstwhile associated with the commercial, is included as an art practice, and ‘object’ substitutes for still life. The latter is accurate as the examples are all inanimate, but, although artists of the era are mentioned (Hoech, Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray) there is no reference to any influence or legacy of new objectivity as a key movement in European twentieth century art. Illustrations are generally well-selected in terms of typifying the work of each particular artist, but quotes from artists, that might have provided starting points for students to delve deeper into the imagery, methods and contexts of their work, are not contextualised, dated or sourced. Lacking proper referencing the book is arguably a *bad* role model for students which means I hesitate to cite it.

By contrast, David Campany’s *Art and Photography* (2003) offers a more defined focus on photography within art practice from the late 1960s onwards in which images, sources and documents are brought together in order to interrogate and reflect upon late twentieth century histories and developments. Over 160 artists are included, and discussion of their work is situated through attention to documents indicating concerns that informed their work at

the time of making. For instance, documentation includes an interview from 1989, originally published in *Ten/8* magazine, by photography historian and critic, Steve Edwards, with Martha Rosler that opens with discussion of the contradiction between deployment popular media – film, video, photography, postcards – in order to effect political intervention yet showing work in the (privileged) space of the art gallery. From the point of view of students (and others) the book offers a very useful compendium of materials and images marking the diversity of issues, styles, methods and content that characterised the era. Company is concerned with photographic practices within contemporary art which, he suggests, ‘has become increasingly photographic’ (Company, 2003: 14). He contends that ‘every significant moment in art since the 1960s has asked, implicitly or explicitly: ‘What is the relation of art to everyday life?’ (Company, 2003: 11) and that photography as an everyday medium has lent itself to such explorations. He suggests that artists, with no vested interest in defending practices associated with fine art photography unlike those trained in photography, have been free to incorporate the photographic in a range of ways. This is amply demonstrated in the diversity of ideas and images incorporated within the collection. However, although he offers a historical and critical overview in his introduction, there is no sustained address to issues of aesthetics, to the social role of the artist, or to the changing status accorded to contemporary art. Perhaps this is the domain of philosophers, sociologists and business analysts, but if we are to understand shifts in the inter-connected network of factors for which the phrase ‘contemporary art institution’ is something of a porous umbrella, then this too begs address. Also, although the inclusion of some artists (Ajamu, Fani-Kayode) hints at the global, this collection clearly reflects debates anchored in Anglo-American or Western European perspectives of the time and does not pretend to do otherwise.

This contrasts with a number of publications that seem to take global reach and diversity as a primary criterion for inclusion of work. For examples, Phaidon also publish *Vitamin Ph: New Perspectives in Photography*, which is described on one website as

A collection of contemporary photography from 121 living artists who have contributed to the international art photography scene in the last five years ... The artists selected represent over 30 countries and run the gamut from established artists like Tacita Dean, to emerging talent and newcomers to the art world. Vitamin Ph features an introduction by art historian T.J. Demos who explains that “photography, through its growing diversity, illustrates the many ways that we are different, *helps us to understand those differences and connects us to the global world.*”¹²

I quote at length to demonstrate the emphasis on internationalism, but, more particularly, to point to sentiments expressed by the editor curiously reminiscent of those that informed the (in) famous post-war *Family of Man* exhibition that attracted opprobrium for what was viewed by many as a naive myth of international human community.¹³ As Roland Barthes aptly

commented, an idealised unity is conjured out of pluralism; he suggested that this is an effect of abstracting images from their contexts as little can be gleaned beyond that which constitutes the surface of the image. Diversity, specificity, particular histories and injustices are obscured. Whilst the context of the early twenty-first century is in many respects radically different to that of the 1950s when the exhibition made its international rounds, the implications of the loss of specificity remain pertinent. That work by, for instance, Sugimoto, can be seen in London, does not mean that the audience learns much about Japanese culture or, more to the point, picks up certain ramifications of his contemplations. International festivals, such as the Venice Biennale, are founded on nationally specific pavilions or group exhibitions, but there always seems to be a precarious balance between similarity (art as international language) and difference (particular histories, aesthetics and cultural concerns) although artists and public of all nationalities probably share a sense both of the intellectual value of art that re-affirms their shared position in terms of cultural capital.

In terms of photography as art, boundaries have become blurred. Exhibitions or compendiums of contemporary photography may encompass a range of types of work even within that which is integrally photographic in terms of ways of seeing; the work of, for instance, Nan Goldin bears little relation to that of, for example Edward Burtynsky, Martin Parr or Andreas Gursky in terms of scenarios and degrees of personal involvement but both implicate the sense of immediacy and the aura of authenticity that characterises photography as document. Such work may sit in exhibitions alongside more traditional fine art photography (Robert Adams; Iturbide) as well as constructed imagery (Knorr; Sherman; Wall), installations incorporating photos (Boltansky), and narratives traced photographically (Calle; Michals; Wearing). What they do have in common is a commitment to art as a forum for expression of ideas that has contributed to regenerating contemporary art as outward looking. What they also have in common is a relationship to an international art market that now values photography highly to the extent that the success of photographers as artists in some respects is highly questionable. Each time another photograph – whether an older fine print or a newer, limited edition, piece – sells for a record sum I can't be alone in wondering whether the money wouldn't be better used invested in groups or communities struggling economically and politically. On the other hand, art does have a social role; each time a work is viewed maybe some insight seeps across, exercises a little influence.

Indeed, in thinking about photography as art it is instructive to import some of the sociological questions that those more concerned with the vernacular normally explore. For instance, following Freund, via Bourdieu, we can ask about the social significance of the art establishment and examine the status of photography within it. Freund took as her starting point the assertion that societies develop 'characteristic forms of expression that are born of the needs and traditions of the dominant social class' (Freund, 1980: 3). She added that photography's importance 'does not rest primarily in its potential as an art form, but rather in

its ability to shape our ideas, to influence our behavior, and to define our society' (Freund, 1980: 5). As applied to the international network that now forms the context for the operations of art museums, galleries and the art market we have to ask how content and ideas can transcend the social limitations of context. Arguably the *dis*-location of art networks tells us something about the society we live in; Capitalist models of production and distribution operate on a global scale, within which novelty or fashion contribute to commodity values within the cultural sphere. Yet, art does continue to engage with ideas and social issues, to offer insights and evoke feelings that may cause us, as viewers, to adjust – even if only slightly – some previous notion, attitude or understanding.

Concern with social ideas is particularly evident in the increased emphasis on location or situation that characterises many newer publically-oriented art projects, certainly in the UK. In terms of thinking about shifts in contemporary art as a context within which photography now contributes as a key player, the role of art institutions in urban regeneration begs fuller comment. The chapter, 'On and beyond the white walls: photography as art' in the third edition of *Photography: A Critical Introduction* includes a section on 'Photography within the Institution' that now needs to take further account of new developments 'beyond the walls'. Galleries and Museums are seemingly ever more public-facing and, certainly in UK, there are many examples of outreach projects within which artists are commissioned to work with specified communities – that might be local, or might, indeed, be virtual (digital) networks. In some respects this might seem to echo community-based projects that featured, certainly in Britain, in the 1970s and 1980s. Community photography workshops, certainly in Britain, emphasised empowerment through picturing (literally photographing within familiar contexts) and through critical reading of (media) imagery. This was referenced in the first edition of the book in a brief sub-section titled 'Outside the Mainstream' that was later dropped in favour of discussion of 'Curators and collectors', a decision that reflected shifts apparent at the time. The challenge in terms of citing new developments is to find ways of linking current outreach programme principles not so much to the history of community photography, although this is relevant, but to acknowledge the extent to which photographic media are now embedded within art movements and, via selected references, point students to the broader contexts of public art, urban regeneration and social networking.

Chapter revision thus has to take into account developments in arts institutions and economic practices as well changes in photography / photo-media and, whilst offering an account of what obtains in terms of contemporary art movements and institutions, also acknowledge that this is a shifting terrain. Revision also has to summarise key recent publications, and substitute some newer imagery for those previously used as illustration. As I have suggested tensions between (modernist) emphasis on fine art photography and (post-modernist) emphasis on the medium as means of exploration of critical ideas still persist to some extent within a complexity of debates in terms of art theory and aesthetics, art as social practice, the art gallery

as institutional site, situation and social regeneration, and digital art practices. Finding ways of conveying such complexity to students new to - and possibly daunted by - the field of debate remains challenging. Furthermore, in reviewing the changing situation of art photography and of photography as contemporary art we need to take into account broader interests and concerns that characterise art institutions now, including the globalisation of touring networks and of the art market. We have to be aware of the workings of notions of cultural capital and intellectual 'value', indeed, of art practices as a hegemonic domain. Yet within this we witness the enthusiasm of artists committed to serious engagement and investigation through art. Given that *Photography: A Critical Introduction* is aimed at student readership the last thing we want is for it to undermine their commitment and ambitions as photographers and artists.

- 1 It was only in 1989, on the occasion of the 150th year of the announcements of photography in France and England, that the British Royal Academy, London, mounted its first ever exhibition dedicated exclusively to *The Art of Photography*. It was a further fourteen years before the Tate Modern took a similar step. Both were some decades behind equivalent developments in the USA, at MOMA, NY and elsewhere, where key curators had for some time acclaimed photography as art.
- 2 The other chapters are concerned with: history and theory; documentary and photojournalism; personal photography and the family album; commercial contexts; the body; digital debates.
- 3 Britain was the primary focus of the first edition as the book was originally conceived primarily for use in the UK; the international profile that it subsequently acquired was unexpected. Aside from extensive adoption as a course textbook in many universities in North America and elsewhere, the 3rd edition was recently translated and published in Greek (2008) and I regularly receive enquiries about the possibility of a Spanish translation (although no publisher has yet taken this up).
- 4 A Greek translation of the third edition came out in early 2008. The cover image has been changed but all other examples remain the same – which makes it odd to read, especially as I don't read Greek so the visual are familiar and the text is estranged for me.
- 5 At which time institutions such as the Tate did not collect photography, seeing this as the realm of more specialist centres such as the National Museum for Photography, Film and Television, the Royal Photographic Society, or the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- 6 It now seems odd that land-related work rarely appeared in major urban galleries in the 1990s. When Tate Modern opened in London in May 2000 the permanent exhibition was organised in terms of genre; to find 'Landscape' as a category and organising principle was something of a shift (although even then the topographic and the environmental was mediated via the inclusion of so-called 'interior' landscape within the same section as if land and environment did not in itself stand up as a theme).
- 7 See, for instance, papers by Geoffrey Batchen, and by Patrizia di Bello in: *photographies*, issue 2, Autumn 2008.
- 8 In Britain we have to remind ourselves that debates about use of colour raged in the 1980s – not really that long ago. Colour had become associated with commercial arenas such as advertising and fashion photography or with domestic photography, and there was resistance to its introduction into what was viewed as the 'serious' sphere of documentary. I have clear memories of anger directed at British photographer, Paul Graham, in the mid-1980s for working in colour on documentary subjects such as social security waiting rooms or the streets of Northern Ireland. I came across similar debates more recently, in 2003, when interviewing photographers in Latvia and Estonia at a time of transition from a dominant monochrome aesthetic to the hyper-saturated colour of the digital. This reminds us both that development is uneven across Europe, let alone globally, and also that particular photo-aesthetics 'read' differently in differing contexts. For example, in former Soviet areas pictorial effects – viewed as overtly romanticised in NW Europe or North America – could be taken as a challenge to the demands of Soviet socialist realism.

- 9 The art market is not new – artists have sought patrons since time immemorial – but the ascendance of photography as a medium within the mainstream commercial gallery (as opposed to the specialist photography print gallery or archive) has been very evident in recent years along with the prices that can be commanded both for fine art photography and for photographically-based contemporary art.
- 10 For example, see Bob Hirsch, *Seizing the Light, a History of Photography*, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 1999; and Christopher James, *The Book of Alternative Photographic Processes*, Delmar Florence, KY: Delmar Cengage Learning 2001. Also debates about, and guides to, digital creativity for which there are now extensive numbers of websites and publications, many mostly dealing with technical solution.
- 11 There have been a number of recent publications on photography books including the two volume catalogue and commentary, Martin Parr, Gerry Badger (co-eds.), *The Photobook: A History*, London: Phaidon, vol. 1, 2004, vol. 2, 2006.
- 12 http://www.coolhunting.com/archives/2006/11/vitamin_ph_new.php (August 2008, my emphasis).
- 13 *Family of Man*, a collection of 503 photographs, organised by Edward Steichen curator of photography at MOMA, New York, opened in New York in 1955, then toured internationally, including Paris, Vienna and Moscow.

Roland Barthes, 'The Great Family of Man' in: *Mythologies*, London: Granada Publishing 1973, 100–102.

Originally published in French in 1957.

Susan Bright, *Art Photography Now*, London: Thames and Hudson 2005.

David Campany, *Art and Photography*, London: Phaidon Press 2003.

Charlotte Cotton, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, London: Thames and Hudson 2004.

Gisele Freund, *Photography and Society*, London: Gordon Fraser 1980.

Lucy Soutter, 'Why Art Photography?' in: *Source*, Belfast, Issue 53, Winter 2007, 22–29.

Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, London: Routledge 1997, 2000, 2004.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*, London: Polity Press 1965/1990.

Van Deren Coke, *The Painter and the Photograph*, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press 1972.

Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 1995.

Peter Galassi, *Before Photography*, New York: MOMA 1981.

Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 1986.

Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography*, 3rd ed., New York, London, Paris: Abbeville Press 1997.

Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, rev. ed., Harmondsworth: Pelican 1974.

Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions and Practices*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1991.

Christoph Schaden

38 The Photobook Comments on a Medium that has been largely ignored by Photo-Historical Research

“Our age of technology needed a long time before one was prepared to afford photography, this universal handmaiden, the status of being both art as well as an object. This may be attributed to the fact that – practically for the entire span of the twentieth century – photography mainly found its audience in printed (and hence, mediated) form.”

Michael Koetzle

Since the turn of the millennium, the photobook has increasingly moved into the focus of an international public as an autonomous form. In terms of the history of its reception, the importance photography gained due to its being mediated in book form had existed for decades; however, this focus, as Michael Koetzle, among others, was able to so concisely demonstrate, was primarily limited to a photograph’s informative utility value.¹ Publications that primarily included photographic images – mostly as a reliable reflection framework for photo-historical research which, in the act of publishing, assured itself of its historically and aesthetically relevant dimensions – served as indispensable instruments for the transfer of knowledge.²

Specialized bibliographies listing photography and literature continued to subsume photographers’ encyclopedias, technical manuals and illustrated books under a general categorical classification system with the aim of providing photography-related research with an orientation frame which was as all-embracing as possible.³ The exhibitions that featured the printed image at the 1984 *photokina* international trade fair in Cologne, for the very first time, grouped the highly diversified areas of photographic themes dealt with in book form under the umbrella term of *140 Jahre Photobuch* (140 Years of the Photobook). Based on Daguerre’s

fig. 1 Alfred Ehrhardt, *Das Watt* in: Christiane Stahl, *Alfred Ehrhardt. Naturphilosoph mit der Kamera. Fotografien von 1933 bis 1947*, Berlin 2007, 31.



Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

1



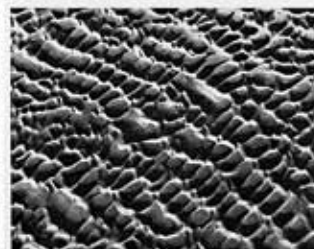
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Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

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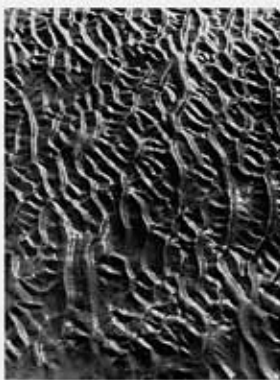


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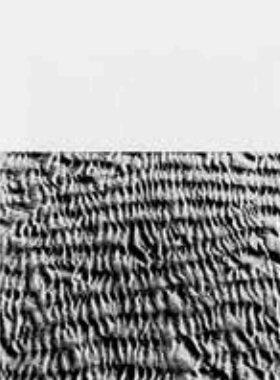
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Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

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Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

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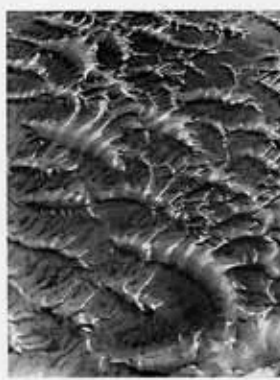
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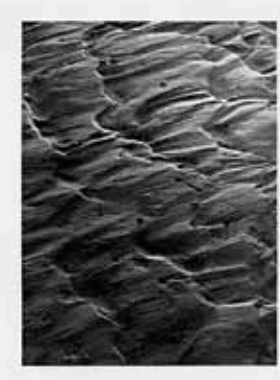
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Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

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Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

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Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

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Struktur eines Tieres, das in der Natur lebt

16

manual *Historique et Descriptions des Procédés du Daguerriotypie et du Diorama* from 1839, the catalogue assembled a total of forty-nine incunables ranging from Fox Talbot's *Pencil of Nature* (1844) to Ed Ruscha's *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) and *Anonyme Skulpturen* by Bernd and Hilla Becher (1970). The deciding factor for this selection was the criterion of which books "have had the greatest influence on the advancement of the medium of photography."⁴ In this connection, the close integration of the book and photographic image was consequential insofar as it always constituted a recollective, in addition to a discursive, reference structure. To postulate the reception history of photographic works, oeuvres, styles, genres, etc., in terms of a history of publication has remained a characteristic dominating the perception of photographic books. In 1999, the German journalist Ulf Erdmann-Ziegler asked "But who says that a museum's inventory, perforce, has to be based on photographic prints? One might just as well begin with books. A stock of perhaps one hundred books would guarantee that exquisite specimens from the history of modern photography could be examined by museum people as well as specialists, consultants and curators."⁵

From an Object of Reference to a Collector's Fetish

In hindsight, one might state that in the same year as the exhibition *Fotografía Pública* took place in Madrid – with the first, impressive, international compendium of photographic publications from the interwar period – a paradigm change was initiated under the dictum of modernity that, for the first time, placed special emphasis on the specific intrinsic value of photobooks based primarily on aesthetic criteria. The extent to which photographic books have, in recent years, mutated from being an object of reference to a collector's fetish can be exemplified by studying recent auction and exhibition catalogues. It is noteworthy that, in the case of the latter, they are – almost without exception – projects initiated by passionate book collectors, connoisseurs and art dealers in order to celebrate the photobook as an autonomous medium and, at the same time, achieve its canonization. The following catalogues should be pointed out (in chronological order): *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century* (2001) and *The Open Book: A History of the Photographic Book from 1878 to the Present* (2004) by the American gallerist Andrew Roth, followed, in 2004–2006, by the two-volume corpus *The Photobook: A History* by the journalist Garry Badger, in collaboration with the well-known Magnum photographer Martin Parr.⁶ It is significant to note that this selection of books caused a boom on the international collector's market that, to a degree, can be regarded as being overheated. More recently, further publications have been produced that have apparently also been guided by a strategy to increase the value of private collections.⁷ Since then, everyone is talking about "a new golden age of photobooks".⁸

In this connection, it seems striking that the qualitative specification of the term "photobook" has always been accompanied by a continuous effort to arrive at a precise definition. In 1989, following on the line of tradition of the artist's book, the Dutch historian Ralph Prints used

elaborate references to embed the photographic book in the media network: “A photobook is an autonomous art form, comparable with a piece of sculpture, a play, or a film. The photographs lose their own photographic character as things ‘in themselves’ and become parts, translated into printed ink, of a dramatic event called book”.⁹ By referring to narrative, dramatic – and even sculptural – reference parameters, this was the first time an attempt at contextualization had been undertaken in an endeavour to do justice to the photobook’s singularity. In retrospect, it is all the more remarkable that the aforementioned parameters for the development of a conclusive methodology in the individual analysis of photographic books have, up to now, only been rudimentarily consulted. The well-known American photographer and book expert John Gossage actually formulated a criteria catalogue in 2004 in order to record the specific requirement profile for photographic books. His stipulations were that “Firstly, it should contain great work. Secondly, it should make that function as a concise world within the book itself. Thirdly, it should have a design that compliments what is being dealt with. And finally, it should deal with content that sustains an ongoing interest.”¹⁰

Taking substantial design-related elements, as well as the contemporary-historical relevance of the subject matter, into account reveals how multilayered the attitudes toward the photobook can, and have to, be. The American journalist and publisher Darius Himes recently stated that “at this level, the book becomes something more than the sum of its parts. But those parts are wildly multitudinous: paper, printing, binding, cloth, boards, ink, typefaces and lettering, page layouts, sequencing and editing, trim size and proportion, essays and interviews, forewords and afterwords, bibliographies, captions, collections and exhibition and, last but not least, the photographs themselves and their subject matter.”¹¹ No doubt, many factors related to publishing and distribution must be added to the multifarious aspects concerning material, concept and design and taken into account when producing a photographic book.

Seeing and Thinking

One may fittingly speculate, from the scientific side, on the extent to which a multi-perspectival approach, required when studying the photobook, has led to well-founded analyses of photo-historical publications, so far, only been carried out in individual cases. In a brief sketch of the problem, the Leipzig-based art historian Katharina Menzel noted, in 2004, that there a large number of reasons why the scholarly treatment of the photographic book has been so impeded. In addition to the requirement of creating a relationship between a reproduced photographic illustration and the layout, painstaking research into the relevant secondary sources and the establishment of the typographical determinants necessary for a sound individual analysis of the photobook are essential. Furthermore, a dilemma arises with respect to the artistic original. “One delicate aspect of dealing scientifically with photography and photobooks is that it appears to be unproblematic to do without the original work. However, this is just as indispensable in the case of photography in a book as it is in when dealing with architecture or painting and can

often only be carried out with a similar amount of effort. Reprints of photobooks and books containing photography harbor dangerous traps for research, as the frequently grave differences to the original only become noticeable in a direct comparison.”¹² And, no less important, there is the task of recording a sequence of photographic images in book form using a suitable methodological analysis instrument.

In view of the extremely rich lines of tradition that photography in book form can list – for instance, in its genres and artistic, as well as national, attributes – the general question as to the segments and epochs in which photo-historical analyses have hitherto been performed arises. In German-speaking countries, it can be stated that, based on a narrowly-formulated conceptual definition, we primarily come across individual investigations on the Weimar Republic in which a handful of photobooks – including *Urformen der Kunst* by Karl Blossfeldt (1928), *Die Welt ist Schön* by Albert Renger-Patzsch (1928) and *Antlitz der Zeit* by August Sander (1929) – are consistently drawn on as canonical reference parameters of the photo-artistic avant-garde.¹³ When dealing with this subject in her 1997 essay ‘Die neue visuelle Realität’, Hanne Bergius arrived at a contemporary historical thesis: “The photobook developed in the twenties as an independent image discourse that did not respond to photography’s repression of the word in the media, but created an argumentative, associative and suggestive, rhetoric that challenged – both concretely and abstractly, as well as synthetically and analytically – seeing and thinking to the same degree.”¹⁴ The author makes reference to several titles from the height of pre-war modernity, including *Painting, Photography, Film* by László Moholy-Nagy from 1925. Nevertheless, such a narrowing down of the conceptual designation according to epochs remains problematic, not only when making an international comparison.¹⁵ In post-war Germany, one can identify a gradual development of the photographic book that is paradigmatically reflected, for instance, in the specific circumstances of its genesis as well as in the reception of individual publications.¹⁶ An attempt to achieve a differentiated view of the photobook by means of a periodization that does justice to the respective technological and artistic innovations was carried out in 2003 in the French volume of essays *Photographie et le Livre*, which, among other things, made a tabular comparison of the parallel stages of development in photography and the book and demonstrated traces of tradition.¹⁷ In doing so, it took into account, for example, the largely autonomous line of tradition of the photographic book in Japan as well as current tendencies. If one sums up the previous attempts made by scholars of art and photographic history who approach the photobook by depicting epochs and analyzing genres, the considerable lack of evidence makes one inclined to advocate basic analyses that include informed discussions on individual works and oeuvres and, at the same time, hold verified cognitive value from a primary source, as being appropriate for the future.¹⁸

Questions of Methodology

When dealing with the examination of individual photobooks, the question regarding the appropriate analysis instruments also arises. In closing, three different approaches that were recently developed by three German art historians will be presented. In her dissertation *Die Städtebilder von Paul Swiridoff*, published in 2006, Adelheid Teuber addressed the lifework of the German photographer Paul Swiridoff (1914–2002). His extensive journalistic oeuvre has been preserved in, among other things, twenty-five volumes of urban photographs which were published over a long period between 1955 and 2001.¹⁹ As the basis for her work-related genre analysis, the author initially developed a standardized list of questions that explored the photographer's and client's intention, the publisher's specifications and the function of the layout and possible texts, etc. The resulting source material served as the basis for a descriptive and analytical review of the volumes that, in each case, comprise an image section, text section and graphic design. In a third step, a book's reception was considered on the basis of book reviews. Although the analysis of the sequence of images does not adhere to a uniform concept, the procedure contains a reliable approach for clarifying the photographer's narrative strategies – he wanted his photobooks to be interpreted as “visual tours through the city”. Virtually without exception, Swiridoff's books of urban photography, in which filmic, dramaturgic and even cartographic aspects are inherent, have a consciously associative arrangement meant to convey a modern image of the respective city.

In 2007, Christiane Stahl applied a completely different method in her appraisal of the photographic lifework of the Bauhaus artist Alfred Ehrhardt (1901–1984).²⁰ Reverting to the artistic biography of the photographer, who, among other things, also worked as a musician as well as a painter and educator trained at the Bauhaus in Dessau, the author revealed the structure of the two photographic books *Das Watt* (1937) and *Die Kurische Nehrung* (1938) in a very convincing way. Stahl regarded the images in the first-mentioned landscape volume *Das Watt* as seemingly “orchestrated like a musical composition in which overtures and codas embrace variations on a basic theme.”²¹ (fig. 1) In her rigorously structural analyses of the structure of the individual photographs, the sequence of images and the resulting book, a “book choreography” unfolds that is the product of the inspiration of the artist who was verifiably influenced by music, painting and education, as well as filmic ideas.

For the work on her master's thesis, Julia Reich chose yet another method for the analysis of the photobook *Facing New York* (1992) by the American street photographer Bruce Gilden (*1946), who has been a member of the Magnum Photos agency since 1998. When making her formal-aesthetic examination, the author proceeded step by step. In three stages, she first of all

analyzed all forty-four individual photographs in the volume from aesthetic-technical points of view. Using so-called setting parameters, she reverted to an appropriate film-theoretical classification criterion that permitted categorizing the images in close-up, semi-close-up and long shots. In a second step, the specific sequence of the images was revealed from dramaturgic points of view, and it was proven that the work is based on a rhythm of movement inspired by film in which the respective angle changes are arranged freely. Taking the specific medial characteristics of the book form into account, Reich was able to demonstrate, in a third step, that a renewed consolidation of the sequence of the photographs could be achieved by

- 1 Michael Koetzle, 'Passion in Schwarzweiß', *Schupmann Collection. Fotografie in Deutschland nach 1945*, exh. cat., Braunschweig 2001, 9.
- 2 The author has highlighted the development from an information medium to a collector's fetish in German-speaking countries in an exemplary way. Christoph Schaden, 'Eine Frage bis heute. Das Fotobuch im Visier der Sammler', *Das Fotobuch*, Photonews 5, 2008 (supplement), 6–7.
- 3 Cf. Eric Lambrechts and Luc Salu, *Photography and Literature. An International Bibliography of Monographs*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd. 1992; Frank Heidtmann, Hans-Joachim Bresemann and Rolf H. Krauss, *Die deutsche Photoliteratur 1839–1978. Theorie-Technik-Bildleistungen. Eine systematische Bibliographie der selbständigen deutschsprachigen Photoliteratur*, Munich et al.: K. G. Saur Verlag 1980.
- 4 *Das Gedruckte Photo. photokina Bilderschauen*, exh. cat., Cologne 1984, 36–45.
- 5 Ulf Erdmann Ziegler, *Fotografische Werke*, Cologne: Dumont Buchverlag 1999, 10.
- 6 Andrew Roth, *The Book of 101 Books. Seminal Photographic Books of Twentieth Century*, New York: Roth Horowitz, LLC 2001; Roth (ed.), *The Open Book. A History of the Photographic Book from 1878 to the Present*, exh. cat., Gothenburg 2004; Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook. A History*, 2 vols., London: Phaidon Press 2004–2006.
- 7 Michèle Auer and Michel Auer, *Photobooks. 802 Photo Books from the M.+ M. Auer Collection*, Hermance: Editions M.+ M. 2007; Stephen Daiter, John Gossage and Jess Mott, *From Fair to Fine: 20th Century Photography Books That Matter*, Chicago: Stephan Daiter Gallery 2006; Alessandro Bertolotti, *Livre de Nus*, Paris: Editions de la Martinière 2007.
- 8 A.D. Coleman, *The Photo Book: Another Golden Age*, unpublished manuscript, New York 2001.
- 9 Mattie Boom and Rik Suermondt, *Foto in omslag. Het Nederlandse Documentaire Fotoboek na 1945 / Photography between Covers. The Dutch Documentary Photobook after 1945*, Amsterdam: Fragment Uitgeverij 1989, 12.
For the relationship between the photobook and the tradition of the artist's book see Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, New York: Granary Books 1995, 62ff and 217ff.
- 10 Parr and Badger, 2004 (note 6) 7.
- 11 Cf. Darius Himes, 'Who Cares About Books?', *Words without Pictures*, <http://www.wordswithoutpictures.org> (27.05.08).

activating the reading operation, which is a component of the voluntary act of leafing through the book. “The viewer participates directly: he or she has to reach into the photography to turn the page.”²² The result is a convincing ‘urban narrative’ that, at the same time, emancipates the viewer by adequately reflecting the vitality of the city in the way the book is received.

As different as the applied methodological approaches are, these three studies have in common that they derive their specific structure of the photographic book from the intention of the respective author. Moreover, this reinforces the basic assumption that the photobook is to be regarded as a distinctive amalgamation of two equal media.

- 12 Katharina Menzel, ‘Fotografie im Buch. Eine kurze Einführung’ in: Barbara Lange (ed.), *Printed Matter. Fotografie im / und Buch*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag 2004, 16.
For the problems associated with the original in a photobook see Thomas Wiegand, ‘Zweite Chance. Das Fotobuch im Reprint’, *Das Fotobuch, Photonews* 5, 2008 (supplement) 10–11.
- 13 Ulrich Rüter, ‘“Die Welt ist Schön” von Albert Renger-Patzsch. Anmerkungen zu einer Inkunabel der Photoliteratur’ in: *Jahrbuch des Museums für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg*, vols. 15–16, 1996–1997, 113–124.
Cf. also David Sánchez Cano, ‘Genesis eines Fotobuchs. Das unbekannte Spanien von Kurt Hielscher’ in: Michael Scholz-Hänsel (ed.), *Spanien im Fotobuch. Von Kurt Hielscher bis Mireia Sentís. Eine imaginäre Reise von Barcelona in die Extremadura*, *Leipziger Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 2, Leipzig: Plötnner Verlag 2007, 51–57.
- 14 Hanne Bergius, ‘Die neue visuelle Realität. Das Fotobuch der 20er Jahre’ in: *Deutsche Fotografie. Macht eines Mediums 1870–1970*, exh. cat., Bonn 1997, 88.
- 15 Cf. the contribution by Kathrin Tobias, ‘Mediale Wechselwirkungen von Wort und Bild. Die Fotobücher der 1920er Jahre’ in: Scholz-Hänsel, 2007 (note 13) 59–67.
- 16 Cf. Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, ‘Die Verschlusszeit des Herzens. Zu Hilmar Pabels Fotobuch “Jahre unseres Lebens” (1954)’, *Fotogeschichte* 44, 1992, 53–64; Sigrid Schneider, ‘“Solche Darstellungen akzeptieren wir nicht!” Zur Rezeption des Bildbands Im Ruhrgebiet von Heinrich Böll und Chargesheimer’ in: *Chargesheimer. Bohemien aus Köln*, exh. cat., Cologne 2007, 241–247.
- 17 Michele Debat (ed.), *La photographie et le livre. Analyse de leurs rapports multiformes Nature de la photographie – Statut du livre*, Paris: Trans Photographic Press 2003, 166f.
- 18 For an example of a general analysis cf. Almut Klingbeil, *Die Bilder wechseln. Meereslandschaften in deutschen Fotobüchern der 20er bis 40er Jahre*, Hamburg: Books on Demand GmbH 2000.
- 19 Adelheid Teuber, *Die Städtebilder von Paul Swiridoff*, PhD. dissertation, ULB Bonn 2006.
- 20 Christiane Stahl, *Alfred Ehrhardt. Naturphilosoph mit der Kamera. Fotografien von 1933 bis 1947*, Berlin: Reimer Verlag 2007.
- 21 Stahl, 2007 (note 20) 26.
- 22 Julia Reich, ‘Bild-Serie-Buch. Die Analyse des Fotobuchs Facing New York (1992) von Bruce Gilden’ in: *Lange*, 2004 (note 12) 120.

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The Collection FG Simak

Interview between Fritz Simak and Anna Auer¹

Auer: I know you as an artist with a great many interests. You are a photographer and began as a musician. Where does your far-reaching interest in photography come from?

Simak: It really began in 1970 with the photo gallery *Die Brücke* that you and Werner Mraz ran in Vienna ... or actually, already in 1968 – I was 13 years old at the time and on tour with the Vienna Boys Choir in South Africa. My parents had bought me an *Eumig super-8* camera and I was really keen on filming with it. That prepared my eye for conscious perception. You can still see the films today; they were shot using Kodachrome material, a film which – as you know – has excellent sharpness and unbelievably rich colours that hardly change after decades. One year later, on a tour of Japan, almost all of our Japanese travel guides had single-lens reflex cameras. I was allowed to photograph with them and was fascinated that one could see a picture in the viewfinder and then produce “precisely” that picture.

But, to get back to *Die Brücke*. When I went into the gallery on Bäckerstrasse for the first time, I saw photos hanging on the walls just like pictures – that was unique at the time. Along with Arnulf Rainer, Franco Fontana and Duane Michals, there were also works by Edward Weston and Ansel Adams; at the age of sixteen, I absolutely found no way to appreciate the latter two, in spite of Werner Mraz’s many attempts to change my mind. At the time, a picture by Thomas Landon Davies, *Lancaster Barn*, was much more important for me (fig. 1). What could not be clearly made out in the reproduction in Allan Porter’s *Camera* (No. 10, Lucerne: October 1972, 50) was easily recognizable in the original in *Die Brücke* (and, today, in my home): This nine-part picture is not a collage but a so-called maxi-contact print. This is produced when a strip of negative is laid on an 8 x 10 inch negative carrier and then enlarged instead of directly onto photo paper as a normal contact print. One can easily see the perforation and read the contact negative numbers.

Davies had the completed picture in his head before he even started to photograph. For me, that was an absolutely new approach to creating a picture. For several years, the 35mm contact print remained one of my preferred artistic means. The *Zaun Sequenz* (fence sequence – fig. 2), which Peter Weibel dealt with extensively in an article in *Eikon* (No. 58, 2007, 22–27), was created in the same year.

fig. 1 Landon Davis, *Lancaster Barn*, 1972
Gelatin silver, maxi contact print, 21 x 22 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

fig. 2 Fritz Simak, *Zaun Sequenz*, 1972.
Gelatin silver, concat print, 24 x 30 cm.





Auer: The exhibition you curated last year *Landscape. Two Collections. Three Centuries of Photography*² in the Kulturfabrik in Hainburg in Lower Austria (1 December 2007 to 29 February 2008) was a major surprise for the local photo scene. Until then, you were only known as an artist and photographer but not as a curator and collector.

Simak: In summer 2006, I was approached by Mag. Friedrich Grassegger – from the Art and Science Section of the Province of Lower Austria – and asked to curate a photography exhibition in Hainburg from the holdings of the *Niederösterreichisches Landesmuseum*. He immediately became enthusiastic about my idea of juxtaposing these pictures with international works from my own collection. This gave me the first opportunity for presenting sections of the Collection *FG Simak*. It was not easy to organize the 700 m² large hall of the revitalized tobacco factory but, in collaboration with the architect Reinhardt Gallister, a magnificent form of exhibition architecture was created inspired by driftwood in the river.

My assistant, Christoph Fuchs, had the excellent idea of building a huge *camera obscura* one can walk in. When one was near the *camera obscura*, one could look through the window at the Danube and its floodplains and one saw precisely this view depicted in the *camera obscura*. At the same time, you could see the ‘Donau-Auen National Park, Hainburg’ as well as the ‘Water’ and ‘Sky’ sections on the adjacent partitions (see fig. 3).

The smallest picture in the exhibition was a loophole view from the First World War (11 x 8 cm), whereas Wolfgang Reichmann’s monumental work *Dobratsch*, with its total of 182 sections, measured a considerable 4.6 x 13.8 meters. I was given complete *carte blanche* in my planning and was able to organize an exhibition with complex points of reference freely in following my feelings as an artist and not as a scientist. In December 2007, Timm Starl described this superbly in an article about the exhibition.

Auer: But, it is really an exception that an artist concerns himself so intensively with the collection of photography. How does your artistic activity influence your passion for collecting?

Simak: I can’t answer the question like that; I do not have a split personality! It is just that, through my artistic and professional photography, I have practice in looking at pictures, and analyzing and judging them. There are two categories of photography for me: One that arouses my interest and one that doesn’t. When I make a closer study of a picture that interests me, I believe that I have understood some essential aspects of the photograph – whether these are essential or not, is anyone’s guess. In a manner of speaking, I recreate each picture for myself

and believe that I understand why it was made that way and no other. It's almost like I was standing personally behind the camera each time. That means that I only collect those pictures I would like to have taken myself.

Auer: Are there any priorities in your collection?

Simak: I am really interested in everything – as long as it has some sort of importance for me. There are actually no limitations in connection with origin, time and subject; the constraints are more of a financial nature. Despite that, certain areas of emphasis have crystallized over the years: landscape, nudes, still-lives, death and sexuality.

I am fundamentally interested in the combination of pictures. In this way, one can approach what I have *seen* without the medium of language. The combination of two pictures can trigger a number of associations.

Auer: If you remember, we once exhibited together; at *Wiener Blut 83. Eine Gesellschaftskomödie mit Paten und Kindern*³ (Viennese Blood 83. A Social Comedy with Godparents and Children) (GGK-Galerie, Villa Vojsik, Vienna, 24 March to 16 June 1983). I was Renate Breth's "godmother" and you were nominated by Ernst Haas. At the time, Haas drew attention to your connection to music: "I have been following Fritz Simak's development for several years and can recognize a very personal vision in his works. He is a musician who became a photographer. There is music in his pictures."

You were a member of the Vienna Boys Choir and studied trumpet. Ansel Adams and Paul Caponigro were accomplished pianists before turning to photography. Fritz Henle once stated that music and photography were closely-related arts. How do you see that?

Simak: In his statement, Haas was mainly referring to my sequences (such as the already-mentioned *Zaun Sequenz*). The possibility of reading a series of pictures upwards and downwards and, at the same time, from left to right, reminded him of a musical score. In addition to the obvious parallels such as treble / highlights and bass / blacks, it is, of course, necessary to be able to interpret a picture correctly like a score. The nature of music cannot be seen in the notes – it is hidden in them. If not, a machine could interpret a piece of music. The interpretation of a picture is no different. Each generation has to make a new attempt at deciphering the pictures. That's why I was particularly concerned with creating a musical atmosphere for the opening of the Hainburg exhibition. I was the trumpeter in a combo

of seven and we performed Miles Davis' numbers from the 1970s along with Franz Lehar's *O Mädchen, O Mädchen. Wie lieb' ich dich* (Oh maiden, oh maiden. How much I love you) from 1928 with resounding success – so, we interpreted an 80-year-old song in our manner and it ended up in a blues.

Auer: How do you estimate the present situation of photography in Austria for collectors and mediators? What do you feel absolutely needs to be changed?

Simak: If there was just a fraction of the number of photo seminars dealing seriously with photography as an independent medium as there are of wine seminars, the situation for photographic artists would be changed from one minute to the next. As you know, a certain amount of effort and energy is necessary if one wants to decipher pictures; this, and more passion for the cause, is what I would also wish from curators and art mediators. You simply need more time to be able to meaningfully experience pictures – record numbers of visitors are definitely no help in this case!

If a radiologist shows me small shadows and changes on an x-ray of my lung, I can follow him and recognize the nuances on the x-ray, but I would only really be capable of understanding this picture if I had previously analyzed thousands of similar ones. In addition to fewer wine – and more photo – seminars, I would also like to be able to curate photography exhibitions more often.

fig. 3 Exhibition view. *Landscape. Two Collections. Three Centuries of Photography*, 2007–2008, Hainburg.

- 1 The content of the private collection FG Simak is widely diversified, focussing the 20th century. The similarities between the pictorial motifs and structures are confronted with each other according to the 'Pairs of Images' principle with the goal of developing a new understanding of their content and interrelationship. The interview took place on 12 June 2008.
- 2 Friedrich Grassegger, Fritz Simak (eds.), *Landscape. Two Collections. Three Centuries of Photography*, Vienna: Brandstätter 2007.
- 3 *Wiener Blut 83. Eine Gesellschaftskomödie mit Paten und Kindern*, GGG-Galerie, Villa Vojsik, Vienna: 24 March to 16 June 1983.





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fig. 4 Floyd B. Evans, *Threatening*, 1937.
Chlorobromide, 31.5 x 42 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

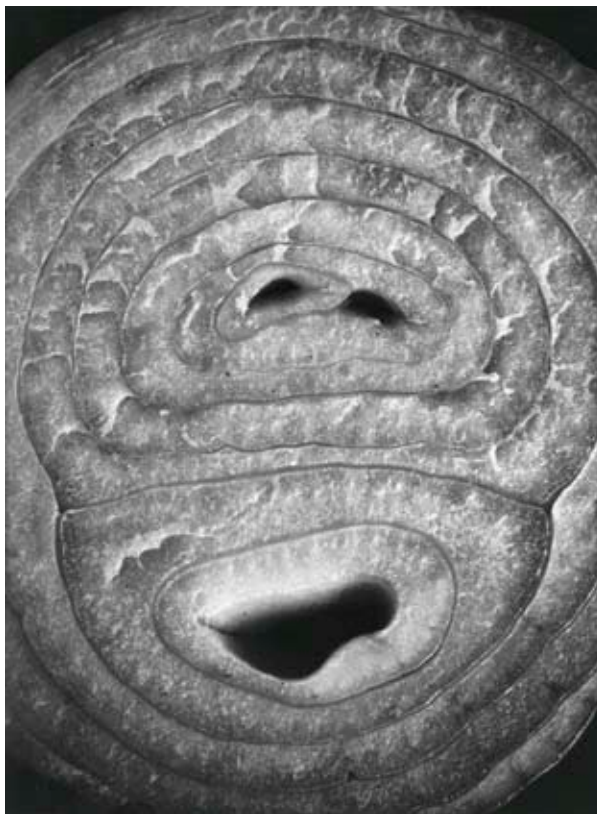


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fig. 5 Minor White, *Sand Dune, Eel Creek, Oregon*, 1966.
Gelatin silver print, 29.5 x 19.5 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

fig. 6 Ernst Haas, *Arizona*, 1962.
Dye transfer print, 32.5 x 49.2 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

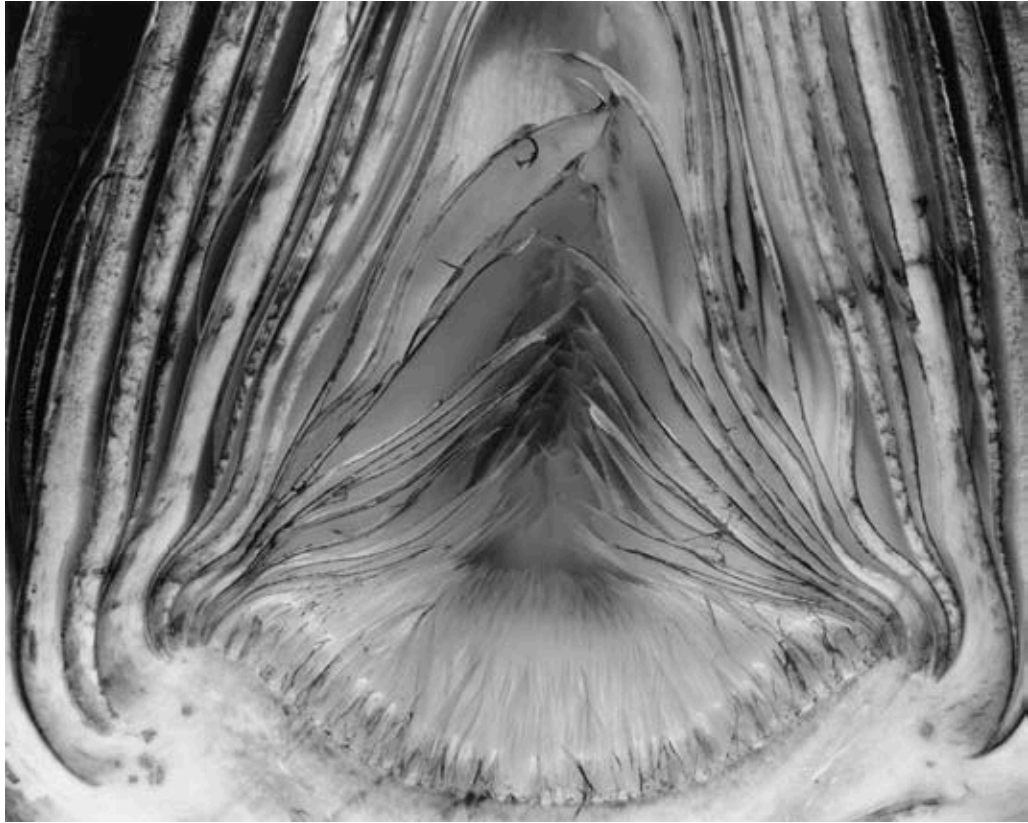




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fig. 7 Elsa Thiemann, *Onion*, 1930s.
Gelatin silver print, 23 x 17.2 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

fig. 8 Edward Weston, *Artichoke*, 1930.
Gelatin silver print, 18.8 x 23.5 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.





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fig. 9 John Pfahl, *Pink rock Rectangle*, Lewinston, New York, 1975. Dye transfer print, 20 x 25,5 cm. Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

fig. 10 Otto Schmidt, *AUS DER GAUL BEI LANA (SÜDTIROL)*, from: *Studienblätter für Künstler*, #21, 1893. Heliogravure, 18 x 23,3 cm. Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

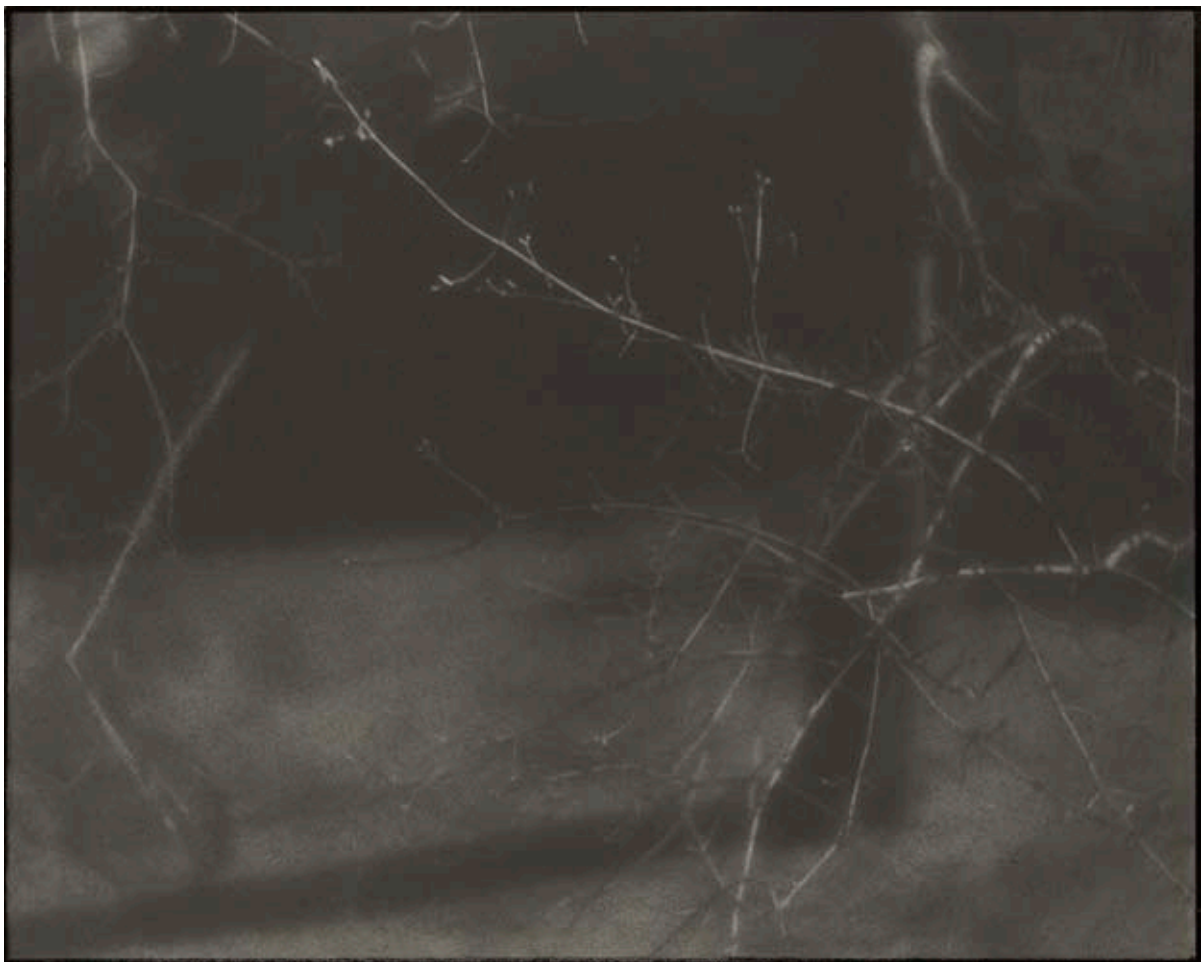




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fig. 11 Robert Adams, *Cottonwood Leaves, Boulder Country*, Colorado, 1995. Gelatin silver print, 20.1 x 13.3 cm. Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

fig. 12 Paul L. Anderson, *THE WITCH TREE*, 1943. Multiple gum print, 19.3 x 24.3 cm. Collection FG Simak, Vienna.







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fig. 13 Richard Kristal, *untitled*, 1969. Gelatin silver print, 49 x 35 cm. Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

fig. 14 Brett Weston, *Tree Root*, 1973. Gelatin silver print, 23.7 x 19.5 cm. Collection FG Simak, Vienna.



fig. 15 Ernst Haas, *Revolving Door*, 1965.
Dye transfer print, 33 x 49 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.

fig. 16 Berenice Abbott, *Allan Street*, 1937.
Gelatin silver print, 49 x 38 cm.
Collection FG Simak, Vienna.



Tim Otto Roth

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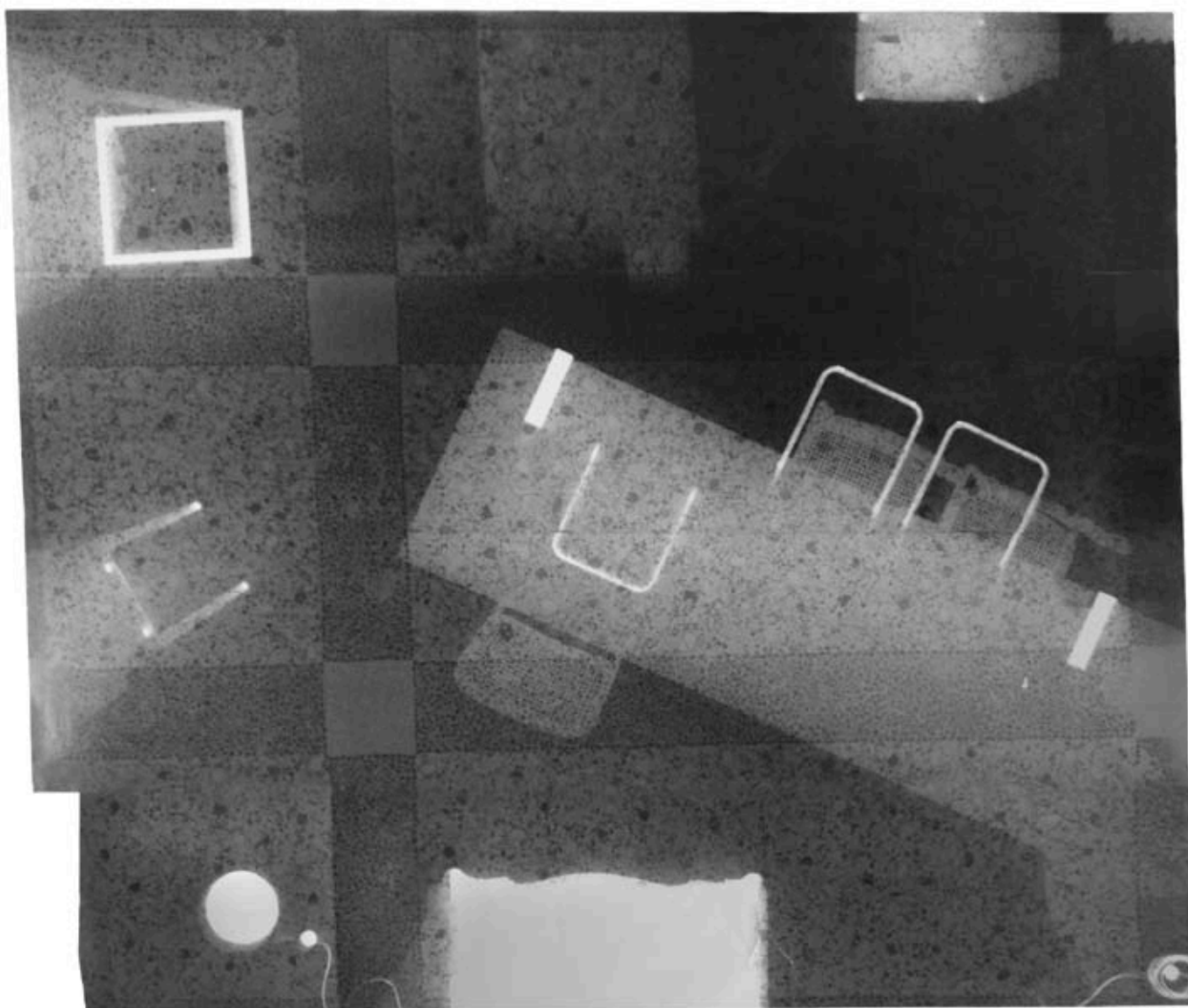
This is not a Photograph Some Remarks on the Photogram as a Picture

“A show whose name comes from a mission-of-Burma song, with a nod to René Magritte, it is intended to be a showcase of photographs that my grandfather would not recognize as such.”¹ These are the introductory words of the curator Roger Sayre in the catalogue of an exhibition which toured several university galleries in the United States in 2001–2002.² The presented works had in common that they were all made on light sensitive materials without using a photo camera, many of them were photograms. As an exhibition title, *This is not a photograph* is, in a way, quite thought provoking because it implies, on the one hand, that a picture made on a light sensitive surface is not necessarily a photograph and, on the other, that the photographic apparatus is an essential constituent for a picture being defined as photographic. So the *not* constitutes a fundamental medial cut with photography. This conceptual step was much more radical than in previous exhibitions. Exhibitions such as *Lensless Photography*³ in Philadelphia in 1983 still related negatively to photography as photography minus x.

It is remarkable, and courageous as well, that Roger Sayre used his grandfather as a *yardstick*. Although this “layman’s layman” only entered a museum once in his life and was not familiar with the history of photography, he obviously could tell you “what a photograph is”. This is the way in which Sayre formulates an inherent conflict between the, more or less, intuitive pictorial perception of the layman’s eye and the theoretical conception of photographic discourse. In fact, the resulting contentious issue is also reflected in the catalogue. The provocation was immediately challenged by A.D. Coleman in his essay following Sayre’s introduction. Obviously, the photo critic felt antagonized by the survey’s title, so his essay can be read as a plea for a more generalizing concept of photography. His retort: “This – meaning every image in this exhibit – is, in fact, a photograph.”⁴

fig. 1 Fabio Sandri, *Stanza di Alberto e Floriana*, 2007. Photogram on bw paper, 405 x 620 cm. In his large photograms, Fabio Sandri records not only the shadows of the furniture, but also the structure of the pavement, by turning the photo sensitive surface to the bottom.

A.D. Coleman defines an artefact as a photograph “if its production involved photographic means and methods in ways that are inherent to them.” This definition is not only tautological, it is also problematic from a technical viewpoint, because he does not conceive of the use of a lens as being inherent for a photographic artefact. It was Erich Stenger who stated, in 1938, that



he considers a photogram “not as a photographic image”,⁵ as a result of the missing camera and lens. In that way, Coleman’s formulation of “process experimentation” is also quite disputable. Doing without a lens is not just an experiment; it results in a different process which can no longer be comprehended as an experimental form of photography. Hence, the exhibition *This is not a photograph* comprised further non-photographic techniques such as a *cliché verre*, which is, primarily, a graphic technique of scratching designs on a surface and a chemigram, which is a record of chemical interactions with photo-chemistry on a light sensitive surface, in addition to the photogram.

For me, considering all these artefacts as being photographic merely because a photo-sensitive surface is involved seems to be problematic; from a different view point, as well. For example, if you have a look at pictures made with pigments on paper, you can quite easily determine how the pigment was fixed to the sheet. Techniques such as painting, drawing, etching or direct imprints might use similar materials to create a pictorial artefact, but they are never the same. This is why a generalizing concept of photography, based on the similarities of a light sensitive surface, arouses my mistrust. For instance, I have severe doubts about considering the letters in a newspaper as being photographic, simply because the offset plate was created using a photo-chemical process. Contemporary artists working with the photogram describe the relationship to photography in various ways. Adam Fuss finds a literary metaphor paraphrasing photography as prose and the photogram as poetry.⁶ The Italian Fabio Sandri conceives the photograms of his ‘stanze’ series not at all as photographs. His shadow records of whole rooms even transcend the concept of a picture and more reflect a “sculptural principle.”⁷ (fig. 1)

The question of whether one can – or rather should – really make a distinction between the photogram and photograph, resulted in unexpectedly absorbing discussions at the symposium *The Photogram. Light, Trace and Shadow* in 2006. The symposium, which took place on the occasion of the major exhibition *Light Art from Artificial Light* at the Centre for Art and Media zKM Karlsruhe was a first joint theoretical effort and discussed the photogram especially in a scientific context. The conference, organized by Peter Weibel and myself, centred on that apparent media outlaw – the photogram – which was to be the focal point of a conference for the first time.

The majority of the participants saw a pressing need for clarification of the question of the relationship between the photogram and the photograph. Here, there were two main lines of argumentation: The representatives of the first supported a general definition of the concept of photography based on the argument favouring the similarities of a photographic surface. This approach was mainly defended by the participating art and photo historians. The other line, argued by the artists and scientists at the conference, rather followed the action of light, thereby underlining how differently it is physically processed in front of the photographic surface.

If the heterogeneous visitors were able to find any minimal consensus within the short period of only two days, it was most probably in the formulation that the photograph and photogram are concerned with two different forms of representation. In the final public contribution, the American art historian Noam Elcott sought to explain what this difference in representation comprises. According to Elcott, camera-less photography and the photogram, respectively, involve a special relationship between three dimensional bodies and all types of rays. Unlike photography, this does not have to do with the surface of the body but, far more, with its porosity, an aspect that is especially apparent in radiographs, as well as other light spectrums. For Elcott, the essential indication of a difference lies in the fact that it is effectively meaningless to talk of positive and negative in the pictures resulting from this porosity.⁸

In order to shed more light on the conflict between Sayre's grandfather and A.D. Coleman, I will concentrate on two positions presented at the symposium that focused on the photogram from a scientific and a philosophical point of view. First, I will switch to the sphere of physics, focussing on clear, procedural-technical differences. It was the computer scientist and ray-tracing expert Philip Slusallek, who demonstrated the difference between the photogram as a shadow recording technique and camera photography as a technique capturing light reflected from surfaces.⁹ The professor of computer science was able to show by means of a diagram (fig. 2) how differently the path of a light ray runs in the photogram and camera photography before appearing on the light-sensitive surface. His diagram presented an intriguing *holistic* perspective on the photogram. It illustrated the absolutist character of the photogram: the light sensitive surface records each ray coming from different directions. It became quite apparent that only nearby objects can be clearly reproduced because, with an increase in distance, the global light situation becomes more and more dominant. In contrast, cameras with a pinhole or a lens are able to select, or even amplify, rays coming from a certain direction.

Lambert Wiesing also vehemently contended such a definitional clarification from a philosophical perspective differing between a phenomenological and a semiotic approach.¹⁰ For him, the two questions – “are photograms pictures?” and “are photograms traces?” – cannot be explained historically, but theoretically as a relationship between the picture and the sign. He illustrated the difference between the picture and sign by asking if dolphins are fishes and if flowers are presents. Pictures represent a notion of quality, whereas traces are a notion of function, a semiotic specification of a sign. Therefore, unlike physical effects, traces cannot be verified.

Referring to Konrad Fiedler's concept of *reiner Sichtbarkeit* (pure visibility), he concretized pictures as surfaces showing something not underlying physical influences: For instance, a

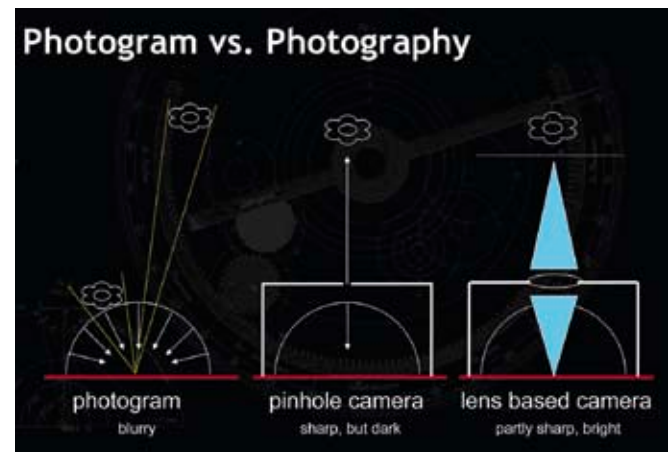


fig. 2 The procedural differences between the photogram and photography as outlined by Prof. Philipp Slusallek in his presentation at the symposium *The Photogram. Light, Trace and Shadow*, Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, April 2006.

photogram differs from a shadow because it is fixed and can no longer be influenced physically by light. His final conclusion was that, on a conceptual level, photograms can be classified like paintings or mosaics: They are a technique to structure light sensitive surfaces in a certain manner.

Lambert Wiesing also discussed the photogram as a technique used in the arts. The German philosopher made it clear that the photogram is a distinct technique for creating pictures. But, a photogram is never an art picture *a priori*, a photogram can just be attributed to the arts. The “art” label is not an expression of quality, it is merely a connotation of how to interpret and contextualize a picture.

If Wiesing’s approach is taken to its logical conclusion, a photogram differs from a photograph because the lens of a camera structures a light sensitive surface differently than a projected shadow does. That is why, phenomenologically, the photogram and photography are two different types of representations. The fact that the photogram and photography both use a light sensitive surface to fix a light impression has no significant influence on the different ways of pictorial representation. Therefore, a connection between the photogram and photography, due to the similarities of a photographic surface, can only have a semiotic character, at best.

These differentiations might help us to better understand the discrepancies between the views of Roger Sayre's grandfather and A.D. Coleman. The point is not that a perception of an untrained person is confronted with the concept of a scholar and vice versa. Above all, there are two complementary viewpoints: It becomes obvious that the layman's eye regards pictures more phenomenologically, whereas the photo critic prefers a semiotic approach to a generalizing concept of photography as a "form of mark-making".¹¹

A semiotic interpretation can be a legitimate and useful tool for better understanding a work of art and the context of its creation. But, if this method of analysis does not want to run the risk of becoming "metaphysical" it should not lose sight of the physics.

In his essay 'Was ist kein Bild? Zur Störung der Verweisung' (What is not a picture? On the interference of the reference), Peter Geimer focussed on the aspect of technical interference with the photographic plate to reflect the conditions of photography.¹² Deliberating on photographic accidents, disposed him to take a complementary approach to photography. His pivotal question "What is not (yet) a picture?" could be modified in the context of this examination by focusing not on the interferences with the photographic plate but on the changes of light formation in front of the plate. This fruitful discussion about the conditions of photography might just as well ask: "What is not a photograph?"

- 1 Roger Sayre, 'Introduction' in: Roger Sayre, *This is not a photograph*, New York 2001, n.p.
- 2 University Art Gallery San Diego, La Jolla, April 5–May 19, 2001; Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, August 3–October 7, 2001; University Art Gallery, De Paul University, Chicago IL, January 18–March 10, 2002.
- 3 The Franklin Institute Science Museum, *Lensless Photography*, exh. cat., Philadelphia 1983. Further exhibitions: *Cameraless Photography*, Yokohama Museum of Art, October 2–23, 1994; *Cameraless Wonders*, Art Institute Chicago, June 1–November 5, 2000.
- 4 A.D. Coleman, 'Essay' in: Roger Sayre, *This is not a photograph*, New York 2001, n.p.
- 5 Erich Stenger, *Die Photographie in Kultur und Technik*, Leipzig 1938, 89.
- 6 Unpublished interview by the author with Adam Fuss on the occasion of the opening of his exhibition at the Fotomuseum Winterthur, November 1999.
- 7 "un principe plastique", French email conversation with Fabio Sandri from 29.06.2008.
- 8 English summary on: <http://www.photogram.org/symposium/englishsummary.html> (25.06.2008).
See also Elcott's conference report: Noam Elcott, 'The Photogram. Light, Trace and Shadow', *Eikon*, vol. 54, June 2006, 53–55.
- 9 <http://www.photogram.org/symposium/slusallek.html> (25.06.2008).
- 10 <http://www.photogram.org/symposium/wiesing.html> (25.06.2008).
- 11 Coleman, 2001 (note 4) n.p.
- 12 Peter Geimer, 'Was ist kein Bild? »Zur Störung der Verweisung«' in: Peter Geimer (ed.), *Ordnungen der Sichtbarkeit*, Frankfurt a.M. 2002, 313–341, 315.

Rolf Sachsse

4I Marginal Notes on the Photographic Historiography of the 1970s – The Reception of Photography as Technique, Medium, and Art

The title of these lines is borrowed from a tiny book by Lucia Moholy, published in 1972, which caused some irritation among historians of the Bauhaus and Modern Art at the time.¹ It is a mixture of an autobiography with a good portion of ferocious criticism on the overall negligence of, then well-known, authors on this subject. Lucia Moholy simply listed mistake after mistake in the writings on her former husband, and the collection of historio-graphical misfits added up to a history of its own – a typical modern history of modernism happening by coincidence, or by piling up misunderstandings. The book was soon forgotten – not too bad for a pamphlet like that – but it helped me understand what was happening at the time I started my own involvement in photographic history which I had previously understood as an integral part of the history of (post)modernism and design. “For whatever reasons” (*in her own words*), she had been invited to become a founding member of the European Society for the History of Photography.

In the late 1960s during my apprenticeship with the two Cologne photographers, Walde Huth and Karl-Hugo Schmoelz, I was introduced to a specific form of photographic history as archival print orders for former Nazi architects existed, side by side, with a romantic commitment to photographic art and craftsmanship, in the same office. Neither led to economic success and, within the span of three years, I witnessed the decline of a studio that had been one of the greatest in the 1950s and still had a respectable size when I started my career in it. It was the high time of advertising photography and dozens of young photographers opened their own studios, in and around Düsseldorf, instigated by the activities of extremely busy young advertising agencies. Their history has not been written yet, but it coincided with a number of developments in both the visual arts and pop music.²

In those times, visiting the annual meetings of groups like the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie – DGPh* (German Society for Photography)³ meant encountering a mixture of old-fashioned craftsmen’s guilds, middle-level industrial entrepreneurship, and some younger paper

and film wholesalers, only outnumbered by the legal experts who had become the press officers of the large companies as a result of the long-term process in the development of the German tax laws concerning photographic products in the 1960s. By this time, the last major figures of photographic art in the 1950s, such as Otto Steinert and Heinz Hajek-Halke, had left the scene due to its uncompromising view on economic issues, leaving all interests in art and history behind. The young advertisers, among them Charles Wilp, F.C. Gundlach, and Franz-Erwin Wagner, who crawled into the picture around the mid 1970s had not yet made an appearance and had previously participated in the foundation of what was to become, in due time, the most important influence on photography in the 1970s and 1980s, the *Bund Freischaffender Foto-Designer – BFF* (Union of Freelance Photo-Designers).⁴ For a photographer's son who eventually developed from being a photographic practitioner into a media historian by picking up studies in communication research, these groups were fine, but a major German debate was lacking: the role of photography and photographers in the propaganda and illegal practices of the Nazi regime.⁵ And, as all forms of practice were going economically well, there was no need for thought, and not the least for any consideration of history. Consuming a well-prepared lecture on the artistic values of photography by Josef Adolf Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth was enough for the year and, five minutes after the applause, everybody went back to business.⁶

Supposedly, this vacuum of interests around 1970 was, at least in part, responsible for an interest of young art historians that arose, less by coincidence than necessity, within that field itself. At an annual meeting of art historians in 1969, Martin Warnke delivered a fervent appeal to drop the old vocabulary for describing artworks which could also be understood as a turn towards newer media and their relation to the visual arts.⁷ Parallel to this instigation of new research fields, there were a number of developments in the visual arts that led to a broader understanding of what could be an artwork – including, a photograph. The influence of artists like Joseph Beuys, and of movements such as the *Situationists* and *Fluxus*, at this time should not be underestimated.⁸ Therefore, some of the heroic memories of contemporaries about their

re-invention of photographic history on the base of art history sound more than somewhat exaggerated.⁹ By the mid-1970s, it had become clear that photography would have a wonderful future as an integral part of the art market,¹⁰ and most of the, then young, art historians sought their fortune in this field and, today, are among the best gallerists, dealers, collectors, and photography researchers.

Strangely enough, one path of understanding was way out of line with these developments, and that was exactly what Lucia Moholy had described in her little pamphlet. Looking at photography as a fraction of the many media that formed both the newer forms of art – performance, video, intermediate sculpture, *etc.*¹¹ – as well as an important service to new forms of design that arose around that time was, in no way, in the interest of researchers or historians in the 1970s. Some art critics devoted a few lines to the impact of photography on new forms of *Concept Art* and others wrote about the influence of silk screen printing after photographic images in pieces on *Pop Art*.¹² Most of photography's history was written on the base of technical developments arranged in linear order, and its aesthetic results were presented in a *cicerone*. As seen from the methods implied, in the early and mid-1970s, photographic history was in a worse state than it had been – even in the early 1930s. The situation was even more woeful with the criticism of photographic works, either as art or as design (ger.: *Gestaltung*).¹³ Most of the photographic magazines around 1970 presented a new “art photographer” with each issue – and that simply meant “tits and ass”.

Interestingly enough, by the mid 1970s, sidelines developed out of areas that had not really been concerned with photography on a larger scale: Instigated both by the development of art criticism under the *neo-Kantian* flavour of concept art and the linguistic turn in scientific methodology that arose from the bases of cybernetics and computation, a term crept into public view that had been in a state of oblivion – although it had been coined some fifty years before, in the 1920s – visual communication. This term correlated immediately with what artists like Joseph Beuys had named *Erweiterter Kunstbegriff* (The Expanded Understanding of Art), and it was installed fruitfully in the realms of art didactics.¹⁴ Au fond, visual communication integrated semiology, especially in the works of Roland Barthes¹⁵ and others, iconology, with strong inclinations towards psychoanalysis and the work of the newly re-discovered German émigrés Ernst Gombrich and Erwin Panofsky,¹⁶ and – unluckily enough – some plain Marxism that led to gross misunderstandings. Thus, I had the chance of reading some fierce criticism on a rather boring advertising photograph that I had assisted in making; and none of the manipulative strategies listed in this article had been part of the studio debates we had while preparing the image.¹⁷

The other sideline of understanding photography in the 1970s was opened by two other re-discoveries: the works of Walter Benjamin were reprinted after having been forgotten for roughly three decades and, with the success of the new German film movement, film theory created a new basis for looking at images – both still and moving.¹⁸ The impact of Walter Benjamin – especially of his essay ‘Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit’ (The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction)¹⁹ – can hardly be overestimated; even two decades after uncovering Benjamin’s lines, one of the representatives of the 1970s’ German photographic industry still felt the need to pick apart all of the Marxist mis-readers he had detected among the post-1968 students.²⁰ By this time, those better critics of photography as an art form had already picked up the writings of Siegfried Kracauer, André Bazin, and others to find the right tools of mediating the mediation of photographic images.²¹ In addition, what the most important book at the time, Susan Sontag’s *On Photography*, owes to film theory is often overlooked; her remarks on the *heroism of looking* literally stem from viewing films like Leni Riefenstahl’s.²²

It took roughly four years –and approximately a dozen sidelines – to install what Andreas Mueller-Pohle rightly named the *Second Avantgarde of Photography* in 1978:²³ an extremely ideologized view of the impact photography could have on the creation of an art scene of its own – as became visible at the same time, e.g., around the Visual Studies Workshop in the USA²⁴ – and its growing influence on the international art market.²⁵ One aspect of the sidelines was the numerous rediscoveries of important and forgotten photographers and theoreticians, e.g., re-printing the writings of Gisèle Freund and showing her images at the same time.²⁶ This was not always an easy task: We were exactly five visitors, plus the artist and the curator, when the first personal exhibition of Freund’s photographs was opened at the Rhenish State Museum in Bonn in March 1977.²⁷ In 1978, the two most important exponents of German photographic theory in the 1950s, Otto Steinert and Berthold Beiler, had passed away, both comparatively young, yet totally out of step with their time. By 1979, things seemed to have changed for photographic history: The reconstruction of what was seen as the most important exhibition in the 1920s – *Film and Foto* held in Stuttgart in 1929 – helped re-install the notion of modernism in photography,²⁸ and the first collection of young documentary photographers – among them, a number of what one might call the first generation of Becher students – was presented with a catalogue, again in Bonn.²⁹ While the first exhibition presented early attempts at integrating photography into modern art, both in the reprint edition of the original catalogue and in an accompanying book,³⁰ the latter was carried by an ambitious endeavour of creating a photographic theory on the base of an authorship similar to film and literature.³¹

By 1980, the early way of writing photographic history as either a technical or an art-historical cicerone had ceased to exist. A number of methodical attempts began to emerge in parallel, from the strict understanding of photography as an art³² over newer forms of understanding industrial history as a history of mind,³³ to its integration into wider approaches of interpretation in anthropology and media history stimulated by metaphorical shifts within post-modern societies.³⁴ And, new developments were on the horizon of a technical revolution: By this time digitalisation was obviously on its way into the printing process, into the collection

- 1 Lucia Moholy, *Marginalien zu Moholy-Nagy, Moholy-Nagy, Marginal Notes*, Krefeld: Scherpe 1972.
- 2 Michael Schirner, *Werbung ist Kunst*, Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann 1988.
- 3 Ludger Derenthal, "Under these aspects, the D.G.P.h. must remain a stepchild." 'Die Gründung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Photographie' in: *Fotogeschichte. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theorie der Fotografie*, Marburg: Jonas Verlag, vol. 16 1996, no. 59, 51–59.
- 4 Manfred Schmalriede, 'Professionelle Fotografie' in: Manfred Schmalriede, Norbert Waning (ed.), *30 Jahre Fotografie in Deutschland, 30 Jahre BFF Bund Freischaffender Foto-Designer*, exh. cat., Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz 1999, 18–62.
- 5 Rolf Sachsse, *Die Erziehung zum Wegsehen, Fotografie im NS-Staat*, [Berlin]: Verlag der Kunst 2003, 18–21.
- 6 Josef Adolf Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, *Vom Sinn der Photographie, Texte aus den Jahren 1952–1980*, Munich: Prestel-Verlag 1980.
- 7 Martin Warnke, *Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann-Kunstverlag 1970.
- 8 Richard Mortel (ed.), *Art Action 1958–1998, Rencontre internationale et colloque interactif*, Québec: Inter Art Actuel 2002.
- 9 Christoph Schaden, 'Interview mit Herbert Molderings ... whether Mr. Burdack had valid title to the collection oder der Fall der Helene Anderson Collection' in: *Photonews, Zeitung für Fotografie*, Hamburg: Denis Brudna Photonews-Verlag, vol. 18. 2006, no. 4, 14–15.
- 10 Anonymous, 'Kunstmarkt: Neue Ware Photographie' in: *DER SPIEGEL*, Hamburg: Spiegel Verlag, vol. 28, 21.10.1974, no. 43, 180–182.
- 11 Peter Weibel, 'Wahrnehmung im technologischen Zeitalter' in: Rolf Sachsse (ed.), *Peter Weibel, Gamma und Amplitude*, Berlin: fundus bibliothek 2004, 320–344.
- 12 Lucy Lippard (ed.), *Pop Art*, London: Thames & Hudson 1966;
Ursula Meyer, *Conceptual Art*, New York: E. Dutton 1972.
- 13 Christiane Wachsmann (ed.), *Objekt + Objektiv = Objektivität? Fotografie an der HFG Ulm 1953–1968*, exh. cat., Ulm: HFG-Archiv 1991.
- 14 Matthias Bleyl (ed.), *Joseph Beuys – Der erweiterte Kunstbegriff*, Darmstadt: Verlag der Georg-Büchner-Buchhandlung 1991.
- 15 Roland Barthes, 'Rhetorik des Bildes (1964)' in: Wolfgang Kemp (ed.), *Theorie der Fotografie, Band 3, 1945–1980*, Munich: Schirmer / Mosel Verlag 1979, 138–148.
- 16 Nikola Doll, Ruth Heftig, Olaf Peters, Ulrich Rehm (eds.), *Kunstgeschichte nach 1945, Kontinuität und Neubeginn in Deutschland, ATLAS, Bonner Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Neue Folge Band 3*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 2006.
- 17 Hermann K. Ehmer, 'Zur Metasprache der Werbung – Analyse einer DOORNKAAT-Reklame' in: Hermann K. Ehmer (ed.), *Visuelle Kommunikation, Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewusstseinsindustrie*, Cologne: DuMont 1971, 162–178.
- 18 Karsten Witte (ed.), *Theorie des Kinos*, Frankfurt am Main: edition suhrkamp 1972.
- 19 <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm> (16.05.2008).

and distribution of images³⁵ and, last not least, into the camera itself. For me, it became easy to determine my interests: Besides defining basic elements in the making and understanding of photographic images, like colour,³⁶ or subjects of photography, such as architecture,³⁷ I could concentrate on those I consider to have made history in one way or other. And, while preparing a monograph on Lucia Moholy in the early 1980s,³⁸ I found a membership application form for the *European Society for the History of Photography* – that is one of the places to trace different aspects of the view on photographic history.

- 20 Rolf H. Krauss, *Walter Benjamin und der neue Blick auf die Photographie*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz 1998.
- 21 A.D. Coleman, 'The Directorial Mode: Notes Towards a Definition (1976)' in: Vicky Goldberg (ed.), *Photography in Print. Writings from 1816 to the Present*, New York: Touchstone / Simon & Schuster 1981, 480–491.
- 22 Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux 1977, 76–102.
- 23 Andreas Müller-Pohle, 'Die zweite Avantgarde der Fotografie' in: *FOTOGRAFIE. Zeitschrift internationaler Fotokunst*, Riesweiler: Wolfgang Schulz, vol. 3, 1978, no. 7, 4–10. The use of the definite article *die* (the) instead of the indefinite *eine* (a) shows exactly the ideological quality of this essay and others – not only by this author, and not in Germany alone – at the time.
- 24 Nathan Lyons, 'On the Founding of afterimage and the Visual Studies Workshop' in: *afterimage*, Rochester NY: Rochester Institute of Technology, vol. 1, 1971, no. 1, 1.
- 25 Peter Boettcher, Floris M. Neusüss (eds.), *Photography as Art / Art as Photography*, exh. cat., Kassel: Fotoforum der Gesamthochschule Kassel 1976.
- 26 Hans Peter Gente (ed.), *Gisèle Freund, Photographie und bürgerliche Gesellschaft, Eine kunstsoziologische Studie*, Munich: Rogner & Bernhard 1968. The second edition of the book, released in 1976 under the conditions of photography's new impact, lacks considerably from having been re-written by the author.
- 27 Klaus Honnef (ed.), *Gisèle Freund Fotografien 1932–1977*, exh. cat., Bonn: Rheinland Verlag 1977.
- 28 Karl Steinorth (ed.), *Film und Foto. Internationale Ausstellung des Deutschen Werkbundes 1929*, Reprint edition, exh. cat., Stuttgart: dva 1979.
- 29 Klaus Honnef, 'Es kommt der Autorenfotograf. Materialien und Gedanken zu einer neuen Ansicht über Fotografie' in: Klaus Honnef, Wilhelm Schürmann (ed.), *In Deutschland, Bönsel, Görlich, Höfer, Hütte, Koenig, Küsters, Manz, Neubauer, Riebeschl, Ronkholz, Schmidt, Schürmann, Struth*, exh. cat., Cologne: Rheinland Verlag 1979, 8–32.
- 30 Ute Eskildsen, Jan-Christopher Horak (eds.), *Film und Foto der Zwanziger Jahre, Eine Betrachtung der Internationalen Werkbundaustellung "Film und Foto" 1929*, Stuttgart: Hatje 1979.
- 31 Honnef, 1979 (note 29).
- 32 Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1968.
- 33 John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation, Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Basingstoke, Hamps.: Macmillan Education 1988.
- 34 Catherine Gudis, Ann Goldstein, Mary Jane Jacob (eds.), *A Forest of Signs, Art in the Crisis of Representation*, exh. cat., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1989.
- 35 Albert Schug, 'Ein System zur Inventarisierung und Dokumentation in den objektbezogenen kulturhistorischen Wissenschaften' in: *Archäographie*, Munich: Verlag Dokumentation K.G. Saur, vol. 6 1977, 27–95. In 1979, I had the opportunity of helping Albert Schug organize the first German conference on the computer-based archiving of photographs.
- 36 Klaus op ten Hövel (ed.), *Farbe im Photo*, exh. cat., Cologne: Kunsthalle 1981.
- 37 Rolf Sachsse, *Photographie als Medium der Architekturinterpretation*, Bonn: Diss.phil. 1983, Munich: Verlag Dokumentation K.G. Saur 1984.
- 38 Rolf Sachsse, *Lucia Moholy*, Düsseldorf: Marzona 1985.

Johan Swinnen

42 Last Supper. Darkness at the Edge of the Aesthetics of Portraiture

“The sensation of the newest, the most modern, is in fact just as much a dream form of events as the eternal return of the same.” *Walter Benjamin*¹

“I slow down to have the time to finally know.” *Roland Barthes*²

Evaluating Photographs and the Politics of Space

Following in the footsteps of Margareta M. Lovell (University of California, Berkeley), who did a great deal of research into the relationship between food photography, advertising and eating, we can explore the questions about who can give us something significant to write about and look at. We have identified four main questions that can be asked of any photograph: What are we looking at? What is it about? Is it good? Is it art?

Food photography today – that is, photography included in contemporary articles on food and many cookbooks – not only displays inventive taste experience, but also positions food within an explicit and implicit reiterative narrative of desire, focusing on leisure, old stamps, contemporary art, and social pleasure. Utilizing its full vocabulary of selective focus, vibrating complementary colours, large-format precision, and visual quotation, food photography maximizes and dramatizes the desirability of taste and the pleasures of eating for the enraptured viewer. Yet, when viewed closely, the genre also reveals itself as implicating a very different protagonist involved in an alternative (and potentially opposite) relationship to the proffered meal.

We will use the photograph *Last Supper* by Bart Michiels (1957, Belgium) to explore how the camera attempts to capture and arrest the narrative at a particular moment in the food cycle – the moment when hunger and desire are about to meet satisfaction.

Judgment presupposes interpretation, and interpretation presupposes description. We need an understanding – hopefully a defensible and convincing understanding – of what photography is about before we judge it. Unfortunately, because of its everyday connotations, criticism is too frequently confused with negative value judgments. The term criticism in the language of aesthetics encompasses much more.³

Insider views and estranged regards

The purpose of the aesthetics of photography is to teach how to judge and appreciate photographs and to provide a context for expressing this judgment verbally on the basis of sound argumentation.

Appreciation and judgment are not the same as considering something to be pretty. Appreciation equally implies understanding and learning to sense things that do not immediately attempt to impress with their prettiness or charm. It ensues that appreciation is totally different from a sentimental association and acquaintance with photography that only serves to confirm what we already knew, felt and thought. Feeling plays an essential part in this process, but there are many types of feeling. Feeling can be educated, trained, expanded and extended. There are a great many means for this purpose; aesthetics for instance, but also the relatively young science of semiotics or the science of signs.

A photographic image has an appearance of simplicity. It is a representation of visible reality and it provides us with information in a non-circumstantial, direct manner. A photograph differs from language in that it seems to be intelligible to everybody: one can see what it shows.

Yet, this appearance is deceitful, since, in reality, things prove to be much more complicated. Semiotics is the science that attempts to analyze photography in a methodologically serious manner.

In order to get a clearer insight into the manner in which photography generates meaning, it is indeed necessary to elucidate the divergent photographic approaches to photographic data. Semiotics approaches photography as a system of signs. We can define semiotics as:

the science that studies all languages insofar as these make use of signs for the purpose of communicating content (*ie.* of signifying). A communicative situation can be conceived as a threefold relationship: a direct relationship between the public and medium, as well as between the medium and reality on the one hand, and an indirect relationship between the public and reality on the other, the latter being brought about by the mediated, and modified by the role of the medium. By means of photography, a message is transmitted which, once understood, acquires a certain meaning.

The problematic part of the above model consists of the part played by the medium in this process. The question we raise in this context regards the influence that the medium might, or does, have on the content of the message. Stuart Hall has clarified this by emphasizing the activity between the sender and the receiver of the message. The message is just as much the result/product of the way in which the sender uses the medium as of the way in which the receiver interprets this message. A certain degree of shared knowledge, both of the codes used and of the reality to which the message refers, ought to exist between both parties if the message is to be communicated as it was intended to be. We will now take a closer look at the importance of the role played by the medium of photography in this process of bestowing meaning. For, if we intend to discover the specificity of an image, we cannot but compare this type of communication process with another, very intimately familiar, medium of transmitting and transferring meaning within our culture, namely verbal language.⁴

Picturing visualistic photography

As an example, we will use the photographs by Bart Michielsen as a frame; or better, as the context: a photographic context created by Michielsen who has produced rich bodies of work. He has always challenged, motivated and inspired the viewers and the younger generation with diverse approaches and different work practices. Can photo-aesthetics be instrumental in explaining these characteristics?

Bart Michielsen expresses his own world in his often eroticizing photographs which give free scope to his associations developed out of a humanistic vision. His series of photographs is built up like a dream, where black and white shades, nuances of colours, and compositional forms stimulate each other and where one image spontaneously evokes another. Michielsen shows refreshingly new images, photos with a motivated expressiveness, in which emotion and experience lay the foundation for a new visual dialogue. Bart's work goes back into history, to the time of the Old Masters, who were able to reproduce, in an enigmatic way, space, light and depth in their paintings, but he also refers to contemporary masters of photography. Bart Michielsen is interested in romantic, aesthetic compositions in which rich sensual symbols are evoked.⁵

The development Bart Michielsen went through was along the path of so-called visualistic photography, which changed the aesthetic sensibility by revealing unknown features of the universe. This type of photography shows the creation of images that, because of their unusual character, receive an aesthetic value. Some photographers consider the art of photography as an embellishing art, which makes everything nicer; others consider it an accusation, which depicts reality. But for Bart, photography is the ultimate means of showing his provocative, peculiar truth. For him, experiences are memories, signs, symbols, levels and geometric forms. As such, he cannot *do* much with it. It is *nothing*. Only after the experiences become solidified, can he start to change and modify them into a usable code system. He uses codification – spontaneously and impulsively – to make the chaos recognizable. He tries to convert the chaos into an elementary order. Then, the exciting moment arrives when he has to select the signs he will use. On the one hand, he has to codify the signs to arrive at a certain reconcilability; on the other, he likes to keep that inner chaos within reach. In fact, he demands more effort from the observers of his work and, at the same time, remains susceptible and open for diverging interpretations: the scope between elementary order, timeless ordering, and between order and chaos.

Variations on a theme of alternate words and worlds

My basic question is then: What are the characteristics of his photograph *Last Supper*?

A. First, it is taken and printed in very precise focus, using a large-format quality, slippery contours of the plate, warm tones predominate, and the image exhibits numerous sharp contrasts of texture and content. The point of view is overhead; it positions the viewer as the eater. The selected photo has a symbolic value. One can expect that both the erotic meaning (excellent food with a beautiful server?) and the additional social connotations (fertility, creativity, power) are accentuated depending on the size of the organ. The phallus, as a means of representation, is somewhat simpler than the penis, as a biological reality.

Bart Michielsen has discovered a reality, recognized by him in the first instance, although the image does not exist at that moment. The image grows in his mind. And then, in a concentrated time window, he creates a new image. If a boomerang is thrown with the right technique, it will return to the thrower in a few seconds. Well, the photographer performs this same operation.

When one looks at Bart Michielsen's photographs, one sees a vision of the world – now dark, then light – which leaves the observer with the impression that the world is impenetrable. Michielsen offers momentary impressions, which evoke a searching effect in the observer. It is interesting to note the harmonious combination of a real vision, conviction, and expressiveness, which all originate in honesty and originality. It is an exciting adventure to discover and observe these *received inner experiences*.

B. Second, photography inside out.

1. In the first place, his photographs are characterized by an approach to photography that actually does depart from reality, yet renders this reality from a very specific angle/perspective as a result of the photographic technique and design it employs. More precisely, the processes that are typical of the medium of photography, such as repetition, paradox and the gap between actual reality and its representation, are often referred to. This contemporary, emphatically visually-oriented photography is characterized by a certain degree of alienation from reality as the latter can be perceived, and often stands out, by its markedly illusory character.

Photography is able to create a duplicate world / reality of a more dramatic nature than the natural world. By imaging this reality in a fragmented manner, the photographer suggests that there is a need for another, a second, reality that ought to be conquered by the photographer.

2. In the second place, one needs to point out that Michielsen's photography is quite ambiguous. It consists of showing a parcel of reality, framed by the camera or in the darkroom, and – considering the objective nature of this procedure – is entitled to lay serious claims to thorough epistemological validity or genuine knowledge of reality. In addition to this, it is, at the same time, a questioning of the reality value of a given image and of the manner in which the objective is being 'dis-objectified' by the subjectivity of both the creator and of the spectator, which, in turn, is enhanced by contextual influences on, and conditioning of, both of these. This very ambiguity has been called the paradox of photography.⁶ The art of photography presents this paradox in its most acute and incisive manner. Each and every photograph constitutes a doxa: it is reality as it is, quite often with conclusive argumentative evidence. But now, in times of virtual photography?

The end of the paradox? Photographers with rich bodies of work? With their diverse approaches and different work practices; how long will the challenging, motivating and inspiring last?

3. After the 'paradox' that was typical in the 1990s, we actually speak about 'paroxysm'.

The concept of paroxysm was introduced by the philosophy of culture to denote certain extreme individual experiences as well as to categorize social phenomena.⁷

Paroxysm denotes the questioning of the border between fortune and misfortune, adventure and misadventure, belief and misbelieve, communication and miscommunication but also between love and hate, pleasure and pain, peace and war, science and myth, medicine and witchcraft, in short all those terms that we could categorize under the antipodes *normal* and *abnormal*.

Photography visualized this problem. Its principle of paradox, viz. photography, being fictitious but seeming real, turns it into an excellent medium for visualizing different instances of paroxysm.

However, one can only name something truly a paroxysm when it can no longer be immediately classified within the norms of the social or the individual, bearing in mind that the anti-social actually also belongs to the social and that an individual's deviant behaviour is really very individual.

One can speak of paroxysm when a border is being looked for and, when found, is crossed by shifting it or by shifting it as a means of crossing it. This implies that one never ends up in a different category.

But, all of Bart Michielsens's photographic work is also an example of paroxysm.

Other photographers working in this field include Duane Michals, Charlotte Lybeer, Masao Yamamoto, Dirk Braeckman, Andreas Müller-Pohle and Jürgen Klauke.

The art of signs in the history of photography

Photography creates an illusionary image at a flat level by offering a surplus value. Because of the absence of time and movement, the alienation becomes more intense. The use of this language of the image, which must be connected to technical insight, is decisive for the quality of the photography concerned.

Bart Michielsens is a conservative in the pure sense of the word. Photography, however, is an immense store of forgotten and deeply hidden meanings. Because of its development throughout the entire culture, each photograph is full of signs and meanings that most people use a very small part of in daily life. But, the photographic work of Bart Michielsens is not merely a store of sunken emotional values, it also offers imaginative potential.

And, that is why he is very much a progressive artist, at the same time. He conserves and reminds us not only of the forgotten but he is also the creator and *image designer* of new worlds, of images and utopias. The intensity with which Michielsens treats his subjects is a testimony to all these possibilities hidden behind his talented graphic language of the image.

M.M. Lovell wrote:

“Food aesthetics, that is, the presentation of food as art and the presentation of art (especially photography) about food, is a singular genre which appears to be governed by a set of complex – but legible and reiterated – visual rhetorics. As with all art, the photograph is both independent of the viewer – an object recording objects – and explicitly directed at and completed by a ‘reader-responsive’ viewer. The elements of the image (or of the plate) are then arranged with not only visually-coded cues but also with fixed attention to the positionality of the viewer.”⁸

Willem Elias wrote on Bart Michelson:

“In photography, the penis is always phallus, because the phallus is its symbolized form. The penis belongs to biology, the phallus to cultural philosophy and to history.”⁹

And also:

“The phallus is the way the penis is presented in a cultural context, for symbolic reasons it is always erect. We are generally in the habit of applying not ethical but aesthetic criterion. Pornography makes no attempt to apply aesthetic principles, eroticism does. Pornography is direct; eroticism takes a roundabout route like art. In fact the distinction is not important. What seems important to us is rather the social function that the two sorts of images serve. By being a photographic representation, every penis becomes a phallus and hence acquires a double layer of meaning as the representation of a representation.”¹⁰

A Message from the Interior

The photographs by Bart Michielsen are interesting because they bear upon the topic of ambiguity within contemporary photography. In a quite convincing manner, he considers descriptive photography as a form of creation, as a fully-fledged form of artistic expression with its own characteristic brand of subjectivity. His distinctive style is proof of this: the framing is particularly well-thought out, drawing upon the tension between concept and composition, his approach to details in their quality of signs, the emphasis he puts on black and white tonalities and colour values.

Nostalgia plays an important part in the world of Bart Michielsen. As a whole, it is a luminous world on which Bart Michielsen briefly lets the sun of his shutter shine. The components of a still life, abruptly illuminated by intrusive light, show their true function: a theatrical landscape that obstinately believes in its own beauty. Photographs, portraits, nudes, installations and

See: website: <http://www.bartmichielsen.net>

- 1 Quoted in: Susan, Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press 1991, 108
- 2 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography*, New York: Hill and Wang 1981.
- 3 Margareta, Lovell in: *Food Photography and Inverted Narratives of Desire, Exposure, Eating Disorders: A Vision Dialogue*, vol. 34: 1/2; 2001, 19.
- 4 Terry Barrett, *Criticizing Photographs, An introduction to Understanding Images*, Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company 2000.
- 5 Johan Swinnen, 'Fotografie en travestie: autoreflexief versus projectief. De fotografische dimensie als agogisch kruispunt tussen esthetiek, politiek en techniek' in: Willem Elias (ed.), *Vizier op agogiek*, Leuven Garant 2002.

commercial food photography are simply other manners of experiencing it.

Bart Michielsens surprises us with photographs of a thoroughly evocative and informative nature, which have an air of belonging together, of congeniality.

Furthermore, his photographs imply more than a mere recording/fixation of reality; they are images replete with ecological, religious and symbolical elements. Looking at these photographs, one is truly embarked on an expedition, whence comes the shock of the assessment that a new element has been added to the morbid elements and that we – in our capacity of spectators – are responsible for this element, namely for the unknown factor.

What this post-modern food picture makes visible, is the knowledge that we cannot not know the origins and destiny of food. Imbedded in the ordered perfection of even the most inviting food photograph, are clues that remind us of this knowledge, clues that, for the hungry eye, potentially deflect appetite, summon guilt, and arrest action. Even at that splendid moment after preparation and before consumption, when desire is greatest and uncontrolled, disordered, unappetizing states of biology, and bleeding are most firmly (and in photography, most permanently and resolutely) kept at bay through the scripted frozen narrative of opulent material props.

The business of eating involves all five senses; the business of experiencing food photography substitutes one sense for all the rest. And that is the safe sense, the one that invites participatory voyeurism while avoiding the bodily consequences of consumption. Seeing, in this sense, is both a kind of disordered or incomplete eating and a carefully orchestrated aesthetic practice akin to reading a romantic novel – a practice that permits an imaginative proximity to a forbidden experience without any real-time, real-life consequences, a practice that is deliberately and selectively fictional.¹¹

6 Johan Swinnen, *De paradox van de fotografie*, Antwerpen: Hadewych 1992.

7 Johan Swinnen, 'Signs That Trigger a Philosophical Response' in: James Elkins (ed.), *Photography Theory*, New York: Routledge 2007, 286-299.

8 Lovell, 2001 (note 3) 19.

9 Willem Elias, *Punctum contra punctum*, Amsterdam: Bart Michielsens, de Brakke Grond 2000, 30.

10 Willem Elias, 'Profiles of Paroxysm, Attack! Photography on the edge' English supplement to Johan Swinnen (ed.), *Attack! Photography on the edge*, Antwerp/Baarn: Houtekiet/De Prom 1999, 24-37.

11 Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press 1984, 209-222.

Thomas Friedrich

43 Photography, Modern Times and Everyday Life in the Big City Printed Pictures in the German Press from 1892 to 1914

There have been a number of transformations in the history of photography, some of them technical, some aesthetic and some a combination of both aspects: the disappearance of the Daguerreotype, the replacement of the wet collodion process by the dry plate, the introduction of the 35mm camera, the appearance of “new vision” and “new realism” in the 1920s, and many others. The most recent transformation – the triumphant progress of digital photography – will not be the last. However, no innovation had such a sustainable effect on the perception and appearance of photography – even though it did not (initially) result in a change in photographic techniques – as the invention of the autotype which made it possible to reproduce photographs simultaneously with the printed text.¹ My impression is that the magnitude and consequences of the creation of a world of “printed pictures” made possible by the autotype is still greatly underestimated.

Until today, photo history has been dominated by the methods and criteria of art history (not least, as a result of pressure from the art market); this includes the tendency towards making a hero out of the autonomously working photographic artist. Seen from the viewpoint of an artistic-aesthetic evaluation, the introduction of the autotype merely deals with the question of the original and reproduction. And, in a strict sense, “printed photography” is actually not photography in the material sense but a printed reproduction of a photographic original, making it a welcome aid in dating, *etc.*, but rather undesirable, or at least of marginal interest, as a research subject. However, the theory presented here is that photography’s triumphant progress, its transformation into a genuine mass medium, is inseparably bound to its introduction into the printed media. The only logical step is to pose the question about the evolution of “modernity in photography”² in a different way than has so far been the case or to treat it as less important than that on how greatly the medium of photography changed as a result of its establishment in the print media which began at the end of the nineteenth century and developed rapidly over the following decades. As long as this does not happen, we are forced to approach this question from the present.

If one deals with the development of modern photography in this manner, as the photo historian Herbert Molderings does “not using isolated photographs by Alfred Stieglitz, Alvin Langdon Coburn or Paul Strand” from the first two decades of the last century but equating it with the moment when, in addition to some singularly innovative pictures, “a completely newly developed programme of a new photographic area came into existence”, in Molderings’ words, one must date the “birth of new photography” with the year of the publication of the Bauhaus book *Malerei Fotografie Film* (presented by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy in 1925 with an expanded version in 1927), the year 1925.³ Molderings’ thesis is just as questionable as it is worth discussing. If one overlooks that Molderings only refers to “isolated” pictures by photographers from the USA from the second decade of the twentieth century⁴ for his reasoning, the question



fig. 1 unknown photographer, *Neues Sehen* 1907, *Ein Photographenscherz* (a photographer's joke). A walk on Leipziger street in Berlin in *Die Welt* (Berlin), vol. xv, no. 17, 21 July 1907, 325.

must be asked why a new area of photography could only be born when its “programme” had been previously completely formulated. How could one arrive at the conclusion that – at least in Europe and, with the exceptions of the already mentioned isolated American photographs – Moholy-Nagy’s manifesto of “new vision” was only realized rather abruptly in the mid 1920s? Such a hypothesis assumes that there is not even uncertain evidence of first steps in the direction of such a “new vision” being made in the years and decades before this. Is that really the case?

Of course, Moholy-Nagy and others of his kind wanted to break away from “pictorial photography” which had sunk into tedious routine but still dominated photographic activities to a large degree in the early 1920s. On the other hand, his “manifesto” shows just how precisely he knew and had studied the material in **contemporary** magazines; for example, he states that: “Occasionally, one finds really ‘good’ pictures among the millions of photographs that appear in illustrated journals and books.”⁵ However, how much knowledge did Moholy-Nagy have about the early stages of illustrated magazines in Germany? This question leads, above all, to the debates of the 1980s and 90s on the development of “modern photo-journalism” which, however, were never carried out as an open controversy. In his book *Deutschland – Beginn des modernen Photojournalismus* (Germany – The Beginnings of Modern Photo Journalism), which was published in 1972, Tim Gidal – himself, active as a photo reporter since the late 1920s – presented the theory that “contemporary, new photo reporting” had only developed in the years between 1928 and 1931 and then, mainly in the *Münchener Illustrierte Presse* inspired by its picture editor Stefan Lorant and principally carried out by young “born” photo reporters who had “almost exclusively, cropped up in the two years between 1928 and 1930” – the most important being Erich Salomon, Felix H. Man, Umbo, Wolfgang Weber, Walter Bosshard, Martin Munkácsi as well as Tim Gidal himself and his brother Georg.⁶ The Swedish photographer and photo historian Rune Hassner, whose book *Bilder för miljoner*⁷ has, unfortunately, never been translated from Swedish and, therefore, hardly discussed, represented the

opposite standpoint. In his lecture *The First Decades: Photojournalism from 1890–1920*, Hassner at least had the opportunity of using numerous examples of earlier photo reporting to show that “there were lively, photo-journalistic activities ... earlier, more frequently and in many more places, than it has previously appeared.”⁸

One decade after Hassner’s lecture, Bernd Weise presented a large number of examples in the *Fotogeschichte* magazine to rebut Gidal’s assumption.⁹ Going beyond this, in the exhibition *Fotografie in deutschen Zeitschriften 1883–1923*, Weise was able to present numerous examples of early German photographic journalism – especially, early picture / text reports – occasionally



fig. 2 Albert Zander, *Lichtpunkte* (spots of light) from the illumination in Berlin in *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, vol. 4, no. 26, 8 September 1895, 6.

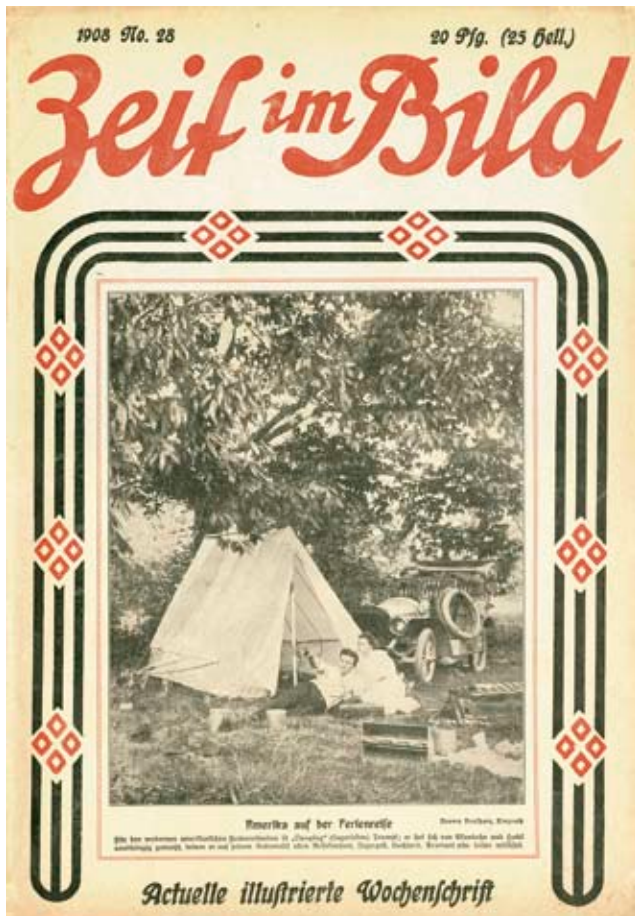
dating back to the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ In spite of this, Gidal repeated his thesis – “modern photo reporting” principally developed in Germany between 1928 and 1931 – in 1993 in a revised edition of his book. The illustrated magazine founded between 1890 and 1914 had, of course, fostered photo journalism but their domain was not everyday life and human relationships as was the case with later “modern photo journalism” but “illustrations of reports of events in public life and genre pictures”. These weeklies were illustrated on a number of pages with “isolated photos in the text”.¹¹ Confronted with the illustrative material Weise had collected for the 1991 exhibition, Gidal was forced to modify his thesis: He then differentiated between (traditional) “photo journalism” and the “modern photo reportage” and, no longer stressed the supposed domination of the individual photograph in early photo journalism but the allegedly new quality of the pictures of everyday life which had appeared in the reportages made by “modern” photo journalists around 1930 compared with those of “public life” and the difference between photos with merely an illustrative function compared with “modern” photos having an aesthetic or narrative quality independent of the texts.¹²

On the other hand, the exhibition and catalogue on the history of photography compiled by Robert Lebeck, assisted by Bodo von Dewitz, in 1991 for the Museum Ludwig in Cologne concentrated on the examination and evaluation of actually existing material.¹³ Here, for the very first time, a large audience was exposed to impressive examples showing the development of “printed pictures” from their infancy when magazines were still working with the xylographic process, over the “onslaught” of the autotype at the end of the nineteenth century, to the various stages of photo journalism in the twentieth century – and this, in an international comparison. In this way, the astonished public became aware of street scenes from the East Side of New York which had been published in *The Illustrated American* in 1893 as well as early photo reportages from *L'Illustration* (Paris) and *Die Woche* (Berlin). The latter was founded in 1899 and, in its first year, brought illustrated reports such as ‘In the German Reichsbank’¹⁴ and ‘In the Berlin Fencing Club’.¹⁵ Apart from the absolutely sensational discoveries such as the full-sheet photo title pages of *Leslie's Weekly* from 1902 and 1903, or the typographically extremely modern double-page spreads on the 1908 Olympic Games from *La Vie au Grand Air*,¹⁶ the exemplary illustrative material in this exhibition, similar to the one organized by Bernd Weise in 1991,¹⁷ drew attention to the beginnings of German photo journalism. A compilation of six photos of beach life on the Baltic coast entitled ‘Berlin in Heringsdorf’ – without any text at all – from the August 1904 *Berliner Leben* magazine was shown along with eight aerial photographs of the city centre of Berlin from the August 1913 edition of *Die Woche* that led to remarkable conclusions on the (potential) expansion of the visual perspectives of the mass public in the years before the First World War.¹⁸

Unfortunately, this pioneering event was not followed by any comparable exhibition that further developed the individual areas and aspects of the exemplary approach and scope of the Cologne exhibition, in recent years.¹⁹ The only exceptions are a few monographic exhibitions that have paid more attention than usual to the importance of photo journalism in the life's

fig. 3 Brown Brothers, New York, *America on a long-distance holiday*, cover der *Zeit im Bild*, vol. 6, no. 28, 1908.

fig. 4 Louis Held, *A lesson in the variety school* in *Die Zeit im Bild*, vol. III, no. 31, 9 September 1905, 1098f.



work of individual photographers. Here, particular mention must be made of the outstanding exhibition on the work of the photographer Philipp Kester held in the Photo Museum of the Munich City Museum. The catalogue's foreword stressed that: "Seeing that Kester usually worked for illustrated journals, the contextualization of his photographs for this medium and the connections to history form the core of this publication."²⁰ This exhibition and catalogue then led to the rediscovery of a photo journalist whose pictures – especially those taken in the years before the First World War – are, at least partially, characterized by a strong innovative power. Once again, one saw several examples of a photographic approach from the pioneer years of the German illustrated press which can only be described as "modern". The informative essays in the catalogue not only dealt with Kester's personal contributions to the early history of the illustrated press in Germany but also provided an outline of the early years of German pictorial journalism.²¹ The impressive facsimile examples of Kester's pictures printed in magazines such as the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, the *Welt-Spiegel*, *Die Woche* and *Zeit im Bild* also make it painfully clear that Kester's work was an exception; a radiant island in the uncharted ocean of early German photo journalism, in a manner of speaking. Dirk Halfbrodt's résumé on the position of Philip Kester's early work in the German illustrated press scene in the years before the First World War showed that, in the first decade, "approaches to creativity and visual aspects [developed] in press photography which are generally only connected with

the achievements of picture journalism in the 'blossoming illustrated culture' of the late 1920s ... If one neglects the drastic depictions of sex and the prominence of the advertisement section, the iconographic structure of today's illustrated magazines, as fundamentally a hotchpotch of superficial political and cultural information, celebrity cult, sensationalist reporting and entertainment, and sentimental gossip, had already developed by around 1910."²² This appears to be accurate seeing that it coincides with the results of earlier research made by Bernd Weise.²³

It seems just as appropriate to draw attention to the deficit that neither the history of photography nor of the press has adequately attempted to make an appraisal of the history of press photography, one of "the most innovative chapters in media history"²⁴ – something Bernd Weise complained about in 1991 and which it is justified to repeat, using other words, today. A much larger popular "visual audience" established itself alongside the bourgeois "text audience" much earlier than is usually believed. Seventeen years later (!), Anton Holzer ascertained that this has been forgotten to a large degree seeing that ultimately "the testimonies of this audience, the popular picture press, have still not found their historians."²⁵

This becomes even more obvious when one considers that there is not even an overall presentation of Ullstein's *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (*BIZ*) – the most frequently mentioned German illustrated magazine – in international



studies on photographic history.²⁶ This applies even more to the competition of the *BIZ*: there are no chronological depictions and contents analyses for the *Welt-Spiegel* (the illustrated supplement to the Mosse Publishers' *Berliner Tageblatt*), *Die Woche* published by Scherl, and the *Zeit im Bild* issued by a minor publishing house, to name only those Berlin journals with a connection to Philipp Kester, not to mention any which appeared outside of Germany's capital city (fig. 4). Some questions which go even further, such as: Why did Mosse only issue an illustrated supplement – in the form of the *Welt-Spiegel* – to a daily newspaper for more than two decades before it assumed the status of an independent illustrated journal in 1926; why did the competitor Scherl produce *Bilder vom Tage*, which appeared as a supplement to its flagship paper the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* six times a week for several years after 1909, in addition – and as competition – to *Die Woche*; and, why was the *BIZ* considerably more successful, in the long-run, than *Die Woche*, and so on; have, so far, not even been asked.

However, the most surprising aspect is the fact that the immense success of illustrated magazines, starting with the rapidly increasing circulation numbers of the *BIZ* at the end of the nineteenth century, followed by the launch of a wave of new competitors between 1899 and 1913²⁷ is frequently reported on but, as a rule, never followed up by substantial research into this phenomenon. Of course, the low sales price and the ending of forced subscriptions, on the one hand and improvements and discoveries in printing, on the other, created the prerequisites for the rise of the popular illustrated press. However, the parallelism of the success of the illustrated magazines and the gradual demise of the traditional family magazines (à la *Die Gartenlaube*) have much deeper reasons than Bernd Weise described – much too briefly – as “changes in the traditional family structure in the developing industrial society.”²⁸ But

what exactly led to the *BIZ*, founded in 1892, only being able to slightly increase its circulation in its first four years of publication but almost tripling it between 1896 and 1900 before increasing it, once again, in the following year to 135,000?²⁹ Where did the *BIZ* readers – they increased to almost one million at the start of the First World War – come from?³⁰ More than half a century ago, the newspaper researcher Theodore Peterson attempted to answer these questions – in connection with the situation in the USA – and, to me, his reply appears to be not only convincing but also applicable, on the whole, to the situation in the late Wilhelmine Empire. Peterson explains that “In 1890 educated readers of substance, readers who could easily afford magazines, had a place on their library tables for perhaps only *Century*, *Harper’s*, and *Scribner’s* ... Concerned as they were with editorial fare for the genteel, the magazines in retrospect seem curiously remote from the dramatic changes then taking place in American life ... Yet beneath this high stratum of genteel readers was a tremendously large and ever growing audience for low cost magazines suited to less esoteric tastes ... , for as America shifted from an agrarian to an industrial economy, conditions were propitious for magazines of large, national circulations.”³¹ In this connection, Peterson also mentions the reasons for the development of, what he calls, “low cost magazines”: the reduction in the production costs of illustrations as a result of the introduction of the autotype. One of the new publishers, S.S. McClure, “believed the development of photoengraving had made it financially possible for newcomers such as him to compete with established publishers in bringing out well-illustrated magazines. *Century*, for instance, had paid up to \$300 for a page-size woodcut; now a publisher could buy a halftone for under \$20.”³² It can be seen that the characteristic elements of the “modern magazine” had taken on a clear form around the turn of the century: the low sales price and, as a result of this, nation-wide distribution – something previously believed impossible – an enormous increase in the number of advertisements and “finally, magazine content had become ‘popular’ as publishers and editors reached new audiences.”³³ Continuing, Peterson resumed that: “Magazine illustration was being revolutionized”, the publisher of modern magazines “used photographs lavishly.”³⁴ And, finally, Peterson once again quoted the publisher McClure who was convinced “that besides being an inexpensive source of good reading, a popular magazine should be an authoritative reporter of modern civilization.”³⁵

If one attempts to apply Peterson’s criteria to the situation in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one discovers astounding parallels. The German Empire also found itself in a period of change from a largely agrarian society to a modern industrialized nation which was perceived as being dramatic by many contemporaries. This change meant that the capital city, Berlin, developed from a royal seat with 300,000 inhabitants at the beginning of industrialization in 1834 to an industrial and commercial metropolis with a population of over four million in 1913.³⁶ The change in production and distribution processes in the contemporary German press conformed completely with the elements of a drastic

transformation in the USA, as described by Peterson, as did the newly-forming class of readers with their specific demands. But, did the contents of the illustrated magazines being produced in Germany also tally with the process Peterson described in the USA which resulted in a radical modernization of the media landscape? A glance at the *BIZ* in the 1890s provides us with some revealing findings. Apart from the fact that, in the early years of the magazine, photographic sequences were at least as important as single pictures,³⁷ illustrated reports of work and leisure in the Reich's capital became an important component of the thematic orientation of the publication at an early stage. These included articles such as "A Stroll through Berlin's Largest Tailoring Academy"³⁸ or "Hugo Kerkau's Billiard Academy in the Equitable Palace in Berlin".³⁹ That we are dealing with photo reportages "in nuce" – even if only two photos were reproduced – can be seen by looking at the 1895 edition where there is a report of a fire in a factory on 26 May.⁴⁰ Both the text, which explicitly refers to the photos, and the two printed photos accompanying it were the work of the engineer Albert Zander. A few months later – in the meantime, Zander, along with the businessman Siegfried Labisch, had founded Berlin's first picture agency – two photographs by Zander were reproduced to illustrate a report on the illumination of the inner-city of Berlin on the occasion of the battle of Sedan in the German-French War. These are not simply the first photos of Berlin at night: The two photos completely dominate the page making their inherent narrative structure apparent – it is as if they were "telling" the *BIZ* readers about a stroll through the illuminated centre of Berlin (fig. 2). This also applies to the three photographs by Waldemar Titzenthaler illustrating an article on 'Am Krögel' street – a relic of mediaeval Berlin – published at the end of 1897.⁴¹ They develop an independent, narrative power making only brief commentaries on the pictures necessary.

In order to counter any objections that these examples from the *BIZ* in the years from 1894 to 1897 are just accidental finds, I will present the second half-volume of the third year of the illustrated magazine *Zeit im Bild*, published in Berlin from 1903, as an additional sample. It also published considerably more than twenty text-picture reports which can be characterized as photo reportages – and in one case as a photo essay – between August 1905 and January 1906. Ranging as they do from reports about 'Pennebacken' (homeless people) and 'Treasure Hunters in the Big City' (garbage collectors) in Berlin, over margarine production and a large pastry concern, to a description of work in a Viennese theatre workshop, and so on, it appears, at first glance, that we are dealing with a series of completely unrelated topics.⁴² However, if they are arranged into groups, we discover clear areas of emphasis: the entertainment industry – leisure time / games / sports – the lower classes, as well as the infrastructure and lifestyle of the big city are, with the exception of reports from "faraway lands", the areas covered by the reportages. To put it in a nutshell: we are dealing with scenes of everyday life, events and activities which are only possible in a large city. With the focus of their picture reporting, the illustrated journals reflected and strengthened the massive shifts in the way of living which were taking

place at a dizzying speed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and presented them to a mass audience. Thematically, this is extremely different from the “picturesque” style of photography, with its romantic view of life in the country and small towns – claiming to be artistic – which characterized the photographic exhibitions and trade journals that started to appear at the time. This “artistic” aspect means that we know much more about them than popular illustrated journals. Has photographic history ever registered that, at the same time as these picturesque “pictures of transition” (Enno Kaufhold)⁴³, something completely different was developing in the form of a great number of contemporary, sometimes even socio-critical, reportages and other press pictures?

In addition, the question of whether the popular press served as a “role model” for the urban behavioural patterns and lifestyle it presented its public with, week after week, in pictures should be the subject of urgent research – and here, the higher the circulation, the greater the need. Whether it is the most advanced holiday activities, such as American “camping” complete with the automobile (fig. 3), which the *Zeit im Bild* presented to its readers on its cover in summer 1908, young women courageously making their way in their careers and spare time, and all kinds of sports – just documenting these new styles of life photographically, possibly had the function of popularizing them or increasing their acceptance and adoption. Even if it was only for a limited period, the early illustrated magazines were, therefore, more than simply an image of the time. They were that public communication space which provided the masses with **training in being modern** better than any private model. Seen from this viewpoint, the photography in the early illustrated press was “modern photography” in a completely different sense than described at the beginning of this essay. In addition: neglecting the typographic surroundings, which appear so conservative and old-fashioned to us today, pictures even appeared before 1914 which anticipate certain perspectives of “new vision” – they are stylistically “modern” as some of the examples given here show. They were possibly pictures that were originally conceived as photographic “jokes” (fig. 1). And, some of the photographers went so far that they not only showed pictures of the big city but also dealt with attitudes which could only develop in modern metropolises. When *Die Woche* illustrated its article “A Bird’s-eye View of Berlin” with aerial photography, which was becoming increasingly popular at the time, as well as the extreme shot of Königstrasse (today, Rathausstrasse) from the tower of the Berlin Town Hall (a photo by the, much too-neglected, Haeckel Brothers) (fig. 5)⁴⁴, we can already feel a trace of what Moholy-Nagy did not elevate to the programme for modern photography until years thereafter.

fig. 5 Haeckel Brothers, *Königsstraße from Berlin Town Hall*, printed in *Die Woche*, vol. 10, no. 38, 19 September 1908, 1661.



- 1 The best depiction of the technical aspects is still Josef Maria Eder, *Geschichte der Photographie*, Second Half, Halle/S: 1932, 611 (*Ausführliches Handbuch der Photographie*, Erster Band, erster Teil), 897–927; cf. also Helmut Gernsheim, *Geschichte der Photographie. Die ersten hundert Jahre*, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Vienna 1983, 641f (*Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, Sonderband III).
- 2 This is the title of the recently published collection of essays by Herbert Molderings, 'Die Geburt der modernen Fotografie' in: idem, *Die Moderne der Fotografie*, Hamburg 2008.
- 3 Molderings, 2008 (note 2) 15. The text is an extended version of a lecture delivered in summer 2003.
- 4 When dealing with Alvin Langdon Coburn, Molderings paid particular attention to Coburn's 'The Octopus', created in New York in 1912, illustrated in Karl Steinorth (ed.), *Alvin Langdon Coburn. Fotografien 1900–1924*, Zurich, New York 1998, 105. 'The Octopus' appears to anticipate one of Moholy-Nagy's legendary Berlin Radio Tower pictures from 1928; see the illustration in Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy. Fotos und Fotogramme*, Munich 1978, plate 40.
- 5 Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei Fotografie Film (Bauhausbücher 8)*, 2nd revised edition, Munich 1927, 31. Incidentally, 17 of the 100 illustrations in the 2nd edition of the book came from illustrated papers and magazines from the mid-1920s, cf., *ibid.* 137–139.
- 6 Tim N. Gidal, *Deutschland – Beginn des modernen Photojournalismus*, Lucerne, Frankfurt/M. 1972, 5, 14f, 26.
- 7 Rune Hassner, *Bilder für miljöner*, Stockholm 1977.
- 8 Bernd Lohse, 'Scharfschütze mit der Kamera' in: Christian Brandstätter (ed.), *Lothar Rübelt. Sport, die wichtigste Nebensache der Welt*, Vienna, et al. 1980, 10.
- 9 Bernd Weise, 'Pressefotografie 1–v' in: *Fotogeschichte*, vol. 9, 1989, no. 31 and 33; vol. 10, 1990, no. 37; vol. 14, 1994, no. 52; vol. 16, 1996, no. 59.
- 10 Cf. the illustrations in the catalogue of the exhibition: Bernd Weise (ed.), *Fotografie in deutschen Zeitschriften 1883–1923*, Stuttgart: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen 1991, especially those on pages 52–61, 74–76.
- 11 Tim Gidal, *Chronisten des Lebens. Die moderne Fotoreportage*, Berlin 1993, 9f, 23.
- 12 It was up to the curators of a 1996 exhibition in Hamburg who wanted to provide "a comprehensive panorama of photo journalism", to rescind these approaches towards differentiation. The catalogue's foreword states that photo journalism is "as we all, know a child of the 1920s" and the earliest picture displayed was from 1928. (Arbeitskreis Photographie Hamburg (ed.), *Das deutsche Auge. 33 Photographen und ihre Reportagen. 33 Blicke auf unser Jahrhundert*, Munich 1996, 6, 114.) A competent critic used the opportunity to complain about the "neglect of photo history:" "The early history of photography still lies in darkness, suppressed by the myth that modern photojournalism began in the 1920s" (Timm Starl, 'Mutmaßungen über das deutsche Auge. Pressefotografie in Deutschland. Eine Ausstellung in den Hamburger Deichtorhallen' in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18 July 1996).
- 13 Bodo von Dewitz (ed.), *Kiosk. Eine Geschichte der Fotoreportage 1839–1973*. (A History of Photojournalism), Göttingen 2001.
- 14 *Die Woche*, No. 10, 20 May, Berlin 1899.
- 15 *Die Woche*, No. 17, 8 July, Berlin 1899.
- 16 Bodo von Dewitz, 2001 (note 13) 63, 79, 84.
- 17 See Weise, 1991 (note 10).
- 18 Bodo von Dewitz, 2001 (note 13) 73, 88.
- 19 Unfortunately, no catalogue was published for the exhibition on the history of the illustrated magazine *vu*, founded in Paris by Lucien Vogel in 1928, shown in the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris in 2006 within the framework of the "Mois de la Photo".
- 20 Dirk Halfbrodt and Ulrich Pohlmann (eds.), *Philipp Kester – Fotojournalist, New York Berlin München 1903–1935*, Berlin 2003, 7. The monographic exhibitions on James Abbe (Cologne 2004), Wolfgang Weber (Essen 2004),

Willy Römer (Berlin 2004), Martin Munkacsi (Hamburg 2005) and Chargesheimer (Cologne 2007) should also be mentioned here.

- 21 This is the subtitle of an essay by Enno Kaufhold, 'Philipp Kester fotografiert in Berlin 1905–1910' in: Halfbrodt, Pohlmann, 2003 (note 20) 210–217.
A particularly splendid overview is given in the contribution by Dirk Halfbrodt, 'Philipp Kester – Bildjournalist. Fotografien und Reportagen 1903–1935' in: Halfbrodt, Pohlmann, 2003 (note 20) 8–77.
- 22 Halfbrodt, Pohlmann, 2003 (note 20) 8, 10.
- 23 Bernd Weise, 'Zur Entwicklung der Pressefotografie' in: *Fotografie in deutschen Zeitschriften* (note 10), 32–36.
Similar conclusions were recently reached by Anton Holzer, 'Nachrichten und Sensationen. Pressefotografie in Deutschland und Österreich 1890 bis 1933. Ein Literaturüberblick' in: *Fotogeschichte. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie*, vol. 28, (2008), no. 107, 61–67, here 64.
- 24 Bernd Weise, 1991 (note 10) 4.
- 25 Anton Holzer, 2008 (note 23) 64.
- 26 Neither *Facsimile Querschnitt durch die Berliner Illustrierte*, Munich, Bern, Vienna 1965, edited by Friedrich Luft nor the anthology collected and edited by Christian Ferber, *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung. Zeitbild, Chronik, Moritat für jedermann 1892–1945*, Berlin 1982, could, or wanted to, satisfy these requirements. However, Luft's foreword does contain some important, even though partially incorrect, information; and, in contrast, the Facsimile Querschnitt at least respects the original layout of the magazine.
- 27 Cf. the information under Bernd Weise, 1991 (note 10) 20–23.
- 28 Bernd Weise, 1991 (note 10) 16.
- 29 Information from Hermann Dupont, 'Zehn Jahre "Illustrierte". Ein Rückblick' in: *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, vol. 10, no. 50, 15 December 1901, 787.
- 30 Information from Kurt Korff, 'Die Berliner Illustrierte' in: *50 Jahre Ullstein 1877–1927*, Berlin: 1927, 279–302, here 301.
- 31 Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*, 1st edition 1956.
Cited after the 2nd edition, Urbana 1964, 3f.
- 32 Peterson, 1964 (note 31) 6f.
- 33 Peterson, 1964 (note 31) 13.
- 34 Peterson, 1964 (note 31) 15.
- 35 Peterson, 1964 (note 31) 16.
- 36 The best overview of industrialization in Berlin and surroundings is still provided by Eberhard Schmieder, 'Wirtschaft und Bevölkerung' in: Hans Herzfeld (ed.), *Berlin und die Provinz Brandenburg im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1968 (Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, vol. 25), 309–421, especially 351–389, data on the number of inhabitants on 415.
- 37 The report on the recently-completed construction of the Reichstag Building is one example of this in: *BIZ*, vol. 3, no. 45, 11 November 1894.
- 38 Published in: *BIZ*, vol. 5, no. 12, 22 March 1896, 11.
- 39 Published in: *BIZ*, vol. 5, no. 21, 24 May 1896, 15.
- 40 Albert Zander, 'Ein Fabrikbrand', *BIZ*, vol. 4, no. 21, 26 May 1895, 3f.
- 41 'Aus dem alten Berlin', *BIZ*, vol. 6, no. 47, 21 November 1897, 1f.
- 42 The mentioned reports appeared in *Die Zeit im Bild*, vol. 3, no. 29, 1028f; no. 38, 1355f; no. 45, 1602f; no. 48, 1718f; no. 51, 1818f.
- 43 Enno Kaufhold, *Bilder des Übergangs. Zur Mediengeschichte von Fotografie und Malerei in Deutschland um 1900*, Marburg 1986.
- 44 The photo was printed in *Die Woche*, vol. 10, no. 38, 19 September 1908, 1661.

Andreas Spiegl

44

Votography (2)¹
Telephoning with the Eyes

In contrast to photography, the phonetically similar concept of *votography* refers to a photographic approach in which the act of taking a picture appears to be more important than the resulting pictures. In this sense, *votography* represents a kind of photography in which the pictures become no more than documents of a symbolic gesture of capturing a moment of reality in a medial reality: One picks up a camera, releases the shutter, observes the picture which appears for a few seconds on the display and then forgets it. Whether it is stored in the memory of the camera or mobile phone is only of secondary importance. In *votography*, the pictures are usually deleted in order to create space for new ones. Correspondingly, the archive merely takes on a short or medium-term perspective. This results in a radical change in the way photography is perceived when its medial qualities no longer develop out of the picture but from the relationship to reality translated into a medial form. That which appears to be photogenic in reality is not its suitability for being converted into a picture but solely its amalgamation with the medial. In this regard, taking a picture is not concerned with the picture itself but with the mediality evoked by this.

The sound which verifies the act of taking a picture is symptomatic: in the case of analog cameras this was the mechanical click made by the opening and closing of the shutter, but digital cameras have a great variety of acoustic signals which only provide an audible confirmation of the act – they are no longer necessary: dealing with technology has developed into dealing with the aestheticization of technology which, here, is simulated acoustically. The metamorphosis of photography into its phonetic doubleganger *votography* also finds its equivalent here. Only the gesture of photographing – the act of introducing a medium between the eye and reality: an interface between the subject and environment – remains visual and declares this meeting between the subject and environment as medial communication. Photographing is the essential aspect; what remains – even it is a picture – is only of an incidental nature.

When one observes the omnipresence of photography – whether in the form of the photo camera or as an extra function on a mobile telephone – the question about the shot appears to

be merely a question of time. Photography does not take place when a picture of reality appears to be photogenic but when a subject feels the desire to transform the moment into a medium. In this respect, photography emancipates itself from the picture and declares itself the reason for a symbolic gesture. The subject of the photograph is not something intended to be captured in a picture and archived, but the point in time striving for the mediality of the moment. The same applies to making a call with a mobile telephone. This is frequently preceded by a momentary desire to telephone; that which is intended to be communicated only takes form during the conversation – even if only the response to a feeling is transmitted: “I only wanted to ask how you are”, or “I only wanted to know where you are right now”, etc. In a similar vein, Slavoj Žižek described this psychoanalytically relevant process exceedingly lucidly: “The object (that’s it) is formed by searching for it. ... The paradox is that the process of searching creates the object searched for that is, simultaneously, its *reason*.”² Applied to *votography*, this means that picking up the camera is preceded by a fundamental desire to perform the act of photography. The subsequent pictures merely confirm “an object that, in a certain sense, is postulated by desire. The paradox of this desire is *that it retroactively postulates its own reason*.”³ In *votography*, the reason for taking a picture is not the motif that then appears in it, but the desire for the act of photographing which, only then, generates the motif. In this respect, the votographic picture is only seeking mediality and always finds a motif for this – independent of whether this was ever searched for. Whatever then appears in the picture, or as the picture, is not the reason for this but its product – in a way, a form of post-production which leads to the pictures being, once again, linked to the photographic discourses questioning the quality of the pictures and their authorship.

Although there is a medial and technical relationship to photographs, it is important to make a clear differentiation between photography and *votography*. The difference between them is the desire which precedes the pictures and emphasizes their importance. To the same extent as the one has a picture as its goal, the other aims at the mere evocation of the medial. The transformation of a moment into a condition of mediality implies the creation of distance.

The votographic interface metamorphoses whatever was perceived as reality into a mechanistic reality. Under the conditions of the mechanistic, reality appears to be medial. In historic media and communications theory, one could assume that a transmitter and receiver were located at either end of the medial; however, in *votography*, we are dealing with the amalgamation and synchronization of both: sender and receiver, producer and recipient become identical in the figure of the votographer. This double role is preserved phantasmatically. In his description of the crystal picture, Gilles Deleuze reverts back to Henry Bergson: “Our present existence, depending on how it develops over time, doubles its virtual existence through a mirror image. Each moment of our lives, therefore, demonstrates these two aspects: it is both real and virtual – on the one hand, perception and, on the other, recollection ... Those who are aware of the incessant doubling of their present in perception and recollection ... can compare themselves with an actor who automatically plays a role and who hears and sees his performance at the same time.”⁴ It is similar with *votography*, in which the virtual and real exist alongside each other: the votographer plays a role but, simultaneously, hears and sees himself doing so. Deleuze: “The real and virtual, which permanently interchange with each other, are different but indistinguishable.”⁵ The decisive aspect of *votography* remains that it is bound less by the picture than the moment which *votography* then transforms into a virtual and real, a medial and real, an ambivalent, double existence. It appears paradoxical that, in this way, the photographic picture takes second place to the reality and presence of the medial and only confirms that this medial moment exists. The attempts made in popular-culture and art to photograph oneself or others while photographing – going as far as producing a picture that shows a subject in a medial condition: both in front of and behind the camera – is symptomatic for this visualization of the medial.

If, in a manner of speaking, the desire of *votography* lies in doubling the subject into a virtual and real one, thereby translating the reality of the subject synchronously into an imaginary medial existence, this desire has its roots in experiences and notions which were once associated with photography – those concerning documentation and reproducibility. Both sketch a relationship to relentlessly vanishing time that can only be captured by photography. The documentary aspect of photography is aimed at the archive which can be turned to when the author and the motif are long things of the past whereas, in *votography*, the documentary

aspects tend towards the mediality of the present which, here, is evoked and confirmed as being medial by the picture. In this regard, the immediacy of the picture suddenly changes into the immediacy of the present. And, the picture is no longer reproducible but only the act of capturing the present which is literally, and always afresh, recorded in mediality. What remains is the impression of the possibility of repeating a medial effect – independent of how greatly the corresponding picture or motif changes.

Seen from this perspective, *votography* nourishes itself from the temporal incongruence between the photographic picture and the transience of time. The same as a photographic picture, *votography* evokes a kind of time machine. However, different from photography, this time machine is not interested in travelling into the past but solely in a visualization of time under the conditions of mediality – a distance to the here and now in the here and now, or, if you like, a form of synchronization of the present with the medial. This is evidenced by the development of the display which shows the just-taken picture – automatically and for the briefest time possible – as a minimally delayed mirror image of photographing itself. That which was real immediately before, now appears medial. However, the coordinates of the medial provide the stimulus for the picture. This confirms, after pressing the button, that the process of the translation into the medial has already taken place. Looking at these identity creating effects, one could be reminded of Oscar Wilde's *Portrait of Dorian Gray*: In Wilde's work, Dorian Gray's phantasmatic fixation on delegating the changes and experiences in his life to his portrait and, thereby, remaining unchanged himself, are at the heart of the matter whereas, in *votography*, the pictures change in order to make the unchangeability and reproducibility of the medial possible. It might appear paradoxical that precisely the difference between the pictures confirms that the act of taking a picture – the mechanism of translating into the medial – remains unchanged: The difference between the pictures documents the indifference of the shot to these. Earlier, it was intended that pictures not change over time, now pictures are meant to change and disappear in order to capture the constant factor of the presence of the medial. This desire for mediality needs to be reconfirmed anew, that is why new pictures, whose horizon lies in being replaced by the next ones, are always taken. *Votography* – therefore, as a kind of photographic performance which favours the act of the transformation into the medial over the final pictures – is what remains of photography.

¹ This text is based on ideas that I sketched in my contribution to the publication *Monat der Fotografie* (2006):

Andreas Spiegl, 'Votografie' in: Vladimir and Estragon (eds.), *Monat der Fotografie*, Vienna 2006, 10f.

² Slavoj Žižek, *Liebe Dein Symptom wie Dich selbst! Jacques Lacans Psychoanalyse und die Medien*, Berlin 1991, 85.

³ Slavoj Žižek, *Mehr-Genießen. Lacan in der Populärkultur*. WO ES WAR I; Vienna 1992, 21.

⁴ Henry Bergson, *L'énergie spirituelle*, Paris 1919, 917f, cited after: Gilles Deleuze, *Das Zeit-Bild, Kino 2*, Frankfurt am Main 1997, 109.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, 1997 (note 4) 98.

Chronology

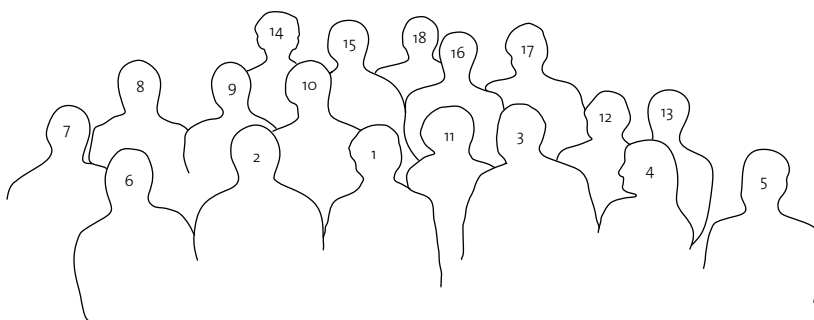
1977

First Meeting at Sterckshof Museum in Deurne near Antwerp (B)

on 15 and 16 December 1977 to form an *European Society for the History of Photography*.

Photo: Jacques Souck

- 1 **Margaret Harker**, *Royal Photographic Society*, London (UK)
- 2 **Petrus Thys**, *Permanet Deputy & Representative* of the Provincial Government of Antwerp (B)
- 3 **André Jammes**, Collector, *Société française de photographie (SFP)*, Paris (F)
- 4 **Ingeborg Th. Leijerzapf**, Curator, *Prentencabinet van de Rijksuniversiteit van Leiden* (NL)
- 5 **Rolf H. Krauss**, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie*, Cologne (G)
- 6 **Suzette Henrion**, *Representative of The Ministry of Culture* (B)
- 7 **Rune Hassner**, Photographer, Stockholm (SE)
- 8 **Roger Coenen**, Curator of the Film and Photo Section of the *Sterckshof Museum*, Antwerp (B)
- 9 **Jan Walgrave**, Head Keeper, *Sterckshof Museum*, Antwerp (B)
- 10 **Colin Ford**, Curator, *National Portrait Gallery*, London (UK)
- 11 unknown
- 12 **Hans Frank**, Head, *Photogeschichtliche Sammlung Frank*, Marmorschlößl Bad Ischl (A)
- 13 **Bernard Marbot**, Head, *Département des Estampes et de la photographie, Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris (F)
- 14 **Marcel Gruyaert**, Member of the *Sterckshof Working Party Foto and Film* (B)
- 15 **Karel Sano**, Member of the *Sterckshof Working Party* (B)
- 16 **Laurent Roosens**, Member of the Board of the *Sterckshof Museum* and member of the *Sterckshof Working Party Foto and Film* (B)
- 17 **Karel van Deuren**, Member of the *Sterckshof Working Party Foto and Film* (B)
- 18 **Alex Charlier**, Member of the *Sterckshof Working Party Foto and Film* (B)





The History of the ESHPh

The founding of the *European Society for the History of Photography* took place at the first General Assembly on 19 November 1978 in Leverkusen (Germany). From 1978 till 1989 its headquarters were in Antwerp, thereafter in Croydon / Sussex (United Kingdom).

In 2001, the Society's office moved to Vienna (Austria) and was entered into the Austrian Register of Societies on 3 March 2004. The first General Assembly, at which the new board was elected, was held on 8 June 2004.

The *ESHPh* was founded with the aim to research the historical development of photography from its origins up to the present and integrate that in a worldwide context. Being open to all interested in photography, whatever their nationality, the Society includes historians, photo historians, photographers, philosophers, sociologists, ethnologists, academics, curators and private collectors. Many important institutions from Europe and overseas belong to the *ESHPh* which supports both the recognition of the history of photography as an academic discipline and the establishment of chairs in the discipline at European universities.

On 15 and 16 December 1977, an initial meeting took place at the *Sterckshof Museum* in Deurne near Antwerp (Belgium) to form a *European Society of Photography*. Laurent Roosens was the initiator of this meeting. The following personalities participated:

Roger Coenen, Curator of the Film and Photo Section
of the *Sterckshof Museum*, Antwerp (B)
Hans Frank, *Photogeschichtliche Sammlung Frank*, Bad Ischl (A)
Colin Ford, *National Portrait Gallery*, London (UK)
Margaret Harker, *Royal Photographic Society*, London (UK)
Rune Hassner, Photographer, Stockholm (SE)
Klaus Op ten Höfel, *Agfa-Historama* at *Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Museum Ludwig*, Cologne (G)
André Jammes, Collector of photographs & rare books, Paris (F)
Rolf H. Krauss, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie*
(Head of the Historical Section), Cologne (G)
Ingeborg Leijerzapf, *Prentencabinet van de Rijksuniversiteit*, Leiden (NL)
Bernard Marbot, Conservateur photographie ancienne,
Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (F)
Laurent Roosen, Head of the Scientific Documentation and
Information of *Agfa-Gaevert N.V.* Mortsel/Antwerp (B)

The Board of the ESHPh 1978–2008

Honorary Members of the ESHPh

John Buck, Head, *The Francis Frith Collection*, London (UK)
Colin Ford, Head, *National Museum of Photography,
Film & Television*, Bradford (UK)
Helmut Gernsheim, Photo historian, Lugano-Castagnola (CH)
Rune Hassner, Photographer, Stockholm (SE)
Laurent Roosens, Head, Scientific Documentation and Information of
Agfa-Gaevert N.V. Mortsel / Antwerp (B)
Larry J. Schaaf, Photo historian, Baltimore (USA)

1978–1982

Laurent Roosens, President of the *ESHPh*, Mortsel / Antwerp (B)
Margaret Harker, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Egdean (UK)
Roger Coenen, Secretary General of the *ESHPh*,
Provinciaal Museum voor Fotografie, Antwerp (B)
Colin Ford, *National Portrait Gallery*, London (UK)
Rune Hassner, Photographer, Stockholm (SE)
Klaus Op ten Höfel, *Agfa-Historama* at *Wallraf-Richartz Museum*,
Museum Ludwig, Cologne (G)
Ingeborg Leijerzapf, *Prentenkabinet van de Rijksuniversiteit*, Leiden (NL)
Bernard Marbot, Conservateur photographie ancienne,
Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (F)

1982–1986

Laurent Roosens, President of the *ESHPh*, Mortsel / Antwerp (B)
Margaret Harker, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Egdean (UK)
Roger Coenen, Secretary General of the *ESHPh*,
Provinciaal Museum voor Fotografie, Antwerp (B)
Karel van Deuren, Editor of *photohistorica*, Antwerp (B)
Colin Ford, Head, *National Museum of Photography,
Film & Television*, Bradford (UK)
Rune Hassner, photographer, Stockholm (SE)
Klaus Op ten Höfel, *Agfa-Historama* at *Wallraf-Richartz Museum*,
Museum Ludwig, Cologne (G)
Paul Jay, Head, *Musée Nicéphore Niépce*, Chalon-sur-Saône (F)
Ingeborg Leijerzapf, *Prentenkabinet van de Rijksuniversiteit*, Leiden (NL)
Bernard Marbot, Conservateur photographie ancienne, *Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris (F)
Peter Weiermair, Head, *Frankfurter Kunstverein*, Frankfurt (G)

1986–1989

Margaret Harker Farrand, President of the *ESHPh*, Egdean (UK)
Rune Hassner, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Stockholm (SE)
Roger Coenen, Secretary General of the *ESHPh*,
Provinciaal Museum voor Fotografie, Antwerp (B)
Anna Auer, *Collection Fotografis Länderbank*, Vienna (A)
Robert Delpire, Head, *Centre National de la Photographie*, Paris (F)
Colin Ford, Head, *National Museum of Photography*,
Film & Television, Bradford (UK)
Ritva Keski-Korhonen, *Suomen valokuvateiteen museon säätiö*, Helsinki (FIN)
Ingeborg Leijerzapf, *Prentenkabinet van de Rijksuniversiteit*, Leiden (NL)
Laurent Roosens, Head of Scientific Documentation at *Agfa-Gaevert N.V.*
Mortsel / Antwerp (B)
Karl Steinorth, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie*, Cologne (G)
Peter Weiermair, Head, *Frankfurter Kunstverein*, Frankfurt (G)

1989–1993

Margaret Harker Farrand, President of the *ESHPh*, Croydon / Surrey (UK)
Rune Hassner, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Stockholm (SE)
Roy Green, Administrator of the *ESHPh*, Croydon / Surrey (UK)
Roger Coenen, *Provinciaal Museum voor Fotografie*, Antwerp (B)
Jean Dieuzaide, Head, *Galerie Municipale du Chateau d'Eau*, Toulouse (F)
Colin Ford, Head, *Museum of Wales*, Cardiff (UK)
Claude-Henri Fourney, Head, *Musée suisse d'appareil photographique*, Vevey (CH)
Ingeborg Leijerzapf, *Prentenkabinet at Rijksuniversiteit*, Leiden (NL)
Laurent Roosens, Head, Scientific Documentation and Information of
Agfa-Gaevert N.V. Mortsel / Antwerp (B)
Karl Steinorth, Executive Committee, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie*,
Cologne (G)
Ritva Tähtinen, Head, *The Photographic Museum of Finland*, Helsinki (FIN)
Peter Weiermair, Head, *Frankfurter Kunstverein*, Frankfurt (G)

1993–1997

Margaret Harker Farrand, President of the *ESHPh*, Croydon / Surrey (UK)

Karl Steinorth, 1st Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, President of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie* (from 1996), Cologne (G)

Roger Erlandsen, 2nd Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Head, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)

Roy Green, Administrator of the *ESHPh*, Croydon / Surrey (UK)

Peter J. Agius, *Thickets*, Oxford (UK)

Alistair Crawford, Head, Department of Visual Art, *The University of Wales*, Aberystwyth (UK)

Miguel Galmes, Head, *Institut d'Edudis Fotografics de Catalunya*, Barcelona (E)

Pamela Glasson Roberts, curator of the *RPS Museum*, Bath (UK)

Ritva Tähtinen, Head, *The Photographic Museum of Finland*, Helsinki (FIN)

Roger Taylor, Curator, *The National Museum of Photography, Film & Television*, Bradford (UK)

Georges Vercheval, Head, *Musée de la Photographie*, Charleroi (B)

1997–2001

Margaret Harker Farrand, President of the *ESHPh*, Croydon / Surrey (UK)

Karl Steinorth, 1st Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, President of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie*, Cologne (G)

Roger Erlandsen, 2nd Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Head, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)

David Faddy, Secretary General of the *ESHPh* (since 2000), *The University of Westminster*, London (UK)

Peter J. Agius, *Thickets*, Oxford (UK)

Alistair Crawford, Head, Department of Visual Art, *The University of Wales*, Aberystwyth (UK)

Miguel Galmes, Head, *Institut d'Edudis Fotografics de Catalunya*, Barcelona (E)

Pamela Glasson Roberts, curator of the *RPS Museum*, Bath (UK)

Ritva Tähtinen, Head, *The Photographic Museum of Finland*, Helsinki (FIN)

Roger Taylor, Curator, *The National Museum of Photography, Film & Television*, Bradford (UK)

Georges Vercheval, Head, *Musée de la Photographie*, Charleroi (B)

2001–2003 (Provisory Committee)

Anna Auer, President of the *ESHPh*, Vienna (A)

Johan Swinnen, 1st Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Antwerp / Brussels (B)

Roger Erlandsen, 2nd Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Head, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)

Eva Dahlman, Secretary General of the *ESHPh*, Stockholm (SE)

Hans Christian Adam, Göttingen (G)

Allan D. Coleman, New York (USA)

Miguel Galmes, Barcelona (E)

Helmut Kleinsteuber, Hatten (G)

2004–2008

Anna Auer, President of the *ESHPh*, Vienna (A)

Uwe Schögl, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Assistant Director and Senior Curator of Photography at the Picture Archive of the *Austrian National Library*, Vienna (A)

Christine Bruck, Exhibition manager, Vienna / A (2007)

Gabriele Hofer, Art historian, Linz / A (2007)

Hannelore Huber, Historian, Vienna / A (–2005)

Othmar Kerchler, Former banker, Vienna / A (2007)

Monika Obermeier, Curator, *WestLicht Museum for Photography*, Vienna / A (–2007)

Peter Prokop, Economist, Vienna (A)

Fritz Simak, Photographer, art historian, Vienna / A (–2005)

Ivo Stanek, Bank director, Vienna / A (–2006)

Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, Curator, *WestLicht Museum for Photography*, Vienna (A)

Advisory Board 2004–2008

Hans Christian Adam, Picture researcher – photo-consultant, Göttingen (G)

Vladimir Birgus, Faculty of Photography, Film & Television, *Academy of Performing Arts*, Prague (CZ)

Allan D. Coleman, Photography critic, New York (USA)

Alistair Crawford, Artist and writer, Aberystwyth (UK)

Zoltán Fejér, Photo historian, Budapest (H)

Activities of the ESHPh 1978–2008

Photohistorica

In the editorial of the 1st issue on May 1978, Laurent Roosens wrote: “With the increasing interest in the history of photography and the growing complexity of its interpretation, the demand was constantly growing in Europe to co-ordinate the efforts and to create an organization allowing its members to exchange information and acquaint themselves with the problems and the progress of their international colleagues”. This comprehensive compilation (58 issues) about international photographic literature was the most progressive at that time.

1978–1988 These issues were published by *Sterckshof Museum*, Deurne / Antwerp. Editor: Karl van Deuren.

1988 A Literature Index of *photohistorica* issues nos. 1–31 was compiled by Luc Salu and published by *ESHPh* at the *Provinciaal Museum voor Fotografie* Antwerp (B). Editor: Karl van Deuren.

1989–1990 These issues were published by the *Provinciaal Museum voor Fotografie* Antwerp (B). Editor: Karl van Deuren.

1991–1992 These issues were published by the *Provinciaal Museum voor Fotografie* Antwerp (B). Editor: Laurent Roosens.

1993 The issue no. 54/55 was published by *ESHPh, Acorn House*, Croydon / Surrey (UK). Compiler and Editor: R. Derek Wood (UK).

1994 The issue no. 56/57 was published by *ESHPh, Acorn House*, Croydon / Surrey (UK). Compiler and Editor: R. Derek Wood (UK).

1994 A Literature Index of *photohistorica* issues nos. 1–53 was compiled by Luc Salu and published by the *ESHPh*, Croydon / Sussex (UK). Editor: Laurent Roosens. Editorial assistance: René Van Welde.

1997 A Literature Index of *photographica* no. 58 was published by *ESHPh*, Croydon / Sussex and published. Compiled and Edited: Audrey Linkman, Manchester (UK).

All these issues can be seen at the Austrian National Library in Vienna (A).

Photoresearcher

The Society's journal, founded in 1990, is dedicated to the research of the history of photography. The contributing authors are internationally recognized experts. Many papers represent the first related publication as a result of a longstanding research activity. It appears once per annum (40 pages).

Nos. 1–4 (1990–1992)

Editorial Board: Margaret Harker Farrand, Roy Green, Anthony Hamber, Sidney F. Ray (UK).

No. 5 (1993)

Editorial: Margaret Harker Farrand, Roy Green (UK).

No. 6 (1994–1996)

Editorial: Alistair Crawford, *University of Wales*, School of Arts, Aberyswyth (UK).

Nos. 7–11 (2004–2008)

Co-Editors: Anna Auer, Vienna (A), Alistair Crawford, Aberyswyth (UK).

All issues can be seen at the Austrian National Library in Vienna.

They can also be downloaded from our website.

The International Letter

This electronic letter represents the voice of our Society and has appeared twice a year since 2002. It deals with the activities of our members and also includes other interesting photographic information; *e.g.* on exhibitions and symposia. Occasionally, some of these papers are published in French or German. (18 pages). These issues are compiled and produced by Anna Auer and co-edited with Alistair Crawford. Since 2007 the *letter* has been distributed via email to our members and can be downloaded from our website.

Symposia

1981 Bath (9–12 April)

1982 Brussels (5 June)

1985 Bradford (11–14 April)

1988 Antwerp (23–25 September)

1989 Vevey (29 June – 2 July)

1989 Gothenburg (28 September – 1 October)

1991 Toulouse (27–29 June)

1992 London (30 May)

1992 Edinburgh (24–26 September)

1993 Vilanova / Barcelona (28–30 June)

1994 Oslo (25–28 August)

1996 Charleroi (25–28 April)

1997 Brussels (18 April)

1997 Helsinki (9–12 October)

1998 Antwerp (10 January)

1999 Udine (5–8 May)

2000 Bradford (16–17 June)

2001 Vienna (20–22 June)

2002 Maastricht (11–13 November)

2003 Mannheim (12 October)

2004 Stockholm (9–10 September)

2008 Vienna (6–8 November)

1985



ESHPh – Symposium, 11–14 April 1985, Bradford (UK)

Photo: Jan Coppens (from left to right)

Mark van Gysegem, Head, *The Academie Wetteren*, Gent (B)

Georges Vercheval, Head, *The Musée de la Photographie*, Charleroi (B)

Roger Coenen, Secretary General of ESHPh, Antwerp (B)

Johan M. Swinnen, *Higher Institute for Fine Arts-Flandres*, Antwerp (B)

Laurent Roosens, First President of the ESHPh, Mortsels / Antwerp (B)

Pierre Cordier, Artist / photographer, Brussels (B)

Pool Andries, Antwerp (B)

1989



ESHPh Symposium from 29 June – 2 July 1989, Vevey (CH)

Photo: Hannelore Huber (from left to right)

Urs Tillmann, Zuerich (CH)

Allan Porter, Luzern (CH)

Karl Steinorth, Stuttgart (G)

Helmut Gernsheim, Lugano/Castagnola (CH)

Ritva Keski-Korhonen, Helsinki (FIN)

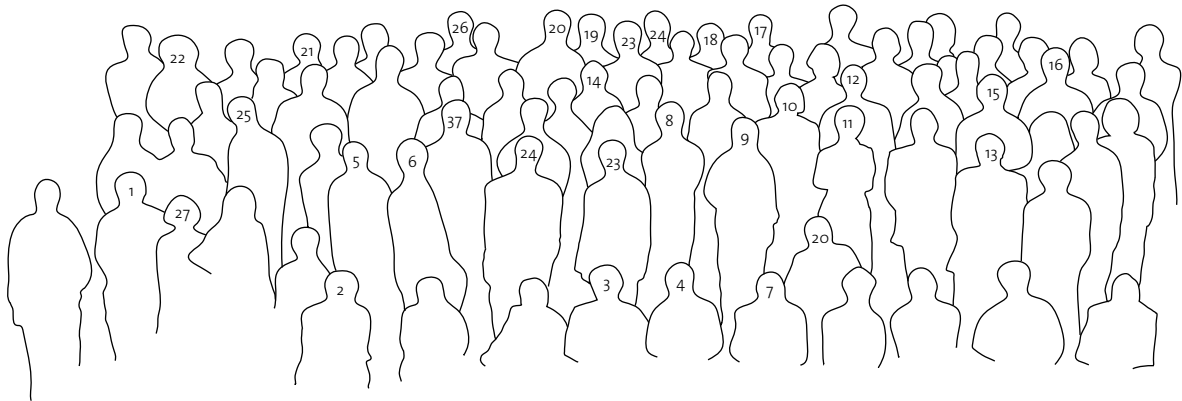


ESHPh Symposium from 29 June – 2 July 1989, Vevey (CH)
Helmut Gernsheim taking a photograph out of the window.
Photo: Hannelore Huber



ESHPh Symposium from 29 June – 2 July 1989, Vevey (CH)
(from left to right)

- Uwe Scheid**, Saarbrücken (G)
- Roger Kockaert**, Brussels (B)
- Anna Auer**, Vienna (A)
- Hannelore Huber**, Vienna (A)





ESHPh Symposium from 29 June – 2 July 1989, Vevey (CH)

150 Years Jubilee of the Invention of Photography

- 1 **Roger Kockaerst**, Photographic conservator, Brussels (B)
- 2 **Claude-Henry Forney**, Head, *Musée suisse de l'appareil photographique*, Vevey (CH)
- 3 **Michel Auer**, Collector of photographs & cameras, President of the *Centre de la Photographie*, Genève (CH)
- 4 **Irwin Dermer**, Photographer, artist, Meilen (CH)
- 5 **Hannelore Huber**, Exhibition manager, Technical Museum, Vienna (A)
- 6 **Ritva Keski-Korhonen**, Head, *The Finnish Museum of Photography*, Helsinki (FIN)
- 7 **Johan de Zoete**, Photo & printing historian, Utrecht (NL)
- 8 **Georges Vercheval**, Head, *Musée de la Photographie*, Charleroi (B)
- 9 **Anna Auer**, Board of the Photographic Society in Vienna (A)
- 10 **Helmut Gernsheim**, Photo historian, Lugano-Castagnola (CH)
- 11 **Miriam Roosens**, Mortsel / Antwerp (B)
- 12 **Laurent Roosens**, First President of the *ESHPh*, Mortsel / Antwerp (B)
- 13 **Robert Lassam**, Curator, *Fox Talbot Museum*, Lackock Abbey (UK)
- 14 **Peter Schicht**, Photographer, Berlin (G)
- 15 **José Manual Torres**, Barcelona (E)
- 16 **Miguel Galmes**, Head, *Institut d'Estudis Fotogràfics de Catalunya*, Barcelona (E)
- 17 **Allan Porter**, former Editor-in-chief of *Camera*, Luzern (CH)
- 18 **Alistair Crawford**, Head, Dep. of Visual Art, *University of Wales*, Aberystwyth (UK)
- 19 **Karl Steinorth**, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Stuttgart (G)
- 20 **Uwe Scheid**, Collector of photographs & cameras, Saarbrücken (G)
- 21 **Jean-Louis Marignier**, Scientist researcher, *National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)*, Paris (F)
- 22 **Paul Jay**, Head, *Musée Niépce*, Chalon-sur-Saône (F)
- 23 **Urs Tilmman**, Editor-in-chief of *Photographie*, Zuerich (CH)
- 24 **Roger Erlandsen**, Head, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)
- 25 **André Fage**, Conservator-in-chief, *Musée français de la photographie*, Bièvres (F)
- 26 **Roger Coenen**, Secretary General of the *ESHPh*, Antwerp (B)
- 27 **Angela Moor**, Photographic conservator, London (UK)

1991



1994

ESHPh Symposium from 27–29 June 1991, Toulouse (F)

Among others, following persons can be seen on this picture:

Margaret Harker Farrand, President of the *ESHPh*, Croydon/Surrey (UK)

Karl Steinorth, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Stuttgart (G)

Laurent Roosens, First President of the *ESHPh*, Mortsel / Antwerp (B)

Miriam Roosens, Mortsel / Antwerp (B)

Claude-Henri Forney, Head, *Musée suisse de l'appareil photographique*, Vevey (CH)

Jean-René Beguin, *Ministère de la Culture*, Paris (F)

Jean Dieuzaide, Photographer, Toulouse (F)

Moulay El Quizzani, Historian, Paris (F)

Christine Roger, *Société française de photographie*, Paris (F)

Peter Schicht, Photographer, Berlin (G)

Georges Vercheval, Head, *Musée de la Photographie*, Charleroi (F)

Anna Auer, Board of the *Photographic Society of Vienna* (A)

Serge Nègre, Head, *Arthur Batut L'Espace photographique*, Labrugère (F)

José Manuel Torres, Historian, Barcelona (E)



ESHPh Symposium 25–28 August 1994, Oslo (N)

Darkness and Light

Among others, the following persons of our Society can be seen on this picture:

Anna Aunt, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)

Eva Dahlmann, Curator, *Nordiska Museet*, Stockholm (SE)

Giuliana Scimé, Art historian, Milano (I)

Jean-René Beguin, *Ministère de la Culture*, Paris (F)

Miguel Galmes, Head, *Institut d'Estudis Fotogràfics de Catalunya*, Barcelona (E)

William Main, Head, *Center for Photography*, Wellington (NZ)

R. Derek Wood, Historian & compiler of *ESHPh's photohistorica* 1993, Bromley (UK)

Etsuo & Hideko Fujii, Photographic scientists, Tokio (J)

Margaret Harker Farrand, President of the *ESHPh*, Croydon/Surrey (UK)

Roger Erlandson, Head, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)

Armgard Schiffer, *Landesmuseum Joanneum, Bild-und Tonarchiv*, Graz (A)

Anna Auer, Board of the *Photographic Society of Vienna* (A)

Jens Jaeger, University Hamburg (G)

Steven F. Joseph, Photo historian, Brussels (B)

Roger Taylor, Curator, *National Museum of Photography, Film & Television*, Bradford (UK)

Helmut Kleinstüber, Scientist at the *Department of Zoology and Fisheries*, Oldenburg (G)

Karl Steinorth, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Head, *Kodak PR Department*, Stuttgart (G)

David Faddy, *University of Westminster*, London (UK)

Peter Schicht, Photographer, Berlin (G)

Roy Green, Administrator of the *ESHPh*, Croydon (UK)

Ingeborg Th. Leijerzapf, *Rijks Universiteit*, Leiden (NL)

Christine de Naeyer, *Musée de la Photographie*, Charleroi (F)

Melinda B. Parson, *University of Memphis*, Tennessee (USA)

Leif Preus, Head, *Preus Fotomuseum*, Horten (N)

Bernardo Riego, *Universidad of Cantabri*, Santander (E)

Johan M. Swinnen, *High Institution for Fine Arts-Flandres*, Antwerp (B)

Ritva Tähtinen, Head, *The Photographic Museum of Finland*, Helsinki (FIN)

Peter J. Agius, *Thickets*, Oxford (UK)

Roger Kockaert, Photographic restaurator, Brussels (B)

Johan Swinnen, Art historian, Antwerp (B)

Vegard S. Halvorsen, Chairman, *Norwegian Society for the*

History of Photography, Sentrum (N)

Hans Christian Adam, Picture researcher, Göttingen (G)

1996



ESHPh Symposium from 25–28 April 1996, Charleroi (F)

Questioning the World. How has photography altered the face of things?

Does photography have the power to change the world?

Among others, the following persons can be seen on the picture:

Eva Dahlman, Curator, *Nordiska Museet*, Stockholm (N)
David Faddy, *University of Westminster*, London (UK)
Charles-Henri Favrod, Head, *Musée de L'Elysée*, Lausanne (CH)
Vicki Goldberg, Critic & editor, New York (USA)
Bernardo Riego, *Universidad of Canabri*, Santander (E)
Steven Franklin Joseph, Photo historian, Brussels (B)
Roy Green, Administrator of the *ESHPh*, Croydon (UK)
Anna Auer, Board of the Photographic Society in Vienna (A)
Armgard Schiffer, *Joanneum, Bild- und Tonarchiv*, Graz (A)
Georges Vercheval, Head, *Musée de la photographie*, Charleroi (B)
Karl Steinorth, Vice-President of the *ESHPh*, Stuttgart (G)

Serge Tisseron, Psychologist, *Université de Paris VII* (F)
Jeanne Verhulst, Curator, *George Eastman House*, Rochester (USA)
Margaret Harker Farrand, President of the *ESHPh*, Croydon/Surrey (UK)
Marc-Emmanuel Melon, *Université de Liège* (B)
Jean-René Beguin, *Ministère de la Culture*, Paris (F)
Hans Christian Adam, Author & picture researcher, Göttingen (G)
Peter Schicht, Photographer, Berlin (G)
Roger Kockaerts, Photographic restaurator, Brussels (B)
Roger Erlandsen, Head, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)
Johan Swinnen, Art historian, Antwerp (B)

2001



ESHPh Symposium from 20–22 June 2001, Vienna (A)

Photography & Research in Austria. Vienna the Door to the European East.

Photo: Viktor Kabelka, Vienna (from left to right)

Johan Swinnen, Vice-President of the ESHPh, *Free University of Bruxelles* (B)

Anna Auer, President of the ESHPh, Vienna (A)

Allan D. Coleman, Photography critic and historian, New York (USA)

Roger Erlandsen, Head, *National Institute for Historical Photography*, Oslo (N)

2004

ESHPh Symposium from 9–10 September 2004, Stockholm (se)

From Nordic Landscape to North American Indians

Current Trends in Nordic and International History of Photography

Among other there can be seen on this picture:

(first rang from left to right)

Anna Tellgren, Curator, *Moderna Museet*, Stockholm (se)

Eva Dahlman, Curator, National Library of Sweden, Stockholm (se)

unknown

Giuliana Scimé, Art historian, Milano (i)

Anna Auer, President of the *ESHPh*, Vienna (a)

Monika Schwärzler, *Webster University*, Vienna (A)

Others:

Hans Christian Adam, Goettingen (G)

Kerstin Arcadius, Malmö (se)

Tamara Berghmans, *Free University of Brussels* (B)

Lena Johannesson, *University of Göteborg* (se)

Peter Schulz, *Moderna Museet*, Stockholm (se)

Leif Wigh, *Modern Museet*, Stockholm (se)

Johan Swinnen, *Free University of Brussels* (B)



Biographies of the Authors

Biographies of the Authors

Anna Auer, President of the *ESHPh*, born 1937 in Klagenfurt (Austria). Studied from 1954 to 1957 at the University of Dramatic Art Mozarteum in Salzburg. In 1975 she initiated the photographic collection *Fotografis* (now *UniCredit Bank Austria AG*) in Vienna, curator from 1976–1986. In 1992 grant from the *J. Paul Getty Museum*, Los Angeles, which led to the exhibition *Exodus from Austria – Emigration of Austrian photographers 1920–1940*, Kunsthalle Wien, 1998. Author of numerous publications on the history of photography. Co-editor of *Photoresearcher* (together with Alistair Crawford) and *The International Letter / La lettre internationale*. In 2008 she was awarded the title *professor*.

Ben Baruch Blich (PhD), born in New York, USA. Focus on visual culture in the history of Western civilization. 2002 guest professor to the *HISK – Hoger Institute voor Schone Kunsten* in Antwerp. Presently senior lecturer in *Bezalel-Academy of Arts and Design*, Jerusalem; chief editor of the e-journal *History and Theory: Protocols*, issued by the *History and Theory Dept.* in Bezalel. Most recent publications ‘The body as Mirror’, in: Waanders Uitgevers, *Territorial Bodies*, Den Haag and ‘Body Representation in Photography’ in: *The Weight of Photography*, Free University in Brussels.

Tamara Berghmans, born 1980 in Vilvoorde, Master of Art History (Vrije Universiteit Brussel); Master of Photographic Studies (Universiteit Leiden). 2008 PhD dissertation: A Research on the Mission and Organisation of the Belgian Modern Art Photography between 1950 and 1965. Currently at *Manfred and Hanna Heiting Scholar* at the *Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam. Publications on art photography (Pictorialism, subjektive Fotografie) and Ed van der Elsken in *FotoMuseum Magazine*, *Stedelijk Museum Bulletin*, *Henri Storck Memorenen* (2007), *The Weight of Photography* (2008).

Vladimír Birgus, born 1954, is Head and Professor of the *Institute of Creative Photography* at the *Silesian University* in Opava. He is the author and co-author of 25 books, including *Czech Photographic Avant-Garde 1918–1948*, 1999 and 2002, *Photographer František Drtikol*, 2000, *Jaroslav Rössler – Czech Avant-Garde Photographer*, 2003, *Czech Photography of the 20th Century*, 2005. He has curated and co-curated numerous exhibitions in many museums and galleries in Europe and the USA.

Katalin Bognár, born in 1977. Master degrees in history and museum studies at *Loránd Eötvös University* in Budapest, Hungary in 2001 and 2002. Currently working on a PhD thesis in history there. Since 2001 curator at the *Historical Photographic Collection of the Hungarian National Museum*. Research focus: stereo-photography, press and propaganda photography in Hungary 1945–1990. Most recent publication: ‘The Archive of the Fine Arts Fund Publishing House’ in: Beatrix Lengyel Cseh, Ilona Balog Stemler (eds.), *New Acquisitions at the Hungarian National Museum III*, Budapest 2007.

Xavier Cannone (PhD) got his master degree in art history at the *Sorbonne* in Paris with a thesis about the surrealism in Belgium – published by *Fonds Mercator* and by *Actes Sud*. Since 2000 director of *Musée de la Photographie – Centre d’art contemporaine de la Communauté française*, Wallonie-Bruxelles in Charleroi, Belgium. Under his direction the construction of the building has been considerably enlarged.

Alistair Crawford, writer, art historian, performer and curator with publications on art and photography in several languages, including *Mario Giacomelli* (London 2001, 2006, Paris 2002, 2005), and *Erich Lessing. Arresting Time 1948–1973* (Vienna 2002, Paris 2003, New York 2005). Practises as a painter, printmaker, photographer and is represented in collections world wide. Many awards and distinctions include: invited *Academician of the Royal Cambrian Academy* and Honorary Fellow of the *Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers*. In 1990 he became the first Professor of Art in the history of Wales.

Luc Deneulin (PhD), art historian, scientific collaborator and researcher at the *Free University of Brussels (VUB)*. Published with Prof. David Willinger (*City College*, New York) including *Four works for the Theatre by Hugo Claus* (New York, 1990) and *Theatrical Gestures of Belgian Modernism* (New York, 2002). 2005: critical DVD edition of Leni Riefenstahl’s films for Pathfinder Ent. (USA). 2008: *The Weight of Photography. An Anthology of Interdisciplinary Essays on Photography as a Humanistic Discipline (ASP)* edited with Johan Swinnen. Research focus on different aspects of documentary film.

Willem Elias is vice-dean of the Faculty of Psychology and Education at the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)*. He has a PhD in Philosophy and he is president of the *Higher Institute for Fine Arts (HISK)*. His publications include *Signs of the Time*, Amsterdam, 1997; ‘Profiles of paroxysm’ in Johan Swinnen (ed.), *Attack*, Amsterdam, 1999; *Aspects of Belgian Art after 1945*, Ghent, 2005. He has mostly written on art theory, cultural studies, art education and art criticism.

John Falconer, Curator of Photography, *British Library*, Department of Manuscripts.

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