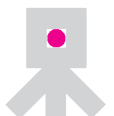


Photoresearcher

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European Society for the History of Photography
Association Européenne pour l'Histoire de la Photographie
Europäische Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Photographie



As we have so many essays this time it was not easy to make the right selection. It was astonishing to see how many authors dealt with the photography of architecture although we had not set this as a topic. So we are pleased that this issue has almost become a theme on one subject, and we wish you a lot of pleasure reading it.

A. D. Coleman tries to get to the bottom of the US government's attitude to sexuality in *Permitting the Forbidden: Photography as License*. In two examples he points out how negative the effect of the sentence of the American Puritanism has been and still is today. In the case of Richard Roice the jury was supplied with an album Roice had put together containing pictures by Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden, Sally Mann and Edward Weston in order to help them reach the verdict. Works of art which can be seen in public museums and collections all over the world were used to obtain a guilty verdict. Over many years A. D. Coleman has been dealing with the problem of where and how limits between sexuality and pornography are to be set. In the early 1980s he founded a *Committee on Censorship and Freedom of Vision of the Society for Photographic Education* which unfortunately lasted only a short time because of the lack of important contacts in the USA. Hans Christian Adam assumes in his essay *Edward S. Curtis and his perception of the North American Indians* that our ideas about Indians have been influenced by the images of E. S. Curtis which we have taken into our memories consciously but also unconsciously. Like no other photographer before him, Curtis was able to deal with American Indian culture over a long period of time. At the end of a period of thirty years he was able to finish his life's work: *The North American Indians*, a portfolio of 20 volumes, which people still feel enthusiastic about because of their beauty. But Adam also points out the ambivalences which has always accompanied the work of Curtis. Seen from today, he concludes that this oeuvre has not only become an important part of the American heritage but also is part of the American dream – one of pride and freedom.

Alistair Crawford's witty article *Everyone ought to be careful in a city like this* (on the occasion of his visit to Vienna last year) is an excellent example of genuine British humour. We walk along with him when he is strolling in the streets and over places which, in a strange way, seem so familiar to him. But, of course, there was the famous post-war film *The Third Man*. These are the pictures of Vienna he is carrying with him and they are now mingling with fiction and reality, until he

really meets the author of the book *The Third Man's Vienna. Celebrating a Film Classic* at the British Council. A pleasant walk into the past with many literary thoughts and maybe some doubts – if the Viennese had really understood Graham Green's fine irony in *The Third Man*.

In *William Bishop and the publication INSCAPE* the founder of this British periodical is telling us which encouragements preceded, including his own personal background, and the reasons for his taking up photography in 1975. An important point were the courses by the photographer Paul Hill and the setting up of groups in the 1970s, such as the London Independent Photography in 1987 and the Royal Photographic Society's Contemporary Group in 1989. A special important forerunner of the idea of *INSCAPE* was the periodical *Creative Camera* founded by Colin Osman in 1968, although it changed into new fields in the 1990s. Today the quarterly can look back to 14 years of continuous activity.

The article *Lucca Chmel. Photographic Interpretations of Austrian Architecture in the 1950s and 1960s* by Gabriele Hofer is based on her research over several years on Lucca Chmel, an Austrian post-war photographer of architecture. Her thesis was published in April 2006 at the University for Applied Arts in Vienna. Before that, at the end of 2004, a first retrospective about Lucca Chmel was shown in the Gallery Westlicht, Vienna (catalogue published by Dietmar Klinger). Hofer not only goes into the middle class education of Chmel but also her political burden. That is why she was ordered to clear away the debris of St. Stephan's Cathedral after the war. During her four months 'penance' she also produced a series of several hundred images of the ruins of St. Stephan's Cathedral. The reader learns about her photographic techniques, especially her main concern for sophisticated and fine graduations of light effects which made the buildings in her images often look unreal and sculptural. As a photographer Lucca Chmel followed the tradition of the 1930s. In passing the reader also obtains information on Austrian post-war architects.

Zoltán Fejér tells in an enthusiastic way *European Ramblings From Vérmező Park to Mars* in the exhibition *Light and Form. Modern Architecture and Photography 1927–1950* which was shown in Budapest in 2003. Fejér was astonished to discover that Budapest once had looked very different, more glittering and beautiful than he had known it from his childhood. He went through the exhibition with a 'virtual' look and started to produce a network from Barci's science

fiction novel through the Bauhaus to the typical Hungarian styles. His reflections end with an enthusiastic report about the successful start of a Hungarian rocket in Budapest's Vérmező park!

In his article *Beyond the Conventions of Architectural Photography* Trevor George Sewell refers to the main problems of architectural photography, above all the question of *light*. After a short overview of the rapid developments of photographic processes, cameras and lenses, Sewell concentrates on the growing number of photography books and architecture periodicals since 1890 which also caused an increasing degree of critical consciousness in regard to this genre. As examples he takes three photographers whose pictures go far beyond commercial architectural photography because an inner concern to the object can be perceived in them. Sewell quotes Frederick H. Evans's pictures of the interior of a cathedral and concludes that they would cause similar emotions in a viewer as if being actually in the cathedral. As a counterpoint he compares Edwin Smith's interior of a cathedral to one of Evans. Though he agrees with certain similarities, he analyses the differences that make Smith's image so exceptional. In 1959 the former architect Smith made a personal statement as a photographer with his image of a cathedral.

In her essay *Reconstructing Memory, Reconstructing the Self: Periklis Alkidis, Family Portraits, 1987–94* Penelope Petsini presents the conceptual work of Periklis Alkidis whose main issue are the real (internal) events the photographer had actually experienced when he was young, and not those images taken by the camera and fixed in the family album which pretend to be real. From his grown-up point of view the photographer/artist Alkidis has tried to get to the bottom of his childhood memories by casting anew the rolls of the persons involved. It is a kind of self-therapy to disclose his former anxieties and feelings. Last but not least we are going to start a new series of *Book Reviews* beginning with this issue, which we will extend subsequently.

Anselm Wagner's comprehensive research on the American art historian, of Austrian descent, *Heinrich Schwarz* who, in 1931, was the first to write a monograph on the Scottish painter and photographer David Octavius Hill which must be regarded as a world sensation. Wagner's publication was presented in September 2006 in Salzburg at the Galerie Fotohof.

Anna Auer and Alistair Crawford
Co-editors, *Photoresearcher*

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Permitting the Forbidden: Photography as License

Is there something about photography that particularly triggers the censorial impulse, and, if so, what is it and how does it work?

Photography is hardly unique in its evocation of censorial ire. Yet a remarkable percentage of the censorship occasions of the past two decades that have attracted the attention of the US government at all levels centre around photographs, including some types of photographs, that a widening audience tends to take for granted. How did that come about? We have reached the beginning of the twenty first century, and have had photography as an integral aspect of western culture for more than 150 years. Time enough, one would think, to get used to it. Why, then, should the lens-based image, and especially the still photograph, continue to function as the most highly charged product of our visual communication system, the most censorable artefact of our age?

From the local prosecution of casual snaphshooters who have made images of their own and other people's children, sometimes nude or semi-clothed, often fully dressed, to the internationally publicised attacks on work by Andres Serrano, Robert Mapplethorpe, and others, and on to the active persecution of such photographers as Jock Sturges, the buttressing evidence surrounds us. The question is not whether this is so, but why.

Here is a simple answer: most of the problematic photographs in questions are images of, and about sex, the body, and bodily functions, subjects that remain profoundly distressing to large segments of the population in the USA, still haunted by its founders' Puritanism. And the photographic image brings to those subjects its peculiar power, which paradoxically can both amplify and soothe any disturbance.

Who among us would deny that when generations of relatives sit around a family album and peruse its images, tracing their lineage, they are also transmitting to each other complex signals about acceptable appearance and behaviour within that familial microculture? Is the critique of fashion advertising not premised on the assumption that reiterated image structures become iconic and that such icons, if they saturate a culture, program our consciousness, so that when busty, broad-hipped women are reiterated as the norm then that is how women yearn to look, and who men lust after, and when pubescent waifs dominate the cultural field of vision then they are the objects of imitation and desire?

Psychologists call this tacit-approval effect in which the lens-based media are implicated 'modelling', and suggest that it is

one reason that paedophiles so frequently collect and show to their victims examples of what some people now generically refer to as 'kiddie porn'. We can, and do, argue vociferously that songs, poems, novels, paintings, movies, photographs do not actually make people do anything; that these are matters of individual choice and thus of individual responsibility. And we also argue, sometimes heatedly, yet accurately, that the demonstrable links between, say, rape or child molestation and sexually explicit material prove tenuous at best; a fine-arts version of 'guns don't kill people – people kill people', if you will. I've made that argument myself, more than once, so obviously I do not entirely disagree with that hypothesis, but I do not entirely agree either.

How can we hold Leni Riefenstahl responsible for anything beyond personal amorality if we believe that her film *Triumph of the Will* had no effect on its viewers? As I wrote a few years back, 'Proposing that art at its most potent poses no genuine threat to anyone or anything resembles nothing so much as telling your houseguests that your growling dog is toothless and can do them no worse harm than pissing on their shoes. I have a higher respect for the impact of art on culture than that.'¹

Yet how do we then specify, or quantify, or even identify that effect? I keep returning to something I said at the outset of an essay written in 1987: 'The only clearly demonstrated and thoroughly substantiated social consequence of the dissemination of sexually explicit material – written, graphic/photographic, filmed, videotaped or theatrically performed – is that it generates endless and apparently unresolvable heated debate among adults.'² For that essay I surveyed a cross-section of the current literature on what might be defined as 'the impact of pornography on society', focusing on the relationship between theories about effects of pornography and their substantiation (or denial) via research, as well as the state of that research itself. My conclusion:

"Research into the consequences of sexually explicit material is qualitatively questionable and easily impeachable on several levels, its very status as science arguable. The fact that it is produced under social conditions frowning on one set of possible results while approving of their opposites makes the likelihood of impartial inquiry negligible ... So we are really just beginning to explore what one writer describes as 'an area in which there are few certainties and little evidence to support arguments on either side of the controversy.'³

I have been reporting on, writing about, and editorialising over censorship issues in photography for more than thirty years, in publications as widely circulated as the *New York Times* and as narrow-cast as *Woman Artists News*, which originally published the essay I just excerpted. I founded the short-lived Committee on Censorship and Freedom of Vision of the Society for Photographic Education in the early 1980s, the lack of support for which from the SPE superstructure and membership alike not only doomed it to a swift demise but ensured that when the censorship battles of the late 1980s erupted the organization would have no vehicle in place to address those crises.

Having acquired a reputation as someone concerned with the issues of censorship in photography, I have served as informal and unpaid advisor to dozens of photographers who have found themselves embroiled in censorship situations. Among them have been: a young amateur photographer entranced by the work of Sally Mann and Jock Sturges, who persuaded his niece to take off her tank top so that he could emulate them and consequently served a 7 year sentence in Michigan for pandering child pornography, and Patti Ambrogio, an east coast teacher of photography, the mother of a young girl, whose exhibition of nude fine art images of her daughter resulted in a nightmarish prosecution that nearly stripped her of custody of her own child.

And I have ended up as an actual and/or potential expert witness in several court cases. I suspect that the most useful light I can cast on this complex of questions may come from recounting some of the specifics of those legal wrangles.

In one of them, a set of photographs and drawings by the British artist and photographer Graham Ovenden had been seized by US Customs in New York. They were posed studies of unclothed young girls, both done from life, that is, when Ovenden draws he works from live subjects, not from photographs. The judge found his photographs acceptable, but was disturbed by the drawings, because, although as graphic art they were protected by law, they were so precise and lifelike that he insisted there had to be photographs from which they had been made, photographs that he would consider pornographic and actionable if only they were in evidence. As they were not, because they in fact did not exist, he was forced to let the work in.

A second and more traumatic instance was the trial of Ejlal Feuer which made the front page of the *New York Times*. Feuer photographed his daughter nude as an offshoot of an

assignment from a class in visual diary-keeping at the International Center for Photography in New York City, and then made the classic mistake that the aforementioned Michigan convict also made, submitting the images to the local Foto-mat for processing. The resulting legal imbroglio cost the Feuer family many thousands of dollars, shattered their relationship with their community, and traumatized them all – before the case was finally dropped by the prosecuting attorney. Here is a section of my deposition in the case:

Artists in all media base their creative work on what they see around them. Writers write about their family's daily life. Painters paint their wives bathing, the groceries on the table, the unmade marriage bed in the morning light. Photographers photograph their loved ones doing all kinds of things. Amateurs and professionals alike photograph their kids; that's probably the most universally common kind of photograph made. And, predictably, a lot of the time those kids are buck-naked.

This never used to be a problem. But then, a few years ago, some people in the law-enforcement agencies in this country got the idea that the way to catch child molesters and 'kiddie-porn' merchants was to use the people who work in the photo-processing industry as watchdogs. So they notified them to be on the lookout for anything that could be interpreted as evidence of child abuse or child pornography – including any images involving nudity. In some states, they even passed laws making the photo-processing companies liable to prosecution if they failed to report any such material ...

We need to be aware that this case, and its numerous parallels, cumulatively constitute a much larger, nation-wide pattern in which unsuspecting people who believe they've done nothing wrong by making images of a kind commonly found in family albums and prominent museums of art suddenly find themselves accused of one of the most heinous of crimes and fighting for their families' very lives. The cost to the police and judicial system of prosecuting these cases must be enormous; the costs to the families involved are not only financial but psychological, and the resulting devastation is incalculable.

These cases, which rarely make the national news, are being dealt with for the most part on a local basis, as isolated occurrences. Consequently, the larger pattern is not being observed, much less considered ...

In my opinion, the legal system has an obligation to understand that the production of visual images of unclothed adults

and children in all media, not just photography, is an inevitable consequence of the spread of photography-education and art-education systems throughout this culture ...

The simple fact is that artists in all media – particularly fledgling artists – make art about their daily lives and their loved ones. And it is high time for the judicial system to affirm that the citizenry has the right to make art – good art, bad art, student art – based on intimate life, and that photography is no less an acceptable medium for such art than any other ...

What we have in this recent case, and in the innumerable parallel instances, is a situation in which a branch of the nation's educational system and its fine-arts presentational network are clearly out of synch with a branch of the law-enforcement system. It is the position of this writer, and of many of his peers and colleagues in the field, that this troublesome issue must be resolved by dialogue between the two conflicting systems and a reconsideration of the legislation concerning child nudity in images, rather than by punishment of individuals like the amateur photographer I've described, who, taking one system at its word and finding themselves penalized and traumatized for it by the other, have in effect been, and have every right to feel, betrayed by both.⁴

Finally, let me describe the most recent case in which I testified. This was a most peculiar situation in Austin, Texas, in early 1998. A convicted paedophile, out on parole, was accused of parole violation for spending an afternoon helping a young boy fix his bicycle. No evidence of harm to the boy, actual or attempted, was introduced. But the defendant, one Richard Roice, was accused of wanting to have sex with him – in effect, of thought crime. Aside from the uneventful time spent in the boy's company, the evidence found in the defendant's lodgings and adduced in support of this accusation was a copy of the Italian neo-neo-realist film *Leolo*, which includes a non-explicit scene of a young boy masturbating, and a photo album that the defendant had assembled from reproductions of photographs clipped out of assorted books and magazines.

I was familiar with most of these images; they are pictures that are well established in the medium's literature. Some of them, in fact, were from a book by Jock Sturges for which I provided the afterword. Many of them are now, and have long been, recognized as classics: pictures by Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden, Sally Mann, Edward Weston, and others. The remainder were mostly commonplace illustrations from

reputable photographers included in a widely distributed instructional book on how to photograph children, published several decades ago as one volume in the Time-Life Books series on photography. Aside from those last, which are basic illustrational stock shots, I had seen just about all of them in museums, galleries, monographs and art/photography magazines, in slide-illustrated public lectures, and elsewhere, for years.

None of them struck me as child pornography. Since the photographs depicted no sexual activity of any kind, either explicit or implicit, but simply celebrated the physical beauty of the bodies depicted and in most cases the spirit of the subjects portrayed, the effect I had expected them to have on children would be to show them that their bodies were considered beautiful and were not to be a source of shame for them. Some people, I know, would consider that 'negative modelling'; I am not one of them.

These images are commonly available in books published by reputable publishers, books that can be purchased in chain stores and independent bookstores and museum bookstores and mail order outlets for fine art books throughout the country. After all, that is where the reproductions the defendant clipped out for his album came from; books that he purchased legally from the sorts of shops that serve local communities across the USA. As prints, and sometimes as posters and postcards, the images are available for purchase from galleries, poster stores, art postcard outlets, and other retail venues.

To my way of thinking, this reflects acceptance by 'the adult community', according to that community's 'prevailing standards'. Yet I could also see how, in another way, a jury could construe them as constituting a paedophile's art history of photography, and could, in their desire to protect their community from a potential sexual predator, decide to use this idiosyncratic 'museum without walls' as evidence of the defendant's intentions and state of mind.

Of course, the evidence was ambiguous at best. Was the defendant using that material to excite himself and incite himself to further abuse of children, or as a safety valve to release those impulses in harmless ways? Since I do not believe in the concept of thought crime, and do not think that photographs I had defend individually can become effectively conspiratorial when brought together in clusters, I had no difficulty accepting the task of defending these pictures and the defendant's possession thereof.

But the prosecution adroitly blocked a good bit of my testimony, and the jury eventually voted to convict. According to David Frank, Roice's attorney, who polled them after the trial was over, most of the jurors accepted my argument that these pictures had been legally obtained, were not in themselves actionable, and had respectable photographic pedigrees and redeeming artistic and social significance. But they thought Roice was guilty, and wanted to put him away; so they decided that they could use this home-made album (and the prosecution's reading thereof) to determine Roice's state of mind: proof of thought crime. What they did thereby, *de facto* and *de jure*, was not to imperil the individual images, nor the books they came from, but only to criminalise that particular, one-of-a-kind configuration of the pictures.

This constitutes case law, of course, not legislation, so the harm it does to other defendants in other, related cases is probably minimal. And, because it does not propose that any of those images or their makers or publishers are prosecutable, it does not significantly put those specific photographs or other pictures in their genres noticeably at risk. So I should have felt – and did feel – satisfied that, if I had not contributed to a clear victory, I had achieved some damage control for the medium of photography.

Yet I am still brooding about this case, and my role in it. Not over what I did, with which I am still okay, but over the question of what I would have done had the case taken a slightly different turn. I ask myself this: suppose the defendant had molested the boy? Would I be willing to argue that this album, found in his possession and perhaps shown to his victim beforehand, did not contribute to his actions or his victim's acquiescence thereto, did not reflect his state of mind, and could not be held responsible in any way for his crime? In other words, could I claim to my own satisfaction that no 'modelling' resulted for either party as a result of contemplation of these pictures?

This 'modelling' is of course not a term that comes from critical discourse about images. It comes from trendy current jargon in the realm of psychoanalysis, and is based on assumptions that are themselves arguable, and controversial, even in their own field.

According to every book and article on child development I have ever read, children are sexual beings from birth, if not in the womb. Babies fondle their own and each others' genitals in the crib and thereafter, unless inhibited by adults. Children 'play doctor' and otherwise explore and express their

sexuality in many ways, without any prompting or encouragement from adults. Presumably, they feel 'emotionally and developmentally prepared' to do this; the ones who appear not to be 'emotionally and developmentally prepared' for it are the adults who are scandalized by it.

So, in my experience, children need little or no encouragement to experiment with sex. As far as I can tell, the term 'negative modelling' describes a compulsion, on the part of some adults, to inhibit children from thinking about sex as anything but nasty and evil, and to pretend that children are not by nature sexual beings. I tend to agree with Sigmund Freud, who wrote, in 1895, over a century ago,

'What is the aim of withholding from children, or let us say from young people, the information about the sexual life of human beings? Is it fear of arousing interest in such matters prematurely before it spontaneously stirs in them? Is it hope of retarding by concealment of this kind the development of the sexual instinct in general? ... Or is it genuinely and seriously intended that later on they should consider everything connected with sex as something despicable and abhorrent from which their parents and teachers wish to keep them apart for as long as possible?

I am really at a loss to say which of these can be the motive for the customary concealment from children of everything connected with sex. I only know that these arguments are one and all really foolish and that I find it difficult to pay them the compliment of serious refutation.'

And yet ... with all that said, I would have had difficulty, moral difficulty, exculpating Roice's album from any and all accountability, had he done any harm to the boy with whom he kept company the afternoon of his arrest. I know that many gay and bisexual youngsters have their first sexual experiences with adults (just as do many heterosexuals under the age of consent), and I am not opposed automatically to what some call 'man-boy love'. But, as the parent of a son and as the once intended target of unsolicited attention from a sexual predator myself, I would draw certain lines concerning informed consent, and I have spent enough time studying the social and psychological effects of photographs on others, and on myself, to feel assured that lens images can help to blur such lines.

I wrote before of the photographic image's peculiar power, and of my commitment to pinpointing it. So here goes:

For most viewers, once trained in reading the conventions of lens-derived signification, the lens-based image reifies behaviour as no other form of image can. It concretises the

abstract, in part because the photograph always particularises; you are looking at that particular dog, that particular house, that particular patch of grass. Beyond that, it reifies the behaviour of its subjects, the behaviour of the photographer as the observer and recorder thereof, and the behaviour of the viewer as audience for both.

I mean, specifically, that it validates what transpires on both sides of the lens, as encoded in the resulting image; making it okay to ‘do that’, whatever the ‘that’ might be: on the subjects’ side of the camera, for example, skinny-dipping, butchering a deer, hugging your grandmother, lynching a person of colour, throwing your mortarboard in the air at graduation, shooting a prisoner of war in the back of the head, having consensual adult sex with your lover, bathing your baby, or exposing for the attention of adults the pubis of a child. And, on the photographers’ side, the scrutinising through a lens of all those actions and the describing of them in images in a medium designed for preservation and transmission to others. And, on the viewer’s end of the triangle, it validates the act of spending time looking at the photographic results of those transactions.

Which is to say that photography can be considered inherently licentious. Here is the definition of that term, from Webster’s Dictionary:

‘licentious: 1: lacking legal or moral restraints; esp : disregarding sexual restraints 2: marked by disregard for strict rules of correctness’.

The word comes from the Latin root *licentia*, the same root as the word *license*. The *licentious*, then, is that which gives license to; that which permits. And what we need and seek permission for is, by definition, never that which is already permissible, but that which is forbidden. Among its many functions, then, photography gives permission to contemplate, to consider, and to emulate the forbidden.

We might say, then, that the representational photograph, the lens-based image of recognizable people, places, things, actions, casts a spell of evocative mimesis. It catapults us into a perceptual and psychological ‘as if’ construct, places us as hypothetical onlookers at and potential participants in whatever it portrays. And, regardless of whatever value judgments the photographer builds into the image, it gives us the choice of saying either yes or no to whatever it describes.

Yet those value judgments – the photographer’s attitudes toward the subjects, as reflected in the imagery and enhanced by rhetorical devices – form only part of any photograph’s

persuasive capacity. The subjects’ acceptance of the camera’s presence, their consent to the photographic moment, forms another part. And the mere fact of the photograph’s ongoing existence contributes its share of suasion in both directions; a reluctant photographer’s condemnatory image of someone undergoing physical abuse can encourage and delight the devotee of torture even as it repels and strengthens those opposed to such barbarity.

Cultural anthropologists speak of imitative magic, in which one simulates the situation desired: If you want a rainstorm, you sprinkle water in the air, rattle drums for thunder, strike sparks from flint for lightning. Or you draw symbols of those phenomena, to attract them. Is photography a system of imitative magic? Does magic work? If people believe in it – yes, by all accounts. And it appears that both censors and transgressors share a deep belief in the effectiveness of photography as imitative magic. They may both be entirely wrong, of course. But what if they are both right?⁵

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Notes

- 1 A. D. Coleman, “The Destruction Business: Some Thoughts on the Function of Criticism,” in *Depth of Field: Essays on Photography, Mass Media and Lens Culture*. University of New Mexico Press, 1998, p. 20.
- 2 A.D. Coleman, “‘Porn’, Polls, and Polemics: The State of Research on the Social Consequences of Sexually Explicit Material,” in *Tarnished Silver: After the Photo Boom, Essays and Lectures 1979–1989*. Midmarch Arts Press, 1996, p. 174.
- 3 A.D. Coleman, “‘Porn’, Polls, and Polemics: The State of Research on the Social Consequences of Sexually Explicit Material,” in *Tarnished Silver: After the Photo Boom, Essays and Lectures 1979–1989*. Midmarch Arts Press, 1996, p. 174, pp.182–183.
- 4 For my published report on this episode, see A. D. Coleman, “The Wrong Arm of the Law: ‘Kiddie Porn’ Hysteria Strikes Again,” in *Camera & Darkroom Photography*, 17:9, September 1995, pp. 20, 60.
- 5 This is an edited and considerably shortened version of the text of an address delivered to the AICA/CACA C4M2 [Cincinnati/Censorship/Camera-based Art/Culture/Year 2000] ‘Indecent Exposure’ Conference, co-sponsored by the Campaign Against Censorship in the Arts; The International Art Critics Association, American Section (AICA–USA); and Cincinnati City Beat. It was delivered on Saturday, 25 March, 2000, at the Omni Netherlands Plaza, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Edward S. Curtis and his perception of the North American Indians

Whenever we open a book or magazine or pass a billboard and see an old fashioned, sepia-toned photograph of a lone 'Red Indian' on the wide open prairie, or face a chieftain wearing a feather headdress, or a squaw before a tipi, the chances are that the photographer was Edward Sheriff Curtis (1868–1952). His photographic *œuvre* not only ties in with our traditional idea of the North American Indian, but has moulded this notion to a remarkable degree, either directly or indirectly, for example, through Hollywood's (and Cinecittà's) exploitation of the Cowboy, Indian and Wild West genre,¹ which again is, at least in part, based on Curtis's records.

Our mental image of Indians has a tendency of being stereotypical, and Curtis's work is not innocent in this respect. Curtis's original photographs show Indians as they might once have been, or, in viewing them today, rather as we might wish the Indians to have been. But no other photographer has created a larger body of pictures on this subject. From the end of the 19th century he dedicated over 30 years to his great goal of capturing in word and image what he thought to be the last living traditions of the Indian tribes. He spent the better part of his life studying their life and customs and noting down their history and their legends with the result that Curtis, the photographer, also became an ethnographer. His many years of endeavour culminated in the 20 volume encyclopaedia *The North American Indian* (NAI),² which comprised extensive textual material and some 2,200 photogravures. The work was issued in a limited print run of less than 300 copies between 1907 and 1930, the subscription set costing a princely 3,000 dollars.³ The encyclopaedia covers native nations living on the entire American continent north of the Mexican border, west of the Mississippi and north to the Bering Strait. It constitutes one of the most important historical publications on the American Indian. Each of the 20 self-contained volumes, which were illustrated with approximately 75 plates measuring 14 x 19 cm, and which also featured some coloured images and the occasional chart or map, was dedicated to one or a number of related or topographically contiguous Indian tribes in North America. Each individual volume was further accompanied by a separate portfolio which generally contained 36 large format photogravures, measuring approximately 40 x 50 cm. The NAI was made to impress. It is one of the most beautiful books ever produced, superlatively printed on heavy paper, leather bound and with gilt edging. It was and is still a scientific

study of value for future generations. It would be a bit malevolent to call the twenty volumes coffee-table books, but the NAI was nevertheless that too. In order to sell, the rich book lover, connoisseur and collector had also to be kept in mind as a potential customer as well as the, possibly fewer, individuals and institutions interested in the subject matter.

The large quality photogravures were also sold singularly, as off-prints, and it is especially on these that Curtis's reputation as a photographer rests. His fame peaked between 1905 and 1914, but by the time the last volume of his *magnum opus* appeared in 1930, he was still only known to a handful of specialists.

Coming from a modest background, Edward Curtis was born in 1868 on a farm in Wisconsin. The boy went to school for only six years. It seems that he took an interest in photography, in a self-taught capacity at an early age, subsequently working as an apprentice in a photography studio in St. Paul. Following the early death of the father, the family settled in Seattle, in the state of Washington. Here, in 1897, he managed to open a successful photography studio of his own, specializing in flattering portraits. Famous personalities sat for him, including the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova (1881–1931) and the winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize for literature, Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941).

Around 1890 Curtis had begun photographing in the environs of Seattle, taking pictures, for example, of the Indians at nearby Puget Sound or of the landscape of Mount Rainier in Washington State. As far as the legend goes he came by chance in 1898 to the aid of a group of scientists whom he said had lost their way in the mountains, an encounter that was to radically alter his life. For the contact led to a highly interesting commission for Curtis: to accompany the private expedition of railway magnate Edward Harriman (1848–1909)⁴ the following year as tour photographer. During the luxurious and somewhat eccentric trip Curtis got to know some prominent American scientists. He profited from the academic atmosphere on board, in particular striking up a close relationship with the ethnographer and expert on American Indians, George Bird Grinnell (1849–1938).⁵ As early as 1900 the two mounted a joint expedition to Montana where Curtis had the opportunity to live among Indians and photograph them. After participating in the sub arctic excursion, Curtis's witnessing of the spectacular sun dance of the Blood, Blackfoot and Algonquin tribes proved to be a second turning point in the photographer's life.



Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian, A Chief of the Desert – Navaho, 1904 (Plate 26)*. Photogravure, Privat Collection, Vienna

Despite his growing fascination for the Indians, Curtis knew little about them then, and initially he shared the white people's prejudice that their religion was nothing but senseless superstition with no deeper meaning. Yet the desire had been kindled in him to learn more about the individual tribes. For his first photographs he asked Indians to restage battles or conduct ceremonies for him. In his pictures he attempted to erase all signs of assimilation on the part of the Indians to the culture of the white man. When two Piegan chiefs facing Curtis's camera proudly presented an alarm clock which looked somewhat incongruous in their tipi the photographer had the disturbing object erased before publication by re-touching the plate. Curtis paid many Indians to pose or give information; he bribed medicine men to show the most sacred items of a tribe. Some of Curtis's most fascinating portraits, masked Navajo dancers, are not quite the right thing for they did not dare to produce the masks themselves out of religious respect. So Curtis, consulting the Indians, set down and made the masks himself. In many cases progressing civilisation had already diminished the Indians' skill to produce items of traditional clothing and it was not beyond Curtis to costume his subjects in 'indigenous garb', not minding that some pieces might have originated from a foreign tribe.⁶ Curtis's images are wonderful examples of how, without the knowledge of the context of the images themselves, the manipulative skills in their making may well remain hidden. Viewers in Curtis times were probably even less aware of the powerful ambi-

guity of truths and lies in a photograph then we are nowadays (though we should know better). In Curtis's case, viewers of all times have happily consumed the pictures' sheer beauty. The idea of creating an extensive documentation of the traditional ways of the Northern American Indian tribes came to Curtis around 1903. He conceived of the plan of capturing in word and image the history of all of the Indian tribes; their life, ceremonies, legends and myths. The areas he wished to seriously investigate were language, social and political organisation, geographical context, living conditions, dress, procurement and preparation of food, weights and measures, religious customs, the rituals and customs pertaining to birth, marriage and death, as well as games, music and dance.

In the years up to 1928 Curtis visited more than 80 Indian tribes. To do justice to his self-imposed, huge task, he had to travel, photograph, and make records in both heat and cold, in drought and in deep snow for years on end. He also had to contend with the trying job of winning over the Indians to his purpose. Through both ignorance and inquisitiveness, Curtis at first unwittingly broke a number of unwritten laws and was correspondingly coolly received by some tribes. Although, with time, he learned a number of Indian languages, it seemed to him advantageous, not least in view of his early blunders, to have a member of the tribe at his side as an adviser and informant. Nevertheless, over the years, he won the trust and friendship of many Indians, who for their part came increasingly to appreciate him as the chronicler of their traditions. Since the Indian peoples had no written lore, Curtis directed his attention to their oral traditions. He noted down the biographies of prominent chieftains, warriors, medicine men and priests, and, with the help of an early sound-recording device, captured the Indians' music which he later had transcribed to notes. As his researches were coming to an end, it happened that tribes which for years he had vainly tried to contact sent word that they would now be glad to receive him. They had realised that Curtis and his assistants were the only people who wished to document their traditions in word and picture. Curtis himself was convinced that the Indians would disappear completely in a few generations' time. One of his most famous images was titled *The Vanishing Race – Navaho*, and the title for this introductory image to the first portfolio of the NAI was programmatic.⁷ Curtis was set to document what he thought would be lost forever.

Although Curtis's Indian pictures were already well-known in the first years of the 20th century, the photographer was un-

able to fund his ambitious project solely from the sales of his photographs. Thus it was an extremely fortunate circumstance that President Theodore Roosevelt should come to know of Curtis's work and introduce the photographer to the financier John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913). The patron Morgan supported Curtis and his project with a kind of bursary, which laid a cornerstone for the publication of his encyclopaedia, but in not an untypical Morgan fashion a couple of hooks were attached, and the money was insufficient to bring the whole project to a conclusion. Indeed, Curtis lived his life balanced at the edge of financial disaster; it is only thanks to his enormous stamina that his *magnum opus* finally saw its completion.

Thus the photographer was always obliged to find other sources of income. He held lectures and published articles, as a result of which his photographs became better known and more saleable. In order to draw crowds he presented himself quite successfully as an adventurer and also as an artist. In 1914 he even shot a feature film, entitled *In the Land of the Headhunters*, based on the life of the Indians on the Pacific Northwest coast. The film was full of action, including a love story, and Curtis took the chance to use the freshly constructed film set as a backdrop for some of his NAI Kwakiutl photographs. The fact that an Indian ethnic group was placed at the centre of the film and determined the entire plot made Curtis's work a first in film history, influencing later filmmakers such as Robert Flaherty (1884–1951) of *Nanook of the North* (1922) fame.

It is only recently that Curtis has met with much greater interest as an author and as a researcher of Indians as distinct from only a photographer. His contemporaries reacted in markedly different ways to his undertaking. Despite Roosevelt's political backing the project found no state sponsorship. Established ethnologists and anthropologists regarded his activities with suspicion. The photographer had no academic training, and yet thanks to his contacts with people in high places, and to his remarkable skills as a lecturer, he was better known than many a professor. The scientists were above all offended by the aesthetic character of his photographs. Curtis wanted to present the fruits of his expeditions in artistic form; to put it mildly his pictures betray an idealised view of reality. The photographer stage-managed his models in their surroundings, and was not content with the simple, matter-of-fact directions that documentary photographers sometimes give to their models. Ethnologists and anthropologists at

American universities wanted to see a strict division between art and science and, as a result they punished the beautiful NAI, as well as the popular magazines that printed Curtis's photographs and stories, by simply ignoring them. In all fairness, however, it should be added that Curtis for his part paid scant attention to other people's research in this field, which rightly met with consternation. Although it is tragic that Curtis and the scientific community were unable to communicate, we might speculate that the NAI might have looked a bit different had they done so, and also might have become a success story right from the beginning.

Edward Curtis has often been depicted as a lone wolf, trying to accomplish the work of an entire institution. Yet the photographer by no means conducted his research on his own, but rather apportioned the core areas of the work amongst a team of up to 17 collaborators. Some of these helpers accompanied him, with some more or less writing texts in his name, while others worked in his Seattle photography studio (which sold individual photographs to the public), or others assisted with the production of the encyclopaedia. *The North American Indian* would not have been published without all their help. Especially his assistant William Edward Myers (1877–1949) should be noted who actually did contribute to the NAI's research value, especially of the textual contents of 18 volumes. The 'how much' is difficult to assess, but it was most probably very substantial. Myers certainly made the NAI 'readable as well as scientifically accurate',⁸ and anthropologist Frederick Webb Hodge (1864–1956) of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Curtis's not always paid free-lance editor, saw that all volumes of the NAI got a thorough backbone of well presented facts.

Public and scientific interest in the progress of Curtis's great work had already largely disappeared by the early 1920s. For the ageing photographer who, at age 59, once more journeyed forth to the Arctic for the last volume, the task of finishing the 20th tome and 20th portfolio exerted such a heavy financial and mental strain that he was completely drained, both physically and emotionally. A Boston rare books dealer, Charles Lauriat, took over the none too successful distribution of the remaining volumes and photogravures.⁹ In the years following completion of the project, Curtis worked on the manuscript of his last work, the book *The Lure of Gold*, which was never published. The photographer died in 1952 aged 84, at Whittier, California, not far from Los Angeles.

It is hard to do justice to such an extensive and qualitatively

heterogeneous body of work as that left by Edward Curtis. His series of volumes were produced over a very long period of time and his attitudes shifted. Visually, he moved inside a triangle whose corners might be defined as commercial studio portraiture, artistic pictorialism and pure documentation. During his many years of work on the NAI Curtis certainly revised his original concept from that of showing a somewhat enthusiastic and artistic heroism towards a more matter of fact representation.

It is exactly this process of learning by doing over years which, in my opinion, has not been acknowledged by many of his critics. Most of today's criticism seems to concentrate on images made up to around 1914, or up to around the half way mark of the NAI project, and critics seem to ignore the later shifts. It is quite easy to see Curtis as an exploiter of his subjects for at times he was. Nevertheless he can also be seen predominantly as an artist, a pictorialist (although interestingly not acknowledged by Stieglitz *et al.*). We can also see him as an ethnographer in spite of a couple of drawbacks, such as his lack of formal education, some doubtful methods of investigation, his virtually non-established ties with the majority of the academic community of his time. While Curtis was a true and trusted friend of many Indians, it is also true that at times he uttered prejudices which must today be called 'racist'. But what obviously stupid things he had said in 1900 he would not repeat in 1930. Curtis was an artist and adventurer, a documentary photographer, a researcher, a writer, a portraitist – all these things and much more, but weighting matters differently at different times of his life.¹⁰ He has been, and is still, very easy to attack on his many failures, as it is easy to praise him. The pictorial quality of his work continues to blind the viewer through its beauty.

Of course Curtis was a child of his times: the 19th century wars of settlers, army, US government and the public, the genocide against the Indians, were all ending after the Battle at Wounded Knee in 1890. The government prescribed process of assimilation began to end all idea of 'Indian nations' and with it the white majority began to forget about the Indians. However, there was a few years later a shift in society which began to look back towards the history of the United States at the time Curtis started his NAI project: To glorify one's own deeds the American public began to recreate an enemy who had once been worthy of the nation's engagement. Thus the Indians became interesting again as well as the legends of the Wild West which became a market-

able commodity. Looking back from the comfortable position of hindsight, the American public could enjoy Bill Cody and his enormously successful 'Buffalo Bill's Wild West' shows with spectacular Indian participation, feeling both entertained and perhaps a bit more curious about its own past. This did not end the self-righteous conviction of white folks that they were the superior race, demonstrated by the conviction that they had 'won'.

But to what degree are Curtis's Indian images photographic documents? Are the majority of his pictures with their magical quality truly an echo of an age in which people still lived in harmony with nature? Subscribing to a humanistic, social standpoint, Curtis attempted with passionate enthusiasm to record in words and pictures a culture that was, so he believed, threatened with extinction in the foreseeable future. This was a common belief at that time; it has been estimated that there were about 10 million North American natives alive when Columbus arrived, compared to only 250,000 in Curtis' time.¹¹

Many of Curtis photographs have imprinted themselves on our minds: shots of Indians who radiate strength and dignity, images that document a great cultural diversity, and pictures that seem to express the universal values of the individual, the family, the tribe, the nation. A major part of Curtis's visual inheritance are portraits; they speak so eloquently that we are inclined to see a personality beyond the surface of these beautiful prints. Costumed by Curtis, as they may be, we still perceive the Indian as a proud personality, definitely an individual – indeed we might discover in our minds many a noble savage. Curtis's photographs suggest characteristic traits of individuals: the presence or absence of a human and moral integrity, a standing fast in the face of overwhelming adversity, they appear to look backwards with great longing, and forwards with great apprehension, yet still in possession of themselves; heroic resignation, dignity, self-respect. While all these characteristics might have existed in the depicted individual or not, we simply do not know. But we wish to believe it to be so; we use these images for our own projections. And some of these projections give the depicted reality an aura perhaps not in existence at the time the photograph was taken.¹² Indeed, even in our times which we feel are so much more enlightened, we still like to make a brew of our personal deductions to assess a personality from our bits and pieces of knowledge, past and present, from the light playing on a face, the lines of age of a physiognomy; all not quite wrong,

and all not quite right. Edward Curtis's Indian images have given a lasting face to the indigenous peoples of the American continent. In his encyclopaedia the once warring Indian tribes are at last united in peace and brotherhood. His photographs show a remarkable variety of the Indian heritage and they become a part of American history. Whatever reservations we may have about Curtis's photographs; that they are posed, constructed, bought, faked, idealistic or romantic, aesthetic, and admittedly artistic nevertheless, they also represent a part of the American dream, a dream of pride and a dream of freedom.

Notes

- 1 Rare is the inhabitant of western spheres who has not been exposed, probably unknowingly, to the Indian photographs of Edward S. Curtis. Of course the concept of the 'Red Indian' has differed culturally from country to country, from period to period, and from medium to medium. In German literature, for example, the late 19th to mid 20th century popular concept of Native Americans was basically influenced by a completely fictitious Apache chief named Winnetou, a noble savage par excellence, and an invention of author Karl May (1842–1912) who had never experienced a true Indian until he travelled to the USA only decades after he had written his bestselling books. May's American hero has been visually recreated by French actor Pierre Brice in the 1960s in a series of highly popular German movies, filmed in Yugoslavia.
- 2 Curtis, Edward Sheriff, *The North American Indian, being a series of volumes picturing and describing the Indians of the United States and Alaska. Written, illustrated and published by Edward S. Curtis, edited by Frederick Webb Hodge, foreword by Theodore Roosevelt. Field research conducted under the patronage of J. Pierpoint Morgan, in twenty volumes.* Norwood, Mass., 1907–1930. The Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Göttingen, owns one of the few complete sets [4^o H. Am. II 12 rara 1–20] in Europe, a gift of J. P. Morgan to his old *alma mater*. I am grateful to Helmut Rohlfing of the Department of Rare Books for making this set accessible to me. The complete NAI contents, both volumes, including text and images plus portfolios, is presented online. See <http://curtis.library.northwestern.edu/toc.cgi>. In book form all portfolio images (plus some from the book set) are available as: Curtis, Edward S., *The North American Indian. The complete portfolios*, Köln et al, Taschen, 1997. This work has been published in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian. For a listing of printed literature by and on Curtis see: www.photolit.de.
- 3 'Although he had hoped to print a limited edition of 500 copies, Curtis was only able to find 222 subscribers for The North American Indian and thus printed less than 300 sets.' See <http://www.fluryco.com/curtis/naip.htm>
- 4 At the time of his death Harriman controlled the Union Pacific, the Southern Pacific, the Saint Joseph and Grand Island, the Illinois Central, the Central of Georgia, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, and the Wells Fargo Express Company.
- 5 Trained as a naturalist Grinnell became a central figure as advocate for environmental protection, habitat conservation and studies on Native Americans. See http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/information/biography/fghij/grinnell_george_bird.html
- 6 For more detail see: Christopher Lyman, *The Vanishing Race and other Illusions: Photographs by Edward S. Curtis*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1982.
- 7 Curtis's caption to the first large plate in the portfolio accompanying vol. 1: 'The thought which this picture is meant to convey is that the Indians as a race, already shorn of their tribal strength and stripped of their primitive dress, are passing into the darkness of an unknown future. Feeling that the picture expresses so much of the thought that inspired the entire work, the author has chosen it as the first of the series'.
- 8 Myers, quoted by Mick Gidley, *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian, Incorporated*. Cambridge & New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 144. Gidley currently presents the most detailed account on Curtis.
- 9 'In 1935 *The North American Indian Corporation* liquidated its assets and the materials remaining from the project were sold to the Charles Lauriat Company [...]. Lauriat acquired 19 unsold sets of *The North American Indian*, thousands of individual prints, sheets of unbound paper, and the handmade copper photogravure plates. The company found buyers for the 19 sets and completed an additional 50 using remainder material and photogravures printed on a different paper, bringing the total number of sets marketed to 291. What went unsold eventually ended up in the Lauriat Company's basement and was forgotten for nearly 30 years.' See <http://www.fluryco.com/curtis/naip.htm>.
- 10 See in more detail *Edward S. Curtis's North American Indian Photographic Images*. Library of Congress, American Memory Project. Digitized and presented by the Northwestern University Library. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ienhtml/curt-home.html>. The accompanying essays were written by Curtis specialists Mick Gidley, University of Leeds, England; David R. M. Beck, University of Montana, and Gerald Vizenor, University of California, Berkeley. Some parts of the texts are 'school book' examples of attempts in political correctness, but generally the diverse approaches of the authors make it clear that the meaning of Curtis's work is still intriguingly open to question more than seventy five years after the NAI publication.
- 11 The population has grown considerably since then. There were 2,663,818 Native Americans living in the USA and Alaska in 2000, according to: www.census.gov/popest/archives/files/MRSF-01-US1.html#ove.
- 12 Remember that in the 19th century, following, for example, theories such as that of Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828), phrenologists made deductions that certain mental faculties and character traits are indicated by the configurations of the skull. Certain parts were not only associated with, for example, 'intelligence', but a 'sense of thieving'.

“Everyone ought to be careful in a city like this”

I wasn't really expecting too much from my first trip to Vienna in 2001 since I've never been a lover of the baroque. I anticipated it would be profoundly Habsburg country, Strauss and yet more Strauss, a brown, slow-moving Danube. Even the prospect of eating the famous cakes did not really appeal to me. Instead, I hoped there would be some delicious remnants of Art Nouveau, maybe cafes like those I found in Zurich; must look for Otto Wagner, turn of the century is more my time: Klimpt, Schiele, go to the Kunst-historisches, of course, Albertina for the prints. No matter, surely something interesting will turn up, it usually does.

The journey in from the airport to Vienna is horrendous as you pass the gigantic petrol complex, the endless factories, belching fumes; least it's all going to be out here, I hope. Sure enough, Vienna looms large as the grand gesture to a past empire. As we sail past wide boulevards and baroque statues, out of the car window, did I really notice the tiny cinema lights blinking *The Third Man*? Is it really still playing here? Of course. Vienna! And had I not just passed that great big wheel? Now, there's a little thought to play around with.

'You are here now, Alistair. What do you want to go to the Prater Amusement Park for? Do you want to go up the Wheel?' 'No, I just want to verify that it is the same wheel, *The Third Man* wheel, where Harry Lime, Orson Welles, does his looking down on the dots routine – £20,000 each, you'll take the money, won't you? Straight out of the temptation of Christ in the desert'. And that bit when he gives that smirky, slimy smile, something about the cuckoo clock is the only result of all that hundreds of years of Swiss democracy and ordered living, but out of the carnage of the Renaissance, instead, we get all that art. You remember? He made that bit up, it wasn't in the script. Brilliant. One teacher at Art School used to say: out of chaos comes order but out of order comes boredom.

In the night, on the way back to the tram downtown, the street cleaners were spraying the cobbles with water, all glistening, against the sound of the horses' hooves clomping; *The Third Man* began to play for real in my head. It was a bit like the time I was in Grand Central Station in New York, and there it was, I recognised it, the ticket kiosk in Hitchcock's *North by North West*. 'What made you think the movies were not real', said the waiter in the hamburger parlour, as I told him that being in New York was like playing in several movies simultaneously, and that was before I ended up sleeping in the Chelsea Hotel, in homage to Dylan Thomas

I said, but maybe it was also for the *Chelsea Girls*, that fore-runner of *Big Brother* reality TV. How they all hated Andy Warhol then but look at them all now glued to drivel!

Directly across from where I was staying in Vienna was a cemetery. I looked over and wonder if it had that long road at the end of the film where that snow queen Anna Schmidt, Alida Valli, walks past the affable American writer Holly Martins, Joseph Cotton, pulling on his fag? Wrong cemetery, should I visit the other one on the map? I would if they had given Mozart a decent grave when he died. Come to think of it, there are so many squares here at night time that look straight out of the film, especially Josefsplatz – this is it, isn't it? And what did happen to Anna? I always wanted to know. Did she stay on in Vienna and look after that cat? 'He only liked Harry.' Is this why I have this silly feeling that I have been here in a previous life? Is this why I feel familiar with names of things, places, faces even. So where is the kiosk where Harry Lime disappears into the sewers below? Is it this one in the Freyung Square? I walk round it, looking for a door. They don't have doors. Maybe Health and Safety have stopped letting people disappear into the sewers. Next square, Am Hof, looks familiar. Is this it? Walk the empty streets at night and you start looking at the walls to see if you are projecting your shadow. That must have been artifice, nobody has a shadow *that* size, not in this light! I've just walked past the Sacher Hotel, you remember the *Sacher Hotel*, don't you? No Austrians allowed. It was also where Graham Greene stayed to write the script.

The Third Man film, directed by Carol Reed, still plays three times a week in Vienna, 52 weeks a year, and has done virtually since its release in 1950. You can, of course, go and see *Der Dritte Mann* instead. What did *they* make of it? At the time? I would have thought that they would have hated it by now because it became Vienna for the rest of us. It keeps climbing the charts, world wide, in the top tens of all time. It is by far the most successful British film ever made, on any account, including the box office. And to think poor Orson Welles, in his need for money ('Unless I do something new I get bored with everything'), accepted the fabulous payment then of \$100,000, but turned down the offer of 20% of the royalties. No wonder he used to say he directed it! I've always bracketed *The Third Man* with Italian neo-realism, it's the British equivalent, very near to Visconti's *Ossessione* (1942) and Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (1945). It too was filmed (mostly) in the actual locations, had



Alistair Crawford, *Dreimäderlhaus*, Vienna, 2005

a dedicated screenplay that respects our intelligence, treats our moral and political dilemmas seriously, with that search for the authenticity of experience, life as lived, hence no translation of the German texts in *The Third Man*, important as they were: 'I thought liberation would be different', and all filmed in the wake of the destruction of the city and its people at the end of the War. The film had a nice twist. I wonder if the Viennese saw it at the time? Did they notice the typical British, Graham Greene, irony at its heart? That the new crook to take over from the fascists was none other than the new 'liberator', the American (the film was made in the heat of post-war politics, the Russians were to hang on to half of the country until 19 September 1955). Amazing that the megalomaniac American co-producer David O Selznick, back in Hollywood providing the finance, never seemed to notice that bit. Did the Viennese, that first time round, recognise that the man who did not know *anything* about anything, about what was going on, anywhere, was Holly Martins, the two bit author of *Oklahoma Kid*, who had never heard of James Joyce but knew his Zane Gray, who was the crook's best buddy, and yet another American – all bluster and no brains. I hope they liked all that, at the time, even if the film portrays the seedy world of corruption, power and treason, of the occupied Austrians caught in the middle, in poverty. No doubt they were grateful at the time to the generous Americans under the Marshall Plan for pouring millions into Austria's reconstruction. The film was careful to

avoid the politics, avoid mentioning the *Anschluss*, but it was all there, in the images, even in the precocious treachery of a 'blonde blue-eyed' child which indicated that all that stuff might well return again, when it suited.

Today *The Third Man* is still to be found in the streets of Vienna, especially at night, when Baron Kurtz, Ernst Deutsch, in the fur-collared coat, not a real man's thing, still walks his dinky dog past you at the Mozart's Café. Speaking of clothes, I could not feel at home anywhere as well as in this place; as the very last man in Britain to keep wearing the misnamed 'sports jacket', I stepped out one morning and gave up counting within a few minutes when I reached 34. It's a great place for me to be anonymous. Maybe it's the *reserve* of the place that makes it so seductive, just like the seductive zither music of Anton Karas, always hinting that there is something else going on. It is also like living in Britain in the 1950s/60s, no binge louts here to contend with, just polite, well mannered youth, and the lady in her white camel coat can still travel the tram late at night without getting chewing gum stuck all over it. Even the food is like we used to have, home cooking, and the man says good night to you as you pass on the street on your way home. Did they not have a cultural nervous breakdown when their empire collapsed? Why only us? And in the night the number plates of the cars that whisk past endlessly come from across the whole of Europe; they criss and cross this strategic hub, the *new* EU centre of a very old Europe. Vienna, quietly, tells



Alistair Crawford, *Hoher Markt, Vermählungsbrunnen 1732, Vienna, 2005*

you just how much *we* have changed, and changed not much for the better.

I've just been on yet another trip there this November. Off I went one day to meet the Duke of Kent, at the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate 55 years of the British Council in Vienna. Not that it had anything to do with me, but with the photographer Erich Lessing, my original connection to Vienna, who was having a small photography exhibit at the presentation as it was also the commemoration of the final liberation of Austria in 1955. He could not attend so I went to accompany his wife, Traudl, to do the needful. Remember the protocol, I told the Austrians: royal guest last to enter, first to leave, you can't leave until the royal leaves. What? Did those Habsburgs not teach you people anything? When the second lady with the clip board asks me the same questions: who are you and what are you doing here, and I was trying to say who I was, what I was, I remembered our friend Holly Martins, the author of *The Lone Ranger of Santa Fee*, who ended up as a mistaken guest at an similar 'British Council' cultural event; this all made me feel likewise: 'If he looks at you then I need to know who you are, I will have to introduce you, and then you will tell him what you do', she said, they said. Then the British Ambassador strode over, with his clip board, extended his hand as he asked who I was but before I could get out half a sentence he mentally switched me off and strode off, leaving my hand suspended in the air. Must be bright, I thought, knew instantly I opened my mouth that I was of no use whatsoever to him. I wondered if he has the same skill with goldfish? Then the tall thin man in the sharpest suit I've seen in years finally arrived and I had to quickly apologise to the Austrians because I had promised that they were going to meet the Tsar of Russia, the one with the dreadful Austrian wife. I sent the message down the line, 'Got the wrong Duke, I meant his brother Michael'.

I danced expertly round the sharp suit so that he could not look me in the eye and give the clip boards stage fright. Come to think of it, the suit was very like *The Third Man's* quintessential Englishman, Mr Crabbin, Alfred Hyde-White, who organised the 'Cultural Propaganda' event and here I was, like Holly, up to the same mischief.

In the exhibit, on a little table, was a big book on *The Third Man*. Traudl was looking at it along with another lady. I had already spotted it which was why I had become Holly Martins in this strange gathering, so I waded in: *Third Man* this, I said, *Third Man* that. 'How do you know all this?', the lady said. 'Because I teach neorealist cinema and *The Third Man* for me is a neorealist film'. It turned out that the lady was Brigitte Timmermann, the author of the book who knows more about this film than any other living soul: *The Third Man's Vienna. Celebrating a Film Classic*, Vienna, Shippen Rock Ltd, 2005, 416 pages, copiously illustrated, landscape format, 23.5 x 31cm, at 49 euro ISBN 3 9502050 1 2, in German or English. It is remarkable achievement to be able to find and to put together such amazing details as this text provides. Now that was worth coming for, I thought! Something interesting always turns up!

It is a wonderful book that should be on the shelves of every movie lover. It is a real enthusiast's treat crammed with so much information that it makes you want to ask even more. You could run a PhD programme on this film, as Timmermann eloquent text clearly demonstrates, not just on the making of the film in its every conceivable aspect, but on all the *associations*. It is like surfing the Internet; such as Graham Greene's clandestine world, his fondness for the traitor Kim Philby, and the other spys he knew in Vienna, including the British producer of the film, Alexandra Korda (I think Greene continued as a spy all his life). The only part I regretted as being too short was that devoted to the camera-

Alistair Crawford, *Hoher Markt, Vermählungsbrunnen 1732, Vienna, 2005*



man, the Australian photographer, Robert Kraskev (1913-1981). Like his work for David Lean's *Brief Encounter*, he had few equals in the photography of night, of black and white: 'You can't do black and white photography better than this' commented Guy Hamilton, Assistant Director to *The Third Man*. Somebody please do a book, a television programme, on this photographer's brilliance.

That evening, after my pretence at the British Council, I was 'performing' at the WestLicht Gallery in *An Audience with Alistair Crawford* so I invited Brigitte to come, if she could, to hear Zane Gray v James Joyce again: 'What do you do?' she said, 'I pretend to be famous.' I was so glad she was able to come because I ended with one of my little 'postcard poems' which I had written on that first visit to Vienna in 2001. I wonder what *they* will make of this, thought, with some trepidation. I explained, before I read it, that, to a British audience, 'Esterhazy' is not the common Austrian name but a particular spy in John Le Carre's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* which also ran on television and was very well known in the UK and that, no doubt, since a certain movie was still playing in Vienna three times a week, they would get the meaning!

A Trip to Vienna 2001 – Kaffehauskultur

Eat your dobostorte, sachertorte, apfelstrudel, mohnstrudel, topfonknodel

I need a mouthful of geschichte, und geschichtekunst, und geschichtekultur
to cook my geschichten gedicht.

Sich voll slopfen mit, we gorge on platefuls of guglhupf
und rehrucken und palatschinken

Gobble , gobble, gobble your goose.

How was it for you?

As they dream of Habsburgs, Habsburgs, Habsburgs,
and twiddle and tweak a thousand Baroque gold nipples in
their sleep.

I even saw a man in the night doorway,
his shoes caught in the street light.

With smiling lips, he bit
into an esterhazytorte.

Yes, I did find the famous doorstep. What joy! It is still there, tangible, alive, and yes, by now, I was beginning to photograph Vienna as if it were a document of *The Third Man*. The unreality of the film had become my reality once again, a new reality, in addition to the experience of that first viewing. So I still wonder: what is it that documentary photographers actually photograph?

I am looking forward to going on my next visit to Vienna now that I have found out that Brigitte Timmermann also runs *The Third Man Tour* (). I can now also visit the brand new *Third Man Museum* that has just opened (www.3mpc.net). I am so glad the Viennese like our British masterpiece, pity we do not seem to be able to make them like that anymore. Have we settled for a cuckoo clock instead?

© Alistair Crawford. First published in: *INSCAPE* magazine 61/Winter 2005/06

William Bishop and the publication *INSCAPE*

A first serious interest in photography began for me while pursuing a degree in the history of art in 1975 at Leicester Polytechnic. The opportunity to develop and print my own photographs created a deeper involvement with the medium. Later in 1979 an interest in the history of photography developed while doing an MA degree in the history and theory of art at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. My MA dissertation was on the first photographer in England, the inventor of the calotype process, W H Fox Talbot. A study of Talbot revealed to me the incredible depth of photography; its limit is the mind, and within the mind, you have the link to an individual person. What communicates is not just the subject, but also a human quality. Later this is what Paul Hill's workshops identified for me.

An essay on Talbot as an artist was accepted by the *British Journal of Photography* in 1982 and this gave me a connection to the *BJP*. I subsequently became a regular contributor during the 1980's with reviews and features. The decade of the 1980's was the time of consolidation of the independent movement in British photography which became my special interest. Later I self-published a paperback on the rise of this movement in Britain and the theory behind it: *Realising Personal Truths in Photography* (1997) became the title of this book.

A small independent group called the *Box Brownies* published an article in *Creative Camera* (10/1986) which championed independent work at that time. The article, in the 'Talkback' series, was titled: 'The amateur photographer is a neglected and patronised species' and The *Box Brownies* wanted to establish an Independent Network. They soon established a list of around 200 interested people who received a series of newsletters. However the sixth and final newsletter carried news of their disappointment at not receiving a grant from the Arts Council of Great Britain to continue the work and so the newsletter was to end with the invitation that if anyone else wanted to take on the challenge to meet the need which had been identified this would be welcome.

With my commitment to writing on independent photography I was also interested in the cause of communication among independent photographers and so decided to take up the challenge. I wrote an article announcing a new newsletter. This was published in the *BJP* on 2 April 1992 under the title: 'The Personal Initiative'. A pilot issue of my newsletter was sent out to people on the Box Brownie Independent

Network list and to others who responded to the article in the *BJP* and sufficient subscriptions arrived to finance the first issue of *Inscape*, published in the Autumn of 1992.

The newsletter quickly developed into an arena for sharing ideas and images and then into a magazine with a suggested theme for each issue. This need for an independent outlet for publication of work still exists today and so 'Inscape', derived from a word coined by the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, continues to serve this need, as well as providing occasional exhibition and book reviews.

Inscape itself can be seen in the context of the growth of independent photography in Britain from the late 1960's, which then witnessed the development of the course in Creative Photography at Trent Polytechnic and Derby College of Higher Education during the 1970's which, in turn, led to the workshop scene pioneered by the photographer Paul Hill and the setting up of support groups, such as London Independent Photography in 1987 and the Royal Photographic Society's Contemporary Group in 1989. This is recorded in the book *Realising Personal Truths*, including the philosophy and theory behind this type of personal work, together with some pictures by leading practitioners.

Independent photography itself can be seen as part of the movement in aspirations towards personal freedom that revealed itself in Britain during the 1970's but which has been discouraged in recent years by increasing pressures in our society towards conformity. The role of *Inscape* therefore in our contemporary context is to provide a platform for personal work in photography, free from commercial or other distorting pressures.

My own ideas evolved through reading books about photography and viewing slides and exhibitions. I worked voluntarily at the library of the Photographer's Gallery in London for a number of years during the 80's and also as a tutor at the Working Men's' College, London. I started attending workshops – first at The Photographer's Place in Derbyshire, ran by Paul Hill, then, in 1987, I went to two workshops which proved to be important: one by Paul Caponigro and another by Raymond Moore. This encouraged me to complete my first serious body of work: a series of photographs which became my first solo exhibition: *Sun Drawings* shown at Camden Arts Centre in 1989. My most recent long-term body of work is titled *Ways of Water*. Using a 6 x 12 cm, or 2:1 format with a wide angle lens has meant learning to see afresh through this format.

In addition to the magazine, *Inscape Small Books* is a relatively new venture with Virginia Khuri's book, *Macchu Picchu* (2004) being a pilot publication as an experiment to make available a book with high production qualities with inspiring content which might otherwise not be published. With *Realising Personal Truths* – the title taken from a quote by Paul Hill – I wanted to document the movement in British photography that came out of Paul Hill's workshop period. I tried to identify its elements and where this trend towards personal work led. My researches concluded that this stream existed in photography right from the beginning; from Fox Talbot onwards there is an element of the individual manifest in the photograph. There was an irony to the publication of this manuscript since it was actually written before the idea of *Inscape* was born in 1992 although, in a sense, it led logically to the founding of *Inscape* itself.

Inscape magazine began by appealing to the grass roots. Then as I developed my own interests from the early 80's onward these interests entered into my photography and worldview. Recent issues of *Inscape* have carried the statement:

'The philosophy of *Inscape* is based on the understanding that the human being is a reflection or microcosm of the wider external world or cosmos and that therefore the inner world and the outer meet in the consciousness of the individual, and into this 'space' each person projects their own uniqueness or unique combination of soul qualities. And since photography is a reflection of the outer but involves selection by an individual, then it follows that the inner world of 'meaning' and the outer world of appearances meet in the photographic image.'

This reflection of the macrocosm, the cosmos inside the human being, relates to the perennial philosophy. Alas this not a popular concept within our contemporary culture but it has been in existence far longer. The whole idea behind *Inscape* is this element of the individual, the *you*, the personal truth. What *Inscape* is trying to do is to support and nourish this. Gerard Manley Hopkins notes: 'Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape of speech for the inscape's sake – and therefore the inscape must be dwelt on.' The word, 'inscape' was used also by Hopkins in his journals to mean an impression of some (beautiful) aspect of nature so strongly felt that it was preserved in the memory – the remembered image became the inscape. 'Inscape – Observations of Nature: When the passion (of the observation of beauty in nature) has subsided it is consigned to my treasury



William Bishop, *INSCAPE* No 59

of explored beauty, and acknowledged with admiration and interest ever after'. Here, for example, is Hopkins' diary entry for 21 October 1868: 'From a height in Richmond Park saw trees in the river flat below inscaped in distinctly projected, crisp and almost hard, rows of loaves, their edges, especially at the top, being a little fixed and shaped with shadow.'

So we can take it that the word 'inscape', also concerns an inner landscape which was previously an outer one. This is very much the territory of *Inscape* as a photographic magazine, with its implied link to personality.

Debates which have regularly arisen over the objectivity of documentary photography have never been satisfactorily resolved. *Inscape's* stance is that even the most documentary of photographs inevitably includes a 'way of seeing' and within that viewpoint something is inflected from the inner world of the photographer. But *Inscape's* real ground of interest is those photographs (the documentary aspect is inevitable) where the photographer as a person helps to create the photographic impression on the light-sensitive surface. The emphasis is on *personal work*.

From its beginning in 1968 *Creative Camera* magazine served the needs of this independent category of photographer in Britain but in the 1990s it moved into fresh territory, rather leaving the traditional group out in the cold, or perhaps the traditional independent may have stayed in a time-warp. *Inscape* therefore took on the task of providing a forum for those workers within the continuing tradition



William Bishop, Hanwell 1997

which derives from Stieglitz. I say the ‘continuing tradition’ because I think the tradition is still being extended. The ‘philosophy’ comes out of the photographer’s approach to their work and its subject. For the idea behind *Inscape* is not to have a magazine which dictates from a centre, but to have a forum which can be fed from autonomous or independent sources around the British Isles and beyond.

Here is a fairly typical response from a reader to a questionnaire posed in issue 18 (1996):

‘I have found it extremely difficult to answer the questionnaire. Like the magazine itself it doesn’t lend itself to pat answers, and herein perhaps lies one of the answers to the question: ‘What makes *Inscape* worthwhile to you?’ For me it is the magazine’s ability continually to ask questions. This openness to new ideas and approaches, an ability to reflect such a wide range of credos, is the secret of its continued liveliness, maintaining the challenge of the unpredictable. Occasionally this challenge brings real gems.

Inscape’s success also stems from its wholly independent and democratic stance. The Editor can (and probably does) publish virtually all contributions, creating what is probably a unique national and international network for photographers. We should never take this for granted, as those of us in the south-west England know only too well. *Light Reading*, our own independent photography journal, ceased publication after South West Arts withdrew funding.

Question 3: ‘What don’t you like about *Inscape*?’ – That’s another tough one. I feel the whole area of subsidised photography has become far too bound up with current vogues and dominated by cliques. It is also wholly admirable to produce a magazine attempting to provide some antidote to an increasingly alienated and alienating world. So why is it that I sometimes feel slightly ill at ease with

the more ‘caring, sharing’ aspects of *Inscape*? I would like more of an acknowledgement of the need to operate in the world as it is, to survive the pollution of the oil slick, without losing touch with our own personal directions. The sheltered island is always beguiling, but I believe that to become too insular is ultimately to risk becoming stranded, unable to progress.

And last but not least Question 5: ‘If *Inscape* were to cease publication do you think anyone would notice?’ – *Inscape* has established a unique network for independent photographers, where regular contributors feel like (and in some cases are) old friends. To lose the magazine would be as bad as losing touch with those friends.’ – (Abridged from the reply by *Ian Chapman*.)

For fourteen years the quarterly contents of each issue continue to surprise its Editor!

William Bishop

Realising Personal Truths (ISBN 09530290 0 X) is available to ESHPh readers for the special price of £7 which includes postage (Outside UK add £3 for postage). Make cheque drawn on a UK bank in sterling payable to *INSCAPE* and send to William Bishop, 22a Gladwell Road, London N8 9AA. Alternatively send payment by Paypal to editor@inscapephotography.co.uk

Subscription to the quarterly magazine *INSCAPE* is £13 (UK) or £15 outside UK (Payment as above). *Inscape* is a quarterly forty-page, A5 format b/w magazine using gloss art paper.

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Lucca Chmel. Photographic Interpretations of Austrian Architecture in the 1950s and 1960s

Architectural photography assumes a substantively as well as a qualitatively pre-eminent position in the multifaceted *œuvre* of the photographer Lucca Chmel (1911–1999). Beginning in 1933 in Vienna, Chmel was active in numerous fields, including landscape, portrait and theatrical photography, but, over the course of Austrian reconstruction following World War II, she came to specialise in capturing contemporary architecture. Between 1948 and 1972 she worked for architects and designers who were among those who played key roles in determining what was being built in Austria, and especially Vienna, such as: Oswald Haerdtl, Erich Boltensern, Roland Rainer, Max Fellerer & Eugen Wörle, Theiss & Jaksch, Anton Potyka and Georg Lippert.

In the light of the size and significance of the architectural firms that commissioned Chmel's work, as well as the tremendous number and diversity of the buildings, interiors and architectural models she photographed, she became an important chronicler of the development of Austrian architecture during the 1950s and 1960s. But she was also more than that. The photographer's creative power brought forth pictorial achievements that go beyond documentation and constitute a subjective interpretation of the forms of her time. She transformed post-war architectural Modernism in photographs that were aesthetic masterpieces in their own right and thus she developed a very specific way of looking at the architectural styles of these decades. This article examines Lucca Chmel's aesthetic positions and the specific visual vocabulary of her photographic portrayals of contemporary architecture. This undertaking encompasses an inquiry into the general conditions operative at the time, as well as the functions of architectural photography as a visual arts genre. Also, since every photographer's subjective view and mode of conceiving a photograph are conditioned by cultural and historical parameters, this elaboration will begin with a synopsis of the most important milestones of her life and work.

Lucca Chmel was the product of an educated, well-to-do, bourgeois milieu. She was born on 5 December 1911 in Vienna and grew up in a family that was interested in art, music and theatre. At first Chmel wanted to be a painter. She received private instruction for three years and in May 1931 passed the entrance exam for Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts, but she suddenly decided to pursue photography instead. She had come to hold the opinion that photography's aesthetic possibilities would offer better opportunities to implement her ideas.¹

From 1931 to 1933, Lucca Chmel attended Vienna's *Graphische Lehr-und Versuchsanstalt*. Her instructor in the Department of Photography, Rudolf Koppitz (1884–1936), had an international reputation. His capacity to stage and formalize reality, as well as his dramatically atmospheric, almost mystical use of light, particularly impressed the young photographer; additional stylistic parallels were his highly developed awareness of how to frame photographs with well-balanced, often stringent compositions.

Lucca Chmel was initially able to make a name for herself as a landscape photographer. Some of her pictures of historical buildings, Austrian cultural monuments and picturesque stretches of countryside were the results of freelance work, others were commissioned for tourist advertisements. In early 1937 she was appointed to an assistant position at the *Graphische Lehr-und Versuchsanstalt* but resigned to pursue an independent career in February 1939. She acquired, from Clara Thury, Foto Clairon, a portrait studio located at Loquaiplatz 13, Vienna.² Between 1938 and 1945 she was, at least outwardly, in accord with the political powers and became a member of the Nazi Party in July 1940.³ This doubtlessly helped her professionally and soon she enjoyed a flourishing career as a theatrical photographer. Until the end of World War II, she was Vienna's most sought-after and successful photographer of the stage, but another specialty was photographing sculpture and handicraft objects. In the winter of 1944–45, she photographed the late gothic choir stalls of Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral that were destroyed in April 1945 by a fire originally set by civilian plunderers in a nearby building during the clash in the streets of Vienna of the Wehrmacht and the Red Army. As a former National Socialist, Chmel immediately reported for duty to clear the rubble. During this four-month work detail she produced a series of several hundred images of the ruins of St. Stephen's. In doing so, she formed a visual language that went beyond the documentation of a damaged edifice; one that clearly reveals that the photographer was deeply touched and enormously fascinated by what she beheld: 'The irreplaceability, yes of course I sensed that, but I was actually fascinated by the structure itself. The burned out cathedral fascinated me because it was so beautifully naked.'⁴

In the late 1940s, Lucca Chmel could follow her personal inclination and professionally specialise in the photography of contemporary architecture. She was in a position to respond to the demands for the photography that had arisen as a result



Lucca Chmel, Vienna State Opera (architect: Erich Boltzenstern), Vienna 1955. Credit Austrian National Library



Lucca Chmel, Austrian Parliament (architects: Max Fellerer, Eugen Wörle), Vienna 1956. Credit Austrian National Library

of post-war Austrian reconstruction. The architectural photographer's task was to portray buildings and their interior appointments as advantageously as possible and in a way that would make a powerful impact on the viewer and, accordingly, would be effective publicity for the architect. Even if documenting a piece of architecture, and thus recording exactly what had been built in a factual way, was an additional element of an assignment, the task that the photograph was *actually* meant to fulfil was to publicise architecture; to showcase it. From 1950 onwards, most of Chmel's photographs were published in the two leading Austrian architectural digests of the day (both founded in 1946): *Der Aufbau*, published by Vienna's Municipal Planning Bureau, and *Der Bau*, put out by the Austrian Association of Architects.

The generation of architects who could resume their professional work after World War II, most of whom had already been active during the interwar period, had a productive and creative associate in Lucca Chmel. When reconstruction really got going in Austria in 1947–48, she already had an impressive list of credits and clients⁵ and was by no means unknown. Furthermore, she maintained good contacts with the municipal administration of the City of Vienna, the era's most important commissioner of architectural projects. The 1950s and early 1960s were Chmel's most prolific and successful years. She was considered *the* photographer of architecture in Austria; her appointment diary was totally booked and she headed a studio with a staff of around four. By 1956 she had assembled top name clientele, most of whom contin-

ued to give her work until she retired in 1972, such as: she photographed numerous espresso bars for Oswald Haerdtl, as well as the Felten & Guillaume trade fair pavilion (1953); for Erich Boltzenstern, the so-called Ringturm, the downtown office tower built for the Wiener Städtische Insurance Co. (1955), the rebuilt Vienna State Opera (1955) and the Vienna Stock Exchange (1958); for Roland Rainer, the Böhlerhaus and the Wiener Stadthalle (both 1958); for Max Fellerer & Eugen Wörle, the Gänsehäufel swimming complex (1955) and the National Council's assembly hall in the Austrian Parliament (1956); for Eugen Wachberger, the National Bank (1953) as well as the DDSG's shipping pier in Linz (1958); for Fritz Pfeffer, Vienna's Schwechat Airport (1960); for Anton Potyka, many night clubs and cafés including Cobenzl (1951); for Theiss & Jaksch, the Nordstern Building (1960); for Robert Kotas, numerous movie theatres such as the Forum (1951); and for Georg Lippert, the Bundesländer Insurance Co. (1961) and the Hoffmann-La Roche office building (1962).

The way Lucca Chmel went about her work can be described as precise and purposeful in the pursuit of photographic art; she was also somewhat of a prima donna and rather complicated. Yet her equipment was simple: she worked with a tripod-mounted Linhof, 13 x 18 baseboard camera equipped with a normal and a wide-angle lens. She also used an exposure meter, as well as simple floodlights for studio and interior work. She preferred glass-plate negatives, which can be assessed as a mark of high-quality photography. Even in the



Lucca Chmel, *Wiener Stadthalle* (architect: Roland Rainer), Vienna 1958. Credit Austrian National Library

late 1960s, when these were difficult or even impossible to procure, Chmel only grudgingly used roll film for professional assignments. She was equally sceptical about colour photography, as it did not correspond to her aesthetic concepts. Her eye – her faculty of perception – was trained in black and white photography: ‘I no longer saw in colour! I only saw in black-and-white. I entered the room, walked through it once, and I knew: ‘Aha, the floodlight has to go over there in the corner!’⁶ Her watchwords were: ‘Modelling with Light.’ After getting an impression of the space she would be photographing in, she meticulously arranged the floodlights which were 500 watt lamps of simple construction mounted on tripods. These floodlights (as well as the light sources available in the space) would be turned on in stages and sometimes rearranged during exposures which usually lasted about 30 seconds, although sometimes they could be as long as 30 minutes. In addition she also let the lighting fixtures that were a part of the space’s interior décor shine for a few seconds. Some of her competitors regarded the tremendous effort that she put into fine tuning lighting conditions as anachronistic and simply superfluous, since the prevailing trend was to use a visual vocabulary that was emphatically cut and dried; in the case of interior photographs the use of additional artificial lights to achieve a dramatically heightened effect was considered inappropriate. Nevertheless Chmel regarded the way she utilised artificial light to deliberately stage a photograph as a creative act. So too in her exterior work, light was deployed as an essen-

tial design element; Chmel had a highly developed feel for the effects that could be created by light and shadow, and she knew how the appearance of a building could be modified with changing light conditions. The way the photographer worked was both highly exacting and time-consuming. Her approach to a piece of architecture was initially an intuitive process; the second phase was systematic, whereby the exposures made in conjunction with her first impression were usually devoted to capturing a structure’s most intense, high-definition perspectives.

In summary, it can be stated that Lucca Chmel’s post-1945 architectural photography is clearly within the technical and aesthetic tradition of the 1930s. This is evident above all from the photographer’s utilisation of lighting effects to visually stage three dimensional spaces in ways that transfigure them or aim to create dramatic moods. Lucca Chmel received her training from 1931 to 1933 at Vienna’s *Graphische Lehr-und Versuchsanstalt*, where her instructor, the late Pictorialist Rudolf Koppitz, strongly influenced her aesthetic approach. During the interwar period, a time when the *Neues Sehen* and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* had long since been blazing innovative trails in Germany, conventional motifs were being maintained in Austria, and especially at the *Graphische* where emphasis was still being placed on well composed photographic imagery and where atmospheric values continued to be the determinative creative model. Nevertheless, during the 1930s, formal aesthetic aspects of these new tendencies in photography belatedly established themselves in



Lucca Chmel, Vienna's Schwechat Airport (architects: Fritz Pfeffer, Kurt Klauudy, Adolf Hoch, Anton Schimka), Vienna 1960. Credit Austrian National Library

Austria and also became evident in her work; for example, in radically composed close-up shots or extreme shooting angles from above or below which produced spatial distortions. In her pictorial conceptions, Chmel repeatedly came up with graphic correspondences for formal and/or material-aesthetic aspects of the architecture she was commissioned to depict. In numerous instances, her pictorial solutions seem like visual dialogues with the architectural-artistic intentions of her day. The increasingly factual style that architectural photography again generally evoked during the 1950s and 1960s in the German speaking countries of Europe, and the point of view that accentuated the clearly structured geometric aspects of buildings and interiors, are distinctly presented in Chmel's oeuvre. In this respect, her work is in accordance with general tendencies in architectural photography of that period. Nevertheless, combined with Lucca Chmel's use of lighting, this factual style is ingeniously undermined and juxtaposed to a counterpoint in the form of dramatically effective graphic expression. This is exactly what engenders the distinctive element of tension that pervades her creative work in the field of architectural photography, and it is also in precisely this respect that her graphic vocabulary is congruent with the topos of moderated Modernism that was typical of post-1945 Austria. The aesthetic continuity that links Lucca Chmel's architectural photography of the 1950s and 1960s with that of the 1930s ultimately finds its correspondence in the architecture itself.

Notes

- 1 Lucca Chmel interview with Annemarie Kratochwill. 'Mit Licht und Schatten. Lebensbericht einer erfolgreichen Photographin' in *Die Presse*, Vienna, 13 March 1960, p. 45.
- 2 No indication has been found that Clara Túry was of Jewish descent or that her studio was Aryanized, that is, she was forced to turn it over to a non-Jew. (Communication to the author from the Austrian State Archives, Archive of the Republic, Vienna, 7 October 2003).
- 3 Austrian State Archives, Archive of the Republic, District File (Gauakte) 56982.
- 4 Lucca Chmel in Gang Art (ed.) *Die Form der Zeit. Architektur der 50er Jahre in Wien* photographiert von Margherita Krischanitz und Lucca Chmel, (exhibition catalogue), Vienna, Böhlerhaus 1992, p. 7.
- 5 Heinrich Thomas, foreword by Viktor Matejka, 'Lucca Chmel' *Bilderbuch Österreich*, Vienna, Globus-Verlag 1947; Anton Macku, 'Lucca Chmel' *Der Wiener Stephansdom nach dem Brand im April 1945*, Franz Deuticke, 1947.
- 6 See Chmel, *Bilderbuch Österreich*, p. 8.

Further literature

Gabriele Hofer, Lucca Chmel. *Architekturfotografie 1945–1972. Zur Repräsentation österreichischer Nachkriegsmoderne im fotografischen Bild*. Vienna, Praesens 2006.

Gabriele Hofer, Uwe Schögl (ed.): Lucca Chmel. *Architekturfotografie 1945–1970*. (exhibition catalogue), Passau, Klinger 2004.

Gabriele Hofer, 'Architektur im Bild. Lucca Chmel und die österreichische Nachkriegsmoderne', in Uwe Schögl (ed.), *Im Blickpunkt. Die Fotosammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, (exhibition catalogue), Haymon-Verlag, Innsbruck, 2002, p. 152–160.

European Ramblings From Vérmező Park to Mars

When I began writing this column for *Fotóművészet*¹ it was already clear to me that it is possible not only to *travel* in space, but also, under compelling circumstances, in *time*. When I found in my mailbox an invitation to the exhibition bearing the title, *Light and Form – Modern Architecture and Photography 1927–1950*, I put it aside, as I was scheduled to leave on a trip a few days before the opening. Despite this, on the preview day there I stood in the crowd waiting for the doors to open, showing off my bandaged hand to friends. The two-week trip had turned into nine days of medical treatment because of a dog bite.

With my aching hand I gritted my teeth and perused the exhibition but after a few minutes I was completely spellbound by the atmosphere. In particular, this was due to the fact that Márton Ágh, Eszter Fodor, László Kalocsai and Judit Varga had designed an outstandingly well-planned setting for the exhibition, a rare occurrence in Hungary. Some of the photos were displayed on walls dressed to look like concrete and in a manner that was familiar to me; Roselyne Doszpoly framed my landscape photograph in her Paris gallery in the same way, pressed between two glass plates with no mounting. By utilizing this technique the wall structure shows through the transparent surface between the edge of the glass and the picture, thereby framing the photograph, whose entire surface is visible without even a millimetre covered up. The photos, taken of contemporary modern buildings constructed in the two decades or so after 1930 (110 photographs in the exhibition and 210 in the catalogue) reveal a Budapest that is entirely different from the city that I am familiar with since my childhood. The façades were not pock-marked with gun shots from the siege of 1944 and the revolution in October and November 1956; the walls of the stairways did not show the indelible traces of the repairs from when the electricity was changed over from 110 to 220 volts; and the trash cans bulging with garbage were nowhere to be seen. There were ‘only’ the buildings, bathed in clear air and unadulterated, radiating light, hitting them at the best angle imaginable with just the right amount.

Certain interiors imbued me with the distracting question of ‘haven’t I seen this before?’ Some of them may have been genuinely familiar, while for others it was clear that they had been destroyed or unrecognizably altered before I had been born. I began to mull over the reason why these pictures had triggered such emotions. Then my father appeared to me, just as he was forty years ago, standing in front of the book-

case pointing to a shelf and saying that now you can read these books too. In front of my eyes opened the alternative literature from between the two world wars. This is when I read Ödön Barsi-Rodríguez’s early science fiction novel², in which a Hungarian rocket to Mars takes off into space from the Vérmező Park in Budapest.

Having viewed the exhibition I was looking forward to the publication of the catalogue. Ibolya Cs. Plank, Virág Hajdú and Pál Rotoók’s Hungarian and English language publication issued by the Hungarian Office of Cultural Heritage under the title *Light and Form (Modern Architecture and Photography 1927–1950)* may only be referred to as a catalogue with euphemistic understatement. The essays embracing the topic in this massive hardbound album of 304, nearly A/4 size pages are accompanied by outstandingly plentiful and very well reproduced illustrations.

Ibolya Cs. Plank’s essay introduces the Modernism of Hungarian architectural photography through the work of, for the most part, Tivadar Kozelka (1895–1980) and Zoltán Seidner (1896–1960). The format of the book is also interesting for it exposes photographic material that in its era, between the two world wars, was produced for newspaper illustrations and professional publicity. In the time that has passed since the 1930s the photographs that appeared in the architectural journal *Ter és Forma* (Space and Form) have reached the status of both primary source documentation for the period and as artistic works. Through them we learn that the appeal of Modern architecture lay in its seeming simplicity. This was built upon the fact that the architects based their constructions not on the delicacy of the fine details, but on the proportions of the large surfaces, on contrasts, and on the tension between vertical and horizontal elements. This was the era of white houses. The smooth surfaces and the magic of opposites represented by the white walls and the dark window surfaces were transmitted unadulterated in the photographs. In fact the status and role of these elements was heightened in the photos to make the buildings stand out from their surroundings. Black and white photography was created by the almighty for the immortalization of modern architecture. *The Light and Form* exhibition and catalogue are also testimony to the fact that the era’s professional architectural photographers, such as Zoltán Seidner, Tivadar Kozelka and Ernő Bánó, completed their work of documenting the contemporary Modern architecture to perfection. They were masters of the technology and masters of the type



Zoltán Seidner, *Block of flats of Trust Pension Society, 29 Margit Boulevard, Budapest 1937*. Credit The National Office of Cultural Heritage

of composition that best suited Modern architecture. Nor is it insignificant from the point of view of posterity that they photographed these buildings immediately after their construction, in their original purity.

It is possible to discuss, compare and contrast the artists working in the ‘New Objectivity’ style, early cultivators of social photography, those that professed the theories of ‘Modern Photography’, and followers of the Bauhaus or the Hungarian styles, but it is not worthwhile. The overwhelming majority of the architectural photos shown in the book are not objects of debate. One could perhaps polemicise on whether these images document precisely what could be seen in reality, and it is certainly true that in certain cases the photographer added more than what the customer had expected. To formulate the question more specifically, when Seidner took the picture of the stairway looking down from above in the Pozsonyi Street apartment house was he simply taking a technical shot, and is a view from below a purely artistic photograph?

Instead of taking a position on this, let us look at two other Seidner photographs. In the case of the image depicting the terrace of the Járítz Villa, the adage that luck also aids the good photographer is shown to be true. Here, literally a half dozen rays of sunlight shine onto the terrace of this house on Baba Street; light must have got into the photographic plate holder. In the other, Seidner took his picture of the basement entrance hall of architect Károly Dávid Jr.’s villa when the



Marsovszky Elemérné, *Open corridor on the roof of the Budaörs Airport, Budapest 1937*. Credit: The National Office of Cultural Heritage

exterior sunlight shining through the entry way caused the line of shadow thrown by the frame of the door and window to extend precisely to the base of the pillar! One may call this luck, but instead I tend to think that it is beyond mere chance that Seidner’s eye picked this up. He noticed something of the architect’s basic conception, or, a bit more poetically, some of the soul of the house.

Looking through the photographs from *Light and Form* lines from Barsi’s science fiction novel yet again come to my mind: yes the writer knew and saw these buildings, and transferred their visual world to his spaceship and its destination...:

“K.J., the Hungarian radio announcer was famous for his composure. On Friday night however, when a hundred thousand people were swarming around Vérmező Park to witness the take-off of the spaceship, even he was caught up by some odd, unusual fever. He was essentially beside himself, and the vein on his forehead throbbed painfully when he spoke into the microphone. – Ladies and gentlemen! I am standing here with a sound damper at Vérmező Park. Around me the enormous crowd that has gathered here to witness the take-off of the first experimental rocket surges and roars like an ocean. The ring of humanity will become ever tighter around the edge of the roped off area – everyone wants to see the phenomenal rocket, or spaceship if you like, that proclaims the genius of one young Hungarian engineer.

The scene that I am looking at from here atop the tribune is like a dream. Every building on the Castle Hill has been lit up for this occasion. The countless windows make it look like a huge enchanted ocean liner rising up on the other side of the square, where colossally sized bunting displaying the national colours waves in the breeze. The lights and the flags are also celebrating; they celebrate the Hungarian who has given his marvellous invention to the country and to the whole world.

Finally the megaphones are silenced! All attention turns to the rocket. The spotlights draw together around its silvery hull. People’s eyes ache from the strong glare – a truly



Tivadar Kozelka, Control room of the Kelenföld Power Station, Budapest 1933. Credit The National Office of Cultural Heritage

enchancing sight! Now only a few minutes separate us from the ignition of the rocket. A few minutes and we shall know the great secret. Will the spirit of man be able to triumph over space and time, and with the help of technology overcome distance?

Burning, inquiring eyes watch the rocket, which rises up towards the clear, starry sky like a gigantic, luminous cone. The rocket is still a piece of stationary, lifeless matter, but in a few minutes flaming tongues of exploding gasses will hurl it upwards.

An explosion of horrific strength sounded after the announcer's words, which was answered by a long echo from the Buda Hills. The gathered multitude at the Vérmező Park stared completely mesmerized by the strange sparkling meteor, which for this one time did not fall from the cosmos to earth, but instead took off from there towards the starry heavens..."

Notes

- 1 The first version of this article was published in 2004 in *Fotóművészet*, issue 1–2, vol. 47, pp. 143–151. *Fotóművészet* (Photographic Art) is a periodical on photographic criticism, theory and history. Zoltán Fejér's column, which has appeared regularly in the magazine for years, deals in a subjective manner with exhibits he has seen during the course of his various travels.
- 2 Ödön Barsi-Rodriguez, born 1904, died 1963, Budapest. He trained for a career in the military, then finished at the Academy of Dramatic Arts, receiving a diploma as a director and then became a scholarship member of the National Theatre. In 1934 he won the first and second prizes in the Hungarian Radio's jubilee radio play competition. He then became one of the Radio's most popular directors of radio plays. In addition to his lively adventure stories he wrote biographies of Farkas Kemelen, Móric Sándor, Paganini and Móric Benyovszky. One of the important early works of Hungarian science fiction was his novel, entitled *The Spaceship*, published Budapest, 1944. Quotes used are from this story.

Beyond the Conventions of Architectural Photography

Throughout the history of architectural photography, and photography in general, a major concern and problem has been how to control light. Once controlled, light can be used for aesthetic purposes. As new processes and technology emerged, so changes in architectural photography occurred. This will probably continue to be the case. With the fast development of computers and digital imaging changes in photography, and architectural photography, are bound to emerge.

Within the genre of architectural photography a number of photographers can be said to have surpassed its conventions. Having mastered photography, architecture is used as a vehicle for personal expression, often by the control and manipulation of light. Of the photographers who have used architecture for personal expression in this respect, the following will be discussed for the purposes of contrast and comparison: Frederick Henry Evans (1853–1943), Eugène Atget (1857–1927) and Edwin Smith (1912–1971). All of them are concerned with an emotional response to architecture, by controlling light they attempted to convey their personal feeling for architecture. Although they all use architecture for aesthetic reasons, as individuals, their work conveys more than objective records and is imbued with different meanings.

A major influence on architectural photography has been the development of photographic processes and technology. Also, the production of architectural photographs is either for commercial, or aesthetic reasons. The period from 1839 to 1890 saw rapid developments of photographic processes. Factors effecting architectural photography in this period were also urban renewal programmes, especially in London and Paris, and a fascination of different cultures and things foreign.

From 1890 to 1940, photographic processes and technology developed further, especially the increase in emulsion speed and improved cameras and lenses. Factors specifically effecting architectural photography were the advancement of reproduction techniques, in particular, the introduction of the half-tone reproduction process used for letterpress printing, and Modernist architecture, mainly The International Style in the 1930s and 1940s.

Architectural photography from 1940 to c. 1980 saw the increasing use of the photographic book as an artistic statement, increased criticism in the 1950s and 1960s of architecture, especially within architectural journals, and the

increasing desire for colour images by architectural periodicals and journals.

As with photography as a whole, the practice of architectural photography can be said to be a continual struggle between the control of light, the photographic processes and technology available at any given period of time, and what the photographer wants to convey in the final image. Changes in the history of architectural photography were, are, and will be affected by the development of new processes and technology. Throughout the history of architectural photography, whether a photograph of architecture has been taken for commercial reasons, or for aesthetic reasons, has also been a major factor affecting changes in the genre. By achieving mastery of this medium one can visually achieve an aesthetic interpretation of architecture by means of controlled expression. By knowing exactly what can and cannot be done with the chosen process and technology, the photographer can go beyond the *conventions* of architectural photography. To a large extent such conventions have been dictated by commercial concerns, especially by architectural journals, and the architectural profession itself. To illustrate an architectural article in a journal, or to publicise an architectural project, a photograph which is objective, a true record, is generally required.

Many architectural photographs in architectural journals are created by means of artificial light, usually flash-light, so as to depict the details of a building. By using this system, an artificial record of the interior is created. Hence it is not a true record of that building, as natural light has been disregarded. Also, the atmosphere of the interior space is usually lost. An architectural photograph produced for commercial reasons is normally emotionally detached, an objective visual record. However, the exception to this convention is the book of photographs. Although produced for commercial reasons, and usually commissioned, the book allows the photographer to express emotional reactions. An architectural photograph which conveys *mood*, mainly by controlling light, and being an expression of the photographer's personal emotional involvement with architecture, can be said to have gone 'beyond the conventions'.

Three photographers who can be said to have surpassed the conventional architectural photograph, in particular with their use of light, are Eugène Atget, Frederick Evans and Edwin Smith. They all share an emotional involvement with architecture and used controlled light in an attempt to trans-

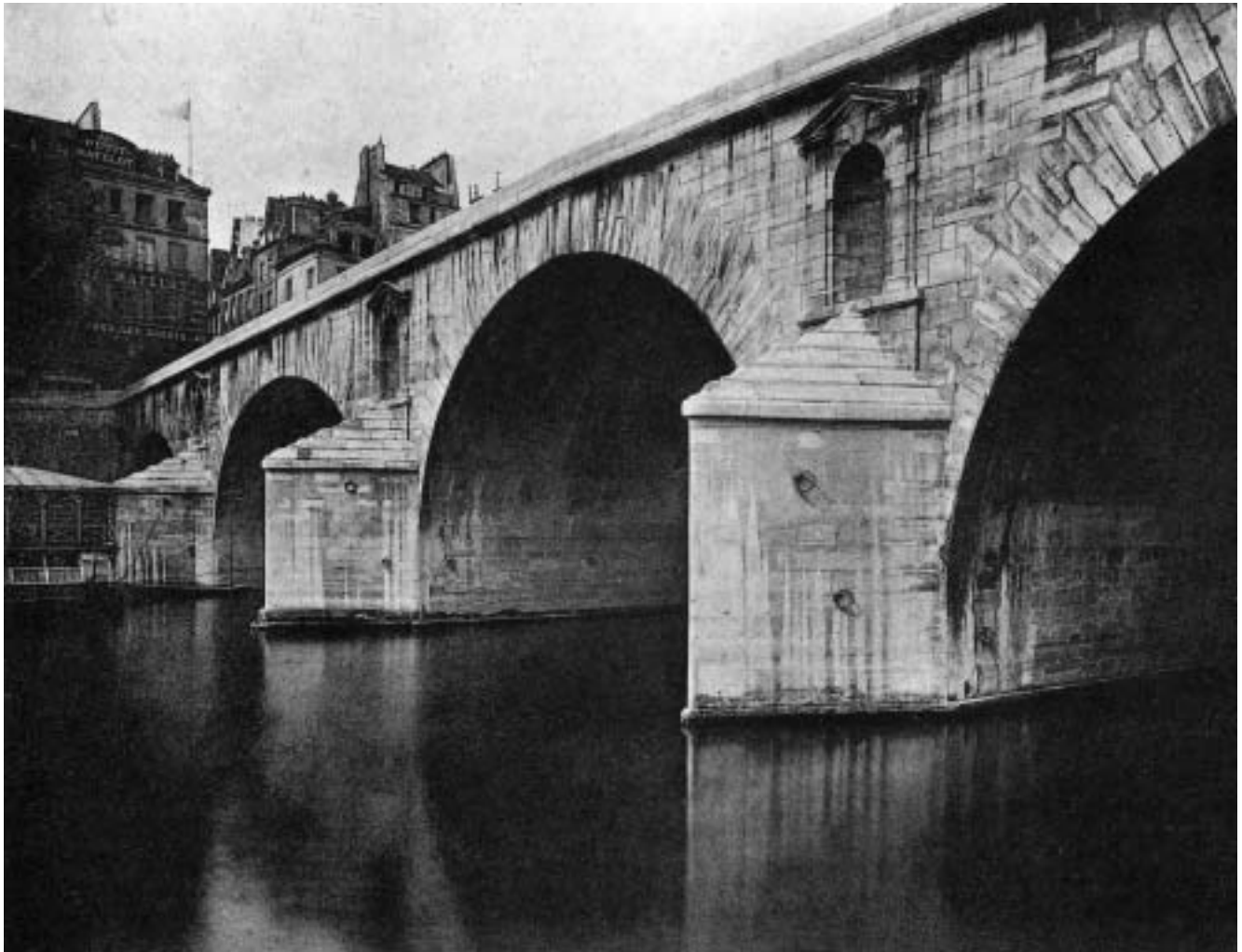


Fig. 1: Eugène Atget, *Pont Marie, Paris 1902, Photogravure 1930*. From the Collection Julian Levy. Credit Galerie Johannes Faber, Vienna

mit their personal responses. A photograph is created by the combination of light and chemical reactions. Without light there would not be a photograph. Therefore light can be said to bring the inanimate to life. This applies particularly to architectural photography. At certain times of the day a building will be in shadow, inanimate, yet when the sun moves, the direction of light will seem to bring the building to life. Emotional reaction to architecture, I would maintain, is specific to life-giving light.

Frederick Evans's architectural photographs, especially his interior views of cathedrals, attempt to create within the viewer the same emotional experience that he felt when he was actually in that cathedral. By careful composition and controlled light, the viewer's eye is led from darkness to light. (Figure 3). To achieve this, he often positioned his tripod and camera in shadow, using a small aperture and a long lens, allowing a greater tonal contrast from black to white. This also allowed him to use long exposures, which created a darker black, and also the areas of the building which are caught by light are more defined. Evans returned again and again to photograph the same view, until he had captured the desired *emotional* experience; one he felt, and wanted to try and capture in a photograph. For Evans, light was the 'desired haven'.¹ From a religious viewpoint, the desire to be in

the light, is to be saved by God from evil and to be at peace as a result. In this context Evans's photographs evoke the spiritual. Although they are photographs of cathedral interiors, they express a yearning, and longing for salvation, and a desire to be with God.

Eugène Atget's early work, especially his views of old Paris, was on the whole produced as a photographic record and as a means to earn a living. However, from about 1920, when he was more financially secure and he did not have to use photography to earn a living, he could photograph what he wanted and his work noticeably changed. The controlled use of light is particularly different in Atget's later work. Light in his earlier work was used to define architecture with clarity, with a minimum of shadow. With the later work, light is used to reflect an aesthetic response to subject matter. By purposely producing a photograph which has strong contrasts of light and dark, with minimal tonal ranges in between, Atget uses architecture as a vehicle to create moody, ambiguous images. The fact that he used printing-out paper, whereby the amount of contrast and especially of darkness of the print can be controlled, indicates that this was done by Atget intentionally.

Intense stillness and calm pervade Atget's late photographs. The water on the lakes is so still that it appears unreal; it



creates an air of mystery and ambiguity. Also, his use of large areas of darkness, to create shapes, shows him to be concerned with formal relationships, particularly in relation to the two-dimensional surface. He usually composed these areas of darkness with a strong sense of harmony; combined with the white areas of the composition, he creates an image of harmonious contrast, which suggests mystery. Atget's photographs of steps in the gardens of parks, especially at Saint-Cloud, show his interest in form and atmosphere. He had photographed some of the steps earlier in his life at Saint-Cloud and later returned to photograph them again. He either takes the steps head-on, as in the photograph of 1906, with the first step in the foreground, or the steps are taken at a slight angle, at a tangent, and are positioned so that the viewer looks at the photograph almost in the same position as if one was actually there looking at the view. These devices are effective in that the viewer is invited visually and mentally to walk into the photograph, and then walk up the steps. As with Frederick Evans's interior photographs of cathedrals, Atget's photographs, and the steps in particular, invite the viewer to walk mentally into the light. By using the pictorial devices of contrast, intentional composition, harmony, control of light; thus creating the effect of a mystical reality beyond experience. We can also say that

Atget's late photographs are, like Frederick Evans's, *spiritual*.

Edwin Smith's architectural photographs are unusual in that he was able, or 'allowed' to produce photographs which are more than straightforward depictions of architecture within a commercial context. Although Smith's cathedral interior photographs bear some similarities to Frederick Evans, they also differ in that he also took photographs of cathedral interiors marked by their unusual composition. In his photograph of Salisbury Cathedral, 1959 (Figure 2), he places a column in the centre of the composition. By doing this the viewer is denied access to the light source which has the effect that the viewer now wants to look around the column, to see where the light is coming from.

Edwin Smith was originally trained as an architect and thus had a knowledge of building, and architectural problems. He found great pleasure from architecture, especially in churches and cathedrals:

'For me photography in a good village church is unalloyed bliss, the visual pleasures and surprises of visiting country churches have been among the most vivid and poignant of my life'.²

In 1950, he was commissioned by the London publishers, Thames and Hudson, to produce photographs for a series of

Fig. 2 (page 30): Edwin Smith, Salisbury Cathedral, the nave from the triforium, 20 August 1959. Gelatine silver print

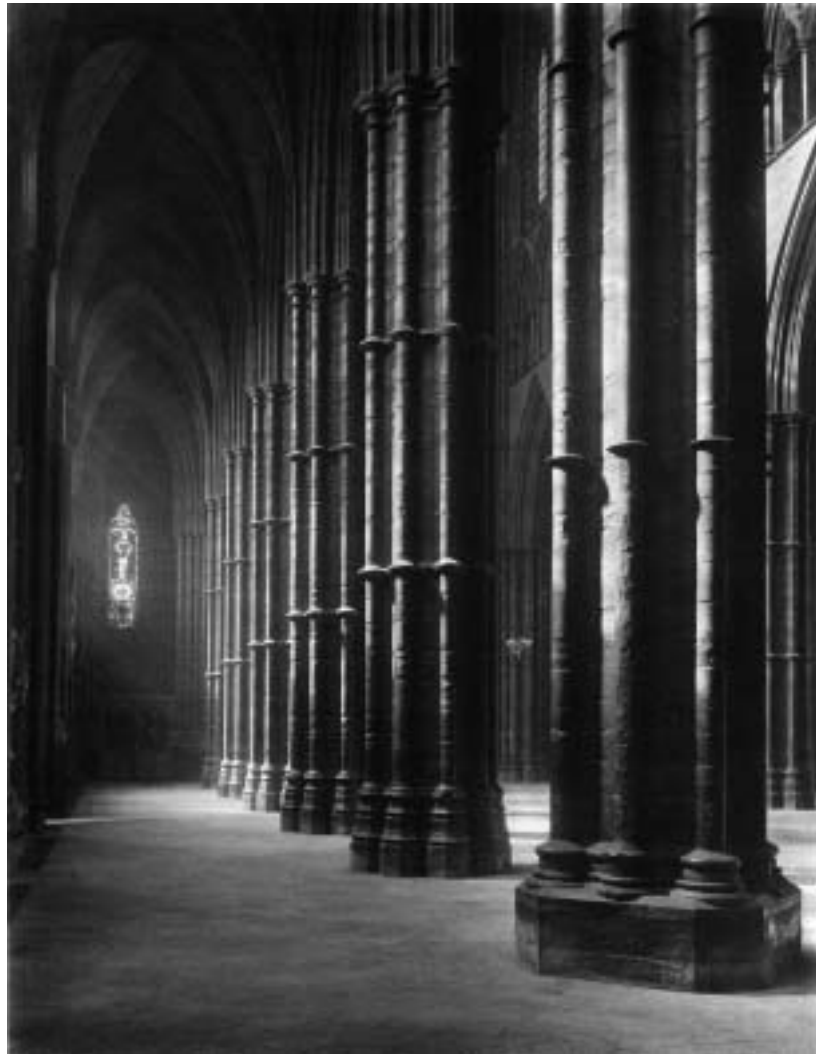


Fig. 3: Frederick H. Evans, Westminster Abbey, The South Nave, aisle and across nave, 1912, platinum print

books on architecture and landscape which included *English Parish Churches* (1976) and *English Cottages and Farmhouses* (1954) and in order to carry out these projects he bought a 1904 camera made by Thornton Pickard of Altrincham, known as ‘The Ruby’, which produced large negatives.

Natural light was an important element in Smith’s photograph, especially of interiors, for he rarely used artificial light. Emotional involvement with architecture, especially church and cathedral interiors, gave him ‘unalloyed bliss’.³ By controlling light to create that same feeling of joy he experienced when he was actually inside the building, he too travels beyond the conventions.

The similarities between the architectural photographs of Frederick Evans, Edwin Smith and Eugène Atget is their use of controlled light used to explain personal emotion, as distinct from a document of architecture. Using the medium of photography, they all aim to share their empathic experience of architecture with the viewer. They transcend the limitations of subject matter, in this case, architecture. By being unconventional in their photography, Frederick Evans, Edwin Smith and Eugène Atget demonstrate that they are indeed artists.

Notes

- 1 Beaumont Newhall, Frederick H. Evans: Photographer of the Majesty, Light and Space of the Medieval Cathedrals of England and France. New York, Aperture, 1973, p. 12. Originally published in *Photograms of the Year 1903*, p. 22.
- 2 Olive Cook, Edwin Smith: 1935–1971. London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p. 10.
- 3 Olive Cook, Edwin Smith: 1935–1971. London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, p. 10.

Reconstructing Memory, Reconstructing the Self: Periklis Alkidis, *Family Portraits*, 1987–94

Either carefully arranged within family albums, or roughly kept in envelopes and drawers, personal snapshots constitute one of the most popular categories of images. Family snapshots are treated and interpreted as a more or less objective recording of personal memory and history. Photographic albums are visual autobiographies and as such they distinctively concretise psychological space and house fantasy lives. The family album is a public relations document providing a united front to the world; in their affirmation of successes, celebrations, domestic harmony and togetherness. Consequently, the conflicts and power struggles inherent within family life are repressed¹. In this sense, family albums are as much about absences, fragmentation and exclusion as they are about presences, coherence and belonging; they both reveal and conceal.

Periklis Alkidis's photographic series titled *Family Portraits* allows us to take a deeper look at a conscious autobiographical exploration of self which enquires into the workings of family photography itself, examining the issue of memory and its construction. The work is based on the photographer's own family photographs juxtaposed to a series of re-constructed images depicting the same scene and people several years later.

When talking about life one of Alkidis's most persistent points is the use of words such as 'theatre', 'roles', 'game'. 'Life is a theatre' he said, 'a performance without a rehearsal. In this sense, photography is a tool that allows one to 'play-back', to repeat the performance and correct the mistakes'. Clearly, the theatre and game metaphors diverge widely in certain of Alkidis's works: *Weddings* and *Snapshots* are probably the most pure sources of this approach. His interest has always been about finding dramatic metaphors in real life events; he represented and criticised such roles and behaviours using humour or irony, creating images which are funny and sad at the same time. Even in his own personal snapshots, his family's social events and rituals are seen and re-presented as a source of this type of metaphor (Fig. 1).

Family Portraits, however, goes deeper into these enquiries. While it continues to assume individuals as choreographed actors adopting particular social roles and positions, only this time, he also opens issues relating to the role this fact plays on the construction of 'self'. Alkidis shows, contrary to some established beliefs, that snapshot photography is not only about recording and preserving memory but also about reconstructing it. The central theme running through his

work is of memory as an interpretation of real events rather than as an objective recording of them. Indeed, as far as *Family Portraits* is concerned, Alkidis's enquiries are very much about explaining how memory can be constructed and reconstructed, as well as the 'why', and how this very construction is significant to the construction of self and self-identity; the subjective sense of one's 'own situation' and one's 'own continuity and character'². *Family Portraits* is a conscious autobiographical exploration of personal identity, of memory and its construction which allows one to see deeper into the workings of photography itself. Given that memory is part truth, part fiction, photography has a unique ability to portray all levels and states of reality and fantasy as equally 'real'. Alkidis explains that this work has immense thought behind it, starting from its obvious meditations on memory and time, to its references on the process of grief and forgiveness, or rather forgetfulness.

Alkidis comes from an upper class, wealthy family that owned several spinning and weaving factories in Asia Minor. His father was the excuse for this work: he was in his nineties when Alkidis started it, very ill and practically disabled. Alkidis described his childhood as uneasy and his father as very despotic, almost dictatorial and a rather violent person, especially in terms of bringing up his children. His father was well educated and had lived all over the world, always absent because of his work, whose appearance in the house was usually related to chastisement. Discipline and punishment, almost always violent, is what he can mostly remember of his childhood. His father was an obsessive amateur photographer who had taken lots of pictures using a rather expensive medium format camera. Alkidis inherited the family photographic collection; a large archive containing thousands of photographs and negatives showing a typical, apparently happy family. None of his painful memories are apparent in the photographs, although Alkidis can easily recall them: 'Looking at these images made me often very angry. They are so fake. A normal, happy family. So superficial...'. Nearly every scene in these photographs takes on a different meaning once you know the story behind it. In this sense, beneath the surface, *Family Portraits* is a work which values both revenge and forgetfulness.

Up to what point can a photograph deconstruct and reconstruct memory? *Memento*, a recent art film by Christopher Nolan is largely about memory; the ways in which it defines identity, how it is necessary to determine moral behaviour,

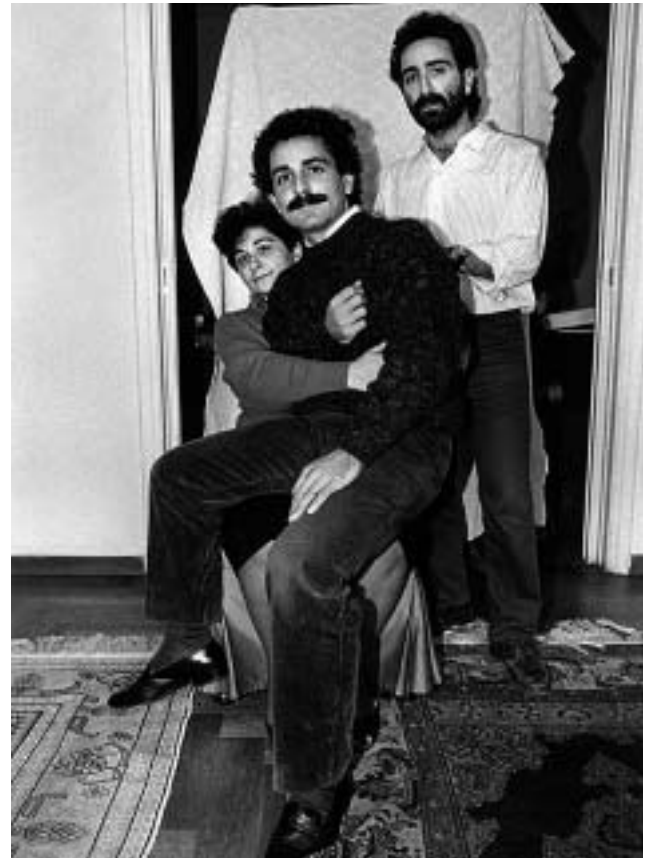


Fig. 1: Periklis Alkidis, *Family Portraits* 1987–1994

and yet how terribly unreliable memory is, despite its crucial role in our experience of the world³. In *Memento*, the hero suffers from a condition called anterograde amnesia, which means that he can not create new long-term memories; none of his current memories can be permanently implanted in his brain. Since his attention span lasts roughly 15 minutes, he reminds himself of what he is doing through a series of notes and a pocketful of Polaroid snapshots with helpful information written on them, and from tattoos. The most interesting part of the film for me, is when the hero takes advantage of his situation by consciously manipulating himself. He can not remember what happened so he decides what to tell himself has happened, he can not remember if someone is a friend or an enemy so he decides what he or she is depending on how he feels at the moment. He gets angry with his partner, so he pulls out his Polaroid and writes on it: 'Don't believe his lies'. In less than a quarter of an hour, his partner becomes an enemy.

As the hero himself says, 'Memory's unreliable ... Memory's not perfect. It's not even that good. Ask the police; eyewitness testimony is unreliable ... Memory can change the shape of a room or the colour of a car. It's an interpretation, not a record. Memories can be changed or distorted, and they're irrelevant if you have the facts.' And facts are what are written on this paper, what is imprinted on this photograph. This is the very heart of the film.

Alkidis's *Family Portraits* is also about memory: it is providing a corrective account of the photographer's own memories and, consequently, life's narrative. Like another hero of

Memento, he consciously manipulates himself and his memories: forget what is painful, remember what you choose, become what you constructed: 'At first I wanted to soften my memories' he said 'and then I realised that I could literally construct new ones'⁴.

The autobiographical genre suggests a context for the work of Periklis Alkidis. His work clarifies another sort of practice because it embraces the broad patterns of memory in life as a whole. At one level *Family Portraits* is about discovery; it is a retrospective project. On a second level it is also about catharsis; a prospective project putting photographs in the practices of phototherapy. The autobiographical genre presents us with a uniquely subjective exploration of memory. The autobiographical projects are personal explorations of past and present identity which acquire a therapeutic function, they are re-enactments as well as fictional novels. As Everett⁵ argues, such projects are uniquely special for their authors, not only because they afford the possibility of a somewhat self-indulgent recreation of the past, but because they also permit a continuation; a move from present to future. Autobiographical films, for instance, 'claim a privileged status in the directors' lives: a shifting ground between various subjective times and realities. It is interesting that having made an autobiographical film, each director appears to feel in some way liberated, able now to forget the past that has been admitted, and to move forward.'

Family Portraits is also a process of self-discovery into a half-remembered, half-invented past, but in enabling the author to recreate his memories, the project itself becomes



Fig. 2: Periklis Alkidis, *Family Portraits* 1987–1994

part of the process of self-discovery. Alkidis deals with memories which for years he had suppressed, finding them too painful to express openly: his inadequate relationship with his parents, his fear, his childhood feeling of duty left unfulfilled, together with the guilts arising from this. What we are presented with is not a straightforward re-creation of a childhood world but a sometimes painful exploration of childhood memories from an adult mind. *Family Portraits* can be seen as a desire to deal, at least partially, with these memories by fictionalising them. The author is thus attempting to come to terms with feelings of inadequacy, isolation, and fear, all of which are deeply rooted in his childhood experience.

In common, all autobiographical projects reveal an overwhelming need to return to their roots, and both to re-experience and to re-evaluate their past selves. Alkidis follows the path of the autobiographical films where the presence of narrators of different ages is ‘the main way of creating the necessary slippages, to create the multiple viewpoints and an ironic overview’⁶. The distancing irony told from the adult’s vision allows him to create an essentially personal voyage which enables him to accept his past and thus to move towards the future.

I use the film *Memento* as a cinematic analogue to Alkidis’s work, in terms of its enquiries on the unreliable nature of memory. Another element which finds its analogue in the *Family Portraits*, is that *Memento* is also a tribute to grief. ‘Grief’ is an emotion largely based on memory, and it is one of *Memento*’s themes that relief from grief is dependent on

memory as well. ‘How am I supposed to heal if I can’t feel time?’ the hero asks. To recall *Memento Mori*, the story on which the film itself is based, ‘Time is theft, isn’t that what they say? And time eventually convinces most of us that forgiveness is a virtue. Conveniently, cowardice and forgiveness look identical at a certain distance. Time steals your nerve.’⁷ And, I would add, your passion.

Can one reconstruct one’s own memories by re-photographing them? Alkidis stressed, ‘Photography gives me the chance to look again at negative events which made me sad; to soften them, to reduce them.’ Filtered by time, negative events, almost all events, lose their initial sentimental tension. One can see them embellished, adorned, even beautified. What then is Alkidis’s objective? ‘To forget. And, at the end, this makes me able to forgive’. To forgive himself for making mistakes in the ‘performance’, to forgive his father for being cruel and violent, ‘I wanted to rebuild all those memories so that this time they will be happy’. The paradox is that, looking at his images, it is difficult to find the happy moments that the photographer aimed to create. There is more impression of happiness in his original family photographs, than in their new versions, ‘I guess that I unconsciously reproduced the feelings produced by the initial scenes’.

Periklis Alkidis admits that working on the *Family Portraits* series was an act of self-psychotherapy. Emerging from the anger for his father and the false image of his childhood that he inherited, he proceeds to the desire to deconstruct it, to destroy it and to build a new, different one. His profit? As



Fig. 3: Periklis Alkidis, *Family Portraits 1987–1994*

the psychiatrist Fotis Kaggelaris notes, to re-photograph means to re-look at – the facts, the fantasies, the emotions. In this sense, Kaggelaris clearly sees in this work a psychotherapeutic essence for he says, ‘Emotions like anger and sorrow are always apparent during a psychotherapeutic procedure, even if it is such an ‘amateur’ effort.’⁸ The father’s influence on Alkidis was to prove decisive. Remarkably, Alkidis, mainly, if not exclusively, focuses on his father’s behaviour, whom he holds responsible for his unhappy childhood and his consequent emotional and psychological condition (exempting his mother). Any fact that concerns his father is always coloured with a negative emotional hue, not so for those concerning his mother which he describes as ‘neutral’. However, as Kaggelaris notes, no one can see things in a neutral way. The meaning of something is always its positive or negative emotional hue⁹. Moreover, Kaggelaris remarks that it is the gaze of the mother (Fig. 2) that ‘emotionally colours the construction of reality, giving reality its meaning and, at the same time, constructing it’¹⁰. The child is ‘completely exposed to the formatting and indispensable maternal gaze in order to construct his/her own reality and its signification.’¹¹ In the case of Alkidis, the father acts symbolically, being probably entrusted with a role determined by the mother.

Already mentioned is Alkidis’ obsession with theatre and roles: one of the most prominent theories in the field of social psychology, role theory,¹² argues that the individual tends to treat the others present on the basis of the impression they give and, at some point, the observed become a



performing team and the observers become the audience. The round of human activity becomes dramatised, claims Goffman, and the individual is divided by implication into two parts: a ‘performer’ and a ‘character’. Thus, the self is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern is whether it will be credited or discredited¹³.

Human interaction can be seen as a ‘performance’ constructed in such way as to provide others with ‘impressions’ similar to those created by an actor, regardless of the individual’s knowledge or ignorance of this very performance. The act of photographing, in turn, strengthens the dramatic effect. Posed or not, photographs frame, consciously or unconsciously, a presentation of self, representing a preconceived idea of how people want to look. In this sense, some degree of theatricality, of performance, appears in most pictures of people.

Family photographs not only evoke memories or unconscious associations but also have proved to be a powerful means for shaping personal memory and self-conceptions, for photographs may act as symbols, the active manipulation of which creates the philosophical framework that helps us define our identity and explain reality¹⁴. For Weiser it is important to remember that photographs ‘speak metaphorically and symbolically, to and from the unconscious, without any words being involved’, and thus any image can be very important. Thus, an ordinary family snapshot,

‘... gives form and structure to our deepest emotional states and unconscious communications. It serves as a

bridge between the cognitive and the sensory, between the inner self lying below conscious awareness and the self able to be known to us – and between the self we are aware of inside and that self we are seen as by others ...

... They permit people to explore this predominantly non-verbal terrain in a predominantly nonverbal manner. Thus they can be effective keys that unlock doors to previously hidden information, feelings and memories that words alone simply cannot reach.¹⁵

Periklis Alkidis believes that the act of re-photographing itself gives to the event a completely new meaning, since it rearranges the roles between the people photographed. 'I am consciously staging the scenes now,' he says, 'I have the power to decide where and how I stand and how I look, and where and how are the others. I'm not helpless.' He has now control over the event which is now clearly a performance, and consequently more power over the people taking part in it including himself. He is, literally and metaphorically, out of his childhood's small carriage (Fig. 3). Remarkably, this translates into more power over the past event itself. He thus becomes master of the process by which he attempts to persuade himself, and consequently others, to accept new self-conceptions. From this perspective, he assigns a special place to the process of the construction of self in his work. 'I was still angry at my father' he said. 'All the guilt I inherited from my childhood, I'm not good enough, I don't meet his expectations, I will be punished ... And he took all those photographs which presented us as a happy, decent family – so pretentious. Our family albums are nothing but a miniature theatre. But, at the same time, he is a harmless small animal now. What used to be a strong and tough man was now a person unable to walk or stand on his feet. I felt I had to give him a remission of sins. But first I wanted to deconstruct the game.' In other words, in *Family Portraits* Alkidis attempted to deconstruct the performance, as well as the impression it provoked, and to reposition himself within this context, namely, to renegotiate his part. He realised the procedure and thus became concerned with leaving completely different images to his own son, images in which, both performance and roles, are played consciously.

'I remember, therefore I am', could well provide the equivalent of Descartes's '*cogito ergo sum*'. But autobiographical memory is part truth, part fiction; the fallible, selective, and manipulative nature of memory turns it into 'I choose what I remember, therefore I control who I am'.

Notes

- 1 J. Spence, *Putting myself in the picture: A political, personal and photographic autobiography*. London, Camden Press, 1986. See also R Martin and Jo Spence, 'New portraits for old: the use of the camera in therapy'. In *Feminist Review* No. 19 (March 1985), pp. 66–92.
- 2 E. Goffman, *Stigma*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1963, p.105.
- 3 C. Nolan, *Memento*. 2001. For more information see: A Klein, 'Everything you wanted to know about Memento' (2001) In: http://dir.salon.com/ent/movies/feature/2001/06/28/memento_analysis/index.html
- 4 Periklis Alkidis interview with the author 15 February 2003
- 5 E. Everett, 'The autobiographical eye in European film'. *Europa*, N° 1, 1996, in: <http://www.intellectbooks.com/europa/number1/everett.htm>, (retrieved in 18/05/2003).
- 6 E. Everett, 'The autobiographical eye in European film'. *Europa*, N° 1, 1996, in <http://www.intellectbooks.com/europa/number1/everett.htm>, (retrieved in 18/05/2003).
- 7 A Klein, 'Everything you wanted to know about Memento' (2001) In http://dir.salon.com/ent/movies/feature/2001/06/28/memento_analysis/index.html, (retrieved in 12/05/2003). The phrase quoted is in a short story called *Memento Mori*. Nolan, the director of the film, stressed that it was inspired by this story.
- 8 Fotis Kaggelaris interview with the author 5 September 2003.
- 9 F Kaggelaris, *Η διαδικασία της αποπροσωποποίησης στη σχιζοφρένεια, Το Βλεμμα και το Είναι στην Ψύχωση. Ελληνικά Γράμματα*, Athens, (first edition 1985), 2003, p. 126.
- 10 F Kaggelaris, *Η διαδικασία της αποπροσωποποίησης στη σχιζοφρένεια, Το Βλεμμα και το Είναι στην Ψύχωση. Ελληνικά Γράμματα*, Athens, (first edition 1985), 2003, p. 126–127.
- 11 F Kaggelaris, *Η διαδικασία της αποπροσωποποίησης στη σχιζοφρένεια, Το Βλεμμα και το Είναι στην Ψύχωση. Ελληνικά Γράμματα*, Athens, (first edition 1985), 2003. p. 117.
- 12 E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London, Penguin, 1959. For a fuller discussion on Role theory see also: E. Goffman, 'Role Distance' in *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1961. E. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*. New York, Pantheon, 1967. E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis, an essay on the organization of experience*. New York, Harper and Row, 1974. J. Potter, and M. Wetherell, 2001. *Self-Presentation; Role theory: the theatrical image of the self*. In *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Sage, (first edition 1987), 2001.
- 13 E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London, Penguin, 1959, pp. 251–255.
- 14 'O Cronin, *The Meaning and Psychological Significance of Family Photographic Collections*. Unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Southampton, Department of Psychology, 1996.
- 15 J. Weiser, 'Phototherapy Techniques: Using Clients' Personal Snapshots and Family Photos as Counselling and Therapy Tools; In memory of Arnold Gassan – photographer, poet and Phototherapy pioneer'. Originally published in *Afterimage*, Nov-Dec, 2001. In http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2479/is_3_29/ai_80757504, (retrieved in 16/05/03).

Book Review "A history of abstract art could begin with Daguerre as well as with Kandinsky."

"A history of abstract art could begin with Daguerre as well as with Kandinsky." This bold statement by Heinrich Schwarz was quoted by Anselm Wagner in the course of the symposium *Talking about photography*, held in the gallery *Fotohof*, Salzburg on 16 September 2006. Wagner presented his book *Heinrich Schwarz. Techniken des Sehens – vor und nach der Fotografie. Ausgewählte Schriften 1929–1966* (Heinrich Schwarz, Techniques of Seeing – fore and after photography. Selected articles 1929–1966) which was the result of many years of research.

At first sight it looks like an insignificant work in a small format but the picture on the cover immediately catches one's attention, showing the silhouette of an artist in a door of a building holding a *camera obscura* in his hands. A snapshot? Not really as the picture is dated 1810.

As soon as I had started to turn the pages I found myself in a breath-taking course through the history of art and photography, recognising that, with this publication, many well trodden paths are omitted.

Who was Heinrich Schwarz (1894–1974) the Austrian art historian who studied at the University of Vienna, finishing with his thesis *Die Anfänge der Lithographie in Wien* (The beginnings of lithography in Vienna)? Who worked as a curator at the Albertina between 1921 and 1923 and, after that, at the Belvedere Gallery in Vienna, until he had to flee from Austria to the United States in 1938?

When Schwarz examined historic landscape painting he observed the frequent use of various optical aids by painters such as the *camera obscura* which not only brought him to early photography but also to deal with contemporary photography. So, already, in 1928/29, he presented the exhibition *Die Kunst der Photographie in der Frühzeit 1840–1880* (The art of photography in its early times 1840–1880) in the Belvedere in Vienna. In the same year he published a review of the book Albert Renger Patzsch, *The World is Beautiful* which we know today as the pioneering work: *The New Objectivity*, that steps from the past to the future. Finally, Schwarz was the first to write a monograph on the photography of the Scottish painter *David Octavius Hill. Der Meister der Photographie* published in 1931 by Insel. In 1932 it was published in English: *David Octavius Hill. Master of Photography*, The Viking Press, New York, on the warm recommendation of Stefan Zweig.

Besides a comprehensive analysis about D. O. Hill's life and working methods, Schwarz also describes his social milieu as

well as the small towns and villages and the Scottish landscape. Above all he gives a precise picture interpretation and detailed information about the persons portrayed.

In his text Schwarz assumes 'that the invention of photography did not happen by chance, but was born out of the needs and matters of their time as well as their ethic and artistic will', whose roots can be traced back to the art of the Renaissance. His discovery, that since the middle ages painters had used optical aids, such as mirrors to fix the image of a person, along with the use of a *camera obscura*, gave him reasons for the theory of a pre-photographic era. For Schwarz, technical history and art history were always co-related. This fundamental idea, very new in the 1930s, was always present in his research. In the course of decades Schwarz developed his theory in numerous lectures and manuscripts.

With an unbelievable effort Anselm Wagner has viewed lots of papers, letters and manuscripts by Heinrich Schwarz, disseminated over many different archives all over the world. He incorporates published as well as unpublished texts, some of which are now only fragments. By judging the roll of this pioneer from today's point of view, he comes to the conclusion that his 'technique of seeing' is still very much up to date. But Wagner also points out the contradictions; Schwarz's progressive ideas were often confronted by his colleagues in Austria and in the USA.

Furthermore, Wagner tells us about the peculiarities of the exhibition business (which are still common) and uses the example of the young Peter Galassi (a follower of John Szarkowski in the Department of Photographs at MoMA, New York). In 1981 Szarkowski commissioned Galassi with the preparations of the MoMA exhibition: *Before Photography. Painting and the Invention of Photography*, based on the thoughts of a lecture given by Heinrich Schwarz in Baltimore as far back as 1963 with the title *Before 1839: Symptoms and Trends*. Szarkowski had attended that lecture. Schwarz had put forward the theory that already some decades before the invention of photography a kind of 'photographic seeing can be observed in painting'. This lecture was initiated by Beaumont Newhall, a life long friend of Heinrich Schwarz and partner in discussion. Background information and the various positions of many of the persons involved are indicated in the text and this is exactly what makes the book so captivating. No less interesting is the picture content, once chosen by Schwarz himself to illustrate



Jurriaan Andriessen, *Künstler mit Camera obscura, um 1810, Feder und Tusche laviert, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet, unknown photographer. Credit Fotohof edition, Salzburg*

his numerous lectures, which are now added to his texts in this book.

This comprehensive research by Anselm Wagner offers an exciting mosaic of information, quotes and commentaries. Monika Faber gives a very interesting and detailed introduction with the title *Verkehrschao. Ein Pionier der Erschließung von kunsthistorischem Neuland* (Traffic jam. A pioneer of breaking new ground in art history). Nevertheless there is no answer to the question: why is the message of this important pioneer of photographic and art history only realized in its full range in our day?

We hope that an English edition will follow soon.

Anselm Wagner (ed.), foreword Monika Faber, *Heinrich Schwarz. Techniken des Sehens – vor und nach der Fotografie. Ausgewählte Schriften 1929–1966*, Fotohof, Salzburg, 2006, 279 pp., including 236 illustrations. ISBN 978-3-901756-70-2.

Anna Auer

Contributors

Hans Christian Adam, born 1948, Bad Muenster, Germany. Attended Goettingen University (studied psychology, art history, journalism), awarded PhD. Since 1981 free-lance picture researcher, author, photohistorian. Clients include: Gruner & Jahr (*Stern*, *GEO*); Musée Internationale de la Croix-Rouge (Genf); IG Metall; Harenberg Verlag Dortmund; Benedikt Taschen Verlag, Cologne. Participated in 30 book projects, such as *Masters of Early Travel Photography* (with Rainer Fabian: London, New York 1981); *Images of War* (London, New York 1983); published monographs on Curtis, Blossfeldt, Atget. A book on *Berlin* will appear in early 2007. Presently preparing a permanent exhibit of the photography & film department of Deutsches Museum, Munich. Long-standing member of ESHPh since 1981.

A D Coleman's most recent project is the Photography Criticism CyberArchive (at photocriticism.com), to which he invites all ESHPh members to contribute and/or subscribe. Currently, in addition to supervising that project, he is co-curating *China: Insights*, a survey of contemporary documentary work from PRC. (details at www.photocriticism.com), which will travel internationally under the auspices of the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography (FEP). His first project with the FEP *Saga: The Journey of Arno Rafael Minkkinen, Photographs 1970–2005*, is currently circulating in Europe before returning to the U.S. on its tour. Coleman was awarded the Kulturpreis of the German Photographic Society (DGPh) in 2002.

Alistair Crawford, born 1945, Scotland, studied at Glasgow School of Art. Currently Research Professor, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, he is also an artist, photographer, print-maker, writer, performer and independent curator. He has held over 40 solo exhibitions shown in Europe and USA and is represented in public, corporate and private collections world-wide. As well as contributing in various languages to books, catalogues and journals, he has curated several touring exhibitions including, 'Erich Lessing. Reportage Photography 1948–1973' for Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (2002). Recent publications include: 'Mario Giacomelli' (London 2001, 2006, Paris 2002, 2005), 'Erich Lessing Reportage-Photography 1948–1973' (Vienna 2002, Paris 2003, New York 2005). For many years he worked to restore the forgotten collections of photography of the British School at Rome which led to a series of publications on his discoveries.

From 1999 he has contributed a regular column, 'Brief Exposure', to the photography journal *Inscape*. A longstanding member of ESHPh, he rejoined when the society 'moved' to Vienna and is co-editor of *Photoresearcher*, *The Proceedings* of ESHPh Symposia, and *The International Letter*.

Zoltán Fejér, born Budapest 1951, professional photographer since 1969. Between 1972 and 2006 has taken part in 16 exhibitions, and is represented in fifteen Hungarian museums and in sixteen collections in nine other countries. Since 1970 has collected cameras for use. While he first investigated the history of the Leica, he noticed later the total absence of any similar literature in Hungary and began to concentrate his research on Hungarian cameras and lenses. He was the first to publish on this topic: *Hungarian Cameras* (Budapest, 2001) and has also written several monographs, including: a photographic history of the small Hungarian town of Vác (1994), and on the Hungarian photographer Jenő Dulovits (2003). He is co-author of the first book on the history of photography in the Hungarian language (1999). Fejér regularly publishes in Hungarian photographic magazines, such as *Fotóművészet* (Photographic Art), *Műértő*, and *LUPE*, and has also written articles for *Leica Fotografie International*. Member of ESHPh since 2001.

Gabriele Hofer studied history of art and communication science in Salzburg and Vienna. From 1997–2002 was manager of Ars Electronica Festival's press and public relations department in Linz. From 2000–2004 as a freelance research associate at the Austrian National Library's picture archive in Vienna worked on the estate of Lucca Chmel. In 2004, together with Uwe Schögl, curated *Lucca Chmel. Architektur-fotografie 1945–1970* exhibition held at Galerie WestLicht, Vienna. Was awarded PhD, the University of Salzburg 2005. Then became a freelance writer (for example, for *Eikon*) and a research associate at the Nordico-Stadtmuseum Linz responsible for the collection of 19th century photography. Joined ESHPh in 2005. Member of the Executive Committee 2006.

Penelope Petsini (MA, University of London, PhD, University of Derby) is a photographer and critic. Both her post-graduate degrees was sponsored by the State Scholarship Foundation of Greece. Since 2004 has taught at the Photography Department of the Technological Educational Institution of

Athens. Has presented work in four solo exhibitions (Aigokeros Gallery 1998; Photography Centre of Athens 2000, Century Gallery, London 2003) and in several group exhibitions, including: *Bankside Browser Project* 1999 (Tate Gallery of Modern Art, London), *Body and Urbanism* 1999 (curated by Ian Jeffrey for the British Council, Centre of Contemporary Art, Tirana), *(Un)Familiar City* 2000 (7th International Month of Photography, Athens), *Mediaterra 01* 2001 (Fournos Centre for the Arts and New Technologies, Lavrio, Sofia, Beograd, Maribor, Frankfurt), *New Images* 2001 and *Traces* 2003 (Thessaloniki Museum of Photography).

Trevor George Sewell is a photographer, painter and art historian. Born Bedford, England 1957. Studied Dunstable College (1974–78), Mander College, Bedford (1981–91), awarded BA(Hons) in Art, University of Wales, Aberystwyth (1991–95). In 1995 awarded a DFE postgraduate bursary, completed MA in Art and Art History 1997. Also in 1997, awarded a University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Postgraduate Research Studentship and completed MPhil in Art History in 2005 with his thesis, entitled, *An aspect of early colour photography: from kitsch to art*. Before undertaking study at university, he worked in the printing industry for sixteen years, as a typesetter and compositor. He has exhibited in England, Wales, Italy and Switzerland and is represented in many collections including the National Library of Wales, and University of Wales, Aberystwyth. He is a member of the artists exhibiting group *fforma*.

Call for papers

Photoresearcher is produced for the European Society for the History of Photography by Dietmar Klinger, Passau, Germany. Articles are requested on all aspects of the History of Photography, especially European (in its widest sense) from members and non-members throughout the world. *Photoresearcher* will also include book, catalogue and exhibition reviews. All publishers and exhibition organisers should send items for possible inclusion to the Editors. All publications received will be cited. Articles for consideration should be sent to the addresses below at any time and should accord with the following instructions:

1. Articles (two copies) should be typed in double spacing on one side only of A4 paper. The languages of the Society are English, French and German. A brief abstract of around 200 words outlining the content of the article is also requested, as is a brief note concerning the author. This should be submitted in English.
2. Where possible articles should also be submitted on a newly formatted 3.5 inch computer disc or by HTML or by CD-ROM. The preferred systems are Microsoft Word and Word Perfect, although other systems may also be accommodated. Anna Auer and Alistair Crawford are using Microsoft Windows XP, Word 2003.
3. References should be separately numbered and placed at the end of the article. Each reference will correspond to the appropriate numeral in the text. References will not appear on the text pages. Intending contributors are advised to get in touch with the Editor(s) *before* preparing their articles in final form, since they will be required to conform to the conventions currently followed in *Photoresearcher*.
4. Proofs are normally sent to the authors together with the Editors' comments and must be returned promptly. Authors are reminded that proofs are for checking only; no major alterations to the original text can be made at this stage. Page proofs are not normally sent to the authors.
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The individual price of this issue is E 15. Special rates for members and for large orders are available.

There is a developing interest in our Society and its activities. For this reason a *Membership Application Form* is included with this issue of *Photoresearcher* distributed to non-members at bookstores and art fairs.

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2006 Dietmar Klinger Verlag, Passau
ISSN 0958 2606
Printed in Germany

Cover: Lucca Chmel, *Forum Cinema* (architect: Robert Kotas), Vienna 1950. Credit Austrian National Library, Vienna

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How to become a member of the European Society for the History of Photography

The ESHPH was formed in 1977 in Antwerp in response to a growing enthusiasm for photography with the aim of exploring the development of photography in all aspects from its beginning to the present day. From 1989 to 2001 the office moved to Croydon, UK, and in 2002 it relocated to Vienna, Austria.

The Society promotes interest in both historic and modern photography. Europe is interpreted in its widest sense. The ESHPH recruits as members photographers, historians, photohistorians, teachers, sociologists, philosophers, curators and collectors as well as important institutions in Europe and world wide.

The Society is open to *all* who are interested in photography whatever their nationality. The ESHPH encourages research, personal contacts, contributions and exchanges amongst members world wide. The Society also promotes photography as an academic discipline and the introduction of chairs for the *History of Photography* at European universities. For that purpose the ESHPH organizes yearly a Symposium which is held in different places in Europe. The last Symposium, *From Nordic Landscapes to North American Indians*, took place in September 2004 in Stockholm.

Regular publications of ESHPH

Newsletter

It presents the voice of the Society and appears twice per year.

Photoresearcher

The Society's journal is dedicated to the research of the history of photography. The contributing authors are internationally recognised experts and their wide-ranging knowledge forms the main basis of the Society. Many papers represent the first related publication as a result of a longstanding research activity. It appears once per annum.

Contributions are also especially welcome from all who feel they can contribute to our understanding of our subject, including photographers, private collectors, curators, teachers, students, etc. Contributors need not to be members of the Society.

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The Internet site of the ESHPH was established in 2004 (www.donau-uni.ac.at/eshph). It provides information about the Society: its statutes, minutes, meetings, as well as other ESHPH activities, such as symposia and publications. It is intended that the internet will become a meeting place for members world wide.

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The ESHPh Symposium Stockholm, March 2005

