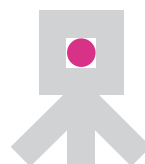


# PhotoResearcher



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# NEW TOPOGRAPHICS



Robert Adams: Mobile Homes, Jefferson County, Colorado, 1973. George Eastman House collections.  
© Robert Adams, courtesy of Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

New Topographics is co-organized by the Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona, and the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film. The exhibition tour has been made possible by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

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# Editorial

Dear Reader,

This is the first time in the history of the PhotoResearcher that you are receiving a second number of our magazine in a single year! The large number of outstanding essays that are now reaching us, and which we naturally want to publish as rapidly as possible, have led to this step. In addition, the concentration on specific areas of photography that began with number 12 has further increased the interest of both our authors and readers. We intend to continue on this course in the next issues! PhotoResearcher number 14 has **Photography in Eastern European Countries in the 20th and 21st Centuries** as its motto.

We are focusing especially on countries where radical changes have occurred in their, still little-known, photo production and research in recent decades - mainly as a result of the political developments since the end of the Cold War. Two contributions are devoted to Turkey and Istanbul - not only because Istanbul is one of the European Capitals of Culture in 2010 but also because the essays, despite all their differences, create a strong impression of the fascinating relationship between this country and Europe. In his essay, *A Turkish Photographer in Berlin in 1929/32*, **John Toohey** examines the connections between cultural tradition, religion and lifestyle in the visual language of an amateur photographer living in exile in Berlin. **Danielle Leenaerts** investigates the symbiotic interaction between photography and literature in the Nobel Prize laureate Orhan Pamuk's book *İstanbul: Hatıralar Ve Şehir* (2003), published in English as *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2005) in her contribution *Istanbul. Memories and the City - The Role and Place of Photography in Orhan Pamuk's Memoir*.

**Ekaterina Markarian** takes a fresh look at the subject of her dissertation for us in "*Traditions and Modernity: The Photographic Legacy of Mark Markarian in Bulgaria*" that follows her grandfather's photographic achievements and provides an exemplary analysis of why pigment printing processes were in use for such a long period until the 1930s. **Adrian-Silvan Ionescu's** essay *Photography in Romania in the First Half of the 20th Century* provides us with an overview of the great variety of photographic activities in Romania in which motifs showing the life and work of the "simple" rural population are surprisingly dominant. In her essay, *Lithuanian Photography in the 20th and 21st Centuries*, **Eglė Deltuvaitė** gives a description of how contemporary photography was only able to develop freely in Lithuania after the political changes in 1990, initially following a politico-sociological documentation style before conceptual photography made itself felt.

**Susanne Holschbach's** essay *Framing (on) Flickr: Modes of Channelling an Indisciplinary Reservoir of Images* continues with our series concerning methodological questions on the history of photography and deals with the extremely topical subject of how photographs play a role in our globalized world. In the 'Preview' column, **Colin Ford** gives us a first impression of the exhibition *An Introduction to Hungarian Photography 1914-89* (working title) that will be shown in the Royal Academy in London from July until end of September 2011

Anna Auer, Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, Uwe Schögl  
Vienna, October 2010

# Traditions and Modernity: The Photographic Legacy of Mark Markarian in Bulgaria

Ekaterina Markarian



Figure 1

Atelier Markarian Passe-partout, c1900 The atelier's passe-partouts showed the house with the sun-lit studio, inscriptions in Armenian, Bulgarian and Latin alphabet and it included the profiles of Niépce, Daguerre and Talbot, symbolically patronising the Markarian photography, aiming to go beyond the commercial trends. The three profiles were supposedly the testimony of the medals won by Vram at different international photo fairs, however no documented evidence exists to confirm.

When writing the photographic history, Bulgaria does not necessarily fall in the centre of Western academic discourses. The reason of this exclusion from the theory and critics could be easily drawn by the Iron Curtain. However, this polarised statement of a political speculation in the European history is far from being the only simple answer why Bulgarian photography is practically unknown. And usually the key is in the most logical conclusion: the history of Bulgarian photography is vague and unstable even in Bulgaria. It counted on incomplete records, memories and insufficient research publications.<sup>1</sup> Facing this challenging perspective, the Bulgarian photography managed to overcome the abyss of oblivion and to have a photography connected, inspired by Western traditions. The case study of Mark Markarian,<sup>2</sup> one of the renowned photographers in his country, advances towards the alternative progression of the European photographic history.

## In the Beginning

The photography in Bulgaria was technically and stylistically far behind other European countries with dynamic artistic and technological progress. What in Bulgaria was considered as a fine photographic art form, in Western Europe was simply the ordinary craftsmanship of commercial photo ateliers. To explain this visible lack of progress, it must be noted that at the turn of the century, Bulgaria had by definition a rural infrastructure and weak practically nonexistent industrial development. The country was still in a complex situation, regenerating from the wars. In 1878, it just came out of the Russian – Turkish war that ended five centuries of Ottoman power over Bulgaria. Later it faced the chaos of the Balkan Wars in 1912-13, in the eve of the First World War. With Ferdinand I Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a sovereign from the Western aristocracy Bulgaria secured its connections with Austria and its further cultural influence.

Hence the shy progress of photography was stimulated by the phenomenon of the travelling photographers. The two main groups were Armenians and Greeks from the South; then Austrians and French coming through the Danube ports in Russe. The Austrians' influence was vital, with the court photographers in service of Ferdinand I, and the commercial photographers. Motivated by curiosity to explore Eastern Europe, well equipped they established a network of trendy portrait studios. After earning enough capital, they left their ateliers with the equipment and the clientele to a local entrepreneur.

This is exactly how the Markarian family started their photographic tradition at the turn of the century. Arrived in Shumen from Kaiseri, Turkey (one of the crossroads of the Armenian Diaspora) via Istanbul the Armenian Vram Markarian took over the atelier of the Austrian photographer Samuel Geltsch in 1894. The Markarian photographers developed a practice, much more modern and pronounced, compared to the majority of the ateliers in

1 Petar Boev, *The Photographic Art in Bulgaria 1856-1944*, Sofia: September, 1983 and *The Photographic Art in Bulgaria: 1945 – 1985*, Sofia: Bulgarian Painter, 2000 were the first serious attempts for a publication on the photographic history, and they are still one of the very few ones. And even so, one must be very cautious reading its contents.

2 This is the first official publication of an unpublished dissertation: Ekaterina Markarian, *Science, Art and Light: the Photography of Mark Markarian in Munich and Vienna*, London: Sotheby's Institute of Art 2009. The author would like to dedicate the present article to the Centennial Anniversary of her grandfather Mark Markarian.



Mark Markarian, *Bulgarian Village*, c 1930,  
bromoil transfer print, 39 x 28,2 cm  
SPUTNIK Collection Andrea Spallart

Literature: Fritz Simak, Sputnik Volume I,  
Lammerhuber Edition: Wien 2010.

Bulgaria. The common trend was the low cost studio portraiture, family albums, carte-de-visite mass production. The first sign that set aside the Markarians was in 1900 – the building of a three story house with a spacious sun-lit photo atelier on the top floor. It was the only one in Bulgaria, and the first of its kind preserved on the Balkans. It had a glass roof and the intensity of the sun rays was adjusted by curtains on every single window. It quickly gained its reputation for the modern salon portraiture, according to the European fashion and style (fig. 1). The Markarian atelier worked in almost every field of photography: commercial studio, journalism, porcelain pictures, even cinema amateurism, and of course art photography. Their mentality to achieve higher quality of the production lead to the need of sending the young generation to Europe for better training as artists and photographers. After the First World War, Aram Markarian, Vram's oldest son, left for Munich admitted in the Bavarian State Academy of Photographic Techniques. A fine portraitist, Aram decided to concentrate on ceramics and porcelain processes after his return to Bulgaria. In the city centre, he built another house, where the ground floor was entirely developed as a large photo atelier with exquisite equipment and laboratories.

### The Art Photography: Mark Markarian in Munich and Vienna

There are two key characteristics of the Markarian photography. Firstly, the Markarians started their photographic practice directly from a European photographer. This secured the equipment for higher technical quality, and their source of the latest Austrian photographic trends. Secondly the style of their work and studio ambiance overall, showed the orientation towards more artistic fields of photography. Although the family lived in poverty, the focus of the Markarian atelier was not simply the business profit; the arts and culture, especially Austrian lifestyle were a valuable asset of the family legacy.

Mark Markarian, the younger son of Vram, born on September 26, 1910 in Shumen, Bulgaria was the only one of the family who decided to become an artist photographer, leaving the commercial practice on the side. Actually, his legacy contributed for the change in perception of the society towards photography as artistic form, not just a street craft.

A clear thread of continuity transcends in his photographic body. The first cell is the Austrian based beginnings with Samuel Geltsch proved as a direct factor. At the same time, the impact of Austrian aristocracy in Bulgaria provided constant cultural exchange should not be neglected. Another key factor is the Markarian atelier built according to European influences and standards. Then Mark Markarian received his early formation at the Bavarian State Acad-





Figure 2  
Willy Zielke and Mark Markarian.  
*Portrait of Mark Markarian*, 1932,  
triple bromoil transfer, 29 x 22 cm,  
The Markarian Family Archive



### Winter Night in Munich

Mark Markarian arrived in Munich admitted at the Bavarian State Academy of Photographic Techniques in 1931. In the intensive course of Willy Zielke, he practiced the novelties of the photographic processes, particularly the bromoil transfer (fig. 2). As Werner Graeff exclaims: “Have you noticed on moonlight highlights, how uncannily expressive black and white scenery can be?”<sup>3</sup> Indeed the nocturnal scenery influenced the stylistic preference of Markarian’s early work in Germany expressed in *Winter Night in Munich* (fig. 3). Markarian presented this work at the annual Academy exhibition, for which he was rewarded with his Diploma of Excellence from the Academy. The image reflects not only his own vision but also gives a hint to the degree of influence of Markarian’s mentor, Willy Zielke, who created some of his strongest modernist works such as *Water behind Glass* in the same period. The technical and stylistic components of *Winter Night* set the work apart and earn the appreciation to its creator. In a way, it could be the earliest testimony of Markarian’s affection to the winter landscape, which would become his main creative focus throughout his later work. Shortly after his return to Bulgaria, he becomes almost entirely devoted to the alpine scenery, always searching for the beauty of nature.

### The Portraits

The bromoil portraits reveal even deeper traces of modernity not only in the formal details of their composition but also in the overall vision of the photographer. They are the preferred genre in the Munich collection, expressing the ambiguous balance between the Pictorialist ideals and fresher modernist trends both in technical and stylistic sense. The face, according to Monika Faber becomes a “modelling medium that, with the expert use of lighting effects, could be formed and dramatically arranged to suit the vision of the artist.”<sup>4</sup> Markarian uses the principle of the uniqueness of the model’s features, wisely expressed through the photographic medium (fig. 5). Its formal qualities exposed under the photographic manipu-

3 Werner Graeff in the foreword to “Es kommt der neue Fotograf!”, published in 1929, essay republished in David Mellor ed., *Germany, the New Photography, 1927-1933: Documents and Essay*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain 1978, 25.

4 Monika Faber, “A Grand Finale and Off into the Blue”, in Monika Faber, Janos Frecot ed., *Portraits of an Age: Photography in Germany and Austria 1900-1938*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz; New York, NY: Neue Galerie New York; Vienna: Albertina, 2005, 20.

5 Faber 2005 (reference 4), 19.



Figure 4  
Mark Markarian, *The Chemist*, 1932,  
triple bromoil transfer on thick paper,  
40 x 28.5 cm, The Markarian Family Archive

lation become the very strength of the character portrayed. Enforcing the modulation of ambiguity, the portrait reveals immediate intimacy and closeness with the sitter yet an “insurmountable distance”<sup>5</sup>. A key point of difference with a typical modernist portrait, here the directness of the camera is always avoided, as if the sitters are not aware of the presence of the photographer. This anonymous intimacy, combined with the escaping gaze is the strongest expressive mode of Markarian’s vision.

In his essay “Photography” Siegfried Kracauer determines the photography as a phenomenon of spatial continuum, one that does not have the purpose of being a historical document. By the bizarre crop Markarian in-



Figure 5  
Mark Markarian, *The Young Violinist*, 1932,  
triple bromoil transfer on thick paper,  
29 x 22 cm, The Markarian Family Archive



creased the isolation from its real existence, in the vacuum of the image, confirming that “In a photograph a person’s history is buried as if under a layer of snow.”<sup>6</sup> This accent on the theme and timeless framing of the subject evokes certain closeness to Pictorialism. Markarian reveals the idealism behind the compositional modes of his pictures without using a thematic vocabulary that is too symbolic, always keeping the connection with the reality, in the contemporary moment of the model of his observation. In *The Young Violinist* (fig. 5) Markarian composed the picture with the precision of musical tonality, creating a paradoxical harmony of expressive means. The bromoil transfer is a process characterized as artistic, or pictorial to achieve painterly images with its most precious quality – the nuances and chromatic variations of the pigments. But here, Markarian uses this same technical quality to give a perfectly modulated black and white texture of the portrait, essential to the modern gelatin silver print.

6 Siegfried Kracauer, “Photography”, republished in *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19, no. 3 Spring 1993, 426.



Figure 7  
Mark Markarian,  
*Portrait of Miss Vienna 1932 wearing a Head Band*,  
1932, toned gelatin silver print,  
20.5 x 16.5 cm, The Markarian Family Archive

The Portrait of a Lady with a Bob Cut is one of Markarian's most emblematic portraits (fig. 6). She is closely framed, without the least feeling of saturation, similarly to *The Young Violinist*. Ironically, the bromoil becomes the means of expression of the new style portraying the modern woman, the elegance of the high class German society. "Our demonic diva" Kracauer says, "does not lack a certain look. The bangs, the seductive position of the head, and the twelve lashes right and left – all these details diligently recorded by the camera are in their proper place, a flawless appearance."<sup>7</sup> The object of his attention is a seductive model from the cover of an illustrated magazine. Yet, it was about a woman symbolising the glamour and fashion of her time. Combining light and motion, Markarian infused in his portraits the avant-garde aesthetics, preserving a certain connection to the classic age-old ideal of portraiture.

Markarian would always accentuate on the impact Munich had on his vision and skills. The role of the Munich Academy increases even more in the early thirties. It reflects a basic principle of the Fine Arts Academia propelling the dogma of excellence in training of the young artists, aiming to perfection in all levels of the craftsmanship of photography, before freely expressing their vision. Its strict network in photography was based on the elitist ideals of preserving an art that is quintessentially German, especially in the formation of foreign practitioners, and the particular resistance to new contemporary artistic styles.

### Mark Markarian in Vienna: the Beautiful Picture

Markarian's legacy is the result of his "everlasting love to the photographic art, unstoppable pursuit to perfection, seeking and reflecting the beauty in life."<sup>8</sup> His belief happens to be similar to the Viennese ideal of photographic expression. He arrived in Vienna in the mid 1932, as an apprentice of Willi Pollak supposedly one of the leading commercial studios in the city of glamour and music, where he photographed the modern beauties of the Miss Vienna pageant. The photographs that Mark Markarian made in Vienna turn out to be some of his preferred works, he did keep the original prints from his time at the Pollak studio and later on he often exhibited them in his own studio in Bulgaria, calling the set "The Viennese Ladies". In this time, photo studios like *Atelier D'Ora* or *Atelier Manassé*, gave the spectators exactly what they needed, in the lavish, highly stylized photographs of glamour and celebrities from the Austrian stage. Markarian had the opportunity as a portrait operator to photograph himself many of

<sup>7</sup> Kracauer 1993 [reference 6], 422.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Markarian, "A Creative Autobiography of Mark Markarian – Artist photographer, AFIAP, Order of 'Kiril and Metodii' Second degree", unpublished manuscript, 6.





Figure 8  
Mark Markarian, *Peak Maliovitza, Rila Mountain*, 1967, gelatin silver print, 30 x 40 cm, The Markarian Family Archive



Figure 9  
Mark Markarian, *The Sparrow*, c1965, gelatin silver print, 18 x 24 cm, The Markarian Family Archive

the famous stars and intellectuals, such as Liliana Heidt, Dolly Haas, Georges Boulanger, Carl Palda and others. In the Pollak atelier, he practiced anonymously as a volunteer for the renom   of the owner. He worked in clubs and restaurants in Vienna to pay for his living. Markarian said he “learned to seek and find harmony between the inner peace and outer forms of the personality and its appearances, and in this way to create in his works a unity of forms and content.”<sup>9</sup> He went to the Pollak studio not even considering the possibility of becoming a commercial photographer, but to improve his vision as an artist.

In the thirties between the wars, Vienna turned to be the centre of extravagant commercial glamour studios that took prevailing role using the legacy of pictorial amateur photography – the beautification and stylisation of the subject, in a high quality picture glorifying the female seduction. In the fine Viennese society that practically was trying to subordinate modernity to traditions, the photographic circles refused to abandon the Pictorialist ideals, and Markarian chose to assimilate the best of both in his work.

The Viennese social models of photo clubs had an enormous popularity in East-European Europe, persistent until very late forties, which is why the Pictorial styles survived in these countries and were the predominant engine of photographic progress in Bulgaria. In 1920 the Bulgarian Photo Club was established and became the source of modernisation of photography, as the main organizer of exhibitions. Helping the Bulgarian photographers to participate in events abroad, it initialized a primary network of international liaisons. It actually followed the original model of photo amateurism imported from Vienna.

In Vienna photography was art by all means. It was created for the stage, dance, performance, poise and grace of the actor, and for the fresh beauty of the “diva of her day”, Miss Vienna. She is not the mysterious woman, hidden in her thoughts seeking intimacy like the austere beauty of the Lady with a Bob Cut; she poses in the picture with all her vanity and coquetterie expressing her seductive beauty in every detail of the picture choreography (fig. 7). Thus the photograph obtained more decorative value, infused in frivolity and enchantment.

Even though Markarian worked at a central photo atelier en vogue, as a portrait operator, he was close to the aesthetics of the Heimat photography, which might be the ear-

<sup>9</sup> Markarian [reference 8], 2.

liest impact on Markarian's predominant theme in his photographic body – the mountain landscape. Markarian created his strongest landscapes in the sixties, but continued to prefer this genre until the very last exhibition he organized in 1985. The Rila Mountain pictures (fig. 8) uncover an iconography with similar aesthetics. Markarian aimed to capture nature in all its splendour: "The little sparrow trembling on a snowy tree branch, the proud peaks of Pirin mountain looking at their reflections in the crystal blue lakes, all this touches my heart, making me a humble servant of this beauty, that exists everywhere, if one could see it and immortalise it in art" (fig. 9) His landscapes frame the beauty of Bulgarian mountains in its most enchanting quality – the winter and snow glitter become the tools of photographic expression for Markarian. To compare, the concept of the Heimat photography was to glorify the lyrical beauty of Austrian nature and mountains, creating an Arcadian belief of a view immersed in serenity. The beautification of the landscape echoed the quest of utopia and imaginary escape. After his return to Bulgaria, Markarian organizes annual exhibitions of his mountain landscapes with the predominant subject of the beauty of Bulgarian nature, especially the snowy mountains.

### **Return to Bulgaria**

Mark Markarian returned to Bulgaria in 1933, and he worked at his brother's photo atelier, where according to his own words he was pursuing to ameliorate his technical skills. In 1937 he founded the first Amateur Cinema Club RosMark Film with his friend the graphic artist Rostislav Bakalov, realising their childhood dream to make motion pictures. Many of the short films were made with the 16mm camera Markarian brought from Vienna.

At that time the cities for the North-Eastern Bulgaria still had pronounced economic development, and stimulated the photographic activity. The North-East, with the main centres in Russe and Varna, consisted of a majority of Armenian photographers, quite often families with established traditions like the Markarians. Of course, there were many recognised photographers in the rest of Bulgaria, for example in Sofia, and Plovdiv – an important commercial centre in the South; however this tendency of dynasties of photographers, developing their traditions from generation to generation, was distinctive for the North-East. Russe known as "the Door to Europe" was a crucial point that because of its geography, on the Coast of Danube River, it was Bulgaria's direct link with Europe. Actually most of the travelling photographers from Austria and Hungary had made their way in the country via Russe. It is one of the few Bulgarian cities with some industrial development, its architecture is strongly influenced by the Italian styles, and its society lived with a pronounced aristocratic mentality.

The city of Varna became quickly a major coastal resort securing its economic progress. In the vibrant and flourishing cultural life, the photography had an independent rhythm conducted by the Armenians. Many of them had received their early training in Germany as well, in Munich and Dresden. One such example are the brothers Arshak and Torkom Boyadjian, practiced photography in Dresden in the early thirties. Just like Markarian was under the direct mentorship of Willy Zielke in Munich, Boyadjian received photographic training superior to others, in Dresden where at that time Hugo Erfurth had his most active creative period. Even though there are no records of any possible direct connection, Boyadjian's practice in Dresden was marked by a certain influence from Erfurth, and a portrait photography dictated by his artistic models. Once again this was a case of modern influence distinctly German, that somehow was reflected far beyond the Western core of European photography. However, these examples were not the main tendency in Bulgaria; they were exceptional and resumed a crucial factor of the advancement and "modernisation" of photography in the country.

Long before the Iron Curtain, Bulgaria was hardly noticed for any photographic advancement. The only trend practically existing was the salon portraiture or partially the reportage. There was no art photography and no pre-existing sources of influence for the young generation of practitioners. This is exactly why many photographers turned to the West in the late twenties and early thirties to receive higher technical and artistic training. Therefore the idea of modernising the photography was so persistent; it was Markarian's ultimate goal as well. Moreover Bulgaria was lacking in academic traditions and museum infrastructure for the conservation of photography; after all it was simply a craft.

After the Second World War the communist regime encoded in photography the so-called phenomenon of socialist realism as the mirror of a prosperous society. The Bulgarian Photo Direction was a uniform network of administrative cells across Bulgaria that controlled the exhibitions, commissions, training and work of photographers. Markarian was a genuinely apolitical artist, but in 1945 he was one of the many intellectuals inspected by police authorities, and a substantial part of his archive, photographic and cinema equipment was confiscated. It was nearly impossible, even illegal for Markarian to return to Munich or Vienna, and he has not practiced the bromoil transfer ever since. Instead he photographed the slow 'progress' of the social and political life in his hometown.

Even so, Markarian's experience as one of the distinguished photographers did earn him recognition to his work. In 1951 alongside Aram Hadjouljan (a photographer and a party member from Varna) he founded the branch of Bulgarian Photo Direction (Photo Union) in Shumen. Being the executive Markarian organised and taught many master classes working on the specialization of young photographers. The Union also gave him a project to develop



Figure 10  
Mark Markarian,  
*Pirin's Emeralds, Pirin Mountain*, c1960,  
gelatin silver print, 30 x 40 cm,  
The Markarian Family Archive

and lead master classes in high-mountain photography. The franchise of the Bulgarian Photographic Direction that Markarian managed in Shumen quickly distinguished itself from the other regional branches with exceptional quality of the photo production. His staff included many Armenians – photographers and technicians, and this was a particularity of the region. There was one new tendency which was favourable to Markarian's photographic work – the photojournalism, and its status of official and most appreciated photography. The reportage and the photojournalism were the formula most fitted to the new regime, as a genre reflecting the bare reality, it served well the propaganda. All other artistic forms, aesthetic models that supposedly had some Western influence were banned as decadent.

Markarian had already been photo reporter in the Second World War, which earned him two medals of recognition for his work. In 1950 he received the title of Artist-Photographer – an honour rewarded by the government to eminent artists for their contributions. In 1960 Markarian was honoured AFIAP – Artiste de la Fédération Internationale de Photographie (established in Bern, Switzerland) in recognition to his photographic artistry and his active appearance on the international photographic scene. This was before Bulgaria was accepted as a member of FIAP in 1962, before it developed actively the network of international picture exchange. Early in his career, Markarian organizes annual exhibitions and appeared in photo events in Cairo, Hong Kong, Germany, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary.

So the photo societies were in the hands of administrative employees of the communist party, who did not have any expertise as artists, or art historians. This caused major obstacles to the creative expressiveness of the prominent photographers in Bulgaria, including Markarian. This uniformisation of the photography eventually became the main reason



Figure 11  
Mark Markarian, *Mount Muratov Looking in the Mirror, Pirin Mountain*, c1975, chromogenic print, 30 x 40 cm, The Regional History Museum in Shumen, and The Markarian Family Archive

for Markarian's resignation from his position at the Photo Direction in 1962. The decision was caused by the intervention of administrators requesting full rights of ownership on the entire personal archive of Markarian. This and the fact he was never a party member, prevented Markarian to earn the appreciation granted to intellectuals and artists in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, because of his extremely active creative legacy he receives the governmental prize of excellence - the silver medal Kiril & Metodii, Second Degree. Later he became the head photographer of the Regional History Museum, in Shumen, as such photographed archaeological discoveries and memorial projects, establishing a large part of the actual photographic archive of the Museum. Again in the midst of an intellectual network, Markarian's contribution was highly valued, even though his position at the Museum demanded much simpler technical and creative expertise. The years at the Museum were known to be the most tranquil and productive for Markarian.

### **The Mountain Landscapes**

Markarian kept the aesthetic models from his early formation in his alpine landscapes, using the physical components of the active light in nature, not far from the ideas of his mentor in Munich - Willy Zielke. In *A Blizzard Is Coming* the blend of snow and light creates a sense of depth and motion of the surface, framing an image of sublime beauty. Another key formal element is the reflection of light in the greyscale spectrum (fig. 10). Markarian does not count on dark room retouching and equipment alterations in order to achieve these effects.

To explore the light modulations at its full capacity, Markarian always preferred the black and white photography. However, the progress of the photo technologies, and the



popularization of the new colour process had an impact on his goal to constantly ameliorate his technical skills. Therefore he starts learning on his own the colour photography, experimenting in the laboratory of the same old house with the panoramic atelier. In the sixties, the Bulgarian Photographic Direction granted him authorization, he was delegated to Germany. As a participant of the group of professional photographers from the Eastern Europe, Markarian studied the colour techniques at the institute of the ORWO enterprise in Wolfen. Once again the German School succeeds to propel its principle to have the foreign photographers trained in their methods, who would absorb its technical superiority and aesthetic models now in colour. One of Markarian's most celebrated colour photographs is the Mount Muratov Looking in the Mirror which shows an exquisite richness of nuances expressing the symbolic message of the alpine vista – the lavish of water and light framed by the camera (fig. 11).

In the early sixties, Markarian prepared a show of his works in Berlin, "The Legend of Rila Mountain". In 1984 the Wittgenstein House, in Vienna hosted a retrospective exhibition of Markarian's photography, named Pearls of Bulgaria. The event was a part of the cultural exchange programs of the city of Shumen and the Committee of the Bulgarians Abroad. It showed approximately 110 photographs in colour only. The following year marked the jubilee of Markarian's fifty years of photographic legacy. A few weeks after the exhibit opened, Markarian, aged 75, had his last hike to Pirin where he died. Followed by his true friend, his camera, he went to the high mountains in one last glimpse of the crystal lakes, the proud peaks and the trembling sparrow.

Two years after his death, the government takes over the ownership of the Markarian house, the same one with the unique sun lit atelier, after which the property was abandoned ruins. In 1991 the house burned down.

Markarian was inspired by a classic academic tradition of seeking and expressing beauty, not rebelling against it. His photographs were not revolutionary novelties. He was unknown for the standards of the Western photographic history, but he had the virtues that other photographers believed in. He went to Munich to receive the training of photographic techniques and science, and henceforth he combined it with his talent and vision to be an artist. What really matters is that photographers such as Mark Markarian should not be forgotten and overlooked by a photographic history belonging to stereotypes and retrospective assumptions. Because they would have much to tell about the conclusions upon which standard accounts of photographic history are based. In the end, as Paul Strand said "your photography is a record of your living, for anyone who really sees".<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Paul Strand, "The Art Motive in Photography", in: *The British Journal of Photography*, Vol. 70, 1923, 614.

# Photography in Romania in the First Half of the 20Th Century

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu



Figure 1

Franz Mandy/Et. Lonyai, Romanian Royal Family and the Crown Prince of Germany, 1909, 17 x 23,9 cm, Courtesy Romanian National Library; to be noticed the camera carried by prince Carol (first from right)



Figure 2

Princess Marie, Prince Ferdinand taking pictures, c. 1910, 9 x 14 cm, private collection



Figure 3

Etienne Lonyai, Queen Marie and her dog, Crag, 1926, postcard, Courtesy Romanian National Library

The Kingdom of Romania – which had been proclaimed in 1881 – was at its apex in the early years of the 20th century. The Royal Court encouraged photographers, some of whom were awarded the much coveted title of Royal Court Photographer.

The old 19th century photographers<sup>1</sup> were still active in the main cities of the country until 1910. Franz Mandy (1848-1910) was one of the most esteemed due to the quality of his works and most of the portraits of the Royal Family were taken by him. Skilled and inspired, he created portraits full of artistry of Queen Elizabeth, the celebrated poetess Carmen Sylva, and Crown Princess Marie.<sup>2</sup>(fig.1) All these pictures were taken by Franz Mandy either in the old Royal Palace or the Cotroceni Palace in Bucharest.<sup>3</sup>

In his later years, Mandy took his assistant Etienne Lonyai (1885-1957) as his associate. The gifted young photographer continued his master's legacy and eventually became the co-founder and president of Uniunea Fotografilor din România (The Romanian Photographers' Union). In 1909, when the German Crown Prince was guest of the Romanian royal family in Bucharest, Lonyai was called to take pictures of them with their noble visitor. The picture taken in the garden of the Cotroceni Palace, the residence of the Romanian Crown Prince Ferdinand and Princess Marie, shows their elder son, Prince Carol – the future King Carol II – carrying a camera. (fig.2). In that period, Lonyai's works were issued under the signature of his patron Mandy. For a while, he signed as successor to his master but, in the 1920s, he started working under his own name. His portraits of Queen Marie were masterpieces of the genre (fig. 4) 3

## The Royal Family's Passion For Photography

Both Prince Ferdinand and his wife Princess Marie were amateur photographers and took pictures while spending the summer in Sinaia. <sup>4</sup> (fig.3) 4 In her memoirs, edited years later under the title Story of My Life, Queen Marie remembered her Kodak camera with which she occasionally took snapshots. <sup>5</sup> Her favourite subjects were her children playing in the meadows surrounding their residence. Years later, King Mihai I, Queen Marie's nephew, developed a great interest in photography. He had his own studio on the upper level of the Peleş Castle where he developed his films and enlarged and printed his pictures. When Lee Miller visited Romania in 1946,

1 Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, Early Portrait and Genre Photography in Romania, "History of Photography", vol.13, no. 4, October-December 1989, 271-285; idem, Photography in Romania (1840-2008). A Chronology, "Historical Year-book", vol. V/2008, 127-144.

2 There was considerable cooperation between the royal models and photographer concerning background, set designing, symbolic objects and

light. All these portraits were masterpieces of composition and expression. Shown wearing loose white robes and surrounded by works of art, books, manuscripts and musical instruments, Queen Elizabeth was the embodiment of the high-minded intellectual. Accompanied by the young violinist and future composer of genius, George Enescu (1881-1955), the Queen played the organ and presided over large musical events at court.



Figure 4  
Julietta, Queen Marie as Morning Star,  
Honorary Chieftain of the Blackfoot  
Indians, 1926, 45 x 35 cm,  
Courtesy National Peleş Museum, Sinaia



Figure 5  
Julietta, Queen Marie of Romania, 1928,  
46 x 31 cm, Courtesy Romania's  
National Museum of History

she went to Sinaia to portray the royal family where she talked extensively with the young king about his passion for photography and saw his camera, a Leica.<sup>6</sup>

### Studio Portraits

When the royal family moved to the Peleş Castle, the summer residence in Sinaia, all formal and informal pictures were shot by Alfred Brand or A. Ihal-sky, two other Court Photographers who were located in that mountain resort. They took pictures either inside the castle or outdoors in the grand mountainous scenery.

Christian Nielsen was active in Constanța, the most important town on the Black Sea Coast, until the 1930s. After the Second Balkan War of 1913, when Romania received the Quadrilateral as territorial compensations, Nielsen moved to Balchik where he established a studio. Around 1926, he photographed Tenha Juvah, the new summer residence Queen Marie had had built on the Silver Coast, along with its magnificent gardens. (fig.28) 5

One of the most important photographic studios in Bucharest was the Julietta. Adolf Klingsberg, a skilled portraitist, was its manager for many years. One of Julietta's constant customers was Queen Marie. She posed there quite often and even mentioned her sittings in her diary as important, but exhausting, events.<sup>27</sup> In late 1926, Queen Marie posed for a portrait dressed as an American Indian chieftain, clad in the fine buckskin gown and sporting the eagle-feather war headdress she had received in a special ceremony of adoption into the Sioux and the Blackfoot nations respectively during her recent visit to the United States.<sup>8</sup> (fig. 26) 6 Two years later, she had a portrait taken in the same studio smartly clad in white and wearing her celebrated pearls and the fabulous halo-shaped diadem with huge sapphires just "to look every inch a queen". (fig. 27) 7 In both pictures the blurred silhouette and the apparently unfocussed features created an aura surrounding the model. These artistic means of portraying the model, along with the soft shades and deep blacks from pictorialism, enhanced the brilliant personality of the charming queen. Julietta might be considered one of the few Romanian studios which had a professed interest in artistic photography in the 1930s and 1940s.

In this way, she wanted to be remembered as a patroness of the arts through Mandy's pictures. On the other hand, young Princess Marie played various literary characters such as Edmond Rostand's *Princesse Lointaine*. She wore either historic costumes for fancy balls or fashionable gowns for formal court receptions. She was also fond of her cavalry uniform – she was honorary commander of the 4th Roșiori (Red Hussars) Regiment – and posed

proudly, with due military bearing, for Mandy's camera. She often sported folk costumes as did Queen Elisabeth. But, unlike her aunt who liked to have lots of objects around her, Marie preferred only a bunch of lilies, her beloved flowers.

3 Emanuel Bădescu, Franz Mandy, fotografia Princesei Maria, "Revista Muzeelor" – Special issue dedicated to Queen Marie, XLII, 2008, 25-28.

Figure 6  
Gheorghe Capșa, Returning from fair, 17 x 22  
cm, author's collection



### Documentary Photography/Ethno-Photography

Photography had a privileged position at the General Exhibition of 1906, which was mounted in Bucharest to celebrate King Carol's forty years of glorious rule over Romania. National topics were the most appreciated. Alexandru Bellu (1850-1921) was a wealthy landlord of noble descent whose favourite pastime was photography.<sup>9</sup> His models were peasant women and gypsies from his estate of Urlați, Prahova County. Bellu's pictures became fashionable around the turn of the century. They were successfully displayed at the 1906 exhibition and most of them were reproduced in large quantities and sold as picture postcards on that occasion. (fig.5) 8 The Manakia Brothers, Ianakis (1878-1954) and Milton (1882-1964),<sup>10</sup> two photographers of Romanian origin who worked in Macedonia that was then part of the Ottoman Empire, received the same acclaim. In their works, they depicted the daily life, traditional costumes and ceremonies of the Macedonian shepherds.

In the 1900s, an amateur photographer concentrated on folk types. Gheorghe Capșa (1870-1942) studied civil engineering and worked all his life in this field. He took pictures in the countryside: houses, carts, oxen, shepherds, ploughmen, hay stackers, peasants returning from the fair (fig. 8) 9, etc., were his favourite topics.

In the same period, ethno-photography was also held in great esteem in Transylvania which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Wilhelm Aurelich (1853-1917)<sup>11</sup> was an outstanding photographer who was active both in Brașov (Kronstadt) and Sibiu (Hermannstadt). In 1906 and 1907, he took pictures at the First and Second Children's Exhibitions held in Apold and Ilimbav respectively.<sup>12</sup> His portraits of peasant children were fine examples of artistry in their handling of infantile poses which are among the most difficult to take. (fig.6) 10 Cheerful or shy boys and girls clad in their finest clothes are shown side by side with their parents.

Another preeminent photographer was Emil Fischer (1873 – 1965)<sup>13</sup>

Figure 7  
Wilhelm Auerlich, Prized boy at The Children  
Exhibition of Apoldul Român, 1906, cabinet,  
Courtesy Library of the Romanian Academy



4 Ana Pleșia, Între vis și viață. J'ai voulu tout pour le mieux, Sinaia, iulie 1906, Marie, „Revista Muzeelor” – Special issue dedicated to Queen Marie, XLII, 2008, 59-60

5 Maria, Regina României, Povestea vieții mele, Editura Eminescu, Bucharest, 1991, 193

6 Anthony Penrose, The Lives of Lee Miller, Thames & Hudson, London, 2007, 174

7 Maria, Regina României, Înmormântări zilnice, Caietele anului 1923, Traducere de Sanda-Ileana Racoviceanu, Editura Historia, Bucharest, 2006, vol. V, 94-95

8 Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, America Seen by a Queen, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, 90-92, 110; idem, Regina Maria și America, Editura Noi Media Print, Bucharest, 2009, 62-64, 66, 162-





Figure 8

Adolph Chevallier, Caroling on Christmas Day, Neamț County, 15 x 9,9 cm, Courtesy The Ethnographic Museum, Piatra Neamț

who had a long career and wide-spread interests in the field. He took pictures of the winners of the 1908 and 1912 Children's Exhibitions held in Poiana Sibiului and Rășinari respectively. (fig. 7) <sup>11</sup> Fischer was co-founder of the Sibiu Photo Club (1904) and President of the Romanian Photographers' Union in the late 1930s.

Adolph Chevallier (1881-1962), a professional photographer of Swiss descent, was born and brought up in the wooded area of Northern Moldavia where his father was active in the lumber industry. Chevallier opened a photographic studio in Piatra Neamț and eventually became a purveyor to the royal court in 1921. <sup>14</sup> Besides routine studio portraits, he took outdoor pictures showing peasants and lumbermen, villages and traditional folk life. His portfolio is of great importance for documenting a vanishing traditional peasant way of life in early and mid 20th century. <sup>15</sup> He photographed a whole variety of topics, including old customs and festivals – both religious and secular – such as weddings and funerals, the Sunday mass and the Easter service, and carolling boys on Christmas Day. (fig. 25) <sup>12</sup> He was also



Figure 9

The Army's Photographic Department, Romanian infantryman greasing his bayonet, 1917, 16,5 x 21,5 cm, Courtesy The National Military Museum

attracted by old trades and occupations such as rafting on the Bistrița River (fig. 24) <sup>13</sup> – the ancient way of shipping logs downriver by sturdy lumbermen who cut wood up in the mountains – or returning from the fair with carts full of merchandise. Similar to Bellu and the other turn-of-the-century photographers who concentrated on ethnographic topics, Chevallier preserved an idyllic view of peasantry in his pictures.

### War Photography

During World War I, after Romania sided with the Allies in 1916, the General Army Staff established a special department with professional photographers to provide official and propaganda images. <sup>16</sup> That was the Serviciul Fotografic al Armatei (The Army's Photographic Department). The head of this department was Lieutenant Ion Oliva who selected some experienced photographers for his team. <sup>17</sup> King Ferdinand reviewing the troops or decorating brave soldiers, Queen Marie in a white, nurse's apron caring for wounded soldiers, trenches, cannons and machine-guns in action, soldiers cleaning and greasing their weapons (fig.9) <sup>15</sup>, troopers washing and sewing their ragged uniforms or eating their soup at the bottom of a trench, young officers relaxing by reading a good book or playing a violin (fig.10) <sup>16</sup>,

163, 177-178.

<sup>9</sup> For more information about Bellu and his work see: Petre Costinescu, *Documente în alb-negru. Un fotograf de la sfârșitul veacului trecut*, Alexandru Bellu, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest, 1987

<sup>10</sup> For more information about the Manakia Brothers and their work see: Ioana Popescu, *Privește! Frații Manakia*, Supliment al revistei "Mar-

tor" VI/2001; Marian Dușui, *Frații Manakia sau Balcanii mișcători*, Arhiva Națională de Filme – Cinemoteca Română, București, 2004; Idem, *Frații Manakia și imaginea Balcanilor*, Editura Noi Media Print, Bucharest, 2009

<sup>11</sup> For more information about Wilhelm Auerlich see: Konrad Klein, *Fotografische Ateliers in Hermannstadt 1860-1918. Einige Anmerkungen zur Erfassung des historischen Fotomaterials im Hermannstädter Staatsarchiv*,





Figure 10  
Army's Photographic Department, Romanian  
U-Boat in the Black Sea, „Armata” No.5/15.  
August 1942.

German prisoners and heaps of captured German helmets, destroyed railway stations and bombed churches and city halls, were common topics for those pictures. Some of them were published in illustrated magazines and newspapers. Many prints were sent to various units on the frontline as propaganda material to boost the troops' moral.

The Photographic Department of the Army once again became very active during World War II. On 20 June 1941, it was affiliated with its counterpart the Film Department to form the Propaganda Department of the General Army Staff. Professional photographers were concentrated in order to work for that department. They were organized into two different sections: One was involved in the operative area (i.e. on the battlefield) and one dealt with affairs inside the country. As in the previous war, the main topics were battlefields, trenches, destroyed churches and public buildings in the areas which had recently been liberated from Soviet Russian rule, crashed aircraft and shattered tanks, troops being reviewed by King Mihai I and by Marshal Ion Antonescu or war conferences held at the headquarters. All of these pictures were used for stirring the patriotic sentiments of the troops and reassuring the civil population of the army's

strength and its victories in battle. Most of the pictures were published in periodicals; others were kept at the Military Archives and were intended to illustrate a history of the war which was never completed. A few years after the end of the war, when Romania was occupied by Russian troops, that large portfolio of documentary war pictures was destroyed in order to erase any remembrance of the Eastern Campaign against the USSR.

### Professional Photographers' Unions And Their Periodicals

In October 1922, a few years after the end of the Great War, the Asociația Fotografilor Profesioniști (The Professional Photographers' Association) was founded in Oradea.<sup>13</sup> It was the first union of photographers in Greater Romania. A month later, on 8 November 1922, a larger organization was established at the Professional Photographers Congress held in Cluj. Even though it was proudly called the Uniunea Generală a Fotografilor din România (The Overall Union of Photographers of Romania), its founding members were exclusively from Transylvania. They had their own publication; the magazine *Fotografia* (Photography) was first issued in Cluj on 15 July 1922. The following year, its name was changed to *Fotografia. Revista Uniunii Generale a Fotografilor din România* (Photography. The Overall Union of Photographers of Romania Magazine), as well as its place of publication to Alba Iulia. The journal was published until 1926.

în Monica Vlaicu (coordinator), 120 de ani de arhivă publică în Transilvania, Editura Tenis-Club-Sen, Sibiu, 1996  
12 Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, Începuturile fotografiei etnografice în România, „Revista Muzeelor” no.1/1991, p.24; idem, Fotografie und Folklore. Zur Ethnografie im Rumänien des 19. Jahrhunderts, „Fotogeschichte”, no. 105/2007, 57

13 Konrad Klein, Ethnografische Fotografie in Siebenbürgen. Biografien und Materialien, „Fotogeschichte”, no. 103/2007, 38

14 Geo Dărbăn, Restituire: Adolphe A. Chevallier, „România Literară”, no.27/13-19 July 1994, 11

15 Elena Florescu, Adolph Chevallier, Valea Bistriței – tradiții populare, Muzeul de etnografie Piatra Neamț, Piatra Neamț, 1993

In late 1923, a few Bucharest-based photographers endeavoured to make an organization which was established on 24 January 1924 under the name of Uniunea Fotografilor Români (The Romanian Photographers' Union).<sup>19</sup> Nicolae Buzdugan, was elected the Union's first president with Etienne Lonyai as vice-president. Owing to some misunderstandings concerning the organization's management, Buzdugan soon offered his demission and Lonyai replaced him. In August 1924, the first issue of *Fotograficul*. Organul Uniunii Fotografilor Români (The Photographer. The Romanian Photographers' Union Organ) was published. The trilingual publication had the goal of providing information to all photographers in Greater Romania – Romanians, Hungarians and Germans. The magazine ceased publication after the forth issue of February 1925 due to the lack of financial support from the Transylvanian members. Nevertheless, the last issue announced the organization of the first exhibition of photography in Greater Romania to be held between 6 and 18 May 1925 in Braşov.<sup>20</sup> There were two sections – one for professionals, and one for amateur photographers. An exhibition of cameras and photographic material was also held alongside that of pictures. Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded for each section. The exhibited pictures were mostly pictorial landscapes and portraits, some of them resembling in style and pose the glamorous likenesses of well-known Hollywood stars of the 1920s.

The first congress of the Romanian Photographers' Union was held in Bucharest, 14-15 May 1924, and was attended by professional photographers from all over the country.<sup>21</sup>

The Union's magazine became available again in 1934; this time, under a new name and in a new format. The editor and most prolific author of *Revista Fotografică Română* was Etienne Lonyai, the very active president of Uniunea Fotografilor Români. In 1926, Lonyai had founded another publication, *Foto-Curier* (Photo-Courier). He authored most of the articles on the history of photography and modern photography and provided first-rate analyses of each epoch's works and accomplishments.

In 1939, the two major organizations, Uniunea Fotografilor Români and Asociaţia Fotografilor Amatori Români, joined forces in celebrating the photography's centennial anniversary.

The outbreak of World War II had played a major role in disorganizing the Romanian photographic associations.

More than a decade passed after the German capitulation in 1945 before Romanian photography regained its status when a few passionate photographers, both amateur and professional, founded the Asociaţia Artiştilor Fotografi (The Art Photographers' Association) on 28 November 1956. Its headquarters was in Bucharest but there were branches in every important town. The organization's meetings and exhibitions, both national and international, were emulated by its members and stirred the interest in art photography.

16 Romanian Military Archives, The Great General Staff, Second Section, Intelligence, file 472, 286; Constantin Stoianovici, *Fotografia*, mijloc de reflectare a războiului, "Document" No.2 (20)/2003, 59-61

17 Romanian Military Archives, The Great General Staff, Second Section, Intelligence, file 472, 289

18 C. Săvulescu, *Fotografia în România între cele două războaie mondiale*,

"*Fotografia*", no.190/July-August 1989, 6; Lucia Cornea, 1999, 27

19 Et. Lonyai, Începutul mişcării fotografice în România, "*Fotograficul*", no.1/1924, 6-8

20 Expoziţia fotografică din Braşov, "*Fotograficul*", no.4/1925, 1-2

21 Et. Lonyai, Primul congres al Fotografilor din România, "*Fotograficul*", no.1/1924, 18

### Art Photography

In spite of all the efforts undertaken to organize and provide visual education for both photographers and the public, it was impossible to talk about art photography until the mid and late 1930s.

A photographer from Transylvania made a brilliant career abroad in the 1930s. He was the celebrated Brassai (Gyula Halász 1899-1984)<sup>22</sup> who was born and brought up in Braşov (Brassó in Hungarian, from where he took his pseudonym). A multi-talented artist, he settled in Paris in 1924, where he was introduced to photography by André Kertész and published extensively in periodicals such as “Minotaure” and “Paris Magazine”. All his life he maintained a balance between art and photography. Because of his incessant wanderings that rewarded him with so many spectacular pictures, his friend the American writer Henry Miller nicknamed him “The Eye of Paris”.

Brassai had close relationships with the artists and writers of the avant-garde and was influenced by many of them. He portrayed his friends Picasso, Dali, Miró, Matisse, Gi-



Figure 11  
Constantin Brâncuși, The Endless Column,  
1937, 20 x 24 cm, private collection

22 Diane Elisabeth Poirier, Brassai, an illustrated biography, Flammarion, Paris 2005; Michel Frizot (editor), A New History of Photography, Könnemann, Cologne, 1998, 454, 520  
23 Cherished company for his contemporaries, Brâncuși's studio was visited

by many avant-garde artists, writers and composers including the painter Amedeo Modigliani – who was, for a time, the sculptor's student – the sculptor and designer Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, the poets Ezra Pound and Carl Sandburg, the novelist Peter Neagoe, the photographers Edward Steichen, Man



Figure 12  
Iosif Berman,  
Feast at a monastery, 15 x 23 cm,  
Courtesy The Romanian Peasant Museum

acometti, Eluard, Breton, Cocteau, Malraux and many others. He also used photographs as the stage design for the ballet *Rendezvous* created by his friends the poet Jacques Prévert and the composer Joseph Kosma – the latter also a Romanian who had settled in Paris.

Constantin Brâncuș (1876-1957), the father of modern sculpture, took photography as a means of presenting his works in the way he wanted them to be understood, as forms in motion. A graduate of the Arts and Crafts School and School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, he moved to Paris where he soon established his reputation as an outstanding sculptor in the first decades of the 20th century.<sup>23</sup>

Brâncuși was so disappointed with the way professional photographers captured his works that, in 1921, he asked Man Ray to teach him how to take good pictures and from that moment on immortalized his own creations.<sup>24</sup> His cameras were, at first, a Thornton Pickard 13 x 18 cm with a 250 Berthiot-Eurygraphe lens and a Voigtländer Killionar (16.5 cm l:6.3) for smaller glass plates. He later acquired a Mackina Plaubel 6.5 x 9 cm with an Anticoma objective 1:2.9. He also had a 35 mm Zeiss Ikon Kinamo movie camera with a Zeiss Biotar objective.<sup>25</sup> He used the most appropriate light in order to reveal the delicate polished surfaces and ele-

Ray and Brassai, and the composer Erik Satie. All of them were influenced, in one way or another, by the Romanian sculptor's art. For instance, inspired by Brâncuși's works, Satie wrote a piano composition called *Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear* in 1903. Sandburg dedicated a poem to the sculptor using his name, Brancusi, as its title, while Neagoe wrote a biographical novel called *The Saint of Montparnasse*.

24 Friedrich Teja Bach, Brancusi. Photo Reflection, Didier Imbert Fine Art, 1991, 8; Ioan Cuciurcu, Brâncuși fotograf, "Steaua" no.1 (320)/January 1974, 53-54; Raluca Bem Neamu, Constantin Brâncuși fotograf, exhibition booklet, Romanian National Museum of Art, 1 September-15 October 2006

25 Friedrich Teja Bach, 1991, 8, 32

26 "Reflective high polish is both the final consequence and the intensification of the rigour of volume defined by its contours. Yet it at once under-



Figure 13  
Nicolae Ionescu, Nursery in Bucharest, 1928,  
16,3 x 23,9 cm,  
Courtesy Library of the Romanian Academy



Figure 14  
Nicolae Ionescu, Clowns preparing for show,  
Franzini Circus, 1928, 16,5 x 24 cm, Courtesy  
Library of the Romanian Academy

mines its closedness and disturbs the clarity of severe shape through the multiplicity of reflections that play along its contours. In the reflective brightness of its surface, shape opens itself to time. It comes alive by reflecting the randomness surrounding it. As some of his photographs demonstrate, Brâncuși often enhanced the effect of high polish by meticulously calculating the incidence of light. (...) Brâncuși's Golden Bird or the New-born are no longer illuminated objects, but have themselves become radiant

giant shapes of his sculptures. Friedrich Teja Bach made brilliant comments on the way the artist brought light into play.<sup>26</sup>

General views and details of his studio have both artistic and documentary value.<sup>27</sup> He also took pictures of his "Endless Column" (fig. 11) 17, "Gate of the Kiss" and "Table of Silence" in Târgu Jiu after their completion in 1937. At the time of his death, he left some 560 glass plates and more than 1300 prints.

Both Brassai and Brâncuși created masterpieces in their field. However, they developed their talent on foreign soil, not in their native country.

In addition to these two artists working abroad, there were only two exceptions active in Romania: Josif Berman (1892-1941)<sup>28</sup> and Nicolae Ionescu (1903-1974) who combined art photography with documentary photography. Both were employed as official photographers for the sociological teams organized and managed by Professor Dimitrie Gusti, head of the Bucharest Sociological School. Berman had led an adventurous life and had long experience as a press photographer when he was hired by Gusti in 1929. He travelled extensively and provided an impressive documentation of many villages such as Fundul Moldavei (fig.19) 18, Drăguș (fig. 20, 21) 19, 20, Nereju, Șanș-Nășăud, and Runcu. He was also Royal Court Photographer during Carol II's rule and took many pictures at ceremonies and official receptions, as well as on informal occasions. (fig. 22) 21 Berman was also attracted by architecture, traditional (fig. 18) 22 or modern, and took snapshots on the crowded main streets of Bucharest at rush hours. Innovative and inspired, he took pictures in the countryside and the capital city, in the Royal Palace and a gypsy

hovel. His portraits of old peasants are especially remarkable for their sharp lights and velvety shades, sometimes resembling Rembrandt's patriarchs. In 1940, with the rise to power of the extreme right National Legionary Party in Romania, Berman – due to his Jewish origin – was fired and his studio closed. Heartbroken, he died a few months later, in early 1941.

When the sociological teams did fieldwork, Berman worked side by side with Nicolae Ionescu. Their documentation was instrumental in organizing the Village Museum in Bucharest, in 1936.

figures, matter luminously oscillating. The drama of light and shadow and the shining reflectivity in the photos radiates engulf the clear contours of the ideal. Essential form is not presented here as ideal form, as a reductive, inert formal proposition, but as generative form; form in motion, as it were." Cf. Friedrich Teja Bach, 1991, 10

27 "The site of the cumulative universe of form" – states Bach – "is Brâncuși's studio, which developed from humble beginnings into an exhibi-



Nicolae Ionescu<sup>29</sup> bought a camera at an early age and worked for publishing houses and newspapers for most of his life. After 1927, he pursued his dream of organizing a museum of photography. In this respect he embarked on making a comprehensive Bucharest “portrait”: he pictured streets, houses, public gardens, religious and secular events and festivals and, most of all, people of all classes, from the lowest to the elite: a merry crowd at the market (fig. 12)<sup>23</sup>, a thirsty youngster enjoying a sip of fresh water at the street-corner (fig. 13)<sup>24</sup>, fashionable ladies at the hairdresser (fig. 14)<sup>25</sup>, a gentleman at the hatter (fig. 15)<sup>26</sup>, and even newborn children in a nursery (fig. 16)<sup>27</sup> and dead people in the morgue. Brothels and prostitutes were also among his favourite topics; in this way, he became a Romanian counterpart of Brassai. Another connection with the French photographer was Ionescu’s interest in the circus and comedians’ life. (fig. 17)<sup>28</sup> In 1938, Ionescu initiated the Photographic Encyclopedia hoping that this would be a means for arousing public interest and funding for his museum. The publication was elegantly printed and contained fifty pictures; landscapes and cityscapes, folk types and costumes. In 1945 he founded the Romanian Photographic Encyclopedia Publishing House where he published some 67 best-selling illustrated books. But he was obliged to give up both his publishing house and the projected museum of photography when the communists seized power in 1948.

Special mention must be made of Willy Pragher (1908-1992), a renowned German press photographer.<sup>30</sup> His father was born in Bucharest and the son had strong ties with Romania where he travelled extensively as a reporter before and during World War II.<sup>31</sup> His photographic legacy is important, both from the artistic and documentary point of view. Despite the ups and down caused by wars and depression in the first half of the 20th century, Romanian photography preserved its passion for folk-life topics and, through the inspired eyes of such masters as Brâncusi, Lonyai, Berman and Ionescu, reached the peaks of art.

tion hall for his sculptures, becoming the masterpiece of his art. Today only the artist’s photographs provide an impression of its real quality.” Cf. Friedrich Teja Bach, 1991, 18

28 For more information about Berman and his work see: Ioana Popescu, Iosif Berman. A Photo-album, “Martor”, no.3/1998

29 For more information about Ionescu and his work see: Emanuel Bădescu (editor), Nicolae Ionescu: Bucureştiul de altădată/ Bucharest of yore/Bucharest d’autrefois, Alcor Edimpex SRL, Bucharest, 2002

30 Kurt Hochstuhl, Josef Wolf (editors), Willy Pragher: Rumänische Bildräume 1922-1944, Institut für donauschwäbische Geschichte und Landeskunde, Tübingen; Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Editura Altip, Alba-Iulia, 2007, 23-30

31 Willy Pragher made a comprehensive portrait of the country in the 1930s

and 1940s. In 1939, he settled in Bucharest where he was employed as photographer by OSIN-Distribution. He journeyed throughout the country and shot such different subjects as fairs, folk festivals, industrial sceneries, political meetings, military reviews, the King and his ministers on the National Day, war destruction and victorious soldiers parading in the conquered places. His pictures were published in periodicals such as Die Woche, Die Linie and especially Signal. His portfolio amounted to more than 20,000 negatives. After four years spent in a Russian forced labour camp in Siberia, he returned to Germany where he resumed his activity as press photographer. Two exhibitions with his works were opened a few years ago in Sibiu, Rumänische Bildräume 1922-1944 (August-September 2007) and Bucharest, Refractions. Willy Pragher – Romanian Visual Spaces 1924-1944 (September 2007).

# A Turkish Photographer in Germany, 1929 to 1930

John Toohey



Figure 1

These photographs are a selection from 37 found in a second hand bookstore in Istanbul. They were taken by a Turkish man in Berlin between 1929 and 1932. We know nothing about this man, his name or what he was doing in Berlin at the time however, judging from the ages of his friends, we can surmise he was a student. Most probably he regarded himself as no more than an amateur snap shooter however his photographs demonstrate an eye for photography and an awareness of modernist ideas in photography.

Few if any native photographers left the Ottoman Empire to open studios in Europe; one reason being that the demand for images of the East proved so lucrative there was no reason to abandon it. To understand how

Turkish photographers might have regarded the West, we need to go to other sources, to amateur photo albums for example.

The photographs here come from a collection found in a suitcase in a dusty second-hand bookshop in Istanbul.<sup>1</sup> There are thirty-seven in all, each print measuring app. 80 x 60 mm, which corresponds to 120 roll film. Most are dated and have inscriptions on the back, in Ottoman and Roman script<sup>2</sup>. When we look at old albums, it is usually the idiosyncrasies that catch our attention, the wayward framing, the happy accident. This photographer carefully composed each shot. He also showed an awareness of modernist aesthetics. In the historical context of developments in Turkey, the images reveal a sensibility that was distinctly contemporary. He – several photographs indicate it was a ‘he’ – could be said to be the ideal citizen in Kemal Ataturk’s new republic, possessing a modern, secular outlook, open to Western cultural ideas.

## The Historical Context

In *A Berlin Diary Autumn 1930*, the opening chapter to *Goodbye to Berlin*, a student asks Christopher Isherwood why he came to Germany. He replies; “The political and economic situation ... is more interesting in Germany than any other country.”<sup>3</sup>

‘Interesting’ was an understatement. The most casual observer would have known that events unfolding in Berlin were far more important to Europe’s future than those in London, Paris or Rome. Though Hitler was still three years away from becoming Chancellor, the Weimar Republic was in obvious decline. The fight between the various political factions for

1 The author is the owner of these photographs.

2 Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin*, London, Vintage Classics, 1998, 26-27.

3 The pictures shown in this essay are a selection from this series, and have been arranged in chronological order as far as possible.



Figure 2  
Anon, *Berlin building*, silver gelatine,  
15/7/1930

control of the country was taking place in the streets. What was happening in Berlin's art scene was darker, more experimental and more relevant than in Paris, the apparent centre of European culture.

The Turkish Republic meanwhile was barely seven years old. Atatürk had already abolished the Caliphate, secularized the constitution, outlawed the fez and other Ottoman headgear and introduced the new Turkish alphabet on November 1, 1928. A modernist revolution was taking place on Europe's edge. Turks were expected to restructure their systems of belief in accordance with the new principles. Although images of Atatürk personally teaching the new alphabet to school children and civil servants are ubiquitous throughout the country, suggesting everyone was familiar with it, the period between legislation and its implementation was swift. Many Turks continued to use the Ottoman script they'd grown up with in

their daily lives. Its use on the back of these photographs should not be interpreted as resistance to the new laws.<sup>4</sup>

### The Photographer

The two sections of society most supportive of Atatürk's reforms were the military, entrusted with their protection, and the educated middle classes. Based on appearances, we can say that our photographer belonged to the latter; however, although a Turkish citizen, he may well have been Armenian or Jewish. (It is also possible he was Greek although this is less likely as

Greeks had always preferred the Hellenic alphabet.) The distinction may be important. As non-Muslims, the Armenian and Jewish communities generally regarded Atatürk's reforms as positive. As a resident in Berlin, he would not have viewed events in Germany dispassionately.

No photographs display any overt political awareness. It is apparent from some that he associated with a wealthy family, that he may have had a girlfriend and one of his friends was Japanese. On the surface, he lived a typical student's life.

### The Photographs

There are the usual snapshots of friends but scattered among them are a few that show he regarded the camera as more than a simple recording device. A modernist principle, abstract-



Figure 3  
Anon: *Window scene (Glon?)*, silver gelatine,  
5/6/1930

<sup>4</sup> J M Landau (ed.), *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, Westview Press Colorado 1984.



Figure 4  
Anon: Women with capstan (Ostsee), silver  
gelatine, 14/9/1930



Figure 5  
Anon: Group (Ostsee), silver gelatine,  
14/9/1930

ing the visible world into shape and form, is most evident in the photograph of the building shot from ground level so it recedes to a point (figure; 1). This is a common motif in the works of Bauhaus photographers such as László Moholy-Nagy but it was also very contemporary.<sup>5</sup> It is unlikely our photographer would have taken this photograph without being conscious of new movements in photography.

That idea is reinforced by the scene of birds flying past a window (figure 2). Rawer than the first, the framing of the rooftops and the bars of the gas heater nevertheless suggest he visualized the image before he took it. Again it evokes the work of Central European photographers, such as Kertész and Munkácsi, who saw movement as integral to the design of the image. Again, it suggests he read the magazines or visiting the exhibitions presenting the new photography.<sup>6</sup>

The third photograph shows five women behind the capstan or winch on a boat. The framing, with the cable becoming one with the lever and neatly dividing the frame, is deliberate. The image also calls to mind a third principle of modernist photography; the incorporation of machinery or technology, usually in conflict with the human subject. In this case, it disrupts the scene drawing attention away from the women.

The fourth image, the photograph of a group of students, owes nothing to modernist techniques though it says more about the condition of Germany in 1930 and it raises a question that would not have been asked then. The poignancy of the collection as a whole comes from our knowing what was unfolding in Europe as the photographs are being taken. The people depicted here are of precisely the age group that, a couple of years later, will graduate and enter professions. At that point they will be faced with decisions. Some may join the German military, some may emigrate and it's entirely possible some will be sent to camps. Regardless of their political convictions, the world they inhabit is doomed. (Less so for the Turkish photographer perhaps; but the country he returns to has a future wracked by instabilities, military coups, pogroms and a smouldering struggle between secularism and religion.)

The question raised is to what degree the effect of these images comes from the

5 Károly Kincses, *Measure, No 43*, Association of Hungarian Photographers and Hungarian Museum of Photography, Budapest, 2006. One of several books that trace the development of modernist photography, in this case pertaining to Central Europe.

6 Kincses [reference 5], 112. The International Exhibition of Film and Photography, which Moholy-Nagy curated in part, was held in Stuttgart in 1929.



Figure 6-13  
Anon., *Sightseeing with Friends in Berlin*,  
silver gelatine 1930.







Figures 14-17  
Anon., *A Trip to the Sea*, silvergelatine 1930.



photographer being an outsider. Would a German student have taken the same photographs? Probably not. For one, the photographer values the situations he encounters as only a tourist can; that is, he knows his relationship with the city is only temporary. It is unlikely, for example, that two Berliners would photograph each other outside the Reichstag in a way that commemorates the building when for them it was an everyday presence. Most of his images – of friends in a park, at a beach, on a ferry – have a feeling of moments within a larger experience. In this sense, the entire collection of photographs is informed by a sense of imminent departure. A set of photographs taken by a German student in the 1930s may be every bit as poignant or tragic but in a different way.

If there is anything intrinsically ‘Turkish’ about his photographs it may perhaps be found in the paradox that many of them have a contemporary ‘European’ appearance. Coming from outside, he has discovered a modernist aesthetic and puts it to use. In a similar way, knowledgeable amateurs still travel to the US and find Walker Evans in a dilapidated boarding or Edward Weston in the southwestern landscape. It is a progression from the situation in the 19th century when professional photographers travelled to Constantinople and photographed the exotic contrivances of native dress and ancient ruins.

# Istanbul: Memories and the City — the role and place of photography in Orhan Pamuk's memoir

**Danielle Leenaerts**

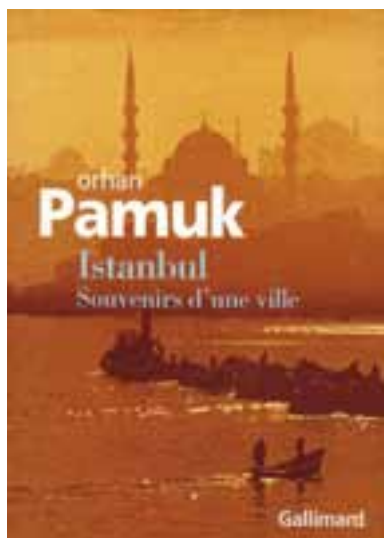


Figure 1

In 2003, Orhan Pamuk's book *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (fig. 1) was published in Turkish. Like the author's earlier writings, it was soon to be translated into many languages.<sup>1</sup> The scope of his work, acknowledged as universal when it was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006, is reflected in the fact that it resonates worldwide in approximately 40 languages today. Yet, as the visual material of *Istanbul: Memories of a City* demonstrates, the literary form is not the only one through which the author expresses himself. Indeed, the photographic image also offers the writer a wealth of material, the richness of which is intriguing both in terms of quantity and quality. The aim of this article is to explore the photographs (selected from works produced by photographers and editors, as well as members of Pamuk's family) that interact naturally with the text at many levels and contribute to the hybrid nature of this work of literature that is a combination of autobiography and critical essay. Beyond these dialogues, it also appears that the nature of photography, in its logic of imprint, of memory process, echoes the literary material surprisingly closely. This article highlights these aspects through the theme of vision in black and white, and the photographic expression of *hüzün* — melancholy.

## Literary field, photographic field

With this book, Orhan Pamuk presents both a partial autobiography – retracing the first two decades of his life – and a sum of reflections on the city of Istanbul and its representations. The inseparable character of these two dimensions also conditions the intricacy of the text and of the images with the visual material blending into the body of the narrative. Following a chronological progression, the author recalls his childhood memories, his family circle, as well as his urban environment and the associated cityscapes. Uncompromisingly candid, he does not hesitate to compare the gradual emotional and financial decay of his family to that of the former capital of the Ottoman Empire that was also in a state of decline and in the grip of a profound identity crisis. A crisis that intersects with Pamuk's own, marked by a thwarted first love, his desire to be a painter, and finally the decision to dedicate himself to writing. And indeed, literary endeavour provides a permanent referent throughout this memoir, which draws on representations of Istanbul from foreign, mainly French, literature and also features other illustrious Turkish writers and their perceptions of the city.<sup>2</sup> Following Walter Benjamin in *The Return of the Flâneur*, an essay on Franz Hessel's *Walking in Berlin*, Pamuk underlines the tendency of incoming writers to take a particular interest in picturesque and exotic aspects. These representations supply the author with a memory of a side of Istanbul that he has never known, because of its westernization, and which he is able to integrate. "My own troubled interest in even the most unreliable Western travel writers does not issue from

1 The quotations in this article are taken from: Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Hatıralar Ve Şehir* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2003; published in English by Maureen Freely as: *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2005.

2 Respectively, Gérard de Nerval, Théophile Gautier and Gustave Flaubert, and the memorialist Abdülhak Sinasi Hisar, his friend the poet Yahya Kemal, the novelist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, who studied under Kemal, and the journalist-writer Resat Ekrem Koçu.

a simple love-hate relationship [...] until the beginning of the twentieth century, Istanbul-lus themselves wrote very little about their city. The living, breathing city – its streets, its atmosphere, its smells, the rich variety of everyday life – is something that only literature can convey and for centuries the only literature our city inspired was penned by Westerners. [...] Perhaps this is why I sometimes read Westerners' accounts not at arm's length, but drawn close by, as if they were my own memories. I enjoy coming across a detail that I have noticed but never remarked upon, perhaps because no one else I know has either.” (pp. 216-217).

These literary prerequisites, together with the photographs that document not just the years 1950 to 1970 to which the narration relates, but also the century which precedes these two decades, inform, and even structure, the book.

The material is organized into 37 chapters, structured around general or personal considerations, with three main strands: autobiographical material, literary material and representations of Istanbul. Most of the 178 photos that are scattered through the 438 pages of the book are reproduced in a very small size. The remainder take up between a third and half a page, and there are only two full-page photographs in the volume; both are attributed to Ara Güler. In contrast to the literary texts to which Pamuk refers, some foreign, others Turkish, the origins of the images are exclusively Turkish, with the sole exception of a photograph taken by Robertson.



Figure 2 Reproduced without captions or comments, these photographs are, however, the object of an author's note at the end of the book specifying their attributions. The note states that the majority of the pictures (65) were supplied by Ara Güler (born in 1928), the “Turkish Cartier-Bresson”. Of the remaining photos, 39 relate to Pamuk's family and include several of the author as a child (fig. 2). Most of these were taken by his father, others by his mother or his uncle. This father, frequently reserved and often even absent from the family residence, nevertheless seems attached to his photographic records, maybe symbolically compensating for his absences with these snapshots. Generally speaking, the abundance of these family photos epitomizes the main vocation of amateur photography, as highlighted by Pierre Bourdieu, namely: “to solemnize and to immortalize the great moments of family life, in brief, to strengthen the integration of the family group by reaffirming the feeling that it has of itself and its unity”.<sup>3</sup> Like the Güler images, these family photos relate to the 1950-1970 timeframe. A further part

3. Pierre Bourdieu (ed.), *Un Art moyen. Essai sur les usages sociaux de la photographie*, Paris: Minuit, 1965, 39 [the quotation was translated from this source].



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

of the corpus of pictures, covering the 1930s to the 1970s, is provided by two photo reporters: Selahattin Giz (1914-1994, 27 images) (fig. 3) and Hilmi Sahenk (born in 1912, 16 images) (fig. 4). Abdullah Biraderler, the director of a photographic agency that operated during the last quarter of the 19th century, is attributed with three photographs and an unspecified number of other images (fig. 5). Pamuk notes the attribution of 11 images, featured in their final postcard format, to the postcard publisher Max Fruchtermann (fig. 6), adding that he had also used some of Biraderler's pictures. The 19th century is further represented by a view of the Hagia Sophia taken by James Robertson in 1853 (fig. 7). A total of eight anonymous photographs (fig. 8), and seven taken by the author himself (fig. 9), complete this iconography. The author's notes on these photographic contents conclude with a double portrait of Pamuk and Güler in the latter's studio, an image taken by Murat Kertoglu, which reflects the empathy between the two men, and the writer's immersion in the photographer's archives.<sup>4</sup>

Reproductions of drawings, engravings and paintings complete this visual corpus. These include a drawing by Le Corbusier and another by Hoca Ali Riza, an engraving by Thomas Allom, five anonymous panoramic lithographs reproduced as postcards, the reproductions of eight paintings by Melling and one of Halil Pasha's painting *The Reclining Woman*.

The mere enumeration of these images demonstrates the importance of the visual counterpart to Pamuk's text. However, it should also be noted that they are not directly commented on; their existence is autonomous, dissociated from any illustrative function. The relationship between the images and the text appears, instead, to operate at a structural level, about which the author expresses himself by reference to the "black-and-white" spirit, interpreted here as central to their common relationship to what the author, in Turkish, describes as *hüzün*, a form of melancholy.

#### A black-and-white spirit

This black-and-white vision, which might be associated specifically with the photographic image,<sup>5</sup> enables the author to describe his perception of

4. This empathy is also manifest in the text Pamuk contributed to the photographer's album, *Istanbul – Ara Güler*, Paris: Éditions du Pacifique, 2009.  
5. At least if we consider that during the main part of its history, photography was limited to black and white. The first colour process only appeared

in 1907, seven decades after the invention of photography, and many more years passed before stable colour prints became available in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On this matter, see: Pamela Roberts, *A Century of Colour Photography*, London: André Deutsch, 2007.





Figure 6 Istanbul when he was a child, as well as his memory of it as a place in two tints: “As a child, I would sometimes imagine painting all these houses, but even then the loss of the city’s black-and-white shroud was daunting” (p. 34). An example illustrates this comparison for the reader, through Pamuk’s only direct comment on a photograph: In this particular case, one attributed to Güler (fig. 10). “A photograph by Ara Güler perfectly captures the lonely back streets of my childhood, where concrete apartment blocks stand beside old wooden houses and the streetlamps illuminate nothing, and the chiaroscuro of twilight – the thing that for me defines the city – has descended. What draws me to this photograph is not just the cobble-



stone streets of my childhood, or the cobblestone pavements, the iron grilles on the windows or the empty, ramshackle wooden houses – rather it is the suggestion that with evening having just fallen, these two people who are dragging long shadows behind them on their way home are actually pulling the blanket of night over the entire city.” (p. 32). The black-and-white haze is not only closer to that of memories, it also offers a first description, in the darkest tones, of the wood of the houses and of the konaks (palaces) which still existed when the author was a child, and which were soon to fall prey to the modernization of the city.

Further elements combine to support this interpretation: stone-paved streets, the potential dangers of the remoter districts, reminiscent of “those in a black-and-white gangster film” (p. 31); “On misty, smoky mornings, on rainy, windy nights, you can see it on the domes of mosques on which flocks of gulls





Figures 9 make their homes; you can see it, too, in the clouds of exhaust, in the wreathes of soot rising from stovepipes, in the rusting rubbish bins, the parks and gardens left empty and untended on winter days, and the crowds scurrying home through the mud and the snow on winter evenings; these are the sad joys of black-and-white Istanbul. The crumbling fountains that haven't worked for centuries, the poor quarters with their forgotten mosques, the sudden crowds of schoolchildren in black smocks with white collars, the old and tired mud-covered trucks, the little grocery stores darkened by age, dust and the lack of custom; all the dilapidated little neighbourhood shops packed with despondent unemployed men, the crumbling city walls like so many upended cobblestone streets, the entrances to cinemas that begin, after a while, to look identical, the pudding shops, the newspaper hawkers on the pavement, the drunks that roam in the middle of the night, the pale streetlamps, the ferries going up and down the Bosphorus and the smoke rising from their chimneys, the city blanketed in snow. (pp. 35-36). All this constituted a manifestation of the same black-and-white spirit for Pamuk. Still apparent in the clothing of the city's inhabitants, this distinctive coloration is rooted, according to Pamuk, in Istanbul's poverty, and in the modesty of Ottoman architecture even at the height of its glory.

Clearly, the author does not aim at depicting an atmosphere which he traces back to the aforesaid elements through colour or through its absence, but through the expression of a feeling. This black-and-white scheme is also characteristic of the representations of the city, in particular the engravings produced by Western travellers and draughtsmen, in the absence of an Ottoman painter who would have been able to paint: "If we see our city in black and white, it's partly because we know it from the engravings left to us by Western artists: the

glorious colours of its past were never painted by local hands. There is no Ottoman painting that can easily accommodate our visual tastes” (p. 39). According to the author, this can be explained by the fact that Ottoman painters relegated Istanbul to the status of a backdrop, a stage set, rather than considering it as an autonomous pictorial subject. This, however, is precisely what the photography of Pamuk’s book effects. While it is not emphasised by the author at any point, presumably because it is obvious, the black and white of the photographic iconography comes to embody the distinctive atmosphere of Istanbul, or at least echo its “black-and-white spirit”. Thus the photographs seem to tie in with the vision of Istanbul presented by Orhan Pamuk through his own memories. However, the gathered visual records do not all relate to these directly, and contribute to significantly broaden this singular recollection, for the benefit of the wider collective memory of the city viewed by other observers, at other times.

Black and white also encapsulate the creative, perceptual distance between the city and its representations. The philosopher Vilém Flusser underlines that, unlike photos, the world does not contain black-and-white states of affairs, as black and white are concepts, ideal cases of optical theory; in the case of black, the total absence of the vibrations contained in light and, in that of white, the total presence of all the vibratory elements. According to Flusser, photographs in black and white thus translate optical theory into images as if by magic. “Therein,” he says, “lies their real beauty, which is none other than that of the abstract universe. So, a number of photographers prefer black-and-white photographs to colour photographs, because they show the real significance of photography more clearly – namely, the world of concepts.”<sup>6</sup> Rather than the city itself, it is then its abstract or conceptual double which we perceive through its photographic representations.

The concept of duplication provides another connection between the photographic and the literary in Pamuk’s memoir. The first chapter of the book is devoted to “another Orhan”, and begins with this confession: “From a very young age, I suspected there was more to my world than I could see: somewhere in the streets of Istanbul, in a house resembling ours, there lived another Orhan so much like me that he could pass for my twin, even my double.” (p. 3). This concept of duplication does, of course, define the film-based photographic process, which establishes an original negative and a series of positive prints, and is potentially able to reproduce the image an infinite number of times. This duplication is associated with a principle of inversion, between an image of reality which initially registers as a negative on the film, and the subsequent restoration, in positive, of the dark and light tones corresponding to the reality as observed through the camera. To this dark, hidden side of photography, there is

6. Vilém Flusser, *Pour une philosophie de la photographie*, Belval: Circé, 1996, 47 (the quotation was translated from this source).

a corresponding bright side, made of visibility, in a dialectic comparable to that referenced by Pamuk as “the black-and-white spirit”. His observation of the snow-covered cityscape offers a clear, bright counterpart to the author’s generally more somber vision. “It is impossible for me to remember my childhood without this blanket of snow.[...] not because I would be going outside to play in it, but because it made the city look new, not only covering up the mud, the filth, the ruins and the neglect, but by producing in every street and every view an element of surprise, a delicious air of impending disaster [...] What I loved most about the snow was its power to force people out of themselves to act as one; cut off from the world, we were stranded together. On snowy days, Istanbul felt like an outpost, but the contemplation of our common fate drew us closer to our fabulous past” (p. 37-38). This relationship between unity and duplication, as observed in the cityscape, is also manifest in the opposition between day and night. “In portraying darkness as a source of evil, it captures what some have called Istanbul’s ‘moonlight culture.’” (p. 64).

#### **Hüzün and “that has been”: a time of memories and melancholy**

In addition to the quintessentially photographic duality of “the black-and-white spirit” of Istanbul, another parallel arises between what Pamuk describes using the Turkish word *hüzün*, untranslated in the French and English versions, and the expression “that has been”, formulated by Roland Barthes as the essence of photography. Close to sadness and melancholy, without however being their complete equivalent, *hüzün* is defined by Pamuk as a black feeling, not sensed by the individual person, but collectively by millions. This feeling that, in his view, characterizes the inhabitants of Istanbul results from the constant reminders, brought about by the architectural vestiges, of the history and the past glories of the Ottoman Empire. Rather than being valued as historic monuments, these are simply left to decay, setting the stage for the city residents’ daily lives. “Hüzün,” writes Pamuk “teaches endurance in times of poverty and deprivation, it also encourages us to read life and the history of the city in reverse. It allows the people of Istanbul to think of defeat and poverty not as a historical endpoint, but as an honourable beginning fixed long before they were born. So the honour we derive from it can be rather misleading [...] [Istanbul] bears its *hüzün* with honour” (p. 94).

Pamuk channels this feeling for his readers, and he also dedicates a part of his work to the solitary writers of *hüzün* (see note 2). Once again, the photographs in the book, which by their very nature inevitably link back to the past, provide visual cues helping to relay, or even materialize, this feeling. In particular, the author experiments with this in the second chapter that includes pictures taken in the family residence he compares to a somber museum. Indeed, the photographic record freezes a portion of space and time, making any

photographic image a memory-image, relative to a more or less recent past, but inevitably pointing to a state “that has been”, as formulated by Roland Barthes. “[...] in Photography,” Barthes writes, “I may never deny that the thing was there. There is a dual, joint position: of reality and of past [...] The name of the noème of Photography will thus be: ‘that has been’, or: the Immutable [...] that which I see was there, in this place which extends between infinity and the subject (operator or spectator); it was there, and yet separated immediately; it was absolutely, irrefutably present, and yet was distanced instantly.”<sup>7</sup>

Just like photography, which necessarily refers to the past of which it preserves a trace, Orhan Pamuk’s Istanbul also designates a past reality, at the origin of ‘the black-and-white spirit’ and of the hüzn which this city inspires. As evidenced by this personal account of days gone by, the essence of Istanbul and that of photography converge.<sup>8</sup>

7. Roland Barthes, *La Chambre claire. Note sur la photographie*, Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma/Gallimard/Seuil, 1980, 120-121 [the quotation was translated from this source].

8. The most recent illustrated book about Istanbul with photographs by Ara Güler and an introduction by Orhan Pamuk is: Ara Güler, *Istanbul: Orhan Pamuk*, Du Mont Verlag, Cologne 2010.

# Lithuanian Photography in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

**Eglė Deltuvaitė** In this article, an overview and analysis of Lithuanian photography from the 1960s to the present day is basically constructed from a historical perspective with attention to the artistic language and socio-political context.

Antanas Sutkus. From the series *Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in Lithuania*. 1965. Gelatin silver print, 40x50 cm



## Photography

first appeared in Lithuania a mere six months later than in France, yet such historical events such as the First and Second World Wars, exile, deportation, guerrilla movements, and the Soviet occupation, had an inevitable effect on its development.

For the purposes of this review, the year 1969 will be taken as the benchmark of contemporary Lithuanian photography, as it saw both the beginning of a new institution legitimizing photography, and the beginning of a documentary style of photography connected to that institution.

After World War II, Lithuanian photography was once again forced to prove its existence as an art form. In the first post-war years it was mostly perceived as a tool of ideological propaganda and photojournalism, or an amateur club activity. However, with the political situation “thawing” somewhat in the 1960s, and with the new core group of talented photographers that had appeared on the scene, the art form gradually blazed itself a path towards recognition.

One of the major breakthroughs was an exhibition by four photographers at the Vilnius Museum of Art on January 17, 1969. It was the first time that photography had been allowed into the main exhibition space of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. The show included works by Antanas Sutkus, Algimantas Kunčius, Vilius Naujikas, and Romualdas Rakauskas – all photojournalists at the time. It aroused great interest in society and triggered debates about the status and position of photography as art etc. that ultimately led to photography taking one of its first steps towards legitimization as an artistic form in the Soviet sphere. At the same time, intensive preparations for founding a society of art photographers were underway to avoid photography becoming confused with photojournalism. These serious, but fragile, ambitions were being developed in a severely politicized and dangerous context during a difficult period.



Aleksandras Macijauskas. *The Wheel*. 1965.  
Silver gelatin print.



Another achievement was the “9 Lithuanian Photographers” exhibition, opened that same year in Moscow’s Central House of Journalists. It featured M. Baranauskas, V. Butyrinas, A. Kunčius, V. Luckus, A. Macijauskas, A. Miežanskas, R. Rakauskas, L. Ruikas, and A. Sutkus, and it was after this exhibition that the art critics and art historians of Moscow and St. Petersburg (A. Vartanov, L. Anninsky, K. Vishni-

avetsky, V. Demin, M. Kagan, J. Borev, and others) began talking about common Lithuanian artistic features and a Lithuanian school of photography. The support of Moscow’s intellectuals was supremely important and contributed to the establishment of the Lithuanian Society of Art Photographers in 1969. From then until the restoration of independence in 1990, this institution was the essential organization responsible for spreading and propagating Lithuanian art photography.



Romualdas Požerskis. From the series  
*Lithuanian Pilgrimages. Serijai*. 1975.  
Silver gelatin print.

Both the activities of the Lithuanian Society of Art Photographers and late 20th century Lithuanian photography itself cannot be evaluated without considering the socio-political context of the time. Although photography in the USSR was always considered second-rate art and therefore suffered somewhat “less” than the “real” arts from censorship, both the institution and the authors were inevitably dragged into manoeuvring between political censorship committees, attention from the security forces, and other contemporary forms of control. Photography, whose essential function was to reflect reality, was equally subject to the requirements of social realism and anything “misrepresenting” the “happy” Soviet society was either rejected or destroyed. The most widespread taboos were nudes (Rimantas Dichavičius), montages (Vitalijus Butyrinas), and other forms of experimental photography. Moreover, the authors themselves implemented a kind of self-censorship to assure that their works were acceptable, well understanding the possible repercussions for disobedience and resistance. For example, Romualdas Požerskis diligently recorded church festivals – religious (sic!) celebrations – but was not able to exhibit these photos until 1988 and then not in Lithuania but in Chicago.



Vitalij Butyrin. *Terra Incognita, Mirages*. 1976.  
Montage.

However, it would be wrong to state that photography of a critical or resistant character did not find its way into exhibitions or publications at all. It was usually presented in a “correct” context, named in formulas approved of by the regime and only after paying a photographic tribute to the portraits of milkmaids, the “joys” of collective farming, and other requisite icons and artefacts of Soviet life. According to the founders and leaders of the Society of Photographers A. Sutkus (long-time Society chairperson) and A. Macijauskas (long-time chairperson of the Kaunas section of the Society), several attempts, using various diplomatic ruses and oratorical skills, were required to “smuggle” in some works of special importance.

On the other hand, the Society itself developed into a control organization. One could only conduct artistic activities, take part in exhibitions, receive commissions, acquire paper, developing and fixing solutions, and other necessary tools, if one belonged to the Society (later the Union). This meant that any professional creative work was impossible outside the bounds of “proper” photography. It was not unusual for the Union to help its member photographers out of dangerous situations; however, in balancing between the creative ambitions of the photographers and political reality, it often had to conform to the latter.

Despite the complications of the times and the specifics of a double life, the Society managed to develop exhibitions, publications, and creative work. Photographic seminars took part (and still do) in Nida, where members were involved in vigorous debates with guests from all the states of the former USSR. Since then, a close connection has been maintained with the photographic communities and institutions in Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic,



Algimantas Kunčius. From the series  
*Reminiscences*. 1975.  
Gelatin silver print, 30 x 40 cm

and Slovakia. Today's Lithuanian Union of Art Photographers continues the work and traditions of the Society, despite, naturally, having lost its monopoly on legitimizing photography as art.

What was Lithuanian photography like, then, in this socio-political context? What was the distinction of the so-called Lithuanian school of photography? The iron curtain, which isolated Lithuania from the western world, affected the development of the entire state, photography included. Books by photographers and theoreticians that changed the history of photography were hard to come by in Lithuania. The ones that did reach the country were perpetually analyzed and discussed. Polish and Czech magazines were the ones most frequently available to Lithuanians. Evidently, the photographers of that generation were self-educated. A closer examination of the photography of the time, along with the reminiscences of the ones who created it, shows the identifiable influence of artists

such as Cartier-Bresson, Atget, Brassai, the Magnum Group, R. Frank, L. Freed, J. Karsh, P. Strand, and "The Family of Man" exhibition, curated by E. Steichen. Lithuanian photography of the 1960s is social documentary, with man at its core. Lithuania was no exception to the wave of humanistic photography, which here took an ethnographic direction. The photographers recorded their nation, villages, work and public life, strongly influenced by lyricism and a psychological approach that combined both journalistic and artistic strategies.

While project art is predominant today, photography was created in large cycles, often taking up to a decade or longer, in those days.

The 1980s brought change both in the political and the photographic realm. Judging from today's perspective, the new generation: Virginijus Šonta, Vitas Luckus, Juozas Kazlauskas, Alfonsas Budvytis, Algirdas Šeškus, Vytautas Balčytis, Remigijus Pačėsa, Gintaras Zinkevičius, late joiners Gintautas Trimakas, Alvydas Lukys, Remigijus Treigys, Saulius Paukštys, Raimundas Urbonas, and others accomplished a radical change in the perception of photography. This is photography which by no means fits within the boundaries of the "decisive moment" principle. The frozen moment in time was replaced by fragmentation of space, "wrong" angles, drawing, conscious flaws, mundane details, photographic meditation, emptiness, and more or less hidden mocking of both the times and the predominant style of pho-



Romualdas Rakauskas.  
From the series *Blossom*. 1874–1984.  
Silver gelatin print 40 x 50 cm

tography. There is no human here or, if there is, he is never important per se. He blends into the environment and the interior and becomes equal or secondary to all the other details. In essence, he becomes photographic noise whose presence is usually presumed or sensed, not experienced directly. Photographic space is occupied by things and a seemingly meaningless environment. As much as possible, these artists denied the canon of the partly metaphorical Lithuanian school of photography, and created a new direction of discursive photography. It is important, here, to note the dissertation of the art critic and art historian Agnė Narušytė,





Vytautas Balčytis. Vilnius. *Viršuliškės*. 1981.  
Toned gelatin silver print, 20,9 x 14,3 cm

“The Aesthetics of Boredom”, that used various categories of philosophy and photographic science to define the Lithuanian photography of the 1980s; this work gives meaning to one of the most important and – in a sense – still ongoing stages of Lithuanian photography.

With the restoration of independence in 1990, there was an essential change in the situation of photography in Lithuania. The Union of Lithuanian Art Photographers maintained its legitimization control function out of momentum, but was unable to regulate all of the processes taking place in the changing political and economical situation. Paradoxically, it was forced not only to renew its structure, but also to re-legitimize the art of photography. A commercial-photography market gradually developed, a network of photographic labs appeared and spread, influencing (still) Lithuanian photography and its perception. The inevitable debates on classical hand-developed photography and contemporary technology

began at the time and continue to this day.

The G. Soros Open Society Fund of Lithuania started operating in 1990 and contributed greatly to Lithuanian photography. In 1992, the House of Art Exhibitions was reformed into the Contemporary Art Centre, continuously including photography as an artistic media into exhibitions. In 1996, a Department of Photography and Video Art opened at the Vilnius Academy of Art forming, in a sense, a new “school” of Lithuanian photography. Photography is no longer a closed realm of “photo artists” – global contemporary art projects influence Lithuanian processes and vice versa. Lithuanian artists take an increasingly active part in large commis-



Gintautas Trimakas. *Planes away (.....)* 1989.  
Toned gelatin silver print, montage, 53 x 90 cm





Rimaldas Vikšraitis. *Grimaces of the Weary Village. Kudirkos Naumiestis. 2001.*  
Silver gelatin print.

acterized by the topic of identity explored from different angles, and the examination of social bonds. Lithuanian photography is multifaceted, conceptual, and serial; it has lost the romance typical of the photography of the 60s and 1970s. Some continue working on an ethnic theme (Klaudijus Driskius, Arūnas Baltėnas, the brothers Černiauskas), but turn to man, the declining village, a heritage at risk of extinction.

The situation of Lithuanian photography today can be defined from several perspectives. On the one hand, the classics are reviewing and reforming

sioned art projects in Europe and sometimes outside it (Arturas Valiauga – International Photography and Research Network project “Works“, Ars Baltica Artistic Photography Triennale, EU-Japan Fest project “Japan Through European Eyes”; Joana Deltuvaitė – A. Toepfer Foundation project “European Values – What Is Important”, etc.); they are invited to important centres of art and have been awarded significant honours (Arles Discovery Award, presented to Rimaldas Vikšraitis by Martin Parr in 2009). The young photo and video artist Ugnius Gelguda is presented at European art fairs. A new generation of photographic artists – Akvilė Anglickaitė, Gintaras Didžiapetris, Rokas Pralgauskas and Monika Bielskytė – have become widely known. Lithuanian photography of the 20th and 21st centuries is char-



Arturas Valiauga. From the series  
*I dropped in on Stepas. We Talked about Life. 2003.*  
Colour photography, 50 x 55 cm

their archives, because most of their works can be exhibited today, gaining new meaning and context. On the other hand, some of the new generation use photography as a means in contemporary art projects. It is foreseen that, in a few years, the first scholarly history of Lithuanian photography will appear and undoubtedly fill in many blank spaces.

The main purpose of this review was, at least partly, to record the panorama of contemporary Lithuanian photography; but each time period requires a separate exhaustive study and analysis, which would deepen the understanding of the richness of Eastern European artistic photography and finally make it possible for it to take up its deserved position on the global photography map.

Joana Deltuvaitė. From the series *After*. 2006.  
D-print, 100 x 75 cm



After the contribution by Herta Wolf: “*collections of all kinds will be formed*” – *The Photograph as an Image and Medium for Taking Inventory*, first published in the last issue of PhotoResearcher (no. 13, pp 54-64) we close our series of publications of the symposium *Depot und Plattform. Bildarchive im post-fotografischen Zeitalter* [Depot and Platform. Picture Archives in the Post-Photographic Age] with Susanne Holschbach’s article. The symposium was held in Cologne from 5 to 6 June 2009 and was organized by the History and Archives Department of the German Society for the History of Photography ([www.dgph.de](http://www.dgph.de)) in cooperation with the Chair of History and Theory of Photography of the University of Duisburg-Essen. The symposium focussed on the changes in picture archives and the questions arising from these changes. The transformation of analogue pictures into digital data has led to archivists being confronted with developments that have an effect on the access conditions and order and administration of the archive material.

## Framing (on)Flickr: Modes of channelling an interdisciplinary reservoir of images

**Susanne Holschbach** Both the practice of photographing and the interest in photographic images have experienced a tremendous upswing in the digital age. This development can be observed in the dynamic expansion of photo-sharing platforms; internet portals that can be used for uploading, organizing and commenting on photographs – or simply looking at them. An outstanding example of this is Flickr<sup>1</sup> that is probably still the most popular of all these platforms. Flickr was launched a mere six years ago by the small Canadian computer company of Ludicorp and sold to Yahoo in 2005; it now hosts around four billion images with thousands of new photos being added every minute.

As with Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and the like, Flickr is a phenomenon of today’s electronic mass culture that is subsumed under the concept of “social media”. This makes it possible to interpret the photos that have been uploaded as stakes in a game in which the important thing is not primarily the meaning and importance of the individual pictures, but what takes place between and – above all – through them.<sup>2</sup> Studies, which have already been undertaken on photo sharing, generally focus specifically on the communicative function.<sup>3</sup> However, from the perspective of photographic theory, it is also important to investigate the kind of pictures that are included in photoblogs, how they are presented and the criteria used for organizing them. If one approaches Flickr as a reservoir of images, one is soon confronted with great difficulties – not only as a result of from the sheer quantity of pictures. In contrast to the digital representation of an institutional archive or a private collection, this reservoir is not simply an accumulation of a limited number of material objects stored at a single location. One is much more faced with temporary constellations of images that are only created through the permanent processes of classification, evaluation, and integration resulting from the activity of the user and the operation of the programme and, in this way, resist the scientific procedure of the examination of an amassment of objects. However, it is possible to investigate the processes oneself: The methods of channelling that drive the flow of pictures into specific paths and control the user’s access to the pictures.

1 The term is an abbreviation of “to flicker”.

2 See Kathrin Peters, ‘Instant Images’ in: Susanne Holschbach (ed.): *Media Art Net. Topic: Photo/Byte* (2005), <<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/#theme5>>, <[http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/photo\\_byte/instant\\_images/7/](http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/photo_byte/instant_images/7/)> (13.7.2010).

3 See, for example, Daniel Rubinstein, Katrina Sluis, ‘A Life More Photographic.

Mapping the Networked Image’ in: *Photographies*, volume 1, issue 1 March 2008, 9-28; Andrew M. Cox, ‘Flickr: What is new in Web 2.0’. DRAFT prepared for *Towards a social science of Web2.0*, University of York, September 2007. <<http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/04/77/66/flickr%20paper.pdf>> (13.7.2010); Christophe Prieur, Dominique Cardon, Jean Samuel Beuscart, Nicolas Pissard, Pascal Pons, ‘The Strength of Weak Cooperation: A Case Study

In this contribution, I will follow a path along two different channels that I consider exemplary and, in this way, attempt to provide what can only be a fragmentary insight into two of the numerous realms of the Flickr universe that I feel to be particularly significant.

### **“Interestingness” and “Number Game”: The Flickr Fame system**

Flickr is a social network on a commercial platform. These two aspects are presented immediately on the surface; that means, on the first level of the interface. If one is in possession of a Flickr account that personalizes the start-up page,<sup>4</sup> the left side of the page shows a selection of one’s current uploads in thumbnail format (“Your Photostream”); below this, the contributions of persons one has “contacts” with (Your Contacts), and finally photos by members of groups one is a member of. On the right side of the page, the largest element forces its way into view – it as an advertising banner with permanently changing commercials from the photographic industry – and the provider launches images that it considers especially pertinent beneath this under the heading of “Flickr Blog” (figure 1). In keeping with the laws of economics that govern his activities, the provider is naturally interested in expanding and this means that the features it provides at the programme level are intended to keep the visitors on the platform for as long as possible and guide them to different levels so that they become aware of the maximum number of features of the portal that, once again, trigger the stimulation to participate, to actively take part as a prosumer. The term prosumer takes the fact that active users are both producers and consumers of pictures into account. One of these stimuli is hidden behind the “Explore” link that can be found on the upper menu bar on the personalized page and on the lower right of the “neutral” start-up page. If one calls up this link, a page opens on which Flickr displays or “covers” individual pictures from the reservoir of recent additions. It is not by chance that prosumers refer to this as the “front page”. The selection of these pictures is determined by an algorithm with the name of “interestingness” and Flickr provides the following information on the way this works: “There are lots of elements that make something ‘interesting’ (or not) on Flickr. Where the clickthroughs are coming from; who comments on it and when; who marks it as a favorite; its tags and many more things which are constantly changing. Interestingness changes over time, as more and more fantastic content and stories are added to Flickr.”<sup>5</sup> This description makes one suspect that, here, we are dealing with an especially effective combination of the interests of the provider and prosumers, programme functions and manipulation by the users. This is because many photobloggers regard having one of their photos appear among those selected as the major goal in the number game they are playing: in the competition for the attention that can be measured in the number of views, commentaries and favouritizations<sup>6</sup>: Factors that are built into the “interestingness” algorithm.

on Flickr’ <<http://arxiv.org/pdf/0802.2317>> [13.7.2010] [This study is based on data collected in 2006]; Nancy A. Van House, ‘Flickr and Public Image-Sharing: Distant Closeness and Photo Exhibition’ in: *Extended Abstracts of the Conference on Human Actors in Computing Systems (CHI 2007)*. ACM Press <<http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~vanhouse/VanHouseFlickrDistantCHI07.pdf>> [25.4.2009]; Nancy Van House et al., ‘The Uses of Personal Networked Digital Imaging: An Empirical Study of Cameraphone Photos and Sharing’ in: *Extended Abstracts of*

*the Conference on Human Actors in Computing Systems (CHI 2005)*, ACM Press <[http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~vanhouse/van\\_house\\_chi\\_short.pdf](http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~vanhouse/van_house_chi_short.pdf)> [25.4.2009].

<sup>4</sup> The startup page for those without an account shows the most significant functions and options of the portal and encourages the visitor to set up an account.

<sup>5</sup> See <<http://www.flickr.com/explore/interesting/>> [11.7.2010]

<sup>6</sup> The simplest and most effective way to evaluate the pictures of other bloggers





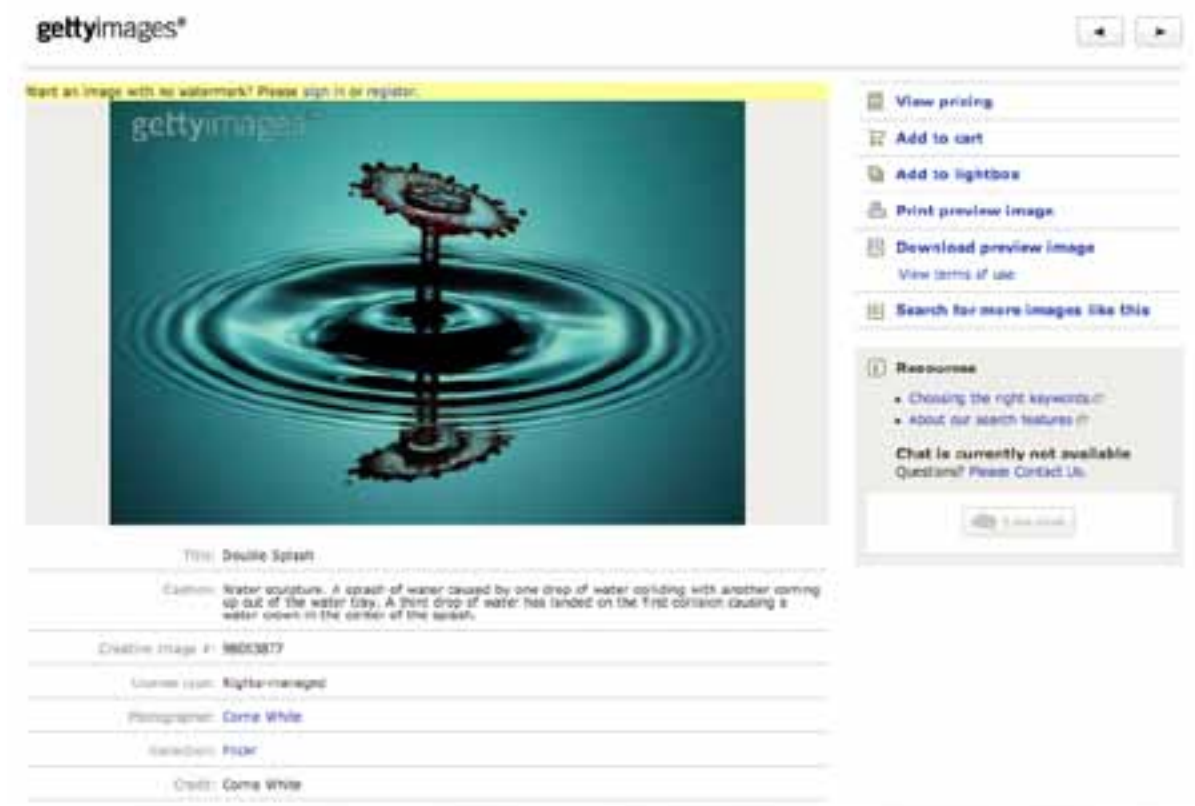


Figure 5.  
Corrie White in Getty Images  
<<http://www.gettyimages.com/Search/Search.aspx?contractUrl=2&language=en-US&family=creative&p=splash&assetType=image>>  
(13.7.2010)

the competition taking place between Flickr's photobloggers.<sup>12</sup> Getty Images advertises these photos by stressing their authenticity, spontaneity and instantaneousness in contrast to the artificiality, redundancy and stereotype of the usual commercial images<sup>13</sup> – with the aim of transforming precisely these signs of quality into a commodity. However, before confirming this comparison by making a moral evaluation of stock photography's access to supposedly “more authentic” snapshots and amateur photographs, one should consider that, on the one hand, the transformation of the fleeting, accidental and casual into an aesthetic of the fleeting, accidental and casual and its capability of being duplicated and reproduced – with the danger of becoming clichéd – is inherent in photography. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that amateur photography and the photographic industry already have a long history of interaction.

### Analogue photography's comeback in the digital medium

To a certain extent, the “interestingness” channel is the glossy level of Flickr or – to put it differently – the level that is most regulated by Flickr. However, the prosumers' input to this level also includes unexpected images that have been brought back to light – some of them, curious finds from the age of analogue photography – along with unavoidable photographic stereotypes. If one follows up these finds, one comes across a broad network of groups whose

10 See Cox 2007 (reference 2), 6.

11 See Flickr's own description of the contents: <http://www.flickr.com/explore/interesting/> (13.7.2010).

12 Prieur et. al. (reference 2) draw attention to the fact that one's reputation in Flickr can also have a perceptual effect outside the blog: “For some users, Flickr fame is converted into real-life recognition and benefits, like publications in magazines, exhibitions, and professional opportunities.” In the meantime, some

users have already created a link to Getty Images and expressly allude to the copyright; for example, see: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/playces/4507519171/> (13.7.2010).

13 See <http://www.gettyimages.com/creative/frontdoor/flickrphotos> (13.7.2010). Cox already foresaw this development in his study: “Flickr might reasonably be seen as a source of more real, contextualised images, ‘authentic’ in feel.” (Cox 2007, reference 2, 13).

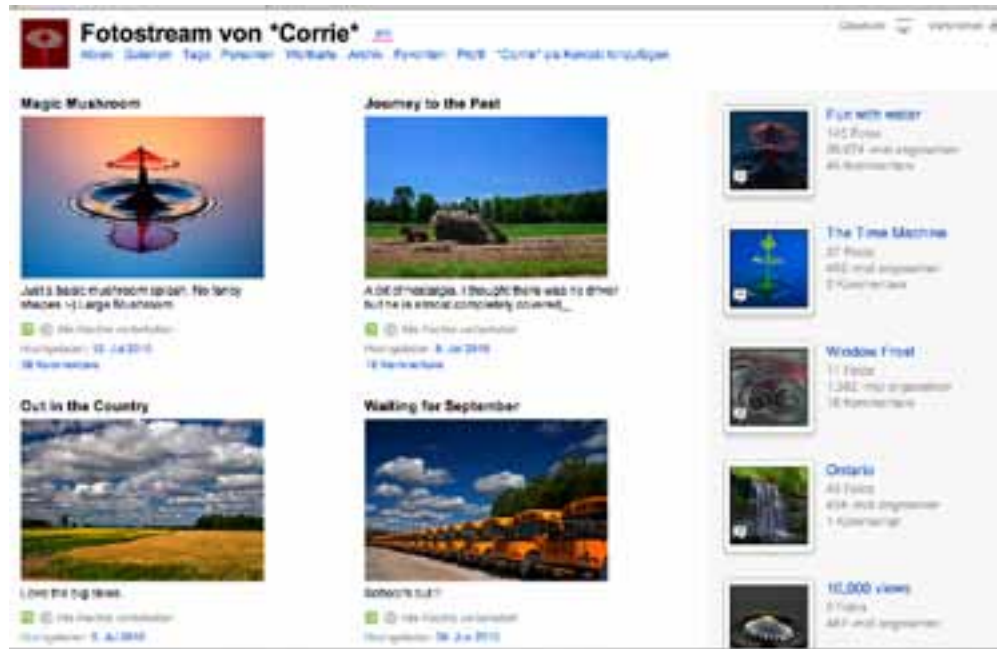


Figure 6.  
Fotostream von Corrie White (Corrie) in  
Flickr. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/10756887@N07/>>

members digitalize private collections of historical photographs and offer them to be examined online by the public – this begins with daguerreotypes and goes as far as snapshots that nobody can – or wants to – remember, passport photos of people nobody knows, postcards and illustrations from, now useless, manuals: Quite simply everything that can be found at flea markets, house clearances, commercial close-downs, or bought on eBay (figure 7). Photo historians will inevitably find their way to these groups because groups in general are the channels over which interest-controlled navigation through the Flickr image reservoir takes place. Groups on all possible technical aspects of photography have come together, groups on all imaginable photographic genres, motifs, subjects etc. One can post one's pictures to groups where the administrators, founders and moderators of the groups accept – or reject – including the pictures in their pool based on rules they themselves have initiated. Conversely, administrators can also “recruit” pictures for their pools from others. In this way, active users can rapidly come to fifty or more various groups. The groups also provide a fundamental system of reference that proves itself to be a much more effective tool for image retrieval than searching for tags: For example, in this way, the Antique Photographs group leads me to a page with carte-de-visite portraits<sup>14</sup> (figure 8), and this then to the Found Photographs pool where I become aware of a participant with the nickname of AtypicalArt<sup>15</sup> who presents excerpts from his private collection in albums sorted according to subjects (figures 9 & 10). What artists such as Hans Peter Feldmann began as a singular practice in the context of art – the recycling of vernacular photography through rearrangement and relabeling – at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, and which has, more recently, become represented in the artistic field by works such as those by Peter Piller<sup>16</sup> and Tacita Dean<sup>17</sup> can be seen on Flickr as a popular leisure-time activity. Nevertheless, AtypicalArt and Ggaabboo represent a group of collectors who carry

14 Included by Ggaabboo: <<http://www.flickr.com/people/23912178@N08/>> (12.7.2010)

15 This collector, who live in Wisconsin, gives detailed information on his “Found/Vernacular Photography Collection” in his profile: <http://www.flickr.com/people/atypicalart/> (12.7.2010)

16 Archiv Peter Piller: <http://www.peterpiller.de/index1.htm> (13.7.2010).

17 Tacita Dean, *Floh*, Göttingen 2002.

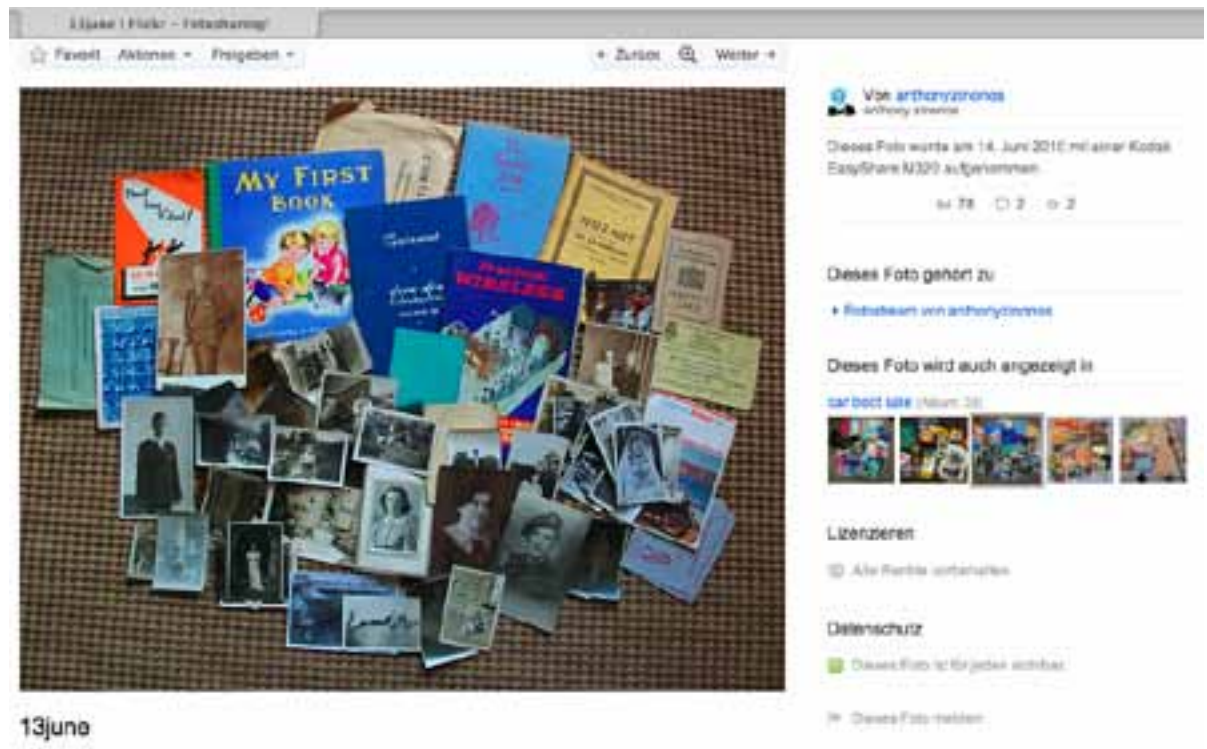


Figure 8.  
Ggaabboo. Gony & Egey Debreceen,  
Visitenkartenporträt <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/23912178@N08/4476587025/in/pool-14924235@N00/>> (13.7.2010)

out their hobby with archival precision; something that can be observed in the manner in which they meticulously annotate their exhibits and, if applicable, reproduce the reverse of the photos. Those groups that collect photographs in their function as historical documents, such as the 20th Century Black History Pool<sup>18</sup>, in order to assemble a visual testimony of sectors that have been marginalized in the writing of history and, in so doing, establish new annals, are united by their archival interest. Institutional archives have also recognized the potential of this interest in historical photography. After Flickr started a pilot project with the Library of Congress in January 2008, an increasing number of institutions have not only provided Flickr with portions of their holdings that can be inspected but also commented on (figure 11).<sup>19</sup> Citing the title of a book by the media theoretician Wolfgang Ernst,<sup>20</sup> the archives are growing uneasy: Collections of all kinds are leaving their locations to become accessible and open for further use.

### Prospects

It makes no difference whether they are originally taken digitally or only reproduced, their transfer into a photoblog represents a decontextualization of the original images. Removed from the specific context of their creation and use or function – such as the organization of the memory of a family or a personal lifestyle, an artistic work or a private collection – they become available for reorganization. Through the implementation of sorting – carried out either automatically or by the prosumers – they are repeatedly rearranged in a manner that is

18 See [http://www.flickr.com/groups/20th\\_century\\_black\\_history/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/20th_century_black_history/) (12.7.2010).

19 See <http://www.flickr.com/commons/> (13.7.2010).

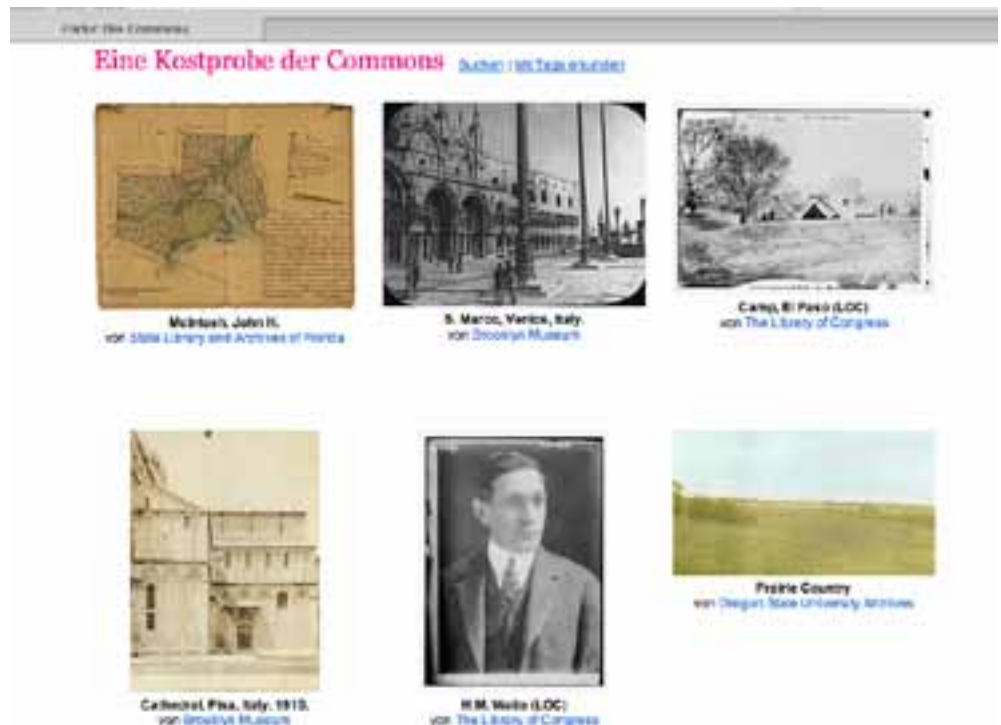


Figure 11:  
Ansichtsseite der Commons.  
<<http://www.flickr.com/commons/>>

often completely at odds with the established genres of photography. The significances that are created and, even more, the kind of discoveries on our visual culture that can be gained from a comparative iconography of the indisciplined, neither artistically nor institutionally-framed combination of pictures, are questions that cannot be answered here and require further investigation.

Other issues must be dealt with in view of the heterogeneous flood of pictures on Flickr. Many of the observations one makes on, and about, Flickr remind one of old familiar culture-critical reservations concerning the mass medium of photography. For example: One that has become consolidated is the metaphor of the flood of pictures as expressed by Siegfried Kracauer faced with the illustrated press in the 1920s: As the flood of images that swept away the dams of the memory, as the assault of the collection of pictures that is so powerful that it threatens to eradicate the possibly existing consciousness of decisive aspects. To speak with Kracauer, Doesn't the public see the world on Flickr that Flickr prevents it perceiving?<sup>21</sup> Or the ghost of producing stereotypes, the process of photographic recycling which – as Susan Sontag wrote some decades later – makes stereotypes out of unique objects and vital artistic products out of stereotypes. Is it not the case that, since the start of digital photography, increasingly dense layers of pictures force themselves between the images of real things?<sup>22</sup> This could also apply to the figure of the person taking the snapshot who Vilém Flusser described as an extension of his camera's self-timer, consumed by its greed. Updating Flusser, doesn't Flickr expressly demand that the prosumers takes snaps incessantly, that they continue to

20 Wolfgang Ernst, *Das Rumoren der Archive. Ordnung aus Unordnung*. Berlin 2002.

21 Siegfried Kracauer, *Die Photographie*, in: idem: *Der verbotene Blick. Beobachtungen, Analysen, Kritiken*, Leipzig 1992, pp. 185–203, 198.

22 Susan Sontag, 'The Image world', in: idem, *On Photography*, New York: Penguin Books (1971) 2008, 153–180, 174. It is significant that, shortly before the quoted passage, Sontag discusses "quality" and "the interesting": "In the form

of photographic images, things and events are put to new uses, assigned new meanings, which go beyond the distinctions between the beautiful and the ugly, the true and the false, the useful and the useless, good taste and bad. Photography is one of the chief means for producing that quality ascribed to things and situations which erases these distinctions: "the interesting."

23 Vilém Flusser, *Für eine Philosophie der Fotografie*, Göttingen 1992, p. 53.

produce redundant pictures? Does this not lead to the world only being perceived through categories such as “interestingness”?<sup>23</sup> Or the apprehensions felt in connection with Web 2.0 and especially the blogosphere concerning a de-professionalization and a deskilling through the troops of amateurs who invade the field of work of professional photographers; a problem that becomes apparent in the acquisition of Flickr pictures by agencies such as Getty Images?<sup>24</sup>

These arguments must all be taken seriously; however, they should not be the point of departure for a sweeping rejection, but for a more profound analysis. That is why I hope that this contribution has been able to make it clear that taking a closer look at photo-sharing as a cultural practice in the digital medium is worthwhile.<sup>25</sup> For example, could one take Flickr into account as an instrument that could cope with today’s flood of photographic pictures by directing them into the relevant channels and bundling them according to the wide range of interests and, in doing so, not only deepen and broaden the established photographic genres and practices, but also differentiate or undermine these genres and practices: whether by automatic referential structures or ‘indisciplined’ user behaviour. And, not least, Flickr and other platforms are not identical with contemporary photographic practice; they merely refer to this by giving impressive proof that, in the era of its digitalization, photography appears to be more popular and also livelier than ever before.

24 Andrew Keen takes an extreme position in this regard: Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur*, London 2007, that polemically speaks about the destruction of our economy and culture through our generated media. Andrew Cox, on the other hand, makes a more differentiated investigation of the fears and hopes connected with Flickr (Cox 2007, reference 2).

25 See Ulrich Hägele, Irene Ziehe (eds.), *Digitale Fotografie. Kulturelle Praktiken eines neuen Mediums*, Studien und Materialien zur visuellen Kultur vol. 4, Münster 2009, which includes: Susanne Holschbach, ‘Fotokritik in Permanenz – Flickr als praktische Bildwissenschaft’.



## An Introduction to Hungarian Photography 1914-89

Colin Ford



Figure 1.  
Rudolf Balogh  
Shepherd with his Dog, c. 1930  
Photograph, 18 x 29 cm  
Kecskemét, Private Collection C/O Kecskemét,  
Hungarian Museum of Photography

‘We need photographs to communicate our particularities and our national character’. When the prominent Hungarian photographer Rudolf Balogh (1879-1944) wrote this in 1914, photography – like other forms of art in a country yoked to Austria – was firmly under European influence. Balogh’s words had a profound effect, marking the beginning of seventy-five years when Hungary’s photographers can truly be said to have been world-leaders.

In 1914, of course, not only Balogh made a call to arms. *Érdekes Újság* (‘Interesting Happenings’), which began publication in 1913, was the only Hungarian newspaper to have ‘secured the patent to reproduce pictures by rotogravure’<sup>1</sup>, and was thus able to publish more photographs than its rivals. Six months after the outbreak of the First World War, it invited serving soldiers to submit previously unpublished photographs to a competition for which the first prize was 3000 crowns. The competition attracted 1599 entries, and some of the pictures were published in Austrian, German, Dutch and Spanish newspapers.

After this success, *Érdekes Újság* boasted that ‘... these pictures will tell the world at large about Hungarian triumphs on the battlefield; the bravery, dedication and resolution of Hungarian soldiers; and the endurance and perseverance of the nation at home’.

The second competition drew 1400 entries, and was followed by a third. This time, it was hoped that some pictures would ‘have no other raison d’être than beauty and finesse’. It is

<sup>1</sup> Gábor Szilyágyi, ‘An Album of War’ in *The Hungarian Connection, the Roots of Photojournalism*, by Colin Ford, Laszlo Beke, Gabor Szilagyi, Klara Tory. National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television, Bradford 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Corkin, *André Kertész: A Lifetime of Photography*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1982, 9. *Érdekes Újság* also put his photograph ‘Tabán, Evening’ on the cover of its 16 June 1925 issue.



Figure 2.

Another photographic competition was run by Borsszem Jankó ('Jack Peppercorn'), a satirical weekly aimed principally at the Jewish population. In a properly humorous spirit, Kertész submitted a picture of himself sitting beside a brook, killing lice as he soaked his feet in the water<sup>3</sup>.

highly appropriate, perhaps, that this was the competition in which photographs by André Kertész (1894-1985) were first published (on March 25 1917, for instance)<sup>2</sup>. *Érdekes Újság* was confident that it now had 'the most beautiful and interesting' archive of the war and its 'horrid yet majestic nature', which also provided 'evidence of the good humour and character of Hungarian soldiers'; it ran a fourth competition (with 1796 entries), and, in the last year of the war, a fifth and final one.

Luckily, for historians of Hungarian – and war – photography, many of *Érdekes Újság*'s winning photographs survive in a much better form than faded old newsprint. After each year's competition, the paper published a portfolio of select gravure prints. A huge success at the time, today these constitute an unrivalled record of those who went to war, and the families who stayed behind. A selection will be shown in next year's exhibition of Hungarian photography from 1914 to 1989 at London's Royal Academy.<sup>4</sup> It is only the second photography exhibition ever mounted at the Academy. The first, *The Art of Photography* was a celebration of the 150th birthday of photography in 1989, selected by the American dealer Daniel Wolf. Wolf acknowledged the significance of five universally known Hungarian figures who profoundly changed photojournalism and art photography: Brassai (1899-1984), Robert Capa (1913-54), André Kertész (1894-1985), László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) and Martin Munkácsi (1896-1956). These five, among more than eighty photographers from the entire history of photography and the whole world, were represented by thirty of the exhibition's total of 450 prints.

Four out of five of these photographers started their careers about the time of the First World War (the exception, Robert Capa, was born in 1913), and left Hungary to make their names in Germany, France, Britain and the USA.

The end of the war signalled the collapse of Hungary's kingdom and a dramatic reduction in the country's size. The Treaty of Trianon gave nearly three-quarters of its area and 64% of its population to Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Tens of thousands of ethnic Hungari-

<sup>3</sup> Károly Kincses, 'A Belated Interview' in *The Hungarian Quarterly*, Issue 181 (2006), 95-110.

<sup>4</sup> Name der Ausstellung, Daten

ans, finding themselves suddenly residents of 'foreign' lands, hastily moved into what was left of Hungary itself. This led to overcrowding, poverty and political unrest, but it also enriched the cultural climate, bringing together artists of many kinds and from many backgrounds. There was a consequent explosion in almost all the arts – including photography.

This new artistic climate spawned a number of illustrated magazines and newspapers. Kertész said that looking at magazines from the age of six made him interested in making pictures. Soon, Munkácsi – who worked for an evening newspaper, *Pesti Napló* (Pest Journal) – could claim to be the most highly paid photographer in the country (he was later to say he was the most highly-paid photographer in the USA).

After the war, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy collapsed, and Hungary declared itself a democratic republic in November 1918. It did not last long. After three months of turmoil, when armies from the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Serbia entered Hungary, the government – which was also a failure on the domestic front – was defeated, and the Prime Minister, Mihály Károlyi, resigned, fleeing to Paris. One of Kertész's famous photographs shows the Romanian army marching into Budapest in 1919 (later, in 1927, he was to photograph the exiled Prime Minister in Paris).

Károlyi was only one among thousands, especially of those in cultural life who saw their freedom of expression being eroded. Sándor Kellner came to England, to become the influential film producer Alexander Korda. Mihály Kertész went to Hollywood, where he became the film director Michael Curtiz, whose most famous film was *Casablanca*. In 1919, André Kertész contemplated moving to Paris, then the centre of the arts world, and the obvious place to further his career<sup>5</sup>. But his mother persuaded him to stay, and he did not go until September 1925. He made a more modest name change, substituting the French 'André' for 'Andor'.

Kertész immediately began photographing Paris, his vision of his new home city being very similar to that of Budapest. But he soon got to know the famous writers and artists living and working in Montmartre, and took portraits of many of the latter (such as Brancusi, Calder, Chagall, Ernst, Léger, Mondrian and Vlaminck). They all frequented the *Café du Dôme* where, one day, the gallery owner Jan Slivinsky offered him his first-ever one man show. The gallery was called 'Au Sacre du Printemps' (presumably after Stravinsky's ballet score, which had caused a riot at its first performance fourteen years earlier). At the opening, Slivinsky played the piano opening, Surrealists read poems and one, Paul Dermée, wrote a prose poem ending with the line: 'In this asylum for the blind, Kertész sees for us'. Despite some brief

<sup>5</sup> Sandra S. Philips, Weston J. Naef, *André Kertész, Of Paris and New York*, New York & London: Thames & Hudson, 1985, 21.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Benedetta, *The Street Markets of London*, London 1936; John Betjeman, *An Oxford University Chest*, London 1938; Bernard Fergusson, *Eton Portrait*, London 1937.

experiments, however ('Distortions', published in 'Le Sourire', a magazine best-known for its girly pictures), he was not a Surrealist at heart. The great Henri Cartier-Bresson (who had determined to become a photographer when he saw the work of Munkácsi) said 'Whatever we have done, Kertész did first'.

**Brassaï** was born Gyula Halász in the Transylvanian town of Brasov (from which he later took his pseudonym). He was a journalist and painter when he went to Paris, but it was meeting Kertész two years later which made him a photographer. From 1929 onwards, he took iconic photographs of the city which, when they were published in *Paris de Nuit* (1931) almost defined the people's view of that city – a view less romantic than Kertész's.

In fact, Kertész seems to have been slightly resentful of his fellow countryman's success. It was Kertész who had lent Brassaï a camera, and showed him how to use it. It was Kertész who had explained how to take photographs at night, a skill which he had mastered in Budapest. But it was Brassaï whose book became a hit. Three years later, Kertész brought out his own, *Paris vu par André Kertész*.

**László Moholy Nagy** (1895-1946) was in many ways the most talented and versatile of our five 'stars'. He began to draw and paint while recovering from being wounded in the First World War, and was one of those who fled Hungary in 1919. After a brief time in Austria, he joined the Bauhaus at the age of 26, having been asked by Walter Gropius to develop the school's programmes and teach there. In Berlin, he met his first wife Lucia Schultz, from whom he learned photography. Moholy was soon using light, shadow, space, mass, colour, and drawing to make virtually a new art form. He was one of the first to experiment with the photogram (though it seems to have been Lucia who first discovered the technique), and used photomontage as a means of portraying reality in a totally new manner.

With the rise of fascism, Moholy Nagy left Germany, first going to England. His English photographs (in a more straightforward documentary style than usual for him) were used as illustrations in three books – *The Street Markets of London*, *An Oxford University Chest* and *An Eton Portrait*<sup>6</sup>. But he did not feel at home, and accepted an invitation from Gropius to move to Chicago and help set up the New Bauhaus. When this was dissolved, he established his own School of Design, which he headed until his premature death.

**Mártin Munkácsi** [Mermelstein] (1896-1963) became a journalist at the age of eighteen, illustrating his regular articles with his own photographs. At the age of eighteen he also took up portraiture, opening several studios in Budapest. From 1924, he began to specialise in sports photography, especially from unusual angles. He moved to Germany and was equally successful there until, in 1934, he too left for the United States in the face of growing fascism. There,

his fashion photography for Harper's Bazaar, Fortune, and Vogue created a whole new style of fashion in motion, which influenced photographers for decades to come.

The lives and careers of all these extraordinary photographers were profoundly affected by the growth of Nazism and, ultimately, the outbreak of war. The youngest of them, **Robert Capa** (1913-54), became most famous as perhaps the greatest photographer of war. He began taking photographs in 1930, but was arrested for taking part in a left-wing demonstration, and had to leave Hungary. In Berlin, he became a student at the German Political College and, to earn money, worked in the darkroom of the Dephot photo agency, where he was given a Leica and assigned to take a photograph of Trotsky at a socialist congress in Copenhagen. In 1933, he moved to Paris, and changed his name from Endre Ernő Friedmann to sound like an American photographer. In 1936, he covered the Spanish Civil War; his *Death of a Loyalist Soldier* is one of the most instantly recognisable and contentious photographs ever taken.

During the Second World War, Capa took photographs in England, North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, and accompanied American troops on their D-Day landing. After the war, he re-visited Hungary, to record the country's post-war reconstruction and the relentless communist takeover. In 1947, he joined forces with David Seymour ('Chim'), Henri Cartier-Bresson, and George Rodger to found Magnum Photos. But he never stopped seeking out war and, in 1954, stepped on a landmine near Thai Binh and was fatally wounded.

The five names who have provided the central thread of this narrative are well-known, and recognised throughout the world. But the Royal Academy exhibition will devote more than half its space to photographers who, whatever their qualities, have never achieved such international fame. I believe several of them would have done so had they left Hungary to make their names in the wider world.

In the catalogue of *The Hungarian Connection, the Roots of Photojournalism*<sup>7</sup>, I referred to one photographer as 'the one who stayed behind'. I sincerely believe that, had Károly Escher (1890-1966) joined the exodus to the west, he would be regarded as a sixth master. As a boy of ten, he was so interested in photography that he made his own box camera: two years later, he was given a proper one. Giving a boy of that age a birthday (or Bar Mitzvah) gift of a camera seem to have been widespread, as several other examples confirm. Some years ago, Andor Kraszna-Krausz, founder of the important publishing house Focal Press, told me this happened to him.

<sup>7</sup> *The Hungarian Connection* 1987 (reference 1), 4

I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Péter Baki, Director of the Hungarian Museum of Photography, whose biographies of Hungarian photographers have been a source of much information in this article, and of Sarah Lea, my indefatigable assistant curator for the Royal Academy exhibition. I have also drawn on the information and insights of Gábor Szilyági and Klára Tóty in *The Hungarian Connection, the Roots of Photojournalism*.





Figure 3.  
Károly Escher  
*Bank Manager at the Baths*, 1938  
Photograph, 29 x 39 cm  
Kecskemét, Hungarian Museum Of Photography

Throughout his teens and early twenties, Escher was an obsessive and successful amateur, before becoming a film cameraman in 1916. A decade later, he finally became a full-time professional, when Balogh helped him to get work from *Pesti Napló* and the progressive evening newspaper *Est* ('Evening'), when Munkácsi left these publications to go to Berlin.

Escher's artistry was soon recognised outside Hungary, and his work was seen in London as long ago as 1931, when he won first prize at the Modern Photography Exhibition. But his photojournalist success meant he did not need to go abroad to make a career. He continued to work for the press up to and after the war, finding other employers after *Est* and *Pesti Napló* closed down. In 1965, he belatedly had his first one-man show, at the Hungarian National Gallery. In a forty-year-long career, he observed the violent changes in his country, brought a penetratingly truthful eye to the romantic vision of country life which was so prevalent when he first took up a camera, and demonstrated a sly sense of visual humour. He, of all the interesting photographers who worked in Hungary from the 1930s to 1960s, most deserves to be

better known outside its borders.

There are other - still less known - Hungarian photographers, who will appear in our next year's exhibition. Below are some brief biographies of several photo artists whose works will be shown:

**Lucien Aigner** (1901-99) took his first photographs at the age of nine, with a box Brownie he had been given as a present. In 1921 and 1922, he studied theatre in Berlin and was Stefan Lorant's assistant cameraman. Returning to Budapest, he became a journalist and photo reporter with several newspapers and magazines. He moved to Paris in 1926, and to the USA in 1939, joining the 'Voice of America' for eight years. He ran a portrait studio in Massachusetts between 1954 and 1977.

**Paul Almasy** (1906-2003) was working as journalist for the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* when, during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, a staff photographer fell sick and Almasy stepped in to take

pictures of the Finnish team. The results were so original that the editor made him a staff photographer. After the war, when living in France, he made many world trips on behalf of the WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF, and was appointed as foreign correspondent for the French government.

**Pál Angelo** (1894-1974) opened his own studio in 1919, and made many photographs of Budapest between the wars. He was one of many who fled the city in that year, opening studios in Paris and Nice, then in the Netherlands. He claimed to have photographed over 400,000 sitters in his career, including such famous sitters as Chaplin, Josephine Baker, Nijinsky, Picasso and Bartók. Back in Budapest after the war, he set up a successful and influential photographic school.

**Demeter Balla** (born 1931) began taking photographs at the age of nineteen with a borrowed camera. He became a professional photojournalist in 1957 and, from 1969 until his retirement, was a member of staff at the Magazine Publishing Company. He was also interested in portraiture and, in recent years, still-lives. One of his books – *Legyen meg a Te akaratod* (Thy Will Be Done), won the Beautiful Hungarian Book Award in 1994.

**Imre Benkő** (born 1943) took up photography at the age of twenty and, five years later, was awarded first prize at a national photographic competition. He has won many other prizes in Hungary and at the World Press Awards (twice). An exponent of subjective documentary, he works only in black and white, and his prints always show the perforations of his negatives. A founder member of the Studio of Young Photo Artists, he continues to teach young photographers.

**Eva Besnyő** (born 1910) lived in the same apartment block as the Friedmann family, and went to the same school as the boys who became Cornell and Robert Capa. She enrolled in József Pécsi's photography school in 1928 and, after graduating, moved to Berlin, where her pictures appeared in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* and elsewhere. In 1932, worried by the growth of Nazism, she returned to Budapest, but soon moved on to Holland, where she has lived and worked ever since.

**Cornell Capa** [Kornél Friedmann] (1918-2008), Robert's younger brother, was introduced to photography as an apprentice in a Paris studio. He went to the USA in 1937, first working in the Life darkroom, then for his brother at the PIX photo agency. In 1948, he became a photojournalist as a Life staff photographer. He was Director of Magnum for three years, organised

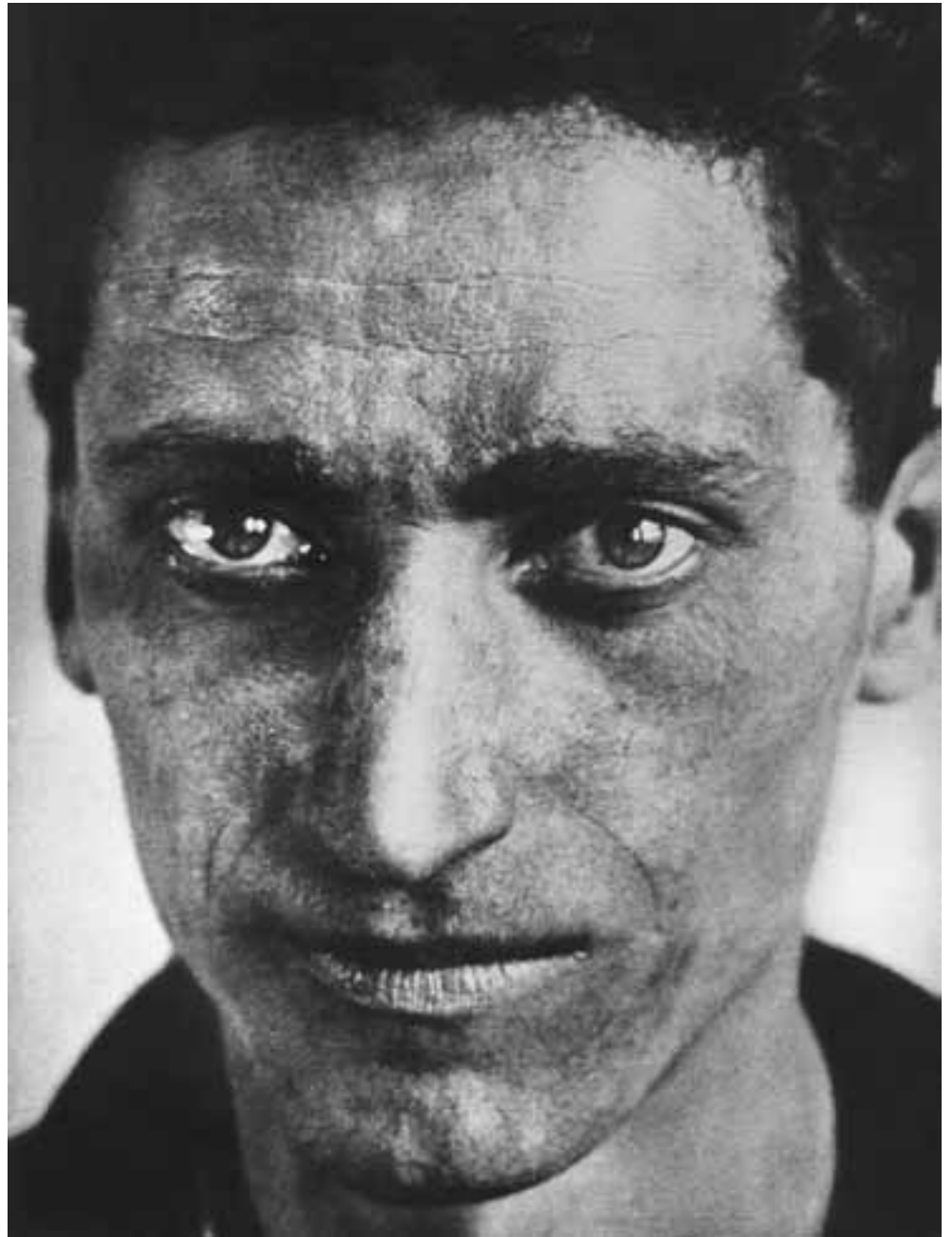


Figure 4.  
Kálmán Kata  
*Ernő Weisz, Factory Worker, 1932*  
Photograph, 18 x 24 cm  
Kecskemét, Hungarian Museum of Photography

exhibitions and courses and, famously, created the International Center of Photography in New York.

**László Fejes** (1935-85) became an unskilled worker at the Budapest Photographic Company in 1957. He later successfully took up photojournalism, working for the magazine *Film Színház Muzsika* ('Film, Theatre and Music') from 1964 to 1985, winning a strong reputation for jazz



Figure 3



Figure 4

and theatre photography. In 1966, he was the first Hungarian to win a prize in the artistic section of the World Press Photo competition, with 'Wedding' (which will be in the Royal Academy exhibition).



Figure 5  
József Pécsi  
*Evening*, 1927. Photograph, 29 x 40 cm  
Kecskemét, Hungarian Museum of Photography

her most famous picture. She was influenced by New Objectivity, made portraits of many famous Hungarians, and published several books.

**Gábor Kerekes** (born 1945) taught himself photography while working as a waiter. After qualifying as a professional, he became a reporter for the Budapest Photographers' Cooperative in 1973. After several other posts, he joined the editorial board of *Képes 7*, then the leading Hungarian weekly magazine. Alongside commercial assignments, he has always done personal work and has for more than two decades been a leading figure in Hungarian experimental photography.

**Tamás Féner** (born 1938) is a much honoured figure in Hungarian photography. From 1970 to 1990, he worked as a photojournalist and picture editor for major newspapers and magazines. His initial focus was on art and ballet, but he later took up social themes – gypsies, miners, and Jewish issues. His photographic essays reveal a determination to improve society, and are characterised by unusual camera angles, and cropping. Since 1982, he has also been a distinguished teacher.

**Kata Kálmán** (1909-78) studied at a dance school in Budapest, where she met the socially aware photographer Kata Sugár and critic/photographer Iván Hevesy, whom she married. After he encouraged her to take up photography in 1931, she photographed peasants, jobless people, and children; an early example, *Bread-eating Child*, became



**Péter Korniss** (born 1937) was born in Transylvania, but moved to Budapest in 1949. Expelled from university for taking part in the 1956 revolution, he went to work at the Budapest Photographers' Cooperative, qualifying as a professional in 1961. At a time when people were afraid to talk about Transylvania, he photographed there regularly, and exhibited the results. Sensitive and responsible, he is never satisfied with superficialities, and is today one of the most distinguished Hungarian photographers.

**Olga Máté** (1879-1965) opened her portrait studio in Budapest in 1899. From 1907 to 1909, she studied photography in Berlin and Dresden, returning to Budapest to join the staff of the photography magazine *Fény*. She opened a new studio in 1912, which became a meeting place for Budapest intellectuals. She was involved in many fields of photography, from studio portraiture to dance photography, from architecture to still life, and won many competitions and awards for her work.

**József Pécsi** (1889-1956) graduated from the photographic college in Munich (where he was the first Hungarian to receive the distinguished Dührkoop medal for photography) in 1910, and opened a Budapest studio in 1911. He established photography courses at the Budapest Applied Arts School and is regarded as the founder of photographic education in Hungary. He was highly influential in photography, portraiture, nude and genre photography

**László Török** (born 1948) qualified as a photographer in 1975, and joined the Association of Hungarian Photographers in 1979. In 1997, he became chairman of its artistic committee. He has made important contributions to Hungarian photography, with his carefully planned bi-tonal and long-exposure photographs, and his nude photography in unusual settings. The series *Roma*, produced in collaboration with Károly Bari, is a major part of his life's work.

**Ernő Vadas** (1899-1962) studied photography with Rudolf Balogh as an amateur. He was one of the most successful photographers of the inter-war years, taking beautifully composed pictures with a bold use of light and shadow. One picture – *Geese* – earned him the prestigious Emerson Medal of Britain's Royal Photographic Society. Surviving Nazi concentration camp, Vadas became a founder member of the Photographic Collective and a reporter for the Hungarian News Agency.

## Biographies

### Adrian-Silvan Ionescu

born in 1952 in Bucharest, Romania. Studies in art history at the “N. Grigorescu” Institute of Fine Arts, graduation 1975; PhD, 1997. Senior Researcher at the “N. Iorga” Institute of History, Associate Professor at the National University of Arts. Research focus on the history of Romanian photography, 19<sup>th</sup> century fine arts and urban civilization. Chevalier of the Cultural Merit Order and King Mihai Medal for Loyalty. Most recent publication: *Regina Maria și America* [Queen Marie and America], Noi Media Print 2009.

### John Toohey,

born in Perth, Australia in 1961, currently teaches English at Beykent University in Istanbul. He is an author (*Captain Bligh's Portable Nightmare*, 4<sup>th</sup> Estate, 1998, Quiros, Duffy & Snellgrove, 1999) and photographer with exhibitions in Australia and in on-line magazines. He is also a collector who contributes examples from his collection and articles on 19th century photography to Luminous Lint as well as posting them regularly on his blog at [www.junkshopsnapshots.blogspot.com](http://www.junkshopsnapshots.blogspot.com).

### Danielle Leenaerts

born 1974 in Brussels. Studies of contemporary art history (Université Libre de Bruxelles/Université Paris I-Sorbonne), Assistant Professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles since 2003 and at the Institut des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Brussels), (history of photography). Main research topics: photographic narratology, urban photography; published books: *L'image de la ville. Bruxelles et ses photographes des années 1850 à nos jours*, Brussels, CFC Editions, 2009; *Petite histoire du magazine Vu (1928-1940)*, Brussels, P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2010.

### Susanne Holschbach

is an art and media historian and lives in Berlin. She has worked as a lecturer and guest lecturer at several art academies (Academy of Visual Arts, Leipzig; Weißensee Kunsthochschule, Berlin; Academy of Media Arts, Cologne). Her research and teaching focus on the history and theory of photography – especially on photography in relation to art – gender and visual culture. She is the author of *Vom Ausdruck zur Pose. Theatralität und Weiblichkeit in der Fotografie des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin: Reimer Verlag 2006

### Egle Deltuvaitė

born 1983 in Vilnius; bachelor degree in political sciences from Vilnius University, master degree in UNESCO Cultural Management, and Cultural Policy Chair at Vilnius Art Academy. Curator, culture manager, contributor/editor of various books and publications; directress of International Art Photography Festival “In Focus”, in Vilnius. Owner and directress of the “Culture Menu” public institution. Member of the board of the Lithuanian Photographic Association. Most recent publication: editor of *Photosophy*. PI „Kultūros meniu“: Vilnius, 2010.

### Colin Ford CBE

a founder member of the ESHPh, became the first senior curator of photography in any British national museum or gallery in 1972; over 20 exhibitions at London's National Portrait Gallery; campaigns for a national museum of photography. In 1982, he became founding Head of the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television (now the National Media Museum), Bradford (i.a. exhibition ‘The Hungarian Connection: The Birth of Photojournalism’ 1987). He has written widely on such historic photographers as Julia Margaret Cameron, Lewis Carroll, Hill & Adamson and André Kertész.

### Ekaterina Markarian

born in 1982 in Shumen, Bulgaria, presently lives in Palm Desert, California. Bachelor's degree in art history and archaeology from the *Université Pierre Mendès – France GRENOBLE II*, in Grenoble, France; studies of art history at the *Université du Québec à Montréal* in Canada and graduated in photography from the *Sotheby's Institute of Arts, London*. Strongly determined to revive the photographic tradition of her family, she works closely with the Regional History Museum in Shumen, Bulgaria for the maintenance and acquisitions of the *Markarian Fund*.

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A-1010 Vienna, Fleischmarkt 16/2/2/31. Austria

E-mail: office.eshph@aon.at

Phone: +43 (1) 513 71 96

www.donau-uni.ac.at/eshph

## Editors

Anna Auer, Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, Uwe Schögl

## Translators

Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, Robert Scott McInnes

## Illustration

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