



Portrait 1845-1970  
Photography

# Portrait Photography

1845-1970

Adnan Sezer / Bruno Tartarin

## Usages of the photographic portrait

Why devote oneself to a technique which renders only the appearance of being, and in which the vague sacral aura of art disappears? To begin with, because the rise of the middle class was accompanied by a clamor for portraits. The daguerreotype was a unique object that responded to a social aspiration. The photo-card, patented by Disdéri in 1854, satisfied the desire of the commercial class for social and historical legitimacy, while also ushering photography into its industrial period. The opponents of this “portraituremania” – a “deplorable epidemic”, as the journalist Victor Fournel put it in 1858 – included numerous writers, the most trenchant of whom was Flaubert. He objected to photographic mimesis and “the multiplication of the self”. In other words: *No portrait, at any price. I have other ideas. I want to be the only person from the 19th century of whom posterity can say: ‘He never had himself represented smiling at a photographer, hand thrust into waistcoat, flower in button-hole! No portrait!’*\* With Flaubert, writes Yvan Leclerc, portraits “appear as an index signifying bourgeois self-contemplation in funereal dress, grotesquerie, narcissistic folly [...] and the decay of art into a serial object.”

On the subject of having one’s portrait done, here is what Nietzsche had to say, in a letter to Malwida von Meysenbug in 1872: “*I will persuade my sister to have her photograph ‘executed’. This, at least, is the verb that expresses what I feel when the Cyclops stands before me like a deus ex machina. Already, as I strive to evade danger, there’s inevitability. And once more I’m portrayed as a buccaneer, a leading tenor or a boyar.*” In any case, photography soon found its place in an aesthetic debate between the advocates of experimentation, with the attendant difficulties about breaking free from “mimesis”, and those who – targeting the portrait – saw photographs as obscene (Flaubert), trivial (Baudelaire) or tastelessly bourgeois (Fournel).

If there is a link between photographic arbitrariness and superficiality, as seen by Flaubert (“I never find it *true*”), or between animosity and opposition, could it consist in the fact that portraiture wants to express its own interiority? There would be no point in looking for any secret behind these postures, these long waits, the extent to which a subject seeks to acquire a soul. A portrait displays the abrupt, truncated essence of being.

But it might equally be suggested that a portrait reveals a story. From this wider viewpoint, what photography attests to is a coexistence of several different temporalities, a crossroads between what is occurring and what has occurred. A portrait is an individual memory, but it also encapsulates a history about a family and a society. There is a biographical landscape, along with fragments of narration that are more or less readily decipherable. Never portrayals in solitude, but accompanied by the living and the dead. Rather than representing singularity alone (or a *desire* for singularity), portraits are part of a narration in which bodies successively occupy the places of others that have preceded them. Thus photography is a form of genealogy, whether real or emerging, as much as a question of specters.

\* In Emile Bergerat, *La Vie Moderne* (January 24, 1880), quoted by Yvan Leclerc in "Portraits de Flaubert et Maupassant en photophobes", in *Romantismes*, No. 105, *L'imaginaire photographique*, 1999.

It is interesting to note that Nietzsche contrasted Flaubert's literature to the relative way in which photography showed things: "This way of 'wanting to be objective', for example with Flaubert. [...] But there is no 'thing in itself', gentlemen! What they obtain is scientificity or photography, in other words description without prospectation - a sort of Chinese painting, a foreground alone, and overloaded."

This fine portrait of Nancy Wagstaff and her grandson was made in 1850 by John Adams Whipple, who began his career as a photographer in Boston in 1847. He invented the “crystalotype”, a glass daguerreotype. And between 1847 and 1855, with his partner James Wallace Black, he developed a procedure for printing from glass plates to paper. He subsequently became a pioneer of astronomical photography. He was well connected to the cultivated milieu of Boston, and was known for his portraits of the city’s leading figures, in particular that of the philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson in the company of the industrial magnate and philanthropist John Murray Forbes.

Whipple’s portrait in bust format of Nancy Wagstaff and the young Albert Abel Hinman Meredith (born on April 15, 1850) diverged from the conventions of well-bred citizens putting on a show of respectability and dignity. Wagstaff was not lacking in these qualities; but the close framing gives the subjects an intimacy that would not have been suited to a more conformist portrayal of the life led by the new middle class, with the habitual rigid poses of those who wanted to use images as an aid to social success.



1. JOHN ADAMS WHIPPLE  
*Portrait of Nancy Wagstaff and her grandson, 1850*  
Daguerreotype, full plate



With regard to this portrait of a colored woman (or “mulatto”), with her modest dress and headgear, we can only speculate. Her expression is marked by detachment without affectation, as though in constrained, or at least embarrassed, consent to the portrait. It is impossible to know anything of her condition. Does she, or did she, occupy a servile position? Or was she a free woman? Might it be supposed that she lived a life of subjugation, and that her biographical landscape was composed of forced labor and self-effacement?

The only certainty concerning this photograph, which was taken in the second half of the 1840s, perhaps in the French West Indies, and then brought back to Nantes, the major French port for the slave trade until 1831, is that those who commissioned it would seem to have had a certain attachment to its subject. But we do not know anything about their mutual relations or feelings. The woman’s resigned expression may signify no more than shyness in the presence of the camera, or modesty without candor, whether or not due to her state in life.

2. ANONYMOUS  
*Black woman, ca. 1845*  
Daguerreotype, 1/6 plate

This portrait of a Scotsman is part of a movement that developed to a considerable extent during the Victorian period, at the apogee of the British industrial revolution. The Edinburgh Calotype Club, founded by David Brewster in 1843, was the world's first photographers' society. Its members produced numerous representations of the working population, characterized by a certain naturalism with regard to urban life and working conditions.

In this stereoscopic daguerreotype, the subject displays the distinctive dress and attributes of his clan, with a stance that is self-assured, unruffled. The image was made by James Ross and John Thomson, who worked together between 1848 and 1864 in Edinburgh, where they were leading figures in their profession. Ross, to begin with, was a portrait and landscape painter. Thomson took over from Thomas Davidson, who had been a specialist in optical instruments and equipment for the production of daguerreotypes and calotypes. In June 1849, Ross and Thomson were jointly appointed "Photographers to the Queen", and they moved into premises on Calton Hill, a center for "primitive" photography. On the back of their first images, it was stated that they made daguerreotypes and calotypes, both "ordinary" and "in color". They also accepted commissions to photograph middle-class homes. An advertisement in *The Scotsman* in 1852 lauded their studio work in the following terms: "The finest daguerreotype likenesses are taken by Messrs. Ross & Thomson, Photographers to the Queen."

Ross and Thomson were the only Scottish photographers to exhibit at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where they won an award. They also took part in the first exhibition organized by the Photographic Society of Scotland in 1856, where they presented 44 images, including 22 daguerreotypes and 7 stereoscopic views. The event, in which 1,050 photographs were on show, attracted some 8,000 visitors. As reported in the press, it included a lively debate between photographers and painters.



3. ROSS & THOMSON  
*Portrait of a Scotsman, ca. 1848*  
Daguerreotype, stereo and colored



This intense portrait of a maker, or supplier, of death masks dates from the mid-19th century. On the back of the daguerreotype, his name is given as Lebrun. Seated, and holding an open book, he looks evenly at the camera. His posture is assured but “reasonable” (as Victor Fournel might have said), not conventional in the usual way, and with no hint of stiffness. His clothes are somewhat more distinctive than might be expected of such an individual, in that they differ from the usual bourgeois funerary attire. Before him, pedestals placed on books and boxes bear six death masks in plaster, along with a carved wooden head.

Such masks were made by professional modelers, sculptors or (more rarely) doctors. Going back a long way, they had previously been reserved for elites, but in the 19th century they became more widely available. The faces of the dead are, in a sense, images of their souls, and death masks symbolically extend the respect in which the deceased were held during their lifetimes. But the masks may also be seen as a response to the keen interest with regard to the pseudo-sciences of phrenology and physiognomy which existed in the 19th century. By idealizing the features of dead people, masks turn them into relics, perpetuate their memory and place death at arm’s length, connecting the known to the unknown. Masks belong to a shared world. They allow absent people to remain in a form of suspended time, as though delivered from mortality and, so to speak, “eternalized”. Masks distance us from death, the better to accept it.

4. ANONYMOUS

*Mortuary mask maker, ca. 1850*

Daguerreotype, 1/2 plate, with 4 daguerreotypes,  
1/4 plates and a photograph in a brooch

These officers at the Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (founded in Nancy in 1824 as the “Ecole Royale Forestière”), were photographed with a certain degree of informality. Their uniform, which was created in 1827 during the Restoration, features a dark green jacket buttoned over the chest, green trousers, and the kind of dagger used in Charles X’s hunts. The school was reserved for young men of independent means.

This large-format daguerreotype dates from around 1850, when the president of the 2nd Republic was Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, the future emperor of the French. It was a difficult time for the forestry administration, with staff reductions, political purges, and sales of state-owned forests. The image is representative of contemporary portraits, illustrating sociability and a certain esprit de corps.



5. ANONYMOUS

*Students of the École nationale des eaux et forêts  
(previously École royale forestière), ca. 1850*

Daguerreotype, full plate

Death has placed this child at an insurmountable distance. The idea of an unknowable Beyond, and the thought of a destiny that we can neither control nor even discover, are sources of universal unease. Photography made it possible to include the child in a common history. An economical staging lends its minimalist liturgy to the intimate drama. The body has been raised up on cushions and pillows. Looking at the typology, now classic, of post-mortem photographs of children in Jay Ruby's *Secure the Shadow*, it is as though this infant were living, reading or playing ("as alive"), sleeping ("as asleep") or in a coffin ("as dead"). The image combines elements from the first two models: the child is stretched out, as though absent, with his eyes open, lifelike. But he is not subjected to any simulated activity. In this deliberately somber environment, one detail stands out. Viewed frontally, he has been endowed with a female attribute, namely an ermine stole whose protective presence indicates his importance for his family, and whose almost unreal whiteness gives the scene an archaic impression of being bathed in brightness, recalling the primordial condition of a soul that has not lived.

To some extent, this hint of unreality moderates emotions that spring from a feeling of loss, and anxiety created by the unsayable. The delicate rehearsal of life in a subtle ceremony of a photographic staging tempers the feeling of revulsion in the face of death. This results in a precious image of appeasement, on the fringe of abstraction, as an image-refuge that is an initiation into familial devotion.



6. HOUDET  
*Post-mortem, ca. 1850*  
Daguerreotype, 1/4 plate, colored



7. CHABROL  
*Man in a chamberlain uniform, ca. 1850*  
Daguerreotype, 1/3 plate

This full-length portrait of a young Nuba woman comes from Pierre Trémaux's record of his African expeditions: *Voyages au Soudan oriental et dans l'Afrique septentrionale, exécutés de 1847 à 1854: comprenant une exploration dans l'Algérie, les régences de Tunis et de Tripoli, l'Égypte, la Nubie, les déserts, l'île de Méroé, le Sennar, le Fa-Zoglo, et dans les contrées inconnues de la Nigritie*, Paris, Chez Borrani, 1852-1858. The photograph was taken in 1853 or 1854, during Trémaux's third and last expedition to the north and east of Africa. The woman is posing before a wall made of sun-baked bricks, whose paleness emphasizes the gracefulness of her anatomy. Her body does not, however, stand out in relief: it is as though her docile voluptuousness had to be toned down in order to avoid any unintended connotation. The photograph is clearly interesting as a document relating to the Nilotic peoples. But it also poses a recurring question: what do such bodies represent for this photographer? The caption reads: "She wears no adornment or clothing. A loincloth from Sennar [a town on the Blue Nile] is her only apparel. On one elbow there is a swelling caused by an arduous crossing of the desert."

Trémaux occupies a particular place in the history of illustrated books, having published one of the first travel albums to contain photographs. At the start, it was on drawings and daguerreotypes that he based his lithographic illustrations; but his desire for more realistic documentation led him to the use of the camera, with which he created calotypes. The plates that he produced on his second and third journeys, published in albums of differing content, consisted either of photographic images on salted paper, drawn lithographs, photo-lithographs or images whose printing involved techniques that were still, at the time, experimental.



8. PIERRE TRÉMAUX (1818-1895)  
*Young girl in Dar-Four, ca. 1853*

Salt print from paper negative, mounted, 253 x 195mm



9. ROGER FENTON (1819-1869)  
*Ismail Pacha & attendants, 1855*

Salt print from a glass negative, mounted, 166 x 165 mm



10. ADAM-SALOMON (1818-1881)  
*Anatole de la Forge, Prefect of Saint Quentin  
and hero of the Siege of Paris, ca. 1855*

Salt print from a glass negative, varnished, 270 x 210 mm



11. PAUL JEUFFRAIN (1809-1896)  
*Portrait of Paul Jeuffrain, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, CDV format,  
unmounted, collector stamp *Collection G. Gimon*

In the early days of photography, and depending on the context, portraits might suggest different approaches; but they always comprised a social scene. In the 18th century, already, portraits were highly valued by important personages. Photography accelerated this phenomenon through its availability to the different sections of the bourgeoisie, who saw in it an instrument of their desire for historical legitimacy as a governing class, which was hard won. They beat a path to the photographers' studios, as Baudelaire noted with disgust: "Unspeakable society rushes, like one single Narcissus, to contemplate its trivial image on metal." (From "Le public moderne et la photographie", in *Salon de 1859*) The advent of the photo-card, or photographic carte-de-visite, with a system of multiple images described by Eugène Disdéri in a patent registered in 1854, meant that after 1858 photography burgeoned, and notably the portrait. The carte-de-visite became indispensable to participation in public life, and it modified the codes of sociability.

Photographers did not remain unaffected by the epidemic that Victor Fournel deplored. When the subject and the photographer were the same person, self-representation was raised to the level of a newly-acquired social prestige which met with the incomprehension of artists, and the mocking derision of cartoonists. Alone or in groups, photographers, photographed, did not reject the rules of the "reasonable pose". As our collection shows, they accepted, by and large, the self-evidence of black clothing, in the bourgeois setting of a drawing room or garden. Leaning on the back of an armchair, Camille Silvy is the only member of his family who seems to be looking impassively at the camera. In bourgeois clothing, Edouard Duseigneur and Paul Jeuffrain epitomize ceremonious stiffness, and the funereality that the Goncourts – who were friends of Nadar, the "false God" – lampooned in their *Journal*. Perhaps it was only a certain complicity with the lens that could confer a natural quality on an individual, as in the picture of some photographers in a studio, with Nadar among them. In his self-portrait, with its novel framing, Pierre Petit took up a bolder pose as a sign of ambition. And Disdéri, lost in the contemplation of a painting, eschewed visual confrontation.



12. PIERRE PETIT (1831-1909)  
*Autoportrait with a mirror, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted,  
CDV format, photographer stamp on verso



13. EUGÈNE DISDÉRI (1819-1889)  
*Autoportrait of the photographer, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, CDV format, mounted,  
photographer stamp *Disdéri & Cie Photographe*  
*Photographe de S M l'Empereur, 8 Boulevard des Italiens, Paris*



14. CAMILLE SILVY (1834-1910)  
*Portrait of Camille Silvy and his family, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, CDV format,  
mounted, photographer stamp on verso  
*Photographed by C Silvy, 38 Porchester Terrace Bayswater*



15. FÉLIX NADAR (1820-1910)  
*Portrait of Paul Nadar, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, CDV format,  
mounted, photographer stamp on verso  
*Photographie du Grand Hôtel Nadar, 35 Boulevard des Capucines*



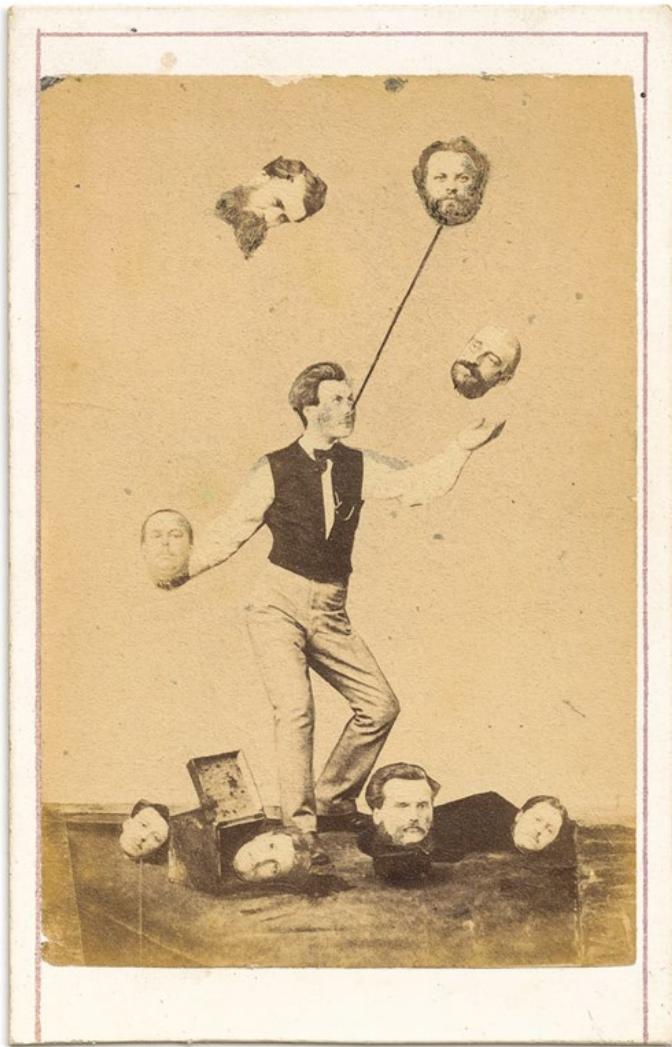
16. ÉDOUARD DUSEIGNEUR (1814-1874)  
*Portrait Édouard Duseigneur, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, CDV format,  
mounted, collector stamp *Collection G. Gimon*



17. FÉLIX NADAR (1820-1910)  
*Portrait of Félix Nadar with a group of friends, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, CDV format, mounted



18. GELMADELAINÉ  
*Photomontage, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted,  
CDV format, photographer stamp on verso



19. ANONYMOUS  
*Portrait, ca. 1860*

Albumen print from a glass negative, CDV format, mounted



20. FRATELLI D'ALESSANDRI  
 (ANTONIO 1818-1893) (PAOLO 1824-1889)  
*Priests from the Orient, ca. 1860*



3 Armenian priests, 2 Chaldeans, 2 Copts,  
 1 Bulgarian, 1 Algerian, 2 Melkite Greeks, 1 unidentified.  
 12 colored albumen prints, from glass negatives,  
 mounted, CDV formats



E' sestu content, Umberto, d'avei per sposa  
 Coust Cherubin del ciel, coust ver tesor?  
 Ebben, guarda, per mi l'e tant giojosa  
 La vostra Union, ch'am torna'l bonneur!

*Montabone*

E tu content Umberto d'avoir pur Epouse  
 ches cherubin du ciel ete veri tresor  
 Ehen regard per mi e beausseu <sup>jeune</sup> ~~bonneur~~  
 la votre union che donne bonneur

21. LUIGI MONTABONE (?-1877)

*Are you happy Umberto to have for a wife?*

Albumen print from a glass negative, 133 x 100 mm, mounted,  
 photographer signature, text in Savoyard with French translation:

*Are you happy Umberto to have for a wife  
 This cherub of Heaven and true treasure  
 Well see, to me she's so happy  
 May your union (you) bring happiness.*

Umbert = Umberto 1st (Humbert 1st), king of Savoy  
 His Wife = Marguerite of Savoy, his first cousin.

He married her on April 22, 1868.  
 He died assassinated by an anarchist on July 29, 1900.



22. ATTR. À FRANCK DE VILLECHOLLE (1816-1906)  
*Students of the École Centrale, ca. 1860*  
2 albumen prints from glass negatives, mounted, 217 x 274 mm



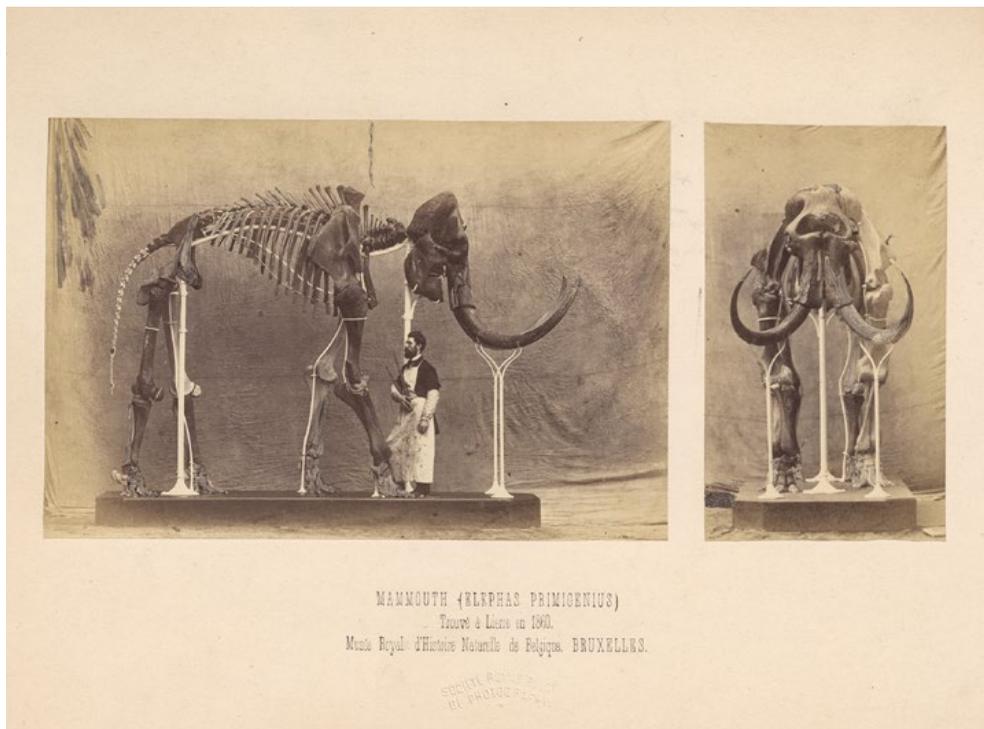
23. PIERRE PETIT  
*Auguste-Vacquerie, ca. 1860*  
Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted,  
photographer dry stamp, 269 x 203 mm



24. ANONYMOUS  
*English fisherman smoking a pipe, ca. 1860*  
Albumen print from a glass negative,  
mounted, 365 x 250 mm



25. ANTONIO SORGATO (1825-1885)  
*Italian woman, Venice, ca. 1870*  
Albumen print from a glass negative,  
mounted, exceptional format 470 x 357 mm



26. SOCIÉTÉ ROYALE BELGE DE PHOTOGRAPHIE  
*Mammoth, ca. 1860*

2 albumen prints from glass negatives, mounted,  
dry stamp *Société Royale belge de photographie*,  
90 x 140 mm and 90 x 55 mm



27. ATTR. CONSTANT DELESSERT (1806-1876)  
*A member of the Puckler Constant family, 1863*

Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted, 216 x 144 mm



28. ANONYMOUS

*Italy "Roma, Costume di Alivito", ca. 1870*

Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted with legend and numbered 4264 under image, 239 x 178 mm



29. ANONYMOUS

*Roma Italian woman, ca. 1865*

Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted, 235 x 182 mm



30. ANONYMOUS

*Moroccan woman, Tangier, Morocco, ca. 1870*

Albumen print from a glass negative,  
numbered 10 in the negative, mounted, 195 x 160 mm



31. ANONYMOUS

*Woman of Fez, Fez, Morocco, ca. 1870*

Albumen print from a glass negative,  
numbered 15 in the negative, mounted, 213 x 165 mm



32. CARLO NAYA (1816-1882) & OTTO SCHOEFFT (1833-1900)  
*Man from Sudan, 1876*  
Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted, 250 x 201 mm



33. ANONYMOUS  
*Javanese woman, ca. 1880*  
Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted, 263 x 210 mm



34. ANONYMOUS

*Japanese woman in European clothing, ca. 1880*

Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted,  
numbered 466 in the negative, 260 x 196 mm



35. KUSAKABE KIMBEI (1841-1934)

*Geisha's back, ca. 1880*

Albumen print from a glass negative, mounted, 265 x 205 mm



36. PAUL MARIE FAMIN (1851-1911)  
*Touareg, Algeria, ca. 1890*

Albumen print from a glass negative,  
mounted, 220 x 167 mm



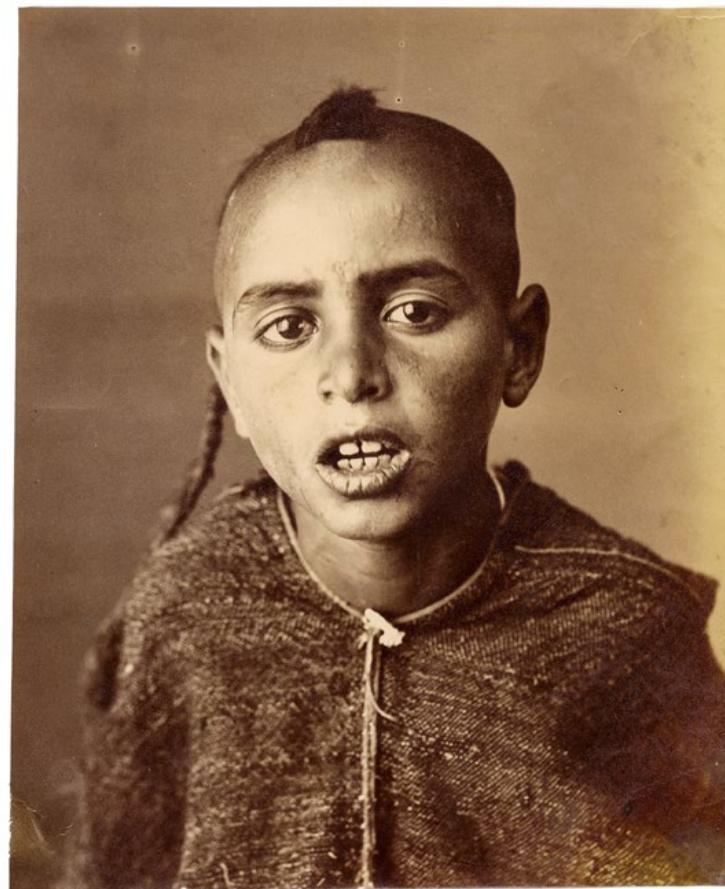
37. FÉLIX BONFILS (1831-1885)  
*Syrian Muslim women in city dress, ca. 1890*

Albumen print from a glass negative, unmounted,  
numbered 672 in the negative, 280 x 223 mm



38. ANONYMOUS  
*Tunisian convicts, ca. 1890*

Albumen print from a glass negative, unmounted,  
numbered 980 in the negative, 253 x 184 mm



39. ANTONIO CAVILLA (1867-1908)  
*Young Moroccan, ca. 1890*

Albumen print from a glass negative, unmounted,  
photographer stamp on verso, 207 x 170 mm

In this portrait, a Western Siberian “Eskimo” family looks straight at the camera, as was often the case in such representations. There was already a long-standing interest in the hyperborean world, and in Arctic populations. The 1880s, when this photograph was taken, were years of discovery, when, among other things, swaths of territory were surveyed. Was this image part of an ethnological field study? Or a census? Or was it intended for inclusion in a classification of the “primitive” people who lived in the Russian north? If so, is it an anthropometric document that was incorporated into a typology of characteristics?

There is a strong possibility that the portrait is part of an investigation into the inhabitants of the Russian Arctic. It has to be recalled that the category of “primitive” people, now abandoned by ethnology, was widely accepted at the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th, with regard to the character and status of the human mind. We cannot know the nature of the relation between the photographer and the three members of the family, who no doubt lived in an isolated, hostile environment, in conditions that the members of the exhibition could scarcely have imagined. This portrait, in the beauty of the ephemeral, may be seen as the incomplete capture of an unembellished instant. The real life of the subjects, which to us would seem extraordinary, is absent.



40. ANONYMOUS

*Eskimos of Russia, ca. 1890*

Albumen print from a glass negative,  
unmounted, 235 x 177 mm



41. ANONYMOUS  
 Portraits of Sicilian brigands, ca. 1890  
 Albumen print from a glass negative,  
 unmounted, 250 x 185 mm



42. W. & D. DOWNEY (1860-1905)  
 Oscar Wilde, 1889  
 Carbon print, mounted, 138 x 94 mm



This set of six photographs, taken in a garden and a studio, and dating from the 1890s, belonged to a painter's collection of documentary material. They show female models in poses dictated by the artist. One of the images is particularly

remarkable, with a seated acephalous model holding a crumpled piece of cloth in her lap. Beside her, there are two plaster moldings of hands on a wooden table, in front of a large painting of the Holy Family, with the Mother bending deferentially over the Child. Behind them, Joseph holds the reins of the donkey. In this way the painter comments on, and amends, the representation of the Virgin and Child. Other photographs show young women in poses suitable to the arrangement of bodies in compositions that are not visible. From the artist's point of view, the photographs may rectify a corporeal attitude or modify a gesture, in terms of anatomical accuracy; or they may lead to the revision of an unsatisfactory or unclear detail in a painting. In this way, an optimal effect can be attained. Photography seizes the static pantomime of what the painter wants to set down on the canvas, in a more laborious but subtle way, so as to objectify his vision.

The wariness initially shown by artists with regard to photography gradually gave way to a more reasoned approach. Photographic images, produced by painters themselves or sourced elsewhere, took on the function of working documents. They could complement the artist's primary vision, displaying the overall coherence of a composition.



43. ANONYMOUS

*Studies for a painter, ca. 1890*

6 albumen prints from glass negatives, 126 x 178 mm



44. VON GLOEDEN

*Portrait of a male couple, ca. 1900*

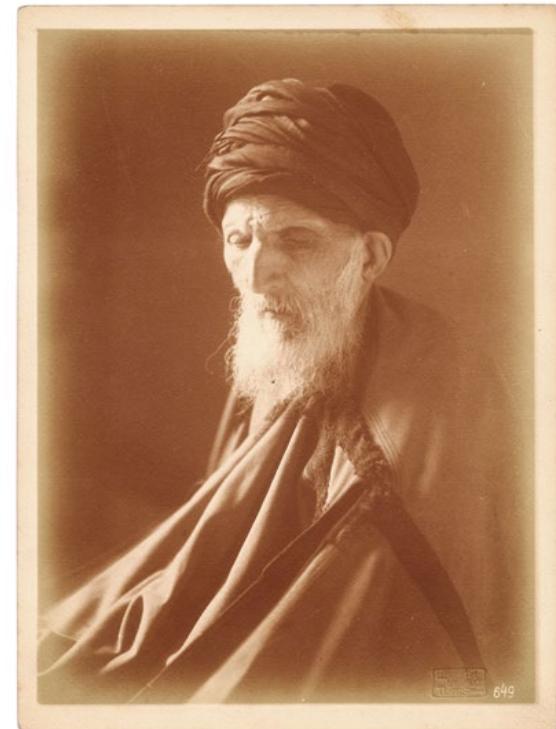
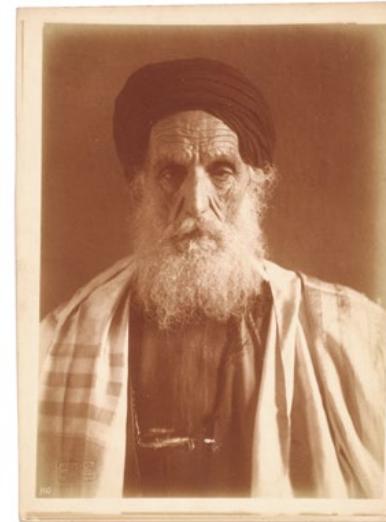
Citrate print from a glass negative, with photographer stamp on verso, unmounted, 222 x 168 mm



45. VON GLOEDEN

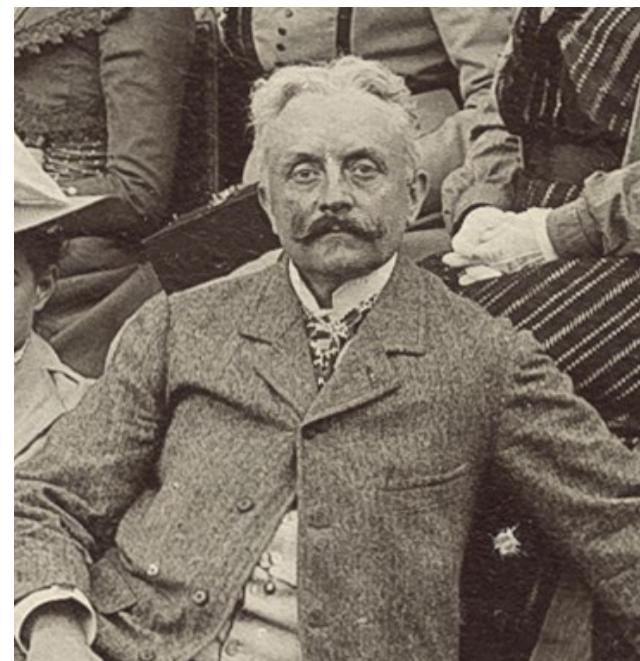
*Portrait of a young man, ca. 1890*

Albumen print from a glass negative, numbered 195 with photographer stamp on verso, unmounted, 218 x 167 mm



46. LEHNERT (1878-1948) & LANDROCK  
*Portrait of a Rabbi, Tunis, ca. 1904*

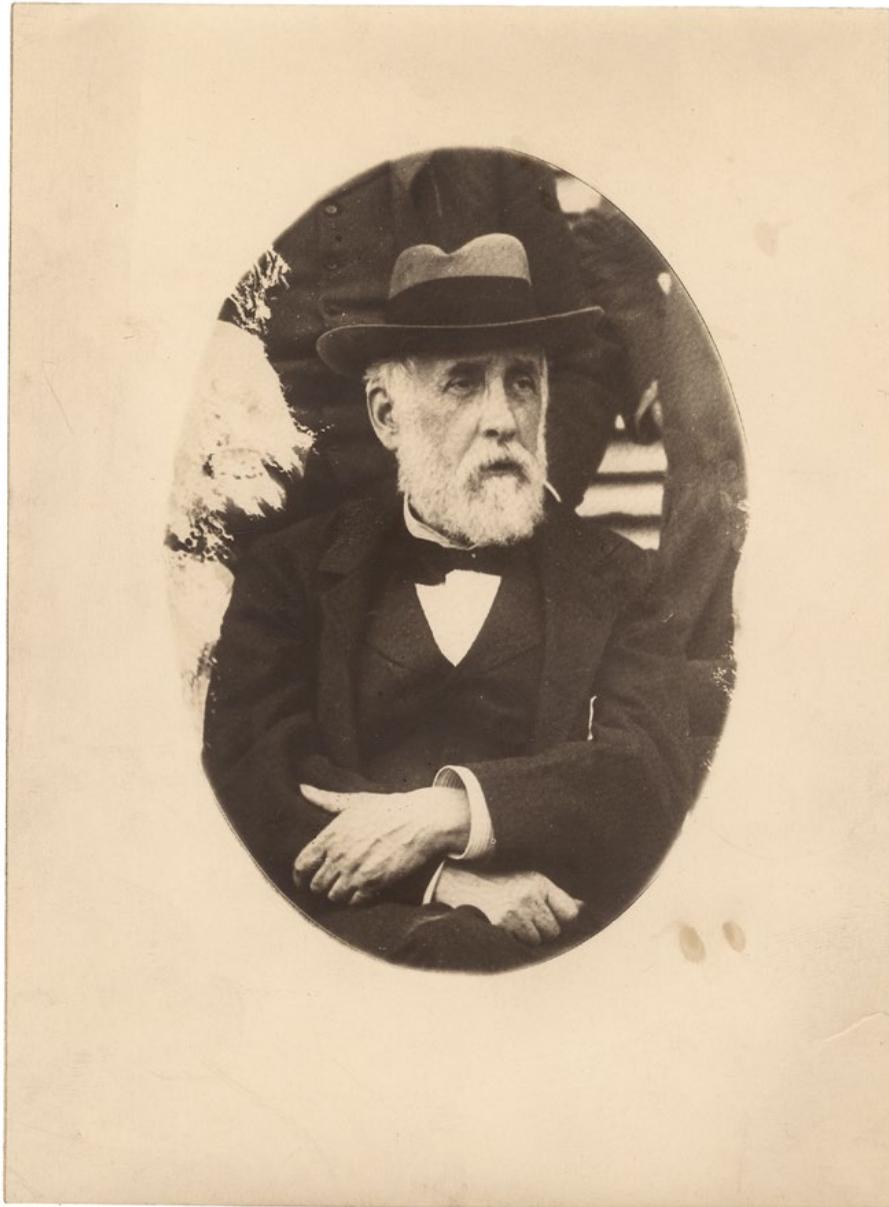
4 sepia silver prints, studio dry stamp on the images and wet  
stamp on verso, numbered in the negatives, 222 x 162 mm



47. ANONYMOUS

*Félix Nadar, ca. 1900*

Silver print, mounted, 175 x 254 mm



This portrait of the painter Edgar Degas dates from shortly after 1905, when, afflicted by progressive blindness and other health problems, he spent more and more time in his studio, away from society and the artistic life. Here, though, his expression is neither serious nor contented, but calm. He appears to be seated before an audience giving a standing ovation for, perhaps, a commemoration or a ceremony.

For Degas, photography, though he came to it late in life, and only briefly, took on a certain importance. Between the summer of 1895 and the end of 1896, he explored its aesthetic possibilities in a personal way, mainly with portraits done in artificial light. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Degas worked only indoors, with indirect lighting and chiaroscuro effects. It has sometimes been said, controversially, that his photographic activity reflected the style and atmosphere of his pictorial work, with the same treatment of portraits and poses. But the choice of a certain imbalance in the compositions, and a creative acceptance of contingency, are absent from the elaborate stagings and equilibrium of his photographic work.

48. ANONYMOUS

*Edgard Degas, pre- 1905*

Silver print, 195 x 145 mm



Collage of Napoléon Bonaparte in his classic pose, which is composed of 12 real photo postcards. The pictorial composition of each print situates the actors in one area of the image while a montaged photographic reproduction (of an historic engraving) is in another. The entire set combines to present a puzzle-like presentation of a Napoléon in a full standing pose. Images depict Napoléon as both a loving husband and father (with Joséphine and his daughter) and a keen military strategist, who gallantly prances on a white horse and is ready for battle.

49. ANONYMOUS

*Collage of Napoléon Bonaparte, 1910*

Photomontage of silver print postcards (90 x 140 mm),  
colored, overall size 550 x 280 mm





This remarkable portrait shows Il Duce at his desk on February 5, 1930. He was the president of Italy's Council of Ministers between 1922 and 1943, and after the formation of an entirely fascist government, and the introduction of fascist-inspired laws in 1925-1926, he was a totalitarian dictator, with all the associated prerogatives. This portrait dates

from the year after he signed the Lateran Pact, when parliamentary elections gave him a mandate to implement an authoritarian ideology based on political and moral "renewal".

In this large-format print, Mussolini looks both haughty and impatient: a superior individual, sure of himself. Whatever the nature of the document he is poring over – a decree to be signed, or a list of instructions to be handed out – he gives the impression of a leader in a moment of reflection and determination, prepared for action. His expression denotes the decisiveness of someone whose authority and inflexible resolve will seal the fate of many. The photograph was taken the same year that the Futurist Alfredo Gauro Ambrosini painted *Aeroritratto di Benito Mussolini Aviatore*. Though very different, both works contributed to the propaganda campaign which, in the early 1930s, reinforced Mussolini's identity, his authority as the founder of the Combatant Fasces and his role as the leader of the nascent "fascist Roman empire", extolling his inspirational genius and manifesting his will to power.



50. ANONYMOUS  
*Mussolini, 1930*

Silver print with its glass internegative, 375 x 300 mm



51. HANS NAMUTH (1915-1990) & GEORG REISNER (1911-1940)  
*Young republican boy, Spain, 1936*

Silver print, stamped Henri Daniel agency on verso, 240 x 165 mm

Tag with German inscription (transl.):

***Near the Spanish battles***

*Armed child. This little boy can, no doubt, only walk with his father's weapon in the hinterland. In reality, there were so many adolescents who went to the front that it became urgent to issue demobilization orders to return them home"*

This portrait was taken in Barcelona shortly after July 20, 1936, when fighters rallied round in support of the Republic. The boy is dressed as a militant, proudly shouldering a gun. He does not, however, have control over his situation. His imitation of his elders constitutes, rather, something of a rite of passage, and an endorsement of the defenders of liberty.

This portrait was created by the photographers Hans Namuth and Georg Reisner, who had been sent by the magazine *VU* to cover the antifascist Olympics that were planned to take place between July 19 and 26, 1936. The attempted military coup d'état of July 17-18, directed against the Second Spanish Republic, cut short the preparations for the games, and led the Republicans to take up arms. It was the failure of the Nationalist uprising that precipitated the civil war, which rapidly became an international issue.

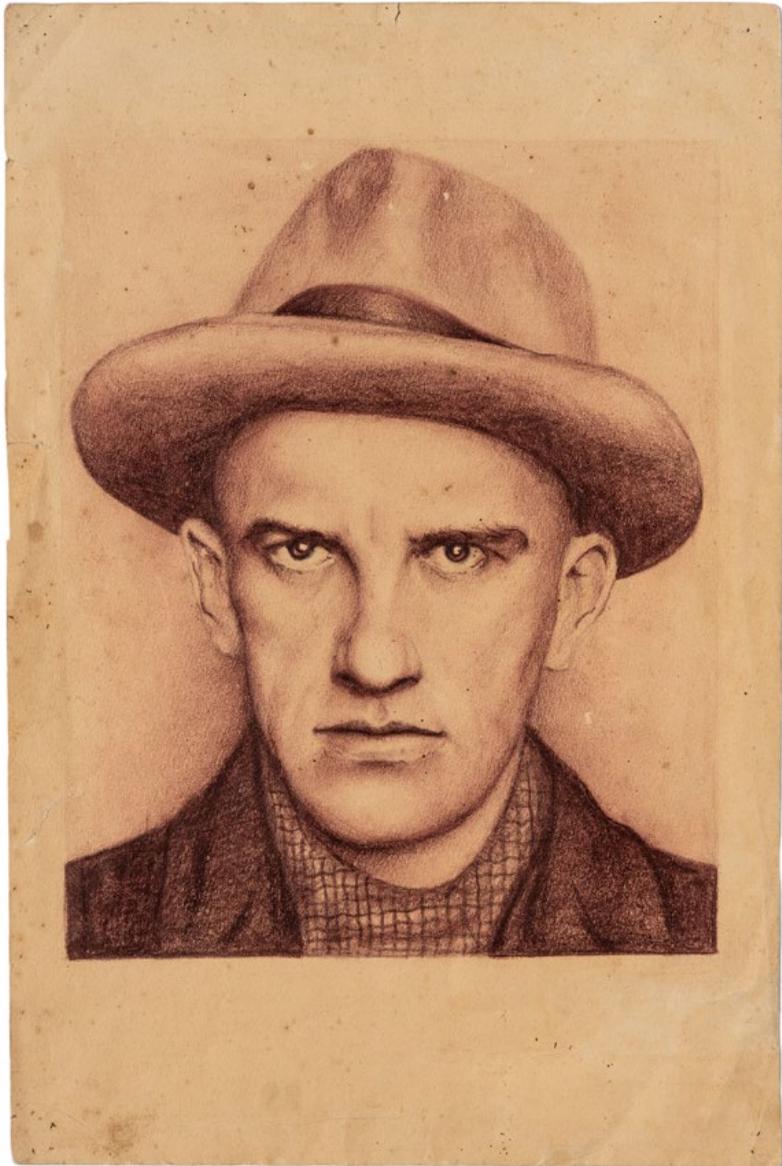
Namuth and Reisner had previously worked together in Majorca, the former having invited the latter to join him there. Events meant that they found themselves among the reporters who witnessed the first days of military engagement. They photographed the daily lives of civilians caught between the opposing forces in Barcelona and Madrid. The results were published in *VU* (particularly in a special issue dated August 29, 1936) and *Life*. Reisner died in Marseille in 1940, while Namuth, who settled in New York in 1950 and became an American citizen, made his name with sequences of photographs showing Jackson Pollock creating some of his "action paintings".



52. PIERRE VERGER (1902-1996)

*Tsinh Ho, Indochina, 1938*

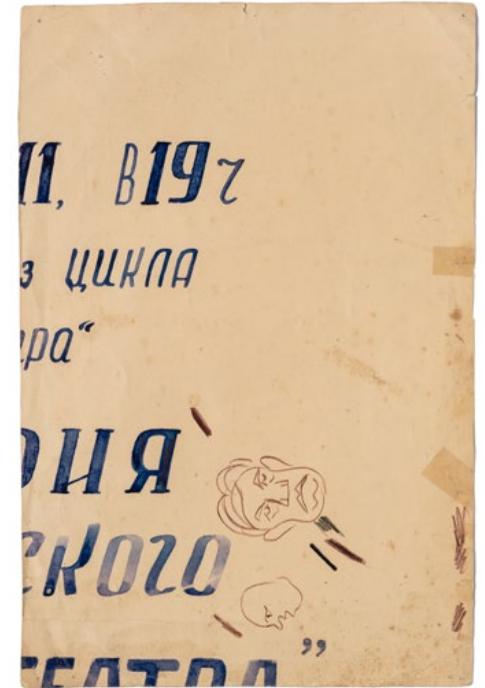
Gelatin silver print, photographer's stamp on verso, 293 x 242 mm



53. ANONYMOUS  
*Mayakovsky ca. 1930-1940*

Drawing from a photograph by Rodchenko, 242 x 195 mm

This portrait of the Futurist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, wearing a hat, was drawn in the 1920s on the back of a card inscribed with a calligraphed announcement of poetry readings. It was based on a photograph by Alexander Rodchenko. The identity of the artist is unknown, but it may have been someone who attended the poet's lectures.



In their productivist manifesto of 1921, Rodchenko and his wife Varvara Stepanova proclaimed the death of art and the supremacy of technique. Rodchenko stopped painting and took up applied arts, then photography. In April and May 1924, he did a series of photographic portraits of Mayakovsky, who was then the editor of LEF, an avant-garde review that he and Osip Brik had founded the previous year. This was a period of intense activity for both men, who promoted ideas of a leftist front for art, in virulent hostility to the bourgeois intelligentsia ("Eat your pineapples, chew your hazel grouse / Your final day's arriving, you bourgeois creature").

Rodchenko did the photographic portraits of Mayakovsky in his studio, without any staging or scenery. This particular image reproduces one of the original photographs, with the same close framing that conveys the poet's forcefulness, and the tension of his features. Far from radiating contentment, what it brings out is psychological depth, along with a suggestion of life on the edge.

*The Wrestler, the Angel with Professional Model, Dorian Leigh* is a wry version of *Beauty and the Beast*, with a playful contrast between delicacy and roughness. It shows an American model who was regarded as one of the first icons of the fashion industry, and Maurice Tillet, a French wrestler who was born in the Ural mountains and who suffered from acromegaly, which was decisive for his choice of career. He was known as “the freak ogre of the ring”, though his stage name was “The French Angel”. During the 1940s he was famous in the United States for his showmanship.

The equivocal beauty of the scene derives from a double dichotomy. Firstly there are the two protagonists, who seem wholly unrelated, one being finely dressed and embodying civility, the other bare to the waist, depicting a “primal” state of humanity. Then there is the model’s facility of movement and grace, compared to the wrestler’s raw, cumbersome materiality, or even clumsiness. This distanced opposition between ingenuity and coarseness is also found in the fairy tale itself: Beauty learns to control her fear, while the Beast demonstrates unsuspected delicacy.

The photographer who dreamed up this reverential union, which illustrates the “reasoned sensuality” that Paul Valéry attributed to Baudelaire, had many pictorial references in mind, particularly from the Dutch Golden Age; and by the end of WW II he was already known for his style, which, in both still lifes and portraits, was free of superfluity. He was not just recognized as one of the 20th century’s great fashion illustrators, but was also painstaking in his attention to detail, sense of composition and printing processes. Over the course of his career he experimented with numerous techniques that enhanced the deep contrasts of his black-and-white images.



54. IRVING PENN (1917-2009)

*The Wrestler, the Angel with Professional Model, Dorian Leigh, ca. 1948*

Silver print, photographer stamp on verso, tag with title *The Wrestler, the Angel with Professional Model, Dorian Leigh*, 220 x 177 mm



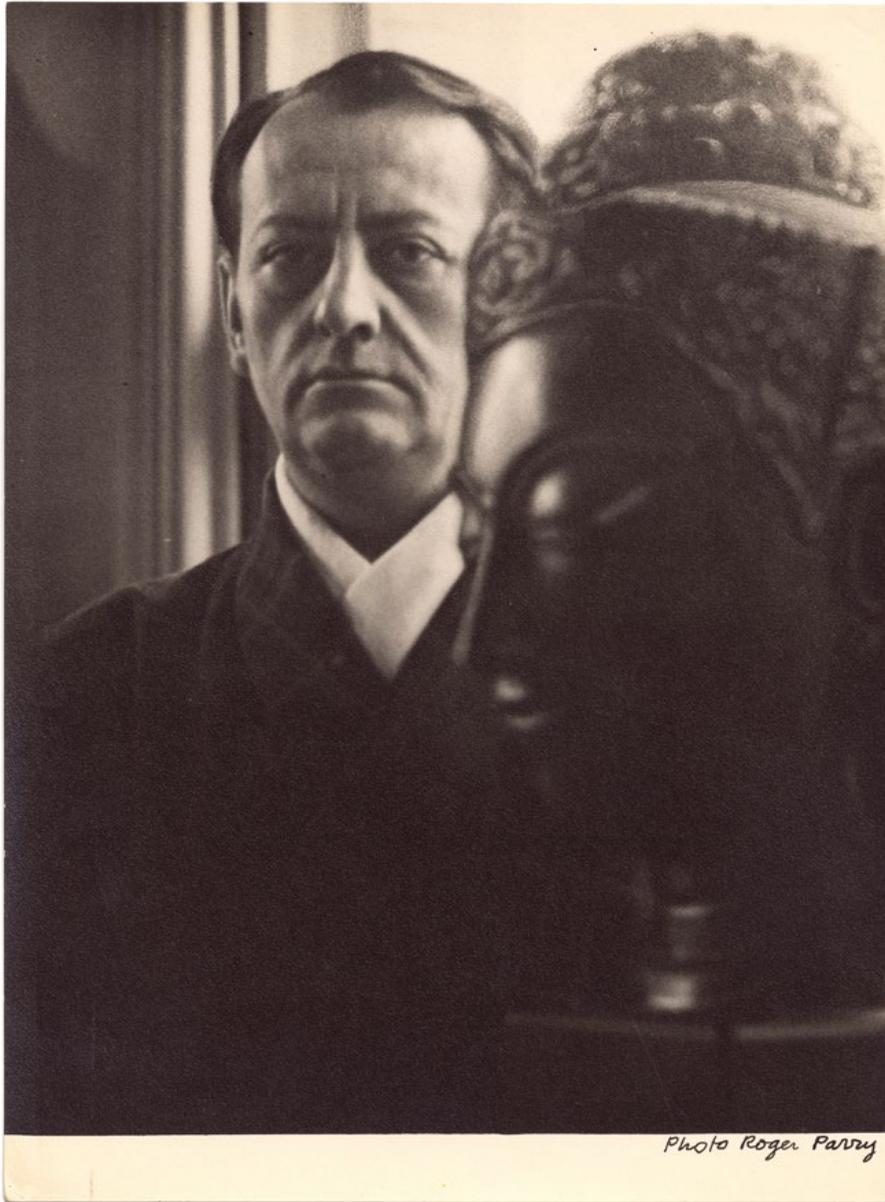
55. ADOLF DE MEYER (1868-1946)  
*Portrait of a woman, ca. 1940*

Gum bichromate print from a glass negative,  
photographer stamp on verso, 225 x 170 mm



56. ADOLF DE MEYER (1868-1946)  
*Portrait of a woman, ca. 1940*

Platinum print from a glass negative,  
photographer stamp on verso, 181 x 151 mm



57. ROGER PARRY (1905-1977)  
*André Malraux, ca. 1950*  
Silver print, 252 x 176 mm

This celebrated portrait of the writer, publisher and iconographer was created by the photographer Roger Parry at the point when Malraux was finishing *The Voices of Silence*, a new version of his *Psychology of Art*. The severity of Malraux's expression is somewhat attenuated by the presence of the Khmer sculpture in the foreground.

Parry, who in 1928, following the inception of the Nouvelle Vision, and influenced by the aesthetic theories of the Bauhaus, began working with the photographer Maurice Tabard, was one of the precursors of photographic modernity in France during the interwar period. He came to prominence in 1930 with *Banalité*, an illustrated volume for which Léon-Paul Fargue supplied a text. Malraux was behind the work, which marked the history of photographic publications, and which remained Parry's masterpiece. He divided his career between illustration and photography, notably with several portraits of Malraux, the first dating from 1933, the year of publication of *The Human Condition*, for which the NRF invited him to provide a cover. Malraux subsequently asked him to do the graphic design and oversee the printing of the images he used in his writings on art. Collaborating with Parry, Malraux placed the photography of works of art at the center of his method. And for the *Imaginary Museum*, Parry created a visual system that would interpret the rhetoric of the writer's art, and the new life conferred on the works.

The celebrated film director Leni Riefenstahl backed the Nazi vision of the world based on the evocative, persuasive power of images. Her *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*), 1935, filmed during the huge rally held in Nuremberg between September 4 and 10, 1934, was among the most innovative propaganda films of its time. Its spectacular, symphonic scope, using avant-garde cinematographic techniques such as low-angle shots and montage, contrasted with her more routine documentaries in the “Heimatfilm” genre, which attracted many German film-makers, and which symbolized national cohesion after the age of “blood and soil”.

This image shows Riefenstahl on the balcony of a guest house in Rome, Leica in hand. Wearing a dress and concentrating on the picture she is taking, her physical appearance is one of gracile distinction. Prevented from directing films after WW II, in the 1960s she became important as a photographer, particularly with her color images of Nuba tribespeople in South Sudan.



58. BOSIO PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

*Leni Riefenstahl, ca. 1960*

Silver print, stamped *Bosio pressphoto* on verso, 222 x 175 mm



Pablo Picasso's artistic odyssey, with his creative periods and their developments, has given rise to a considerable number of exegeses. From the last three decades of his life, one might pick out the work of David Douglas Duncan, with whom the artist cooperated. This is not a question of material to be commented on, but of an existence to be unveiled – rather than interpreted – in terms of the art itself as much as the everyday banality and rare moments, with a certain sense of devotion, but also an awareness of photographic work to be accomplished.

Picasso did not stick with any particular period for very long. He was always casting around, and experimenting. At the point where he met Duncan, in February 1956, he was at the height of his fame. Around him, art was changing. But he continued to work with frenetic enthusiasm, intercut with moments of doubt. Duncan wanted to grasp the paradox of his creativity, along with his easy way of relating to his entourage, and the inevitable banal betrayals. Picasso was facetious, for example in his portrayal as an Indian chief of the Great Plains, attentive and amused. But given the context, he did not pose. He lived. Looking at an almost completed composition, surrounded by older works, he ruminated. Standing back from a brace of paintings, sitting alone in the bareness of a large room in the château of Vauvenargues, he reflected. Pots of gloss paint dot the pictures taken in the studio. And Duncan's imposing archive, comprising thousands of images, now housed at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, goes beyond the basic framework of photoreportage. Picasso had already attracted the attention of major photographers, including Man Ray, Brassai, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Dora Maar. His relationship with Duncan was different, being more focused on his personal universe. And this unique approach to creativity is singularized by its span of seventeen years.

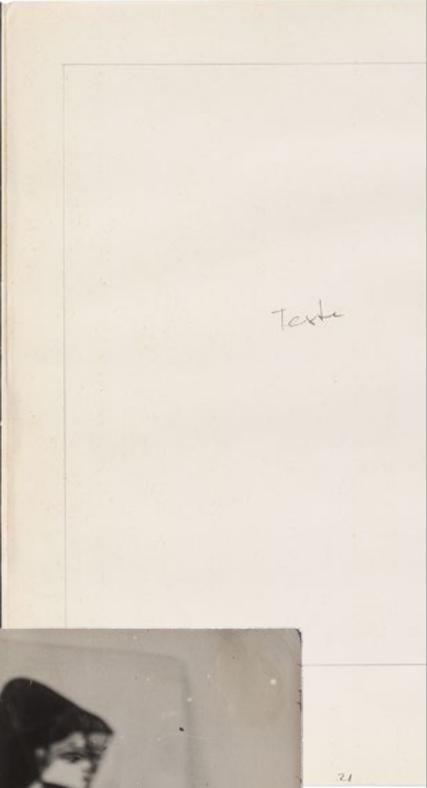
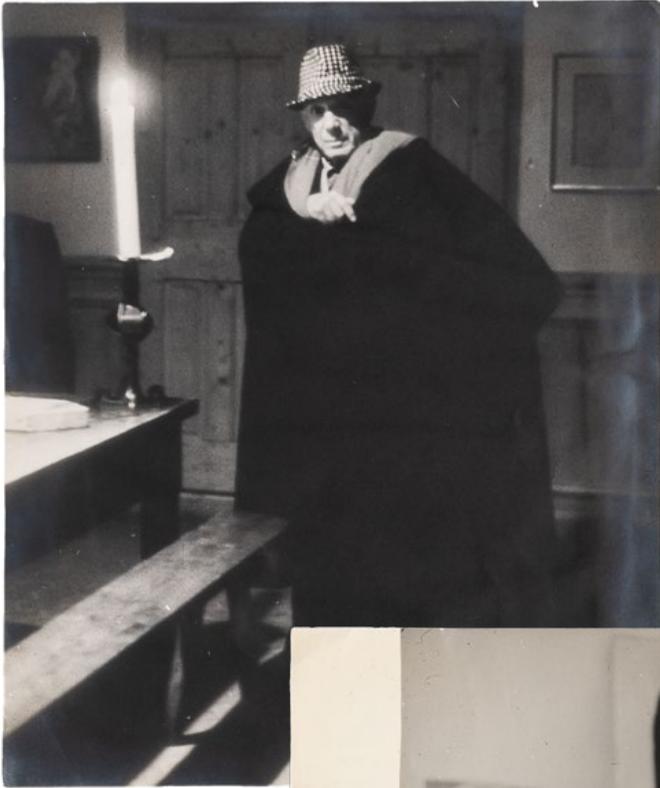
59. DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN (1916-2018)  
*Duncan-Picasso, original model of a book, ca.1960-1970*  
15 silver prints, double page spread: 300 x 510 mm



12



13





60. LUC FOURNOL (1931-2007)  
*The French writer Céline welcomes the actress Arletty, April 14, 1958*  
Late silver print on baryte paper, 240 x 160 mm

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