

## Handout Study Guide: Session 6

Photography & Art: First Phase 1839-1890 -----Key Points to remember & \*possible essay questions

-What were the three main positions discussed in the text, about the potential of camera art in the 19<sup>th</sup> C?

- In pose, cropping, and tonal range, his painted portraits after Daguerre's invention, have been characterized as "enlarged daguerreotypes". Using photography to make a record of his own output, and as source material for poses and backgrounds, vigorously denying at the same time its influence on his vision, or its claims as art, who was this 19<sup>th</sup> C. French painter?

-Who championed the work of Hill & Adamson, the embodiment of artistic expression with their Rembrandt like calotypes, writing of the concern of the relationship of "truth", and "reality", to "beauty" in photography?

-The conventions of still life painting transferred to photography with little change in style or subject matter. Name one of a few photographers, whose still life work was most original when not competing with paintings of similar themes, excluding "after-the-hunt" still lifes?

-Who was the photographer convinced that visual art should uplift and instruct, and the first to make imaginative use of combination printing, producing a reenacted narrative synthesized in the darkroom from about 30 negatives, an opus entitled, "Two ways of Life", representing an allegory of the choice between good and evil (or work & idleness)?

-Which painter turned photographer wrote many articles and 11 books on aesthetics and techniques of Photography, saw himself not only as a practitioner, but as a theoretician with a mission to elevate photography as an art, and in 1869, his first and widely read book, emphasized artistic principles of pictorial unity, and conclude with a chapter on combination printing?

-\*What was the theory of Aesthetics called, that was developed, refined, and then renounced 1885-1893, proclaimed by the English photographer Peter Henry Emerson, which embodied the protest against the developments of photography seen in the contrived combination images and the trivialization of photography via mass production genre images?

Images to remember for identification: Photographer, Title, Date, Process that could appear on quizzes or final exam.

Oscar G. Rejlander, The two ways of life, 1857, combination albumen print

Oscar G. Rejlander, Hard Times, 1860, combination albumen print, "A spiritistical photo" he wrote on mount

PH Emerson, Young Boy Fishing, 1887-95, Photogravure

PH Emerson, Setting the Bow Net, 1887-95, Photogravure

Frank M. Sutcliffe, Water Rats, 1886, Albumen Print

Charles Aubry, leaf arrangement, 1860's, albumen print/glass neg

Henry Peach Robinson, When the day's work is done, 1890, Photogravure

Henry Peach Robinson, Fading Away, 1858, combination albumen print

Henry Peach Robinson, Sleep, 1867, combination albumen print from 4 glass negs

Important Quotes: Be able to identify to whom these quotes are attributed.

-Although the painter, Paul Delaroche was a leading advocate of photography, he is particularly remembered for his much-quoted remark, on seeing the Daguerreotype, that "from today, painting is dead!"

-In response to the irony of Painters using photography as source for their work, French journalist, Ernest Lacan observed in 1852, that, "photography is like a mistress whom one cherishes and hides, about whom one speaks with joy but does not want others to mention".

-Painter Eugene Delacroix, prominent French romantic artist, who used photography toward the end of his lifetime, welcomed photography as reference material, but realized its limitations, writing in his journal in 1853, enthusiastically noting that if photographs were used as they should be, an artist might "raise himself to heights that we do not yet know".

-Henry Peach Robinson adopted combination printing, first working out preliminary sketches into which the photographic parts fit like a quilt or patchwork, claiming, "a method that will not admit of modification of the artist cannot be art".

-\*P. H. Emerson argued that a photographer should imitate the eye. He claimed that one only sees sharpness in the center, and that the image is slightly blurred at the periphery, and therefore suggested that one should make a photograph slightly out of focus in order to achieve that effect, merely ensuring that the image in the center is sharp. In his book, Naturalistic Photography, he wrote: "Nothing in nature has a hard outline, but everything is seen against something else, and its outlines fade gently into something else, often so subtly that you cannot quite distinguish where one ends and the other begins. In this mingled decision and indecision, this lost and found, lies all the charm and mystery of nature"

-\*P.H Emerson indicated his passion for photography when he declared: "...we must first see the picture in nature and be struck by its beauty so that we cannot rest until we have secured it on our plate...."

- Frank Meadow Sutcliffe in his paper entitled, "How to look at photographs", 1892, stated, "May I say that a photograph gives us the naked truth, which has to be clothed by the imagination".

General concepts to remember:

-Photography was linked with the "great industrial madness" of the time, which in the eyes of many critics and other artists, and thinkers, meant disastrous consequences on the spiritual qualities of life and art. French critic and Poet, Baudelaire thought un-endowed painters should become photographers, and thought photography, "a humble servant of art and science, like printing and stenography." Noted critic, Charles Blanc, stated that "photography copies everything and explains nothing, it is blind to the realm of the spirit".

-1851-1871 post collodion era: allied societies and publications were in the vanguard of discussions about photographic art, and their writings evolved into a point of view about the medium that still forms the basis of photographic aesthetics today, "that the camera is an instrument, like the pencil or brush, and photography, a process like engraving or drawing, and, what makes an artist is not the process, but the feeling. "

-Barbizon Painters, Realist and Impressionist painters, who concerned themselves with the depiction of mundane reality, accepted photography in part because of their scientific interest in light, and in the accurate depiction of tonal values.

-\*Post 1851, besides using camera images as studies of models and draperies, and for portraits that were to be enlarged and printed on canvas, painters began to incorporate in their work, documentary info and unconventional points of view taken from familiarity with all sorts of photographs. The high horizons, blurred figures, and asymmetrical croppings visible in many Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings seem to establish a relationship with "camera vision".

-To many Victorians, no clear distinctions existed between studies of the nude made for artists, those done for personal expression, and those intended as titillating commercial images (pornography). Realistic paintings of unclothed figures, except in mythological or historical contexts were scandalized, and so the more naturalistic camera depiction of nudity was not surprisingly unaccepted, no matter what the purpose the images designed to serve.

-Second half of 19<sup>th</sup> C. critics demanded of painters and photographers to select themes and treatments that not only would delineate situations naturalistically but would also embody uplifting sentiments. The demand that photographs be at once truthful, beautiful, and inspirational influenced the making of still lifes, genre scenes, portraits of models in allegorical costume, and composite images that aimed to compete with "high art". To overcome the sharp definition thought by some to be too literal for art, photographers employed various techniques to blur the image for more expressionistic effect.

-Posed genre scenes, and combination printing was not popular in the US, because of the general distrust of mannerism in the arts, and the firm conviction that the camera should not tamper with reality. However, in the 1860's in America, stereograph format and genre scenes became popular, especially "spirit" images which provided a respite from the pressures caused by urbanization and industrialization .

-\*Even though PH Emerson renounced his great expectations for artistic photography, Naturalism –refined and reinterpreted provided a foundation for the photographic art movements that developed throughout Europe and US after 1890.

New Technology, New Vision, New Users 1875-1925 Short Technical History Part II -----Key Points to remember & \*possible essay questions

-Which process followed the wet plate collodion technique, excluding the too slow collodion dry plate? When was it marketed? When was it put onto celluloid support instead of glass?

-When was roll film, as it is known today, invented?

-A serious effort to make possible fast exposure, control over focus, and large image size resulted in the development of what kind of camera, first patented in 1861, which used a mirror to redirect the light rays to a horizontal ground-glass focusing surface?

-Name at least two photographers, beginning in 1872, and for the next 20 years who devoted themselves to the analysis of motion by the camera, in an effort to understand and record the discrete stages of movement?

-\*Name at least two 19<sup>th</sup> C or Early 20<sup>th</sup> C. painters that were greatly influenced by the scientific studies of movement done by Muybridge or Marey?

-\*Photography had a profound influence on French Impressionist painting, name at least two techniques seen in stereographs depicting motion that can be found in many paintings from this period?

-In 1888, the first small hand held single-lens camera was marketed to target the popular interest of people who wanted to take pictures of the spontaneous and informal events of their everyday lives. What was the camera called, who invented it? What other industry did its invention spawn?

-What was Hershel's term to describe instantaneous exposures?

-Who was the French photographer that starting photographing in 1901, at age 7, with a hand held camera, and continued its use throughout his lifetime to chronicle the unexpected in his photographs?

-Who was the French photographer who documented Old Paris from about 1900-1925, embracing the authentic culture of France that modern technology was destroying?

-Who was the best known black studio photographer in the US who opened a studio in 1916, in Harlem, photographing the well-to-do, and famous?

-Who invented the positive glass Autochrome plate, in 1907?

-Photomechanical reproduction developed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> C, in response to the growing demand for photographic reproductions of what genre?

Images to remember for identification: Photographer, Title, Date, Process that could appear on quizzes or final exam.

Eadweard Muybridge, Galloping Horse, 1878, Albumen Print

Eadweard Muybridge, Galloping Woman Walking throwing scarf over shoulders, 1884-85, Albumen Print

See more images, and still motions of Muybridge @ <http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/>

Thomas Eakins, Eakin's students at the site of "The Swimming Hole", 1883, platinum print

Etienne Jules Marey, The Flight of the Seagull, 1886

J.H. Lartigue, Paris Avenue des Acacias, 1912

Eugene Atget, Le Dome, boulevard Montparnasse, June 1925, printing out paper

Eugene Atget, La Villette, fille publique faisant le quart, 4/19/1921, printing out paper

Eugene Atget, Avenue des Gobelins, 1925, printing out paper

Important Quotes: Be able to identify to whom these quotes are attributed.

Alfred Stieglitz suggestion to those using the hand camera study their surroundings and "await the moment when everything is in balance", seems to have forecast a way of seeing that 30 years later became known as the "decisive moment".

General concepts to remember:

-For 50 years following the announcement of the invention of photography, its practitioners sought answers to the technical problems created by the expanding aesthetic, commercial, and scientific demands. Professional photographers wanted more sensitive film and stable standardized products to document an ever widening range of subjects; the scientific community needed refined and specialized equipment, and artistic photographers wanted materials of long tonal range and permanence.

-At the end of the 1880's, with simplified apparatus and processing methods, "push button photography" turned potentially everyone into a photographer.

-The explosion of products, techniques, and processes produced significant changes in the kinds of images made, and how they were used, and as a consequence established new audiences for photographic images, which provided information that altered public attitudes and perceptions of reality because of their increased numbers.

-\*Besides the progressions in printing technology to make possible the direct transcription of photographic illustration in media, the most important stimulus for standardization of photographic materials and processes, was the realization that photography was more than a craft that reproduced what the eye could see, that its potential as a tool for revealing scientific, sociological, and physical phenomena never actually seen, had transformed it into the most significant pictorial means in modern industrial society.

-\*The hand held camera ushered in a change in the practice, use, and character of photography, not just in the polarity of documentary and artistic photographs, but especially in the animated and vigorous street life in cities which offered an uncommon panorama of picturesque subjects. They photographed with less artifice the variety of peoples and experiences to be found in urban slum and working class neighborhoods. Until the mid to late 1880's photographers in search of visual antidotes for the depressing uniformity of life in industrialized societies had either ventured abroad to exotic lands or had searched out quaint pastoral villages untouched by industrial activity.

-The character of contemporary life in the cities was explored by many photographers with the hand held camera, such as Stieglitz who looked for intimations of tenderness and compassion to contrast with the coldness and impersonality of the city in the 1890's, or Horace Nicholls in England who sought out moments of extreme contrast of class and dress. In the US, at the turn of the century photographers were urged to depict that the social life of the nation was nurtured in the cities, and there was an excitement in their freedom from conformity and ignorance.

-Late 1880's after hand held cameras gained popularity, images from studios and amateurs popularized the post card format.

-Of all the technological innovations occurring in photography between 1870 and 1920, none was more tantalizing or possessed greater potential for commercial exploitation than the discovery of how to make images in color.