

Art Photography

Science versus Art in Photography

In the late 18th Century, Immanuel Kant posited two modes of knowing: 1) rational and 2) intuitive which are associated with 1) science and 2) taste, sensibility, art. Esthetics was to be the study of beauty which had its own form of truth different than that of science's truth.

In 1853, Sir William J. Newton at a meeting of the Royal Photographic Society in London presented a paper (see p.79 in the Newhall collection of primary essays on photography) which divided up photographic practice into: 1) scientific reportage (based on sharp, crisp images, like the D-type made); and 2) esthetic images (based on softer images with broad effect, painterly-like as seen in the C-type). The latter could be hand-retouched and combination printing of different negs onto the paper positive was possible.

Therefore, in the illustrations which are sent forth to the world to be placed in similar positions as pictures and engravings, their appearance ought not to be so *chemically*, as *artistically* beautiful.

—Sir William John Newton

Newton and Art Photography

Newton says art photography must break the mechanical aspects of the photographic process via hand intervention and the C-type permits such intervention and gives "a greater breadth of effect and consequently more suggestive of the true character of nature." Newton's appeal is just a reformulation of the esthetic notion of *effect* in painting as discussed by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses on Art* (1790) where Reynolds notes that over all sharpness in a painting is too distracting and result in a loss of unity in the composition. Only certain areas should be sharply rendered. This academic stricture was carried over into art photography.

Modes of Achieving "Art" in Photo

- 1) selective focus, lenses that are uncorrected for aberrations.
- 2) combination printing, especially printing in the sky.
- 3) imitating academic painting subjects and compositions.
- 4) use of non-silver "ennobling processes" like cyanotype, gum bichromate, bromoil, Van Dyke printing, photogravure, and later use of platinum or palladium printing.

Art Photography and Tableaux Vivants

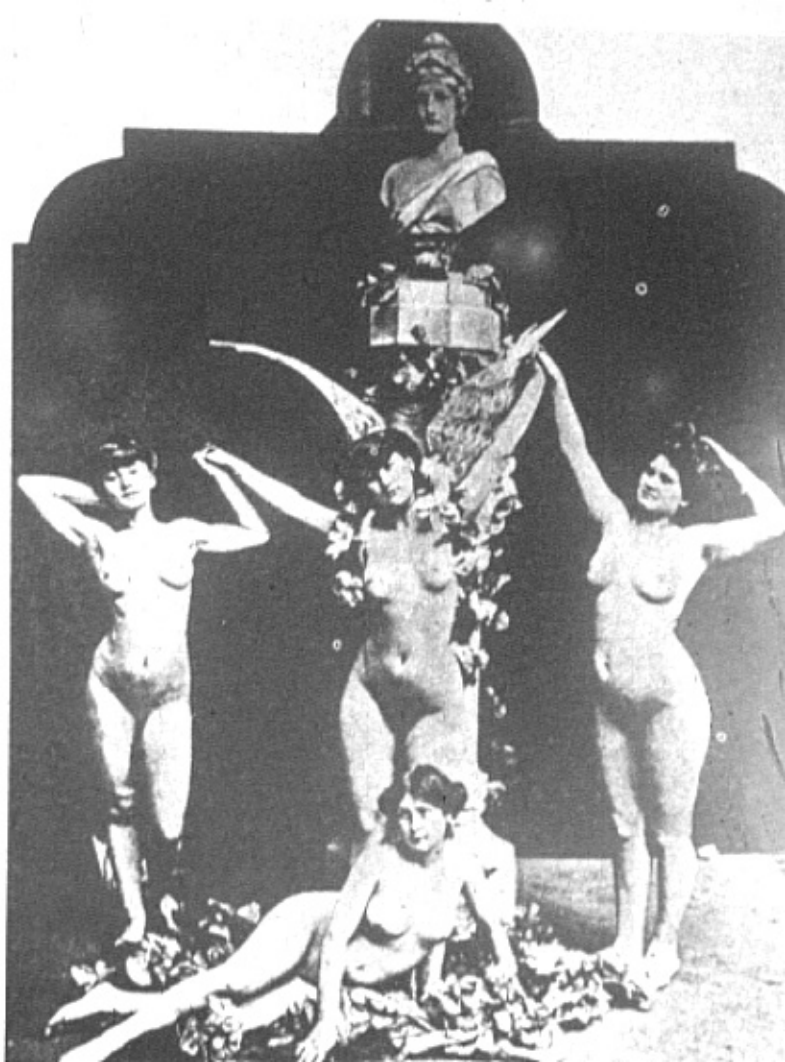
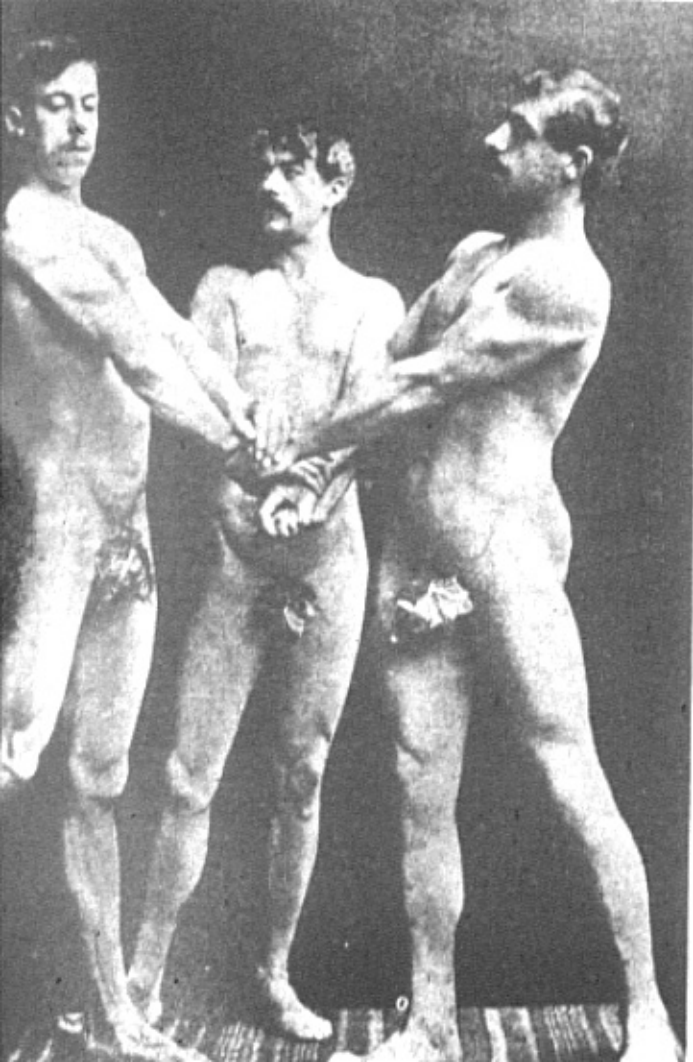
Arranging live people into imitations of famous painting scenes, called "tableaux vivants," were popular in aristocratic circles.

Examples can be found in literature: 1) In Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* (1810) the protagonists must represent Poussin's *Esther Before Ahasuerus*; 2) In George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876) the heroine appears in a tableau inspired by Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*.

Photography, reproached for its realism, wanted to show it was capable of producing fictions with painterly and literary pretensions.















LEWIS CARROLL 28 March 1863 GCUT

Carroll's interest in photography began in 1855 when he was instructed in the calotype by his uncle, Skeffington Lutwidge. In January 1857 he first saw and admired Rejlander's studies of children, which undoubtedly influenced his own style and technique

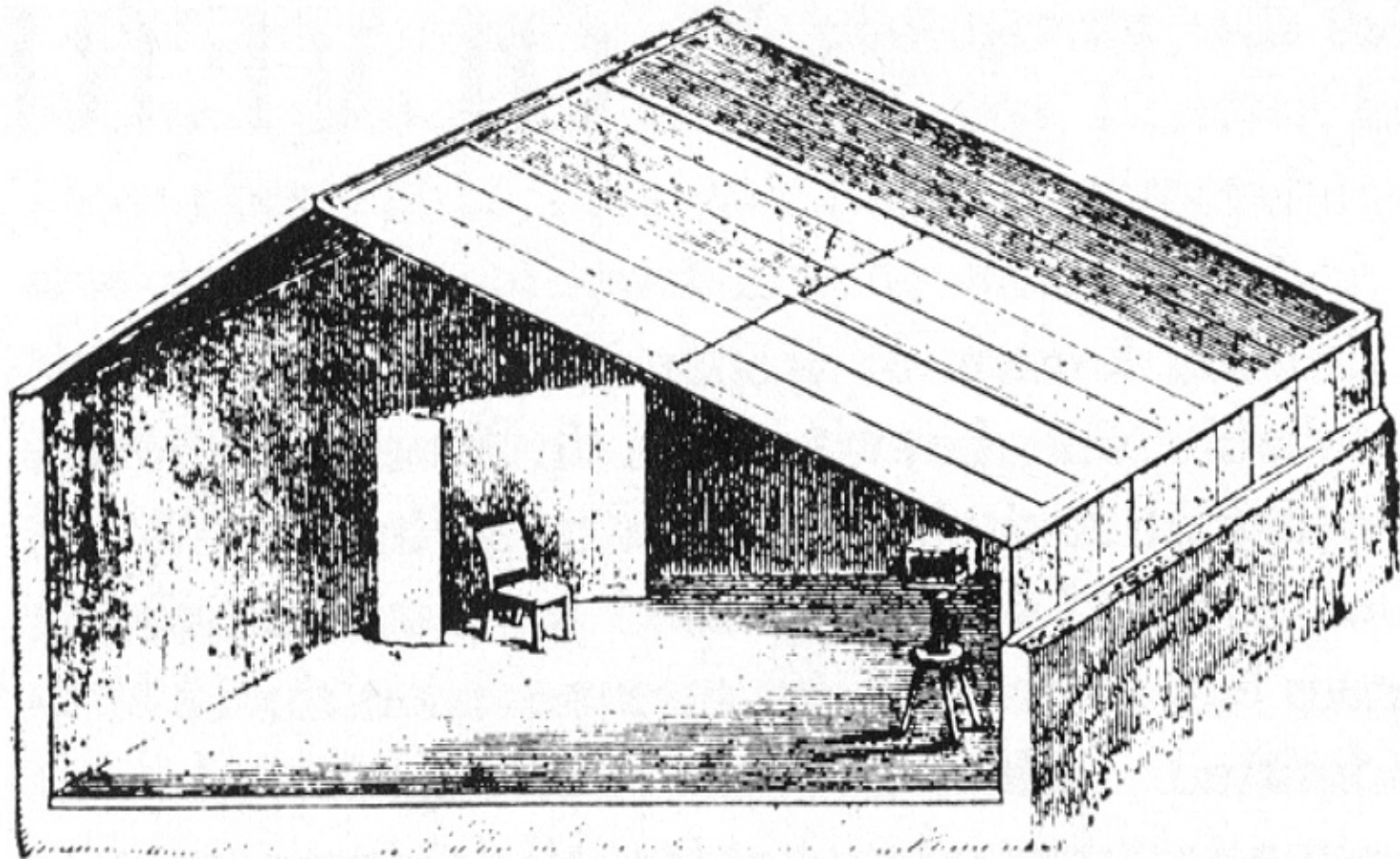
Oscar Gustave Rejlander and Combination Printing

O . G. Rejlander (1813 - 1875) is called "The Father of Art Photography" for he expanded on what Gustave LeGray did with combination printing (separate negs for sky and foreground double-printed onto a single scene).

Immigrating from Denmark to London, he began a very successful photo business shooting elaborate theatrical and literary allegories. Rarely did he shoot outside the studio. In 1855 he did his first composite print called "Groupe Printed from Three Negatives" that depicted canal boys and their donkey, a typical genre subject (in the studio it was not bright enough to shoot at smaller lens apertures and hence at the large apertures he shot at, he could not get the depth of field to encompass the large scene he wanted to obtain, so compositing proved the answer.

PHOTOGRAPHS by O. G. REJLANDER.
FIFTY of his best mounted on Cardboard, and in a Portfolio
(22 inches by 18), price £12 12s.—For further particulars apply to
O. G. REJLANDER, Wolverhampton.

Fig 2 Rejlander's advertisement in the Illustrated London News, 7 February 1857



TWO WAYS OF LIFE, OR HOPE IN
REPENTANCE, exhibiting at Manchester,
31×16, £10. 10s. 0d. Original Studies of do., 5s.
and 7s. 6d. Reduced Copy of ditto, 16×8½, 12s. 6d.
Ariadne, 10s. 6d.; ditto, Stereoscopic, 2s. 6d. Pho-
tographed from Life, by O. G. Rejlander, Esq.

The above, and all the beautiful Photographs of
this eminent Artist, can be had wholesale and
retail, of the publishers,—

BECKINGHAM & CO.,

PHOTOGRAPHIC CHEMISTS,

103, GREAT HAMPTON ST. BIRMINGHAM.

**AGENTS FOR OSBORNE'S DEVELOPING BOX AND
SUTTON'S PHOTOGRAPHS.**

Rejlander con't

Rejlander would make his prints in large editions and sell them to the public. Often his subjects were drawn from the popular literature of the day, or typical genre scenes of picturesque social types. He also taught photography to: C. L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), Gustave Dore, and Alfred Lord Tennyson.

In 1857 he exhibited in most famous composite print: "Two Ways of Life" which was composed to two sheets of print paper on which Rejlander had combined 30 different negs. Queen Victoria purchased a copy, whose composition was based on Raphael's painting "The School of Athens" (1510). The theme of moral choice: following the road of the righteous versus that of perdition was drawn from a literary source: "The Mysteries of London" (1846), George Reynolds.







Rejlander and Genre Scenes

"Two Ways of Life" may also have been influenced by the example of Madame Wharton's troupe of actors who did *tableau vivant* or *poses plastiques* as living canvases depicting scenes from famous paintings.

After much negative reviews of his composite, however, Rejlander began to shoot more genre scenes like: "Drunken Barnaby Leaving the Tavern," "Don't Cry Mama," and "Hard Times." In 1871 he did photo illustrations of human emotions for Charles Darwin's "Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals," even using himself as subject.

His most lucrative photo was "Ginx's Baby" (1872) which named after a popular novel of the day. He sold 60,000 24 x 30 cm prints and 1/4 million cartes-de-visites of it.









O. G. Ray, Lauder, 1858

You can choose a beautiful young woman, envelop her artfully in bedclothes, make her take a sensuous pose, arrange her slender fingers delicately and call it "Summer," but it is wasted effort, Monsieur Rejlander: this young woman is not Summer. It is quite obvious that her name is Jane Brown or Sophia Smith, and that the drapery is only bedclothes.

















(left) FLAMMA VESTALIS by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. (From half-tone reproduction.) The profile bears a close resemblance to that in Rejlander's TRULY THANKFUL

(right) TRULY THANKFUL c1862-8 RPS



D. G. Rossetti, *The Wedding of St. George and Princess Sabra*. Watercolour, 13" x 13"; 1857. (The Tate Gallery)

ough Rossetti most profoundly identified with the early Italian Renaissance poet Dante, his sense of English mediaevalism is the most authentic of all the Pre-Raphaelites. Whereas Holman Hunt merely progresses beyond the mannered stage set, in Rossetti there is a unity of form and sentiment that goes far beyond the average historical painting of the nineteenth century. Mrs. Cameron more than not failed in her costume illustrations for Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* but in *Guinevere and Lancelot* there is a genuine sense of grief that surmounts the usual photographic inadequacies.



Julia Margaret Cameron (1815 - 1879)

Born in Calcutta to wealthy parents, she returns to England in 1848 to the isle of Wight. Age age of 48 her children got her a camera and she starts her photographic career, being largely self-taught. She worked for another 10 years at it before returning to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) with her husband. She used the wet plate collodion process.

Her subject matter was portraits of the literati and artists, sometimes photographing subjects for her painter friends, from 1867 - 1870. She also did set-up tableau illustrating literary sources, e.g., Lord Tennyson's "Idylls of the King".

Her work shows strong influence of English Pre-Raphaelite painters, such as D. G. Rossetti's paintings of women.

Cameron con't

Her style utilized: close-ups with emphasis on the head and hands, i.e., intellect and labor; her images were often ill-focused, peripheral blurring, suppression of detail, and dramatic lighting, never lapsing into formula.

Her technique was considered poor by many other photographers; H.P. Robinson told her "not to make smudges."

She used two cameras: early work done with a 11 x 9 in. plate camera; later work she used a 15 x 12 in. plate camera.

In her book *Annals of My Glass House* she wrote, concerning her famous sitters (Tennyson, Carlyle, Herschel, etc.): "When I have such men before my lens, the portrait so made has been almost the embodiment of a prayer."





High point and end of medievalism

The inspiration the Victorians found in the medieval world, a way of replacing the realities of modern life with romance and chivalry, was the height of fashion. The modern counterpart of *Morte d'Arthur*, which had influenced the Pre-Raphaelites, was the *Idylls of the King* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, published in 1859 and added to in 1869. It was illustrated by Hunt, Millais, Rossetti and Woolner.



The Oxford Union frescoes

The murals for the Oxford Union were the most famous collective work of that period. Rossetti had gone to Oxford to see his friend, the Dublin architect Benjamin Woodward, who was working on the university's new museum and on a new debating hall for the Oxford Union. Impressed by the decoration of Merton College Chapel, renovated by the architect William Butterfield, with a painted ceiling by John Hungerford Pollen, Rossetti persuaded Woodward to let his group of painter friends decorate the walls above the gallery that encircles the debating hall.

Burne-Jones, Morris, Pollen and Rossetti himself, assisted by Spencer Stanhope, Val Prinsep and Arthur Hughes, together with Munro who sculpted a tympanum, launched themselves into an adventure that came to be regarded not only as one of the high points of the Pre-Raphaelite period but also as one of its great failures, in technical terms at least. The project was for ten frescoes illustrating the *Morte d'Arthur*.



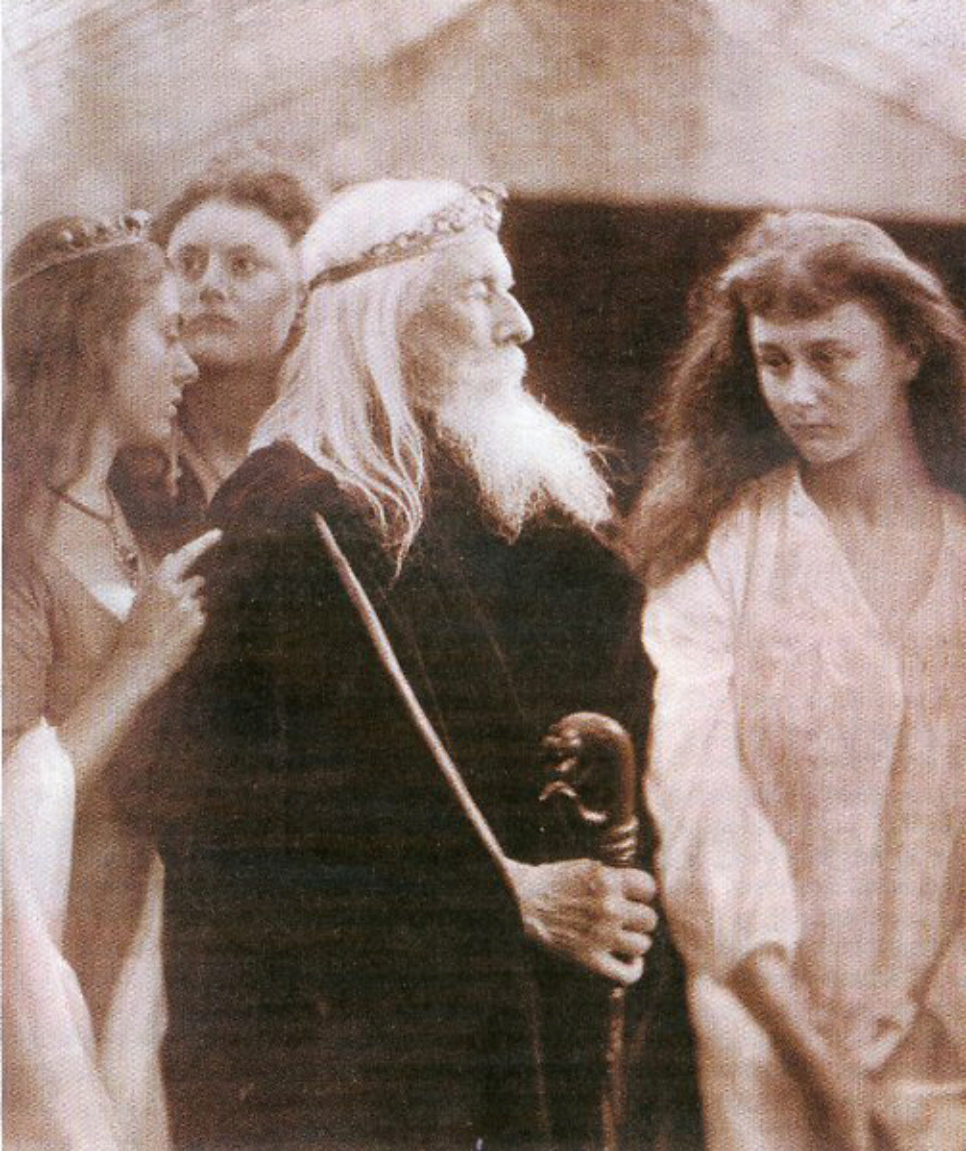












Henry Peach Robinson (1830 - 1901)

1858 -- he meets O. G. Rejlander and continues to exploit the potentialities of composite printing. This same year he makes his first combination print, "Fading Away," concerning a girl dying of consumption (tuberculosis) using 5 separate negatives.

He won over 100 competitions for his allegories and narrative photos. He became known as "the high priest of photographic picture making by rule and combination."

He wrote several books on art photography:

Pictorial Effect in Photography (1869)

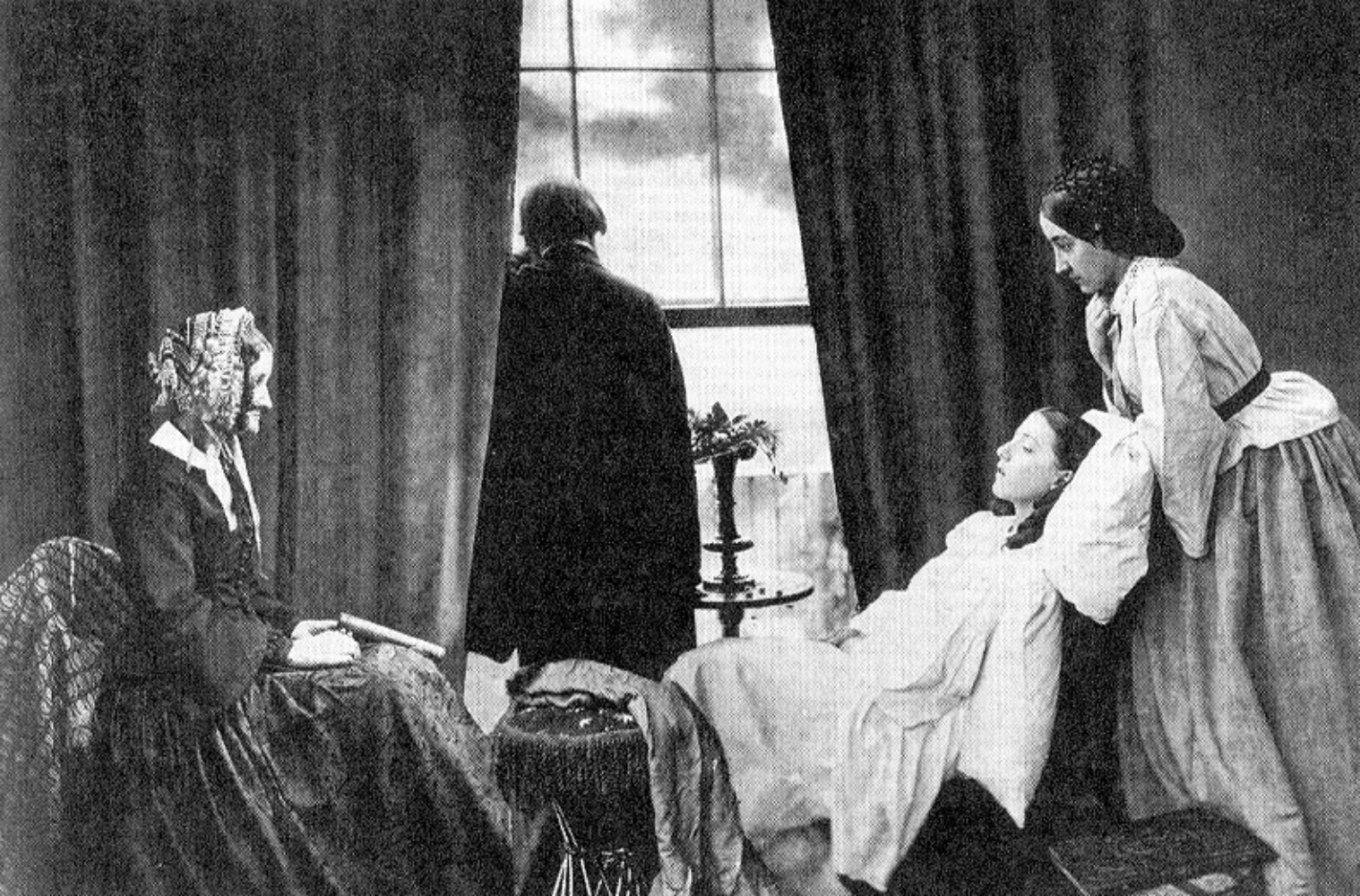
Picture Making by Photography (1889)

Art and Photography (1890)

His practice of photography was opposed to Peter Henry Emerson's "naturalistic photography."

HENRY PEACH ROBINSON, early Pictorial photographer and theorist, wrote:

"My object in introducing engravings from paintings of complicated forms has not been to offer to photographers examples for exact imitation, but that it may be shown how immutuable laws exist in all good works of art, whether that art is exemplified in the lowest subjects, or the highest; that the same laws of balance, contrast, unity, repetition, repose, and harmony are to be found in all good works, irrespective of subject; and that the arrangement of the general form of nearly all pictures in which true art is visible is based on the diagonal and the pyramid."













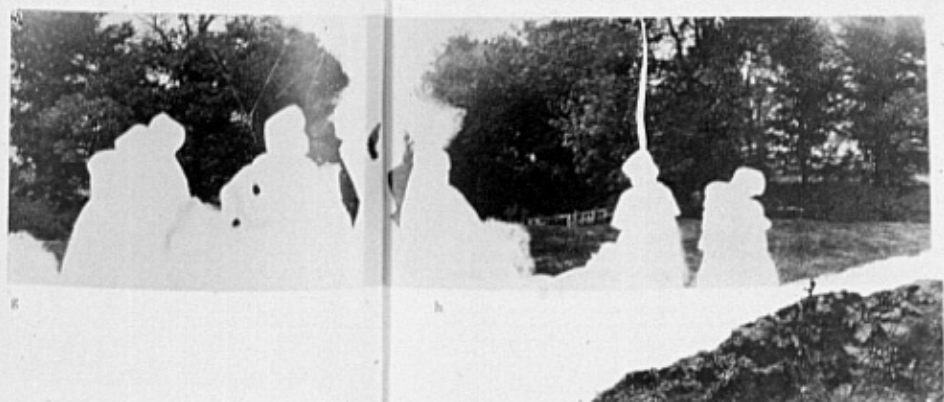


Figure 22b-j *Bringing Home the May, 1862*. Prints of the nine separate negatives used to form the composite. The 'figure' images here associated with the masked landscape negatives as follows: b and c with g; d with h and h; e with h, i and j; f with i and j







Fonda Speaks To Vietnam Veterans At Anti-War Rally



Actress And Anti-War Activist Jane Fonda Speaks to a crowd of Vietnam Veterans as Activist and former Vietnam Vet John Kerry (LEFT) listens and prepares to speak next concerning the war in Vietnam (AP Photo)







Peter Henry Emerson (1856 - 1936)

His theory of art photography he called "Naturalistic Photography." This consisted of: 1) discovering the camera's own rules, rather than aping academic painting; 2) using selective focus (adhering to Von Helmholtz's theory of human vision where central vision is sharper than peripheral); 3) choice of subject, lighting, selective focus and excellent printing on platinum papers would yield best art photos.

In 1889 he published his book *Naturalistic Photography* in which he defended photography as an art form *independent* of painting, as a creative merging of art and science to render an *impression* of nature.

In 1886 he and his anthropologist friend, Goodall, set out to photograph the people living in East Anglia in the Norfolk Broads (an area like the wet-lands of Holland).

Emerson con't

The life of the peasants living in the Broads was being threatened by greedy landlords and development. Emerson and Goodall wanted record the life of these unique people and maybe help their cause by favorable publicity.

Two photo books resulted (each with text by Emerson and Goodall): 1) *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* and *Pictures of East Anglian Life*. In the latter Emerson wrote: "My aim has been to produce truthful pictures of East Anglian Peasant and Fisherfolk Life, and of the landscape in which life is lived. I have made ample notes, so that all the information . . . was gained by actual observation."

Emerson was set against combination printing and all other fakery such a retouching, as well as fuzzy focus in photography.

NATURE

(The fountain-head of sensuous impressions,
but not necessarily of *ideas*.)

One | branch.

PHOTOGRAPHY

(A cross between *Nature* and a *machine*.)

Two | branches.

Realism.

(The sharp photograph —
wherein sentiment, illusion,
and decoration are disregarded;
merely a register of bald facts
mathematically true.)

Naturalism.

(The more or less correct
reflection of Nature, wherein
truth of sentiment, illusion of
truth [so far as possible] and
decoration are of first im-
portance.)

The shift toward the concept of interiority so marked in this era—in William James, Henri Bergson, and the symbolist movement in the literary and visual arts in general—finds its photographic equivalent in Emerson, who offers us the opportunity to follow him in the construction of the photographic observer.

From H.P. ROBINSON'S touting of the art photograph as a human construct, it was not far to the inquiry into the lens-formed image as a coded representation as suggested in this excerpt from P.H. EMERSON'S book NATURALISTIC PHOTOGRAPHY (1889):

"We have shown why the human eye does not see nature exactly as she is, but sees instead a number of signs which represent nature, signs which the eye grows accustomed to, and which from habit we call nature herself. We shall now discuss the relation of pictorial art to nature, and shall show the fallacy of calling the most scientifically perfect images obtained with photographic lenses artistically true."

A NATURALISTIC PHOTOGRAPH

is not merely a photograph with one plane sharp and the rest fuzzy, as asserted by the muddle-headed idiot.

Is not merely a blurred view, as suggested by the incompetent operator.

Is not every photograph printed on mat surfaces, as suggested by the unintelligent.

Is not a "fuzzy" thing, as hinted by the back-biter.

A naturalistic photograph requires a man of strong artistic sense to produce, and a refined artist to appreciate, but it is doomed to the sneers and contumely of the Chicago and purely British section of the photographic press Philistines who have sneered in their day at Whistler.

“Our contention is that a picture should be a translation of a scene as seen by the normal human eye,” he writes. “Having thus demonstrated that the best artists have always tried to interpret nature, and express by their art an impression of nature as nearly as possible similar to that made on the retina of the human eye, it will be well to inquire on scientific grounds what the normal human eye really does see.”

Emerson's interest resides less in the way the camera might emulate vision than in the relation of the photograph to its hypothetical observer. Here he turns away from the issue of the camera's (or photographer's) connection to its subject in the field and toward the interaction of the resulting image and its viewer. Emerson notes how the sharp-focus photograph is, from the point of view of attention, chaotic—the eye darts across its surface, coming to rest arbitrarily on the many undifferentiated details presented. By contrast, a successful work of art invariably will train attention upon those parts of its composition that carry the greatest meaning and subordinate the rest to a contextual function. If a photograph is to be the same—if it is to “be a picture”—it must do the same. Focus here is deployed to facilitate what we might call the managerial control of response: it preprograms the image's mental reception by submitting a visual hierarchy of information that accords with the artist's intent, not in emulation of how we see but in recognition of how we might derive meaning from representational imagery. The point of differential focus, then, is not to make the camera emulate the eye, but to force the camera to create pictures that function as signs for our cognitive experience of nature.

"The principal object in the picture must be fairly sharp, just as sharp as the eye sees it and no sharper, but everything else, and all other planes of the picture must be subdued...slightly out of focus, not to the extent of producing destruction of structure, or fuzziness, but sufficient to keep them back and in place."

this adherence to naturalism was also taking place in painting with the Barbizon painters and eventually the Impressionists. His was a reaction against the Pre-Raphaelites:

"They imitated the pigments, not the light."

Jules Antoine Castagnary described the naturalist movement:

"The naturalist school declares that art is the expression of life under all phases and on all levels, and that its sole aim is to reproduce nature by carrying it to its maximum power and intensity; it is truth balanced by science. The naturalist school re-established the broken relation between man and nature."

of Robinson he said:

"one writer [Robinson] has served up a senseless jargon of quotations from literary writers of Art matters, a confused bundle of lines which take all sorts of ridiculous directions and which this worthy impresses are necessary to make a picture. The bulk of the work contains the quintessence of a blend of literary fallacies and Art anachronisms, and yet in spite of all these wisecracks, many a beautiful picture has been produced which has defied their every law."

"Retouching is the process by which a good, bad, or indifferent photograph is converted into a bad drawing or painting...The technique of photography is perfect, no such botchy aids are necessary..."

and

"It is a false idea and an inartistic one to endeavor to represent outdoor effects in a studio."

and

"...one is constrained to think that the ideal these amateurs set before themselves is to produce something like a **photograph** of a **painting**, and they imagine this is progress, this is art..."

Emerson's Promotion of Platinum Printing Papers:

a. Emerson criticized the use of albumen papers with their characteristic gloss surface; he himself used exclusively **platinum paper** for their subtle tonalities; he writes:

"It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that 'strength' in a photograph is not to be judged by its so-called 'pluck' or 'sparkle', but by its subtlety of tone, its truthful relative values in shadow and middle shadow, and its true coloring."

Directly tied to the issue of focus was that of tone. Emerson maintains that students should avoid tonal extremes in their prints and ignore the standard advice given them to capture a full range of tones from pure white to deep black. Helmholtz had argued that the nerves of the retina, like muscles, are susceptible to overuse. "The process of fatigue . . . takes place in the eye as well as other organs. When the entire retina becomes tired, as when we spend some time in the open air in brilliant sunshine, it becomes insensible to weaker light, so that if we pass immediately into a dimly lighted room we see nothing at first; we are blinded, as we call it, by the previous brightness." Emerson applies this proposition to the making and viewing of representational art works: "The reason we prefer pictures which are not too bright lies in the fact that the eye cannot look long at a very bright paintings without tiring. As a physical fact, . . . the most delicate modeling and tonality is to be obtained in a medium light." There are no outlines in nature, Emerson contends, and no true black and white; students of photography are therefore advised to present the tonalities of their prints in a relatively compressed fashion, confining them to the middle regions of the tonal scale, where the eye operates best. Emerson's principle of easiest orientation recognizes that the photographic print will most often be viewed under normal lighting conditions; the task of the photographic artist is to get the tones in proper relation, one to the other, for these conditions, in such a way as accords with a viewer's ordinary experience of the subject. Tonal extremes distract; tonal harmonies facilitate the most efficient physiological apprehension of the graphic image. In Emerson's scheme, the photograph becomes in effect its own psycho-physiological event. Photographers were adjured to understand the dynamics of that event as the grounding condition for photographic expression.

Reasons for using platinum papers:

- i. more sensitive than albumen paper
- ii. allowed greater control of the image contrast
- iii. image is permanent, silver is not
- iv. had a softer tonal scale as shadow tones are compressed (glossy paper extends shadow tones) and hence detail is suppressed.

Platinum printing process was patented in England by William Willis in 1873 and was marketed in 1879 under the name **Platinotype**.

Making platinum paper:

- i. paper is sensitized with ferric oxalate and potassium chloroplatinate; on exposure to light the ferric salts are reduced to the ferrous state; the paper has a matte surface.
- ii. when the paper is placed in a potassium oxalate developer, the new ferrous salts are dissolved and in turn reduce the platinum in contact with them to the metallic state.
- iii. the print is fixed in hydrochloric acid to eliminate any remaining ferric salts.

the color of platinum prints can range from a cool, slightly purple black to split tones of brown and warm black to a very warm brown; by toning with uranium, the image can even be changed to a red, green or blue color.

platinum paper was manufactured up to WWI, when by 1916 platinum became too expensive to use and **palladium** (sodium chloropalladite) was substituted; it produced almost identical results.

Robinson especially took exception Emerson's notion of "differential focus," saying that he, Robinson, preferred depth of field to be sufficient to render all planes in focus, but not necessarily tack sharp.

Emerson countered Robinson by saying that a NATURALISTIC PHOTOGRAPH:

- i. is not merely a photograph with one plane sharp and the rest fuzzy.
- ii. is not merely a blurred view.
- iii. is not every photograph printed on mat surfaces.
- iv. it is true to the sentiment of Nature, giving the appearance of things as truly as possible, and is decorative.
- v. it is where the closest truth of Nature is obtained by throwing the background of the picture out of focus to an extent which did not produce destruction of structure; the principal object of the picture being either sharp or just out of the sharp.

The self-acknowledged stylistic source for Emerson's early photography was French Realism, as it descended from Jean-François Millet at mid-century to figures like Jules Bastien-Lepage and Léon-Augustin Lhermitte in Emerson's own day (figs. 2 and 3). Emerson referred to Millet in his writings as "the Immortal." The French Realists' veneration of the harsh life of peasants, their understated painterly mood and impetus to place their costumed figures into broadly rendered landscape settings accorded perfectly with the sensibilities of younger English



North East Coast of England



Norfolk Broads

Norwich

Great Yarmouth

Sheringham Cromer

Holl

Mundesley

Fakenham

North Walsham Happisburgh

Aylsham

Stalham

North Elmham

Reepham

Scottow

Coltishall

Castle Acre

Dereham

Ringland

Caister-on-Sea

Swaffham

Brundall

Acle

A1065

Watton

Wymondham

Great Yarmouth

Gorleston-on-Sea

A140

A148

Hales

Corton

A1065

Attleborough

Long Stratton

A143

Lowestoft

Brandon

Banham

A140

A143

Beccles

A146

Thetford

A1066

Harleston

Diss

A143

A12

A134

A11

A140

A143

A146

A148

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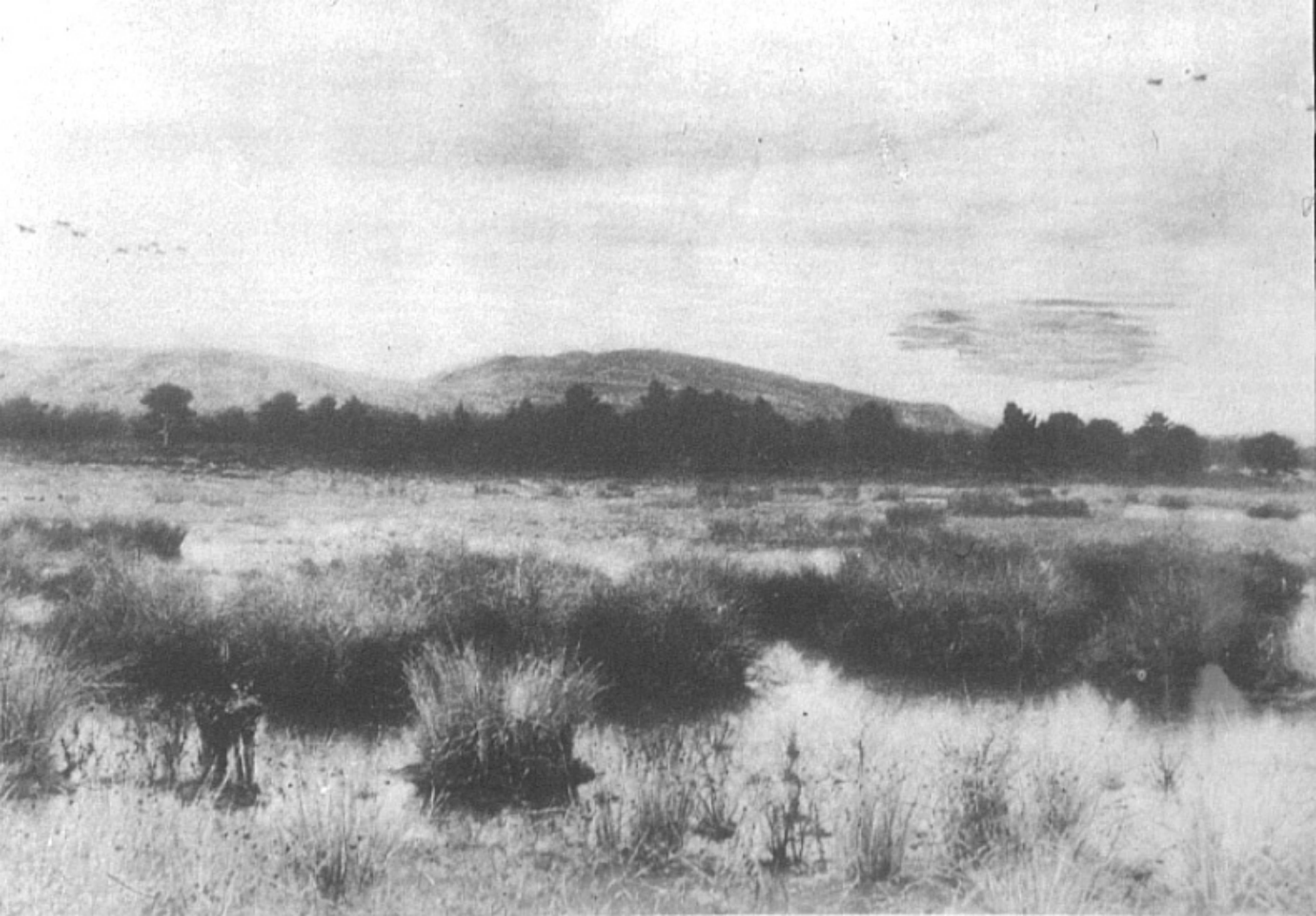
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P. E. MORGAN







Peter Henry Emerson, *At the Ferry—A Misty Morning* Plate from *On English Lagoons* (London: David Nutt, 1893). Photogravure, 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (10 x 12.8 cm). George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, Museum collection, by exchange

The textual passages he composed proved an integral part of their overall function. Emerson's introduction of visual difficulty as a theme is part of a larger enterprise to reproduce sensory responses, wherein textual passages supplement those bodily capacities outside the realm of the photographic.²⁴ Thus for *At the Ferry—A Misty Morning* (fig. 7), he writes of the way mist affects the act of hearing:

It is marvelous how clearly sounds can be distinguished in such weather—we could hear the clank of oars on the broad, voices on the distant marshes, and an accordion playing in the village accompanied with the silvery laughter of girls; but all these sounds seemed ghost like. One felt as if the formless silent grey world around us was peopled by phantoms whose voices sounded clearly though far off.²⁵



















in 1890, however, Emerson's views changed concerning photography's status as a fine art, after he read an essay in *The Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry* called "Photochemical Investigations and a New Method of Determination of the Sensitiveness of Photographic Plates" by two chemists: Hurter and Driffield.

- i. these chemists discovered the H & D Curve or the Characteristic Curve of film emulsions (toe, slope, and shoulder) with tangent of the slope = the contrast of negative.
- ii. H & D meant that one could control exposure and development as to expand or reduce negative contrast.
- iii. but Hurter and Driffield proved that by no chemical or printing sleight of hand could one change the relation of one tone to another; Emerson had thought one could change the tones at will; it was the cornerstone of his argument that photography could be art.
- iv. given H & D's findings and Emerson's argument = photo was not capable of being an art form.

1890, published a pamphlet titled **The Death of Naturalistic Photography**, Emerson said:

"The limitations of photography are so great that, though the results may, and sometimes do give a certain esthetic pleasure, the medium must rank the lowest of all arts, lower than any graphic art, for the individuality of the artist is cramped, in short, it can hardly show itself...I thought once (Hurter and Driffield have taught me differently) that true values could be obtained and that values could be altered at will by development. They cannot; therefore to talk of getting values in any subject whatever as you wish and of getting them true to nature is to talk nonsense...I regret deeply that I have come to this conclusion."

EPITAPH.

In Memory of

NATURALISTIC PHOTOGRAPHY,

WHICH RAN A SHORT BUT ACTIVE LIFE,
UPSET MANY CONVENTIONS
HELPED TO FURTHER MONOCHROME PHOTOGRAPHY TO THE
UTMOST OF ITS LIMITED ART BOUNDARIES,
STIRRED MEN TO THINK AND ACT FOR THEMSELVES,
PRODUCED MANY PRIGS AND BUBBLE REPUTATIONS,
EXPOSED THE IGNORANCE OF THE MULTITUDE,
BROUGHT OUT THE LOW MORALITY OF CERTAIN PERSONS IN THE
PHOTOGRAPHIC WORLD,
BROKE DOWN THE PREJUDICE OF THE OUTSIDE PUBLIC AGAINST
PHOTOGRAPHY'S VERY SLENDER ART CLAIMS,
ENCOURAGED MANY AMATEURS TO BABBLE AND MAKE THE WORDS
"ART," "TRUTH" AND "NATURE," STINK IN THE
NOSTRILS OF SERIOUS ARTISTS,
ENDING BY GIVING A FEW A BRUTAL SORT OF APPREHENSION
OF ART, AND DYING WHEN ITS
ALLOTTED TASK WAS DONE WITH A GIBE ON ITS LIPS,
FOR THE "AMATEUR," THE "PLAGIARIST,"
THE "PRATING TRUE-TO-NATURE MAN,"
THE "IMPRESSIONIST," THE "NATURALIST," THE "IDEALIST,"
AND THE HUMBUG.

Pictorialism (1885 - 1925)

The first international serious amateur art photo movement. Photographers organized into photo clubs and held juried salons, awarding medals, inviting members of other groups to join if their work was of sufficient quality.

Key Pictorialist Clubs:

England: The Royal Photographic Society, and The Brotherhood of the Linked Ring.

USA: The Photo-Secession

France: The Photo-Club de Paris

Austria: The Austrian Camera Club

The first Photographic Society (PHG) in the German-speaking lands was founded in Vienna in 1861. Also, the first school of photography in Austria was established in Salzburg. In addition, in 1888 in Vienna, Josef Maria Eder founded and directed the first school for photography in Europe. Both institutions are still active.

Ennobling Processes

- gum bichromate printing
- Van Dyke (brown) printing
- Bromoil printing
- Cyanotype printing
- Photogravure
- Platinum printing
- Collotype printing

These permit the hand of the photographer to intervene in the photographic process

The Pictorialist Style

- 1) soft focus, differential focus, or even extreme diffusion.
- 2) moody atmospheric effects: haze, fog clouds.
- 3) dappled sunlight, S-curve compositions.
- 4) borrowing of academic art themes, genre scenes, influence of Tonalist landscapes.
- 5) non-silver process often used, where hand work can personalized the print.
- 6) Suggestion, symbolism, vagueness achieved.
- 7) Influence of Japanese prints bridges into modernist photo as well (flatness, shallow depth)

Robert Demachy (1859 - 1937)

Central figure in the French Pictorialist movement, founding member of the Photo-Club de Paris (1894). Master of the gum bichromate process. Hated straight photography. With Alfred Maskell, he co-authored the text *Photo Aquatint, or The Gum Bichromate Process* (London: 1897). By 1906 he was using the Bromoil Process exclusively. In 1906 he co-authored the with Constant Puyo *Art and Photographic Procedures*.

By 1914 he'd given up photo for sketching.

Robert Demachy On the Straight Print:

"A straight print may be beautiful, and it may prove superabundantly that its author is an artist; but it cannot be a work of art . . . Now, speaking of graphic methods only, what are the distinctive qualities of a work of art? A work of art must be a transcription, not a copy, of nature."

ROBERT DEMACHY

Etude de Femme, 1894



Etude, 1895



Coin de rue à Menton, 1896



ALFRED STIEGLITZ

The Cardplayers, 1894



A Rainy Day on the Boulevard, 1895



Winter, 5th Ave., 1896



F. BOISSONAS

Les Troglodytes, 1894



DRESSER

Nettoyage, 1894



E.H. de SAINT-SENOCH

Vieux Pont de Quimperle, 1895



HUGO HENNEBERG

En Esté, 1894



Novembre, 1895



Le Pont, 1896



Sur la route, 1897



HANS WATZIK

Un Tyrolien, 1894



Michel, 1895



Soir d'automne, 1896



ACHILLE DARNIS

La berge inondée, 1897



ACHILLE DARNIS

Tête d'Étude, 1895



G.J. ENGLEBERTS

Dans les Dunes de Kałczyk, 1895



E.J.C. PUYO

Sommeil, 1896



HEINRICH KÜHN

Crepuscule, 1897









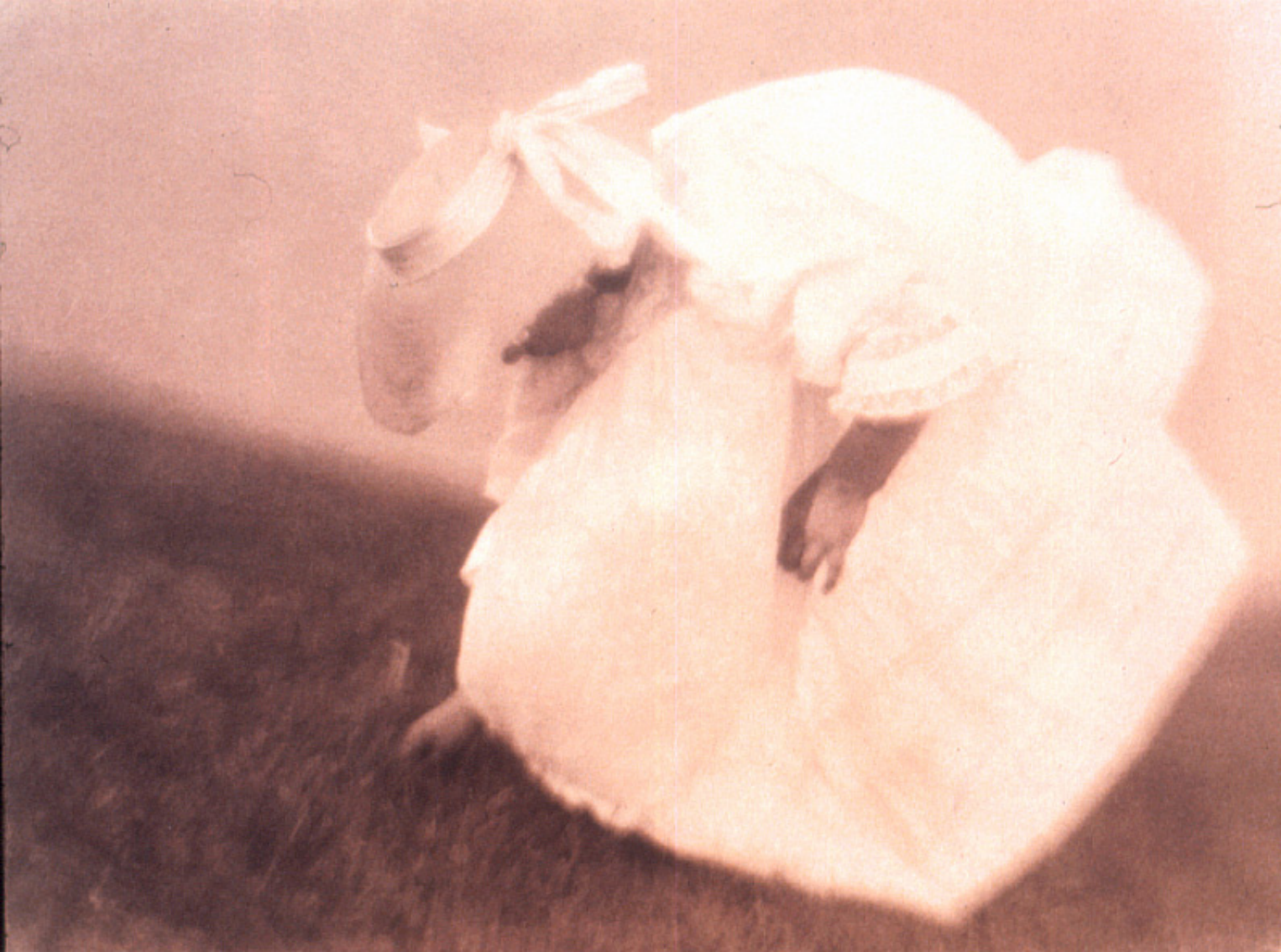




Fig. 7: Heinrich Kühn: "Edeltrude and Miss Mary in white standing against a crumbling stone wall", unsigned and not dated, about 1912, Autochrome, 24 x 18 cm

chromes basically differ from the pictorial printing techniques in the fact, that the creative process can only be controlled during the shot. It is not possible to carry out multiple exposures and corrections of tone values later on. Alfred Stieglitz, in "Camera Work" 1907, clearly explained the process of the autochrome: "The transparent support, glass, is covered with an adhesive matter which receives a coating of potato-starch grains dyed blue-violet, green, and red-orange. After isolating this with a waterproof varnish it is coated with a panchromatic collodion emulsion. The exposure is made in the usual way, but with the glass side of the plate facing the lense, so that the light passes through the coloured grains and only then reaches the emulsion. The lens is fitted with a special yellow filter made by the Lumières for the plate. The plate is developed and then, without fixing, is treated in broad daylight with an acid permanganate reducer, rinsed and redeveloped. The result is a positive print in natural colours."⁸ The developed positive plate is held against a strong light source and so the effect of additive mixture of colour becomes visible.



Heinrich Kühn: "Miss Mary in white, seen from behind, walking up a hillside", not dated and signed, from about 1908, Autochrome, 24 x 18 cm

colours. Being more a tonalist than a colourist, de Meyer composes the picture like a black-and-white photograph putting the emphasis on the difference of tone values. De Meyers detached view of the motif might have its reason in the rejection of the aesthetics of "orgies of colours", against which the critics of the autochromes warned in contemporary publications.

For Kühn, the reproduction of colour was the medium to transport the emotions and sensations of the photographer. According to him, a photograph should express "subjective truth and inner perception". Therefore, the perception and sensation of colours are important for Kühn's physiological conception of the picture.





163. HEINRICH KÜHN
Still Life, c. 1904
gum bichromate print, 26 x 38 (10 3/4 x 15)
Gilman Paper Company Collection



164. HEINRICH KÜHN
Still Life, c. 1904
bromoil transfer print, 21.1 x 29.5 (8 3/8 x 11 5/8)
Museum of Modern Art Collection



ALON

FATHER · FORGIVE · THEM · THEY · KNOW · NOT · WHAT · THEY · DO · † · TO · DAY · THOU · SHALT · BE · WITH · ME · IN · PARADISE · † · WOMAN · BEHOLD · THY · SON · † · SON · THY · MOTHER · † · MY · GOD · MY · GOD · WHY · HAST · THOU · FORSAKEN · ME · † · I · THIRST · † · INTO · THY · HANDS · I · COMMEND · MY · SPIRIT · † · IT · IS · FINISHED



