РНОТОGRAPHY 1839-1937

In 1937 Beaumont Newhall organized the first survey of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The exhibit, simply titled "Photography 1839-1937," helped to establish the photography department at MOMA, with Newhall serving as its first curator. A catalog published by MOMA on the occasion of the exhibit shared the same title.

In 2009 I made a complete copy of this catalog in photograms by placing a sheet of black & white photo paper under each page and exposing it, simultaneously making a copy of both front and back. The original catalog consists of 232 pages -- mostly text with a number of reproductions. My version, half as long, is displayed as a group of 116 photograms. The whole book can be seen at once, yet its merged text and images obscure as much as they reveal. It eclipses itself as it is rendered by the very medium of its own subject. The volume you hold in your hands serves as documentation of this photogram piece, but it also completes a circle, as it returns the catalog to book form.

The original price of the catalog was \$3.00. Adjusted for inflation, in 2010 that price would be \$45.56. Since this book is half the volume of the Newhall original, its price is \$22.78, half of the (inflated) price. Enjoy.



THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART . NEW YORK

1839 - 1937

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY BEAUMONT NEWHALL

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ruly portable camera was perfected. A small box was litted with news at one endland a track our screen fulleoffyrieng (i) and a getting inside the camera and viewing the front of the inhage from the inside.

the back of the image was observed through the screen. By deflecting the image to the top of the camera with a mirror, and shading the screen with a hood, an apparatus was made which closely resembles the modern reflex camera. The draftstran pointed the ieus at the scene which he wished to draw, placed a thin piece of paper over the ground glass and traced the outlines of the image. Cameras of this type were a regular part of artists' equipment in the eighteenth century.

Long before photography was perketted, the principle of the camera was well known, and its image had been recorded manually countless bines. Set bits on some first the set of t

Lightichanges the nature of arany chemical substances. The chlorophyll of vegetation becomes green on exposure to light; colored stuffs fade. Among the substances radically aftered by light are the sales of silver: the combining element is liberated, leaving pure metablic silver which, because unpolished, is black. The light sensitivity of these salts was first observed by Johann Heimich Schulze in his classic experiment of $p_{2,7}^{2,1}$.

Anto a glass these Schulze poured a mixture of chalk, silver and mitric acid. After thorough shaking, the silver and acid combined to form silver mitrate. When held in the similghi, the substance changed from white to deep purple, it spostne to the heat of a furnace produced to such change so Schulze deduced that the reaction must have been caused by the sun's light rather than by its heat. To prove his deduction, he pasted scencils of opaque paper on the flask. After exposure to light the stencil was removed, and the figures or writing which had been out out of the paper to form the stencil were clearly visible on the surface of the mixture within the flask, traced in the dark color of the sitter.

Thus by $i\gamma_2 \gamma$ the ability of light to darken certain materials and ats ability to form a two-dimensional image of the world of three damensions were both known. Vethot until the nineteenth century were experiments made toward the production of photographs, although a photograph is essentially the combination of these two phenomena. A piece of metal, paper, or glass, coated with a light-sensitive substance, is placed Whatever effect the announcement might have had on the public is eclipsed by the dramatic publication of diguerrectyry.

Talbot's experiments led inducedly to a great improvement in rival process. Sir John Eterschei had discovered in 1819 that silver is could be dissolved by sodrum throsulphate (them impropedy consodrum hyposulphite, a name which has persisted in the short neglits "inypo"). He published this discovery and suggested its use to fathous a means of dissolving the unaltered silver saits from the photograph thus rendering it purmanent. Daguerre immediately adopt a it. Talbwas rejuctant, which was unfortunate, for not until he used it was photographs permanent.

After the publication of daguerreotypy, Talbot improved his are, by borrowing the principle of development. In this terms cut down the exposure time to rivill the improved daguers or the patented his new process as calelypy in 1845, from that date it becares assignificant technique. Its great advantage was that an indefinit conber of copies could be made from one mester negative. Jailot pubsalbum of actual primits, encluded *The Penall of Manael* in 1646 the first publication disstrated with actual photographs. Write ees me stallment a slip was inserted, reading "The plates of the me cutors from the artist spencif."

Unlike Dagnerre, Jalbot continued his researches and practice annois graphy himself, the Royal Photographic Society possesses an advance eighty two prints, a manuscript note at the head of the table of contern dates them as 1843. Original duplicates of some of the polarity of remarkably fine state of preservation, have been lent to polarity by Jalbot's granddaughter (Plates 13-15). Calbot uncost contern mented, in 1852 he patented a most important method of molography on steel. His calotypy was most highly developed by later workers.

SPREAD OF CALOTYPY

Unlike Daguerre, Talbot attempted to control personally the 13th rights to his process. This was, of course, impossible; anyone with the requisite skill could duplicate the experiments published by the 2014. Tabot, op. ett. posited. One would expect that this relationship would be iniform; that an equal increase of exposure would create an equal increase in the silver deposit. They found, however, that this was not the case. At first the blackening is much less; soon equality is reached; then the blackening becomes greater. Underexposed negatives show no details in the sha lows. Not enough light has been admitted to affect the salts equally. In order for a negative to represent the tones of nature in exactly that preparion in which they appear to the eye it must be given an exposure which lies in the middle section of the curve, where the increase is regular. This curve, which is called the "characteristic curve" or the "H and D, curve varies with different types of plates.

Although this discovery may seem of purely theoretical interests of immediate practical value. Further experiments showed that do not ment played no part in the true rendition of tone values, and the was an optimum development time, depending on the subject and plate which would produce the best results no matter what the exposure 1 hus it was found possible to develop entirely by calculation; the plate or film could be enclosed in a light-tight tank and the developer porced in through a light trap. After a certain number of minutes, which depended on the temperature of the developing bath, the solution was porced of him could be developed with great ease by this method as well as films which were sensitive to all colors, for there was no need to examine them of using development with a colored light. Today, practically all, orkens

"THE DEATH OF NATURALISTIC PHOTOGRAPHY

Atter learning of the Hurter and Driffield experiments. P. P. Emerson studied them carefully. As a result, he became convinced that photography could never be an art. This conclusion, perhaps the earliest admission by a photographer that photography was not an art (that is, not a medium capable of results comparable to painting or drawings, he published in a fittle pamphilet whose title, *The Death of Naturansis Photog*raphy, was surrounded by a heavy black border.

"The limitations of photography are so great that, though the results may and sometimes do give a certain aesthetic pleasure, the medium must 62

sga Portrait. Lent by the Julien Levy Gal iery, New York

SELLIER, Parts

233 Self Portrait (?), c. 1865. Lent by Victor Barthélemy, Paris

SOULIER, Charles. Paris

234 Panorama of Paris from the Lunerres c. 1860. Lent by Victor Barthélemy Paris

TOURLAQUE & CALOIR. Paris (?)

- 355 oupper of the National Guard of Monmartre, c. 1860. Lent by Victor Barthele my, Paris
- WOOD & GIBSON, American, Prolably worked for Matthew Brady.
- 280 Inspection of Troops at Cumberlanding, Pamunkey, Virguna, 1862. Print by Alexander Gardner, From Garanes Photographic Shetch Book of the War.

Washington, Plulip & Solomon, n. d., pl 16. Lent anonymously

UNKNOWN PHOTOCRAPHER

7 Russian Battery at Malakoli, Gruneau War, 1853-1856, Lent by Victor Bathélemy, Paris

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- 240 Pounais of Charles Negre, c. 1860
- spists Water Wagons, Paris, c. 186.
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- 244 Filling the Water Wagon, c. 1870
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- 249 Fanorana ol Faris, r. 1875, Lent e. A. Gilles, Paris

MODIFICATIONS OF THE COLLODION PROCESS Positives on cloth

BUDOR. Paris

247 Portrait, c. 1852. Lent by Victor Bar thélemy, Paris

(3) Control of a Manuel 1852. Erench. London A. Gilles, Paris.

19 Wheelwright c 1855, French Len by Victor Bartheleny, Paris

MODIFICATIONS OF THE COLLODION PROCESS. Ambrotypes (positives on glass)

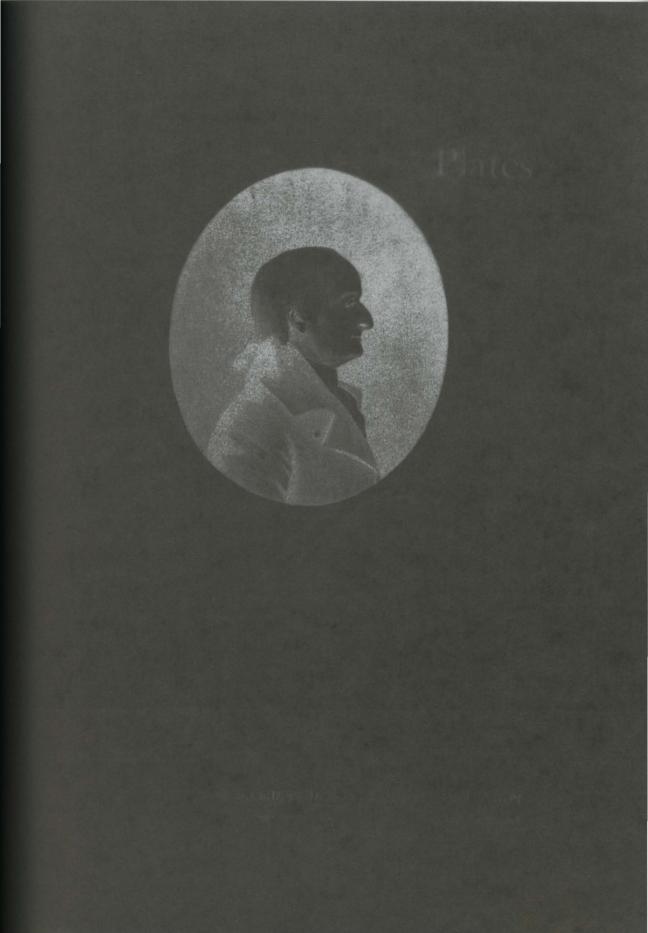
BRADY, Matthew B. See nos. 149-169 250 Portrait, c. 1855. Lent by Frederick 1

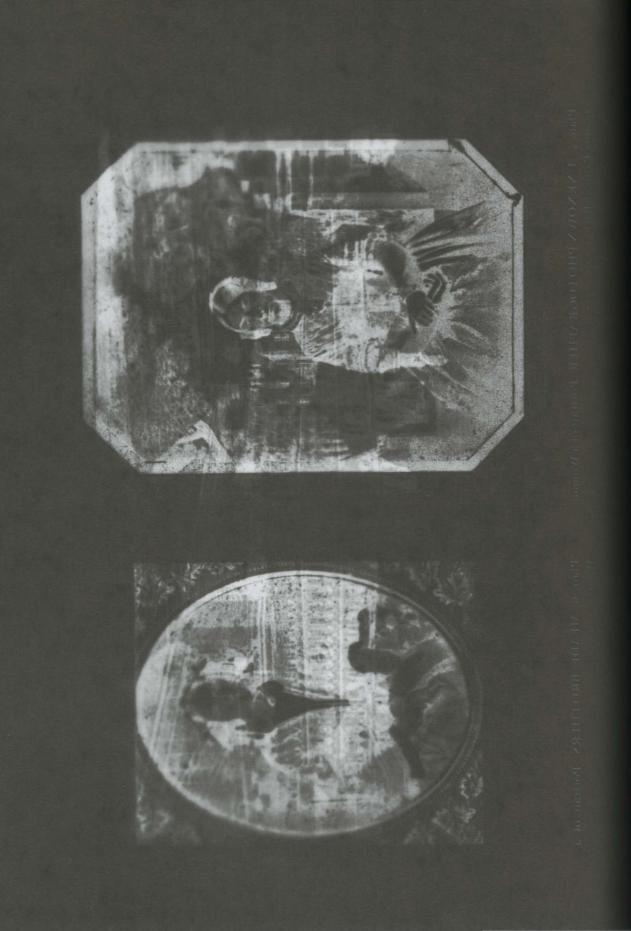
- UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHERS 251 Abraham Lincolu e. 1869. America
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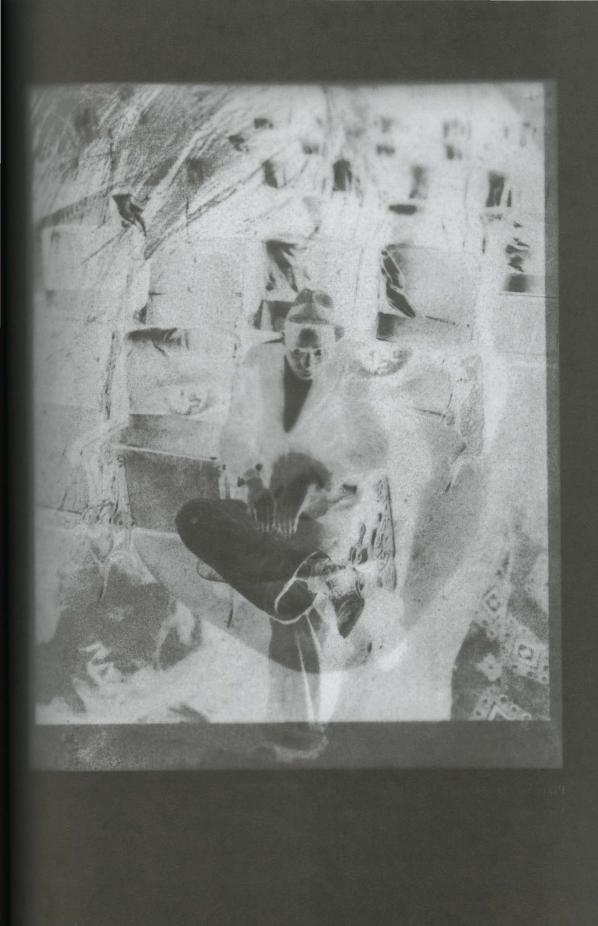
Nos. 252-253 lent by A. Gilles, Paris

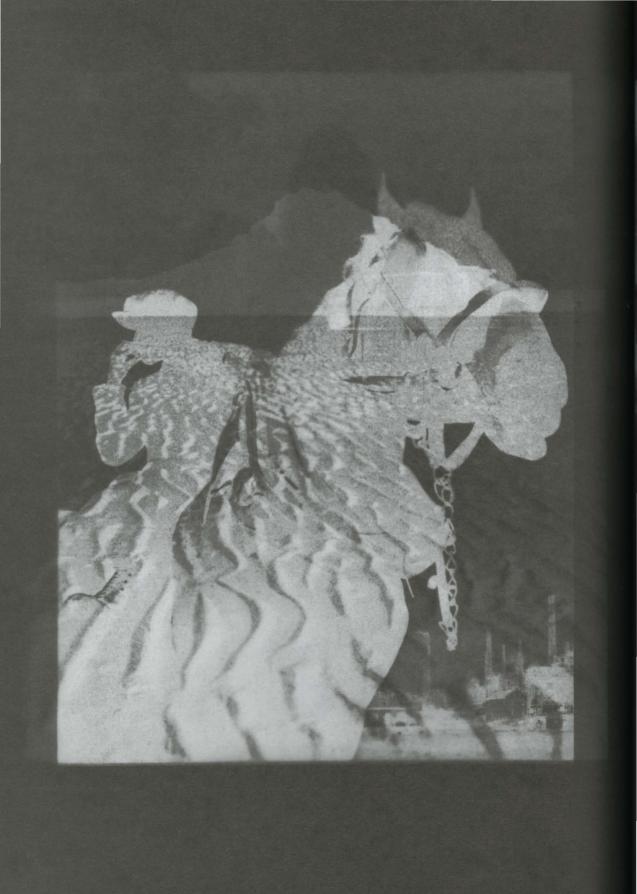
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