A CENTENNIAL ALBUM
Drawings, Prints, and Photographs

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with Stephen C. Pinson

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
This Bulletin marks the centennial of the founding of The Met’s Department of Prints and, by extension, reflects on a century of collecting works on paper at The Met. At various times in the Museum’s history, works on paper—prints, drawings, and photographs—have all come under the auspices of the same department. This intertwined story speaks to the close relationship among these works, which often overlap in terms of artist, subject, and purpose. As the authors discuss in their introduction, these diverse collections comprise many singular masterpieces, but also a variety of other materials that were preparatory or documentary in nature or designed to be reproduced and disseminated to a wide audience.

William M. Ivins, the visionary founding curator of the Department of Prints, addressed this essential characteristic of works on paper when he remarked that a print collection “cannot be formed solely upon Yes or No answers to the question: Is it a work of art?” More than a trove of masterpieces, Ivins argued, the collection must be like a library, filled with great works but also enriched by a variety of other items whose chief significance may be a startling technical innovation or, perhaps, a reflection of the turbulent times in which it was made. Fortuitously, Ivins’s notion of a comprehensive repository also included photographs—a concept not necessarily shared by other print curators at the time—and it was under his tenure that some of The Met’s best-known photographs entered the collection. That inclusive philosophy informed much of The Met’s collecting of works on paper for the next one hundred years, resulting in an astonishing diversity of artists, genres, and media, from sketches and cartoons for paintings to theater sets and illustrated maps.

Arranged as a provocative series of pairings—one drawing or print with one photograph—this Bulletin invites the reader to find connections and divergences between works of art that are seldom seen together. Ranging in date from the fifteenth century to the present day, they are by turns famous and obscure, poignant and humorous, scientific and literary, realistic and imaginary. Some reveal clues to how an artist might have composed another work of art; others provide glimpses of a lost masterpiece or a vanished way of life.

The pairings were selected by Nadine M. Orenstein, Drue Heinz Curator in Charge, Department of Drawings and Prints, and Jeff L. Rosenheim, Joyce Menschel Curator in Charge, Department of Photographs, along with Stephen C. Pinson, Curator, Department of Photographs, based on suggestions from members of their respective staffs, who also researched or wrote many of the entries: Stijn Alsteens, Carmen Bambach, Malcolm Daniel, Douglas S. Eklund, Mia Fineman, Russell Lord, Mark McDonald, Constance McPhee, Laura Muir, Meredith Reiss, Allison Rudnick, Beth Saunders, Femke Speelberg, and Perrin Stein. Their insights build on the commitment and knowledge of a century’s worth of discerning curators: in addition to Ivins, these include Jacob Bean, who founded the Drawings Department in 1960, and Maria Morris Hambourg, who founded the Department of Photographs in 1992. Mention should also be made of Chairman Emeritus George R. Goldner, who over twenty-one years helped build the collection with great energy and connoisseurship and initiated the immense task of making it available online. We are equally grateful to the many collectors and donors whose contributions helped make The Met one of the world’s leading centers for the study, exhibition, and conservation of works on paper.

Thomas P. Campbell
Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
This Bulletin celebrates the splendid variety of works on paper in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The occasion is the centennial of the founding of the original Department of Prints, in 1916, from which the two distinct departments we have today—Drawings and Prints, and Photographs—eventually emerged. With remarkable foresight, the Museum’s founding curator of prints, William M. Ivins, collected masterpieces by such artists as Albrecht Dürer, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Francisco de Goya alongside equally important photographs by William Henry Fox Talbot and Thomas Eakins. He was also the first curator at The Met to collect contemporary art, including significant works by Edward Hopper (fig. 1), Alfred Stieglitz, and Martin Lewis. To mark the anniversary of these collections, we have prepared a selection of works from both departments that speak to each other either visually—through their form, function, and technical finesse—or by virtue of their complementary subject matter. This romp through our vast holdings thus offers not a traditional selection of highlights but instead an unexpected and rarely seen cross section of works on paper ranging from the sublime to the quirky: from Correggio, Edgar Degas, and Julia Margaret Cameron to furniture pattern books and baseball cards.

Works of art on paper can be rare masterworks of art history—original and experimental—but also referential and, essentially, reproductive. In that regard, drawings, prints, and photographs have long been able to encapsulate the wider world and bring it closer to home. People have prayed to them, traded them, drawn on them, mailed them, read them, learned from them, and even eaten them. As Ivins remarked in a 1917 address to the Museum’s Trustees, prints “touch life intimately at so many points and in so many ways that


often it is difficult to say that a print which should have an undoubted and honorable position in any well-rounded collection has a distinct artistic value. Many times technical innovations of the most startling and important kind are first found in original prints of little or no artistic value.”

Since works on paper are often inexpensive to produce and collect and, because of their generally modest size, easy to circulate and store, they are truly cross-cultural objects. Sixteenth-century Netherlandish prints have been found pasted into manuscripts produced in Turkey just decades later. British photograms of botanical specimens were folded and mailed to Italy just weeks after the birth of photography was announced to the public, in early 1839 (fig. 2). Curators of works on paper have thus traditionally acquired for their collections examples of high as well as “low” art, from drawings and prints by the old masters to book advertisements (fig. 3) to Kodak Brownie snapshots.

This predilection (or responsibility) is reflected in Ivins’s statement to the Trustees, when he laid out a vision for the newly formed department that is still reflected in The Met’s collections today: “The print collection . . . cannot be formed solely upon Yes or No answers to the question: Is it a work of art? Rather it must be, like the library of a professor of literature, composed of a corpus of prints in themselves distinctly works of art, filled out and illustrated by many prints which have only a technical historical importance.” Nonetheless, the Museum’s holdings have been enriched by the results of centuries of artistic experimentation and achievement. Hercules Segers’s Plateau in Rocky Mountains (page 39) confirms the seventeenth-century artist’s mastery of classic methods of printmaking as well as his unbridled innovation; so, too, does Louis Ducos Du Hauron’s Fox, from about 1870 (page 39), one of the earliest examples of color photography. Remarkably, both techniques remain puzzling to scholars.


Everything recorded on paper in the ever-distant past and ever-present future is an integral component of the wonderful history of drawing, printmaking, and photography. Works on paper have recorded humanity’s creativity and depicted virtually every aspect of the known and imagined world: plants and animals, cities, anatomy, sex, art, cooking, celebrations, and war, small tradespeople and celebrities, science, medicine (fig. 4), and religion. Drawings, prints, and photographs show us how things were made and how they function; they document our worldly pleasures and our existential terrors; and they honor cultural change through the simple description of quotidian human existence in all its manifestations, from youth to old age (figs. 5, 6).

The collections of works on paper at The Met are also representative of the rest of the Museum’s diverse holdings and serve to expand our understanding of the other arts. They often help confirm, question, or deny the originality, date, and authorship of a work of art. Perhaps more important, the Metropolitan’s collections of works on paper include materials that other curatorial departments would rarely, if ever, collect and accession, including illustrated letters, cartoons and sketches for paintings and frescoes, maquettes for printed books, mug shots, visual diaries, illustrated maps, theatrical dioramas (fig. 7), patent drawings, valentines, postmortem portraits, playing cards, and even wallpaper.

Many of the works on paper in The Met’s collection record significant moments in world history, and the techniques with which they were made allowed for their almost immediate creation and dissemination. A photograph by Dorothea Lange, for example, turned an image of a worker’s strike in San Francisco into an emblem of the labor movement of the 1930s (page 23). Works of paper can thus capture time—such as a letter by Édouard Manet on which he drew two plums from his garden at Bellevue and then records his concerns about selling his painting at an exhibition in Ghent (page 35)—but by the same token they can impose a kind of timelessness on things that will inevitably change. Karl Blossfeldt, for instance, gave permanent solidity to fruit that will unavoidably rot (page 38), while Hans Hoffmann depicted a prickly hedgehog in a moment of stillness (page 38).
Over the years Met curators have often acquired multiple examples of the same prints and photographs, knowing that, despite the possibility of exact duplication provided by these media, in many cases there is a notable range of quality and effect from one print or photograph to another. As a printing plate is used, the plate surface wears down and the quality of the resulting impressions diminishes; the plate can then be radically reworked. Likewise, a photographic negative or transparency can be interpreted and printed in endless ways and then cropped afterward to dramatically change the shape and effect of the picture, and thus its meaning. Yet it is the range of these multiple impressions—as with Edward Steichen’s three versions of The Flatiron (fig. 8)—that characterizes the world’s greatest public collections of works on paper, because it is from these variations that scholars and the general public can learn about artistic process and intention. Similarly, an important collection of drawings is composed not just of highly finished sheets but also those small sketches, _primi pensieri_ (first thoughts), and cartoons that document an artist’s method, training, and development of other works. Correggio’s _Annunciation_ (pages 4, 16), for example, is a preliminary study for a fresco in a church in Parma, now severely damaged. The Met’s drawing not only preserves our knowledge of how Correggio prepared the fresco, it also helps us to visualize and interpret the final work.

The Metropolitan Museum’s collection of drawings, prints, and photographs is an expansive work in progress. Just one hundred years old, it has slowly become one of the nation’s greatest repositories of humanity’s creativity, revealing in its depth and breadth not only the endless desire to record things as they are but, perhaps more important, how they might be. As we embark on a new century of collecting, it is an honor and great pleasure to consider what The Met has achieved to date.

Note

Saint Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate), was traditionally seen as an exemplar of the Christian scholar. He is seated here in a study typical of Dürer’s day. He works peacefully at a tilted writing table, while a lion (from whose paw, according to popular legend, Jerome removed a thorn) and dog slumber in the foreground. The light of the saint’s halo and the sunlight pouring in through the windows are in perfect equilibrium, while recurrent horizontals in the composition add to the pervasive sense of repose and harmony. The print is one of Dürer’s three technically brilliant master engravings known as the Meisterstiche.

This exquisitely made interior scene, redolent of the luxuriant aesthetics of mid-nineteenth-century aristocratic taste, was probably made in the salon of Gros’s Paris home in the first half of the 1850s. It is a fascinating glimpse of the way daguerreotype plates were presented at the time. Unlike American daguerreotypes, which were commonly enclosed in folding leather or thermoplastic cases, French daguerreotypes were most often framed and put on the wall. None of the daguerreotypes displayed in Gros’s salon are known today.

Like her subjects, Goldin operates in the gap between art and life that is the special province of the bohemian, where one’s attitude, attire, relationships, and lifestyle are as carefully constructed and dramatically expressed as in any work of art. From the mid-1970s to the 1980s, Goldin produced more than eight hundred images that she originally presented as a slide show with music entitled “The Ballad of Sexual Dependency.” *Nan and Brian in Bed, NYC* is the artist’s signature piece from this period: a contemporary vision of alienation and romantic discord set in the photogenic squalor of New York’s Lower East Side.


Sargent developed this moody image of a young male model swathed in a blanket from a transfer lithograph he exhibited in Paris and London in 1895. In this later state, he transformed the image by applying tusche (a special oily ink or crayon) directly to the stone to enrich the darks and then by scratching expressive abstracted patterns into the shadows.
Odilon Redon (French, 1840–1916). Armor, 1891. Charcoal and Conté crayon, 20 × 14½ in. (50.7 × 36.8 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1948 (48.10.1)

In this fantastical drawing of a helmeted woman in profile, the sitter is rendered strangely mute by her armorlike covering, made untouchable by its thorny needles. The exact meaning of Redon’s image is unclear, but it has been thought that the bizarre bondage expresses a subconscious fear of female sexuality or, conversely, serves as a symbol of female fecundity. Equally important is Redon’s virtuoso handling of charcoal, which captures the dark velvet quality of the helmet and the pallor of the woman’s skin.


Best known for The Brown Sisters, a series of photographs of his wife and her sisters made each year since 1975, Nixon has long been interested in documenting the physical manifestations of mortality. During the early 1980s he made a number of portraits in a nursing home in Boston, including this powerful image of “C.C.” A veritable relic, she is as resolute as the time that has ravaged her.

Gobert, who was head of the enameling workshop at Sèvres, is shown here with his head slightly bowed and his eyes half-closed—in part to help maintain his pose during a long exposure in bright sunlight—as if lost in thought. The sharp focus on Gobert’s face and the flecks of light and soft massing of shadows, characteristic of prints from paper negatives, heighten the sense that this portrait is a privileged meditation by Robert on the interior world of his friend and colleague.
Honoré Daumier (French, 1808–1879). Man Reading in a Garden, 1825–79. Watercolor over black chalk, with pen and ink, brush and wash, and lithographic crayon, 13¾ × 10¾ in. (33.8 × 27 cm). H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.199)

Daumier, an artist better known for his printed caricatures, evoked in this watercolor both summer heat and cool shade. Amid the dappled light, which filters through the trees to engulf the man’s hands and feet, there is a sense of utter relaxation but also intense concentration.
Correggio (Antonio Allegri) (Italian, active by 1514–1534). *The Annunciation*, ca. 1522–25. Pen and brown ink, brush and gray-brown wash, highlighted with white gouache, squared in red chalk, on paper tinted with reddish wash, 3¾ × 6⅞ in. (9.5 × 17.2 cm). Frederick C. Hewitt Fund, 1917 (19.76.9)

This exquisite small sheet is a preparatory study for the badly damaged fresco originally painted for the Church of San Francesco, Parma (now in the Galleria Nazionale, Parma). The drawing is highly worked in a rich mixture of media, with the topmost layer in thick white gouache, anticipating the brilliant lighting and color of the fresco. The sheet is squared and, although small, may have been the final design, in which the painter (and perhaps his patrons) would have been able to visualize much of the final result on the wall.

Léon Gérard (French, active 1857–61). *Leonardo da Vinci, Drawing for Christ in “The Last Supper,”* 1857–61. Albumen silver print from paper negative; image 14⅝ × 10½ in. (36.3 × 26.6 cm), mount 23¼ × 16¾ in. (59.2 × 42.6 cm). Gilman Collection, Purchase, Denise and Andrew Saul Gift, 2005 (2005.100.51)

The drawing in this photograph is related to the famous figure of Christ seated at the center of the table in the fresco Leonardo painted of the Last Supper in the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, from 1495 to 1498. Although the way the image loses itself in the roughly textured surface suggests that it is the sinopia, or sketch, that underlies the fresco, it is in fact a preliminary drawing on paper, which was later abraded and restored. The face is so well known that Gérard’s photograph of this distant version of it works like a memory; insubstantial as smoke, yet distinct, the portrait hovers like the face of Christ on Veronica’s veil.

In this eccentric self-portrait of the artist as a young dandy, Steichen seems poised at a threshold, hovering half in and half out of the frame. Made in Milwaukee before Steichen headed to Paris in 1900, this photograph was one of three that Stieglitz bought for five dollars each at their first meeting, saying: “And I am robbing you at that.” Steichen, nonetheless elated, confessed to never before having sold a picture for more than fifty cents. In 1933 the portrait was the first photograph that The Met accessioned from Stieglitz’s foundational gift of 419 prints from his personal collection.


Throughout her career as a draftsperson and printmaker Kollwitz depicted herself in bold, honest self-portraits. In this early sheet, she rendered her starkly lit head with deliberate parallel strokes, indicating areas of shadow and light by loading her pen with darker and lighter solutions of black ink.

This dramatic interior offers a glimpse of one of the holding tanks in the hull of the S.S. *Great Eastern*, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. The world’s largest ship at the time of its launch, in 1858, the *Great Eastern* was later used to lay the first transatlantic telegraph cable; here workers control the outfeed of cable destined for the ocean floor. Establishing a transatlantic telegraph required repeated attempts over eight years as well as the support of dedicated financial backers, skilled engineers, and both the British and United States navies. When achieved in 1866, the communication link was hailed as one of the century’s great technological achievements.


More than anyone else of his generation, Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806–1859) was the personification of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Brunel was a builder of railways, terminals, tunnels, dry docks, piers, and bridges, but his crowning achievement was the *Great Eastern*; measuring 692 feet in length and weighing 22,500 tons, it was six times the tonnage of any ship yet built and was propelled by all the technology then available: screw, paddle, and sail. In Howlett’s photograph Brunel stands before the giant chains that were wound around huge checking drums to serve as restraints during the launching.

Following the stock market crash of 1929, Lange increasingly left her studio to photograph a rapidly growing homeless population, mostly migrant workers crowding the streets of San Francisco. This photograph was most likely made on May Day, observed by many around the world as a celebration of the international labor movement. A man looks away from the camera, his back to a banner that identifies his cause. The low viewpoint creates a sense of monumentality, thrusting the worker against the sky and boldly silhouetting his head. The exclamation point painted on the banner strikes the same chord as the daggerlike shadow that cuts across it, spearheading the emphatic and desperate imperative: FEED US!


Emiliano Zapata was one the leaders of the Mexican Revolution, a long-running conflict that began in 1910. Celebrating Zapata’s legacy as an advocate of agrarian reform, Rivera’s print was made more than a decade after Zapata’s death, in 1919, and is based on a detail of the artist’s murals at the Palace of Cortés in Cuernavaca, a colonial town south of Mexico City. Rivera himself was deeply involved in Mexican politics. He participated in the founding of the Union of Technical Workers, Painters, and Sculptors in 1922 and later that year joined the Mexican Communist Party.
Jusepe de Ribera (called Lo Spagnoletto) (Spanish, 1591–1652). Drunken Silenus, 1628. Etching with drypoint, engraving, and burnishing; first state of three, 10⅓ × 14 in. (27.2 × 35.5 cm). Rogers Fund, 1922 (22.67.14)

Regarded as Ribera’s most remarkable etching, this image of Silenus, companion to the wine god Dionysos, helped the artist establish his reputation far beyond Naples, where he had worked for most of his life. While being crowned by Pan, Silenus raises his cup to accept another drink of wine. His action is humorously echoed by the two infants at right engaged in similar activities, one of whom has passed out.

Model captured this camera-loving bather (among her most iconic subjects) on her first assignment for Harper’s Bazaar, which in 1941 published an alternate image of the same woman in a standing pose. Model’s photograph served as the somewhat ironic illustration for a story about Coney Island as a popular bathing spot “where fun is still on a gigantic scale.” The reclining version, with its “cheesecake” pose, was perhaps too outrageous for the women’s fashion magazine.
Thomas Eakins (American, 1844–1916). *Bill Duckett Nude, at the Art Students’ League of Philadelphia*, ca. 1889. Platinum print, 9¼ × 8¾ in. (23.3 × 22 cm). David Hunter McAlpin Fund, 1943 (43.87.20)

In the 1880s and 1890s Eakins explored various artistic and educational applications of photography, from motion studies jointly produced with the pioneering Eadweard Muybridge to an inventory of naturalistic poses referred to as the “naked series.” In 1886 he was forced to resign as director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts after outcries arose against his use of nude male models in women’s classes. A group of loyal students rallied to his defense, however, and formed the Art Students’ League of Philadelphia, where Eakins made several photographic studies of Bill Duckett, the young companion of Walt Whitman. This enlarged platinum print displays his masterful fusion of photographic naturalism with a decidedly romantic sensibility.

Rembrandt (Rembrandt van Rijn) (Dutch, 1606–1669). *Reclining Female Nude*, 1658. Etching, drypoint, and engraving on Japan paper; sheet 3¼ × 6¼ in. (9.5 × 17.1 cm). H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.107.28)

Throughout his career, Rembrandt was fascinated by the challenge of how to render a dimly lit figure within an almost entirely dark image. In this beautiful and understated work, the artist engulfed the model in rich tones, achieving painterly effects never before seen in printmaking. To do so, he relied on an ensemble of inventive techniques and materials, including combinations of velvety drypoint and dense etched lines, films of ink left on the printing plate, and golden-toned Japan paper, which lends an underlying warmth to the dark image.
Julia Margaret Cameron (British, born India, 1815–1879). The Mountain Nymph Sweet Liberty, 1866. Albumen silver print from glass negative, 14¼ × 11¼ in. (36.1 × 28.6 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941 (41.21.15)

Of the arresting model, Miss Keene, who is the subject of Cameron’s Mountain Nymph, Sweet Liberty, we know nothing but her last name. She stares directly at the camera (and, by extension, the viewer), her hair loose and her eyes open wide. Filling the frame, she seems to step out of the picture with a startling sense of presence to connect psychologically with the viewer. The photograph takes its title from John Milton’s poem “L’Allegro,” a celebration of life’s pleasures: “Come, and trip it as you go / On the light fantastic toe; / And in thy right hand lead with thee / The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty.”

Fernand Khnopff (Belgian, 1858–1921). The Offering, 1891. Pastel, graphite, and chalk, 13¾ × 29½ in. (34.9 × 74.9 cm). Bequest of William S. Lieberman, 2005 (2007.49.651)

A nude woman makes an offering to a portrait bust on an altar. She looks out at us, as though our appearance has interrupted her ritual. Khnopff’s brand of Symbolism mixed an admiration of medieval and Renaissance imagery with a fascination for the occult, ritual, and the dream world. The altar here resembles one in his home, created to revere Hypnos, the Greek god of sleep; his sister Marguerite was the model for the figure. The blue cartouche at center is inscribed with a partially effaced “NEVERMORE”: a quotation from Edgar Allan Poe’s poem “The Raven.”

Schadow worked primarily as a Neoclassical sculptor; among his many works is the ornamentation on the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. He was also an early practitioner of lithography, although for him printmaking was more of a hobby. Schadow created several lithographic portraits of children, including this one depicting the two sons of architect Martin Friedrich Rabe. The bright lighting and Schadow’s parallel hatchings, which follow the forms, create a rendering of the boys that evokes sculpture.
Albert Sands Southworth (American, 1811–1894) for Southworth and Hawes (American, active 1843–63). Students from the Emerson School for Girls, ca. 1850. Daguerreotype, $6 \frac{1}{2} \times 8 \frac{1}{2}$ in. (16.5 × 21.6 cm). Gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes, Edward S. Hawes, Alice Mary Hawes, and Marion Augusta Hawes, 1937 (37.14.8)

The Boston partnership of Southworth and Hawes produced the finest portrait daguerreotypes in America for a clientele that included leading political, intellectual, and artistic figures. This full-plate daguerreotype shows the students of the most prominent school for young women in Boston, established in 1823 by George Barrell Emerson, second cousin of the poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. Although there are more than thirty figures in the portrait, subtle variations in posture, gesture, and facial expression, especially among the students seated at center, convey the presence of vivid and distinct individuals within the group.

With Jazz, Matisse employed an unorthodox and distinct visual vocabulary to radically rethink what an illustrated book could be. The Knife Thrower is one of twenty plates he made, many illustrating his memories of the circus, using the stencil technique of pochoir. The irregularly shaped image and bold colors reflect what Matisse termed “drawing with scissors,” that is, his process of cutting directly into sheets of colored paper to create various shapes and outlines that he then arranged in compositions or recycled in future works. These paper cutouts were then made into stencil prints.


Trained as a painter and printmaker, DeCarava took up photography in the late 1940s while working as an illustrator at an advertising agency. He displayed a clear affinity for the medium and won a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in 1952. As he set out that year to photograph the people of Harlem, he found the perfect subject in jazz singer Billie Holiday. Although already plagued by the drug and alcohol problems that would lead to her death seven years later, she appears here as hopeful, soulful, and full of life.

*Spiraea aruncus (Tyrol)* is a superb example of Atkins’s cameraless photograms of algae and plant specimens, which the artist either gathered herself or received from other amateur scientists. A continuation of the long-standing tradition of botanical illustration in all media, Atkins’s early efforts resulted in the first photographically printed and illustrated book, *Photographs of British Algae* (1843). To make her prints, Atkins placed plant samples directly on light-sensitized paper. The resulting cyanotypes, or blueprints, appear as negative images against a sea of Prussian blue.
Attributed to Mary Delany (British, 1700–1788). *Botanical Study*, ca. 1772–82. Paper collage; sheet (irregular), 10 ⅞ × 9 ⅜ in. (25.5 × 23.2 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925 (25.19.45)

Delany mastered the art of “paper mosaick” at age seventy-two, when fading eyesight hindered her embroidery. She nonetheless became one of the most accomplished practitioners of this unusual genre. Working to scale directly from plant specimens, Delany cut and assembled dozens of minute pieces of colored tissue to create precise botanical images, such as this exquisite study, likely made for Lord and Lady Bute during a visit Delany made to their estate at Luton Hoo.

At age seventy-five, when he was no longer making new photographs, Stieglitz made a Christmas card with this contact print of an image from the early days of his life with Georgia O’Keeffe. The folded mount is inscribed *For Georgia. Alfred. Xmas 1939.* A sweet reminder of a passionate past.
Édouard Manet (French, 1832–1883). A Letter to Eugène Maus, Decorated with Two Plums, August 2, 1880. Watercolor and pen and ink, 8 × 9 ¾ in. (20.1 × 24.8 cm). Purchase, Guy Wildenstein Gift, 2003 (2003.1)

The letters Manet embellished with watercolors of fruit from his garden at Bellevue and sent to his friends are enchantingly informal. This letter to fellow painter Eugène Maus is fresh in color and features one of his favorite subjects, the yellow-green plums called mirabelles. In the letter, Manet shares his concern about his submission to the 1880 Salon in Ghent.

Before her photographs first appeared in *Esquire* magazine, in 1960, Arbus photographed a wide variety of subjects in and around New York, often in the hope of finding editorial work. Whether she had a specific story or assignment in mind when she took photographs of the monkeys in the Central Park Zoo is unknown, but this particular image is entirely consistent with her more famous work made during the same period. Indeed, the baby monkey, behind bars and staring directly at the camera, is a poignant counterpart to the pictures *Esquire* published in 1960: photographs of guileless denizens in locales both “posh and sordid” captured on a nighttime journey through the city.

In this study for his famous painting *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* (1886, Art Institute of Chicago), Seurat imparted a timeless, idealized appearance to a monkey by showing the animal in strict profile, with minimal detail and only a vague hint of a setting. He defined the essential aspects of the monkey through broad strokes of Conté crayon while reserving the paper support to suggest light emanating from behind.
Hans Hoffmann (German, ca. 1545/50–1591/92). A Hedgehog (Erinaceus roumanicus), before 1584. Watercolor and gouache on vellum, 8¼ × 12⅞ in. (20.7 × 30.7 cm). Purchase, Annette de la Renta Gift, 2005 (2005.347)

This breathtakingly lifelike depiction of a hedgehog must have been based on sketches made from life. Although Hoffmann was a painter and a draftsman of portraits and religious subjects, he is remembered mainly for his studies of plants and animals. His initial inspiration was not nature itself, however, but the highly detailed studies of it made by his famous predecessor Albrecht Dürer, whose works were still admired and highly coveted some forty years after his death. While Dürer tended to stress the objectivity of his observations, Hoffmann animated his depictions of animals, suggesting a touching alertness absent from the greater artist’s nature studies.


Blossfeldt began his exploration of forms in nature in 1890, but his images were little known before their publication in Urformen der Kunst (Art Forms in Nature) in 1928, a book that secured Blossfeldt’s international fame. The renegade Surrealist writer Georges Bataille, fascinated by the hallucinatory clarity and sinister sexuality of Blossfeldt’s plant forms, chose several of the photographs to illustrate his essay on the enigmatic “language of flowers” in the first issue of his review Documents in June 1929.
Hercules Segers (Dutch, ca. 1590–ca. 1638). *Plateau in Rocky Mountains*, ca. 1625–30. Etching, drypoint, and metal punch printed in blue-green on paper with a yellow-green ground, colored with brush; second state of two, 4 1⁄8 × 5 1⁄2 in. (10.5 × 13.8 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1923 (23.57.3)

The most idiosyncratic and experimental printmaker of the seventeenth century, Segers pushed traditional techniques to their most expressive ends in his otherworldly landscapes. By etching in colored inks on paper that was already colored and then painting the printed impression by hand, he created a unique work of art using a medium more typically employed to create multiples of the same image.

Louis Ducos du Hauron (French, 1837–1920). *Fox*, ca. 1870

Three-color assembly print, 9 5⁄8 × 8 7⁄8 in. (24.4 × 22.4 cm). Gilman Collection, Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005 (2005.100.214)

Ducos du Hauron, an amateur physicist and artist, began experimenting with color photography in the early 1860s. By 1868 he had patented a three-color process that he improved upon and published the following year in the treatise *Les Couleurs en photographie: solution du problème*. His method involved exposing negatives through green, orange-red, and blue-violet filters and then making positives of them on three sheets of gelatin incorporating carbon pigments of primary colors. When superimposed, the three layers made a single color photograph: a technique that is essentially the basis of modern color processes.

Commissioned to decorate the walls of a hospital in Winterthur, Switzerland, Struth photographed the surrounding rural landscape and flowers in the hospital’s lush gardens. In each of the patients’ rooms he placed a small flower study and a large landscape at the head and foot of each bed, respectively. Through conceiving and creating photographs specifically for a site of recovery and rehabilitation, Struth made explicit the conceptual framework underlying all his work: the therapeutic belief that images can facilitate the viewer’s active reconfiguration of the relationship between one’s own irreducible being and the givens of circumstance.
Joseph Mallord William Turner (British, 1775–1851). *The Lake of Zug*, 1843. Watercolor over graphite, $11\frac{3}{4} \times 18\frac{3}{8}$ in. (29.8 × 46.6 cm). Marquand Fund, 1959 (59.120)

In one of his masterful late watercolors, Turner manipulated an evocative range of blues, yellows, and pinks to depict a summer dawn in the German-speaking region of Switzerland. As the sun rises between distant mountains over the town of Arth, its rays illumine high clouds and rising mist, with reflections forming a path across the Lake of Zug. On the near shore, villagers gather at the water’s edge and nymphlike figures bathe and play.

In 1978 Sugimoto began a series of photographs called Motion Pictures, in which he recorded the empty interiors of a number of Depression-era movie palaces. The elaborate decor of each theater—mostly fantasy interpretations of Italian villas, Spanish courts, or Persian gardens—frames a blank but mysteriously glowing movie screen. This hallucinatory radiance derives from the cumulative projection of an entire feature film compressed, through long exposure, into Sugimoto’s negative. The resulting light delicately reveals what is usually hidden: the interior of the theater’s shell, gleaming seductively with the high expectancy and grand illusions of popular culture.
Schinkel, the most prominent German architect of the nineteenth century, spent much of his early career in Germany creating innovative sets for Berlin’s major theatrical stages. He focused on creating well-executed backdrops rather than the staggered fixed flats with one-point perspective that had been popular during the Baroque and Rococo eras. In this magnificent piece, one of twelve set designs originally created for an 1816 production of Mozart’s opera *The Magic Flute*, the Queen of the Night appears standing on a crescent moon under a heavenly vault dotted with stars.

In 1872 Carroll, the famous author of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, had a studio built above his rooms at Christ Church, Oxford. With trunks full of toys and costumes from the Drury Lane Theatre, the “glass house” was intended as a paradise for the children of visiting friends and colleagues. In this tableau vivant, Carroll cast Xie (Alexandra) Kitchin, his muse in the 1870s, as the princess to her brother’s Saint George; another knight/brother has fallen prey to the leopard-skin dragon. Not part of a seamless illusion, the flimsy crowns and rocking horse instead hint at the children’s power of make believe.


One of America’s most inventive turn-of-the-century poster designers and graphic artists, Bradley played with stylized heraldic symmetry for this illustration for a children’s book that he also wrote. Seated on cat-shaped thrones, the characters Tommy and Helen feast on magically delicious sweets after being crowned king and queen of Toyville. Glinting eyes at their knees indicate that their feline supporters hope for a share.
Compiled by Gideon Saint (British, 1729–1799). Scrapbook with Furniture Designs, ca. 1763. Pen and ink, engraving and etching, 12 3/8 × 6 3/4 in. (32 × 17 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934 (34.90.1)

This vellum-bound scrapbook with designs for furniture and associated decorations was compiled by the eighteenth-century British carver and gilder Gideon Saint. Chock-full of drawings and prints, many cut from British and French series of ornament prints, the volume was organized according to object type (such as brackets, tables, or chimneys) so that Saint’s clients could easily choose which pieces they wanted to have made. This album is the sort of everyday studio working material that was rarely preserved.


About 1904 Atget began photographing the interiors of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century hôtels particuliers, or town houses, including the Hôtel de Lauzun, on the Île Saint-Louis in Paris. During the 1840s the poets Charles Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier had rented upstairs apartments in the house, which also served as the site of many drug-induced experiences of the infamous club des hashischins. Atget was less interested in such Romantic exploits than in documenting the decor of the house, including its Neoclassical paneling. Much of this boiserie was dismantled and sold off during a twentieth-century renovation and was ultimately acquired by The Met in 1976.
In 1935 Abbott embarked on a series of photographs documenting New York City. Funded by the Federal Art Project, during the next four years she made hundreds of images of the city’s monuments and architecture, including this one of Sumner Healey’s shop. Attracted to the “extraordinary montage of antiques”—anchored by a ten-foot-tall figurehead of Mars from an eighteenth-century battleship—Abbott also captured the owner’s cat, seemingly trapped on either side by the decorative dogs flanking the store’s entrance. Healey died soon after Abbott made this photograph, and the shop closed two years later.

This design for a business card (or possibly an announcement) shows an ironmonger’s shop as if the facade had been removed, thus presenting the interior as a theatrical tableau. In a setting cluttered with wares, a male customer discusses the merits of a lock with a female employee. This impression is an early, unfinished state on which the artist made additions in pen and ink to indicate where he intended to further work the plate.

This hand-colored photograph of a cigarette without its wrapping papers is one of several prints made for the covers of the limited edition of Surrealist poet Georges Hugnet’s book The Seventh Face of the Die (1936). Duchamp’s cigarette, the quintessential sexual surrogate, was an “assisted readymade,” an example of the artist’s ability to render an everyday object mysterious and unsettling. The idea for the picture stems from a passage in the tenth part of Hugnet’s book, in which the poet writes of a woman’s “young magnolia breast / pretty and gloved like a cigarette / caressing as a cherry / anxious as the last train. . . .”


Honus Wagner, a shortstop for the Pittsburgh Pirates from 1900 to 1917, is widely recognized as one of the best baseball players of all time. The baseball card with his image on it is the rarest of all baseball cards, however, because Wagner requested that the card be pulled from production shortly after it was released. Legend has it that he objected to the use of his image to advertise tobacco products to children.
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