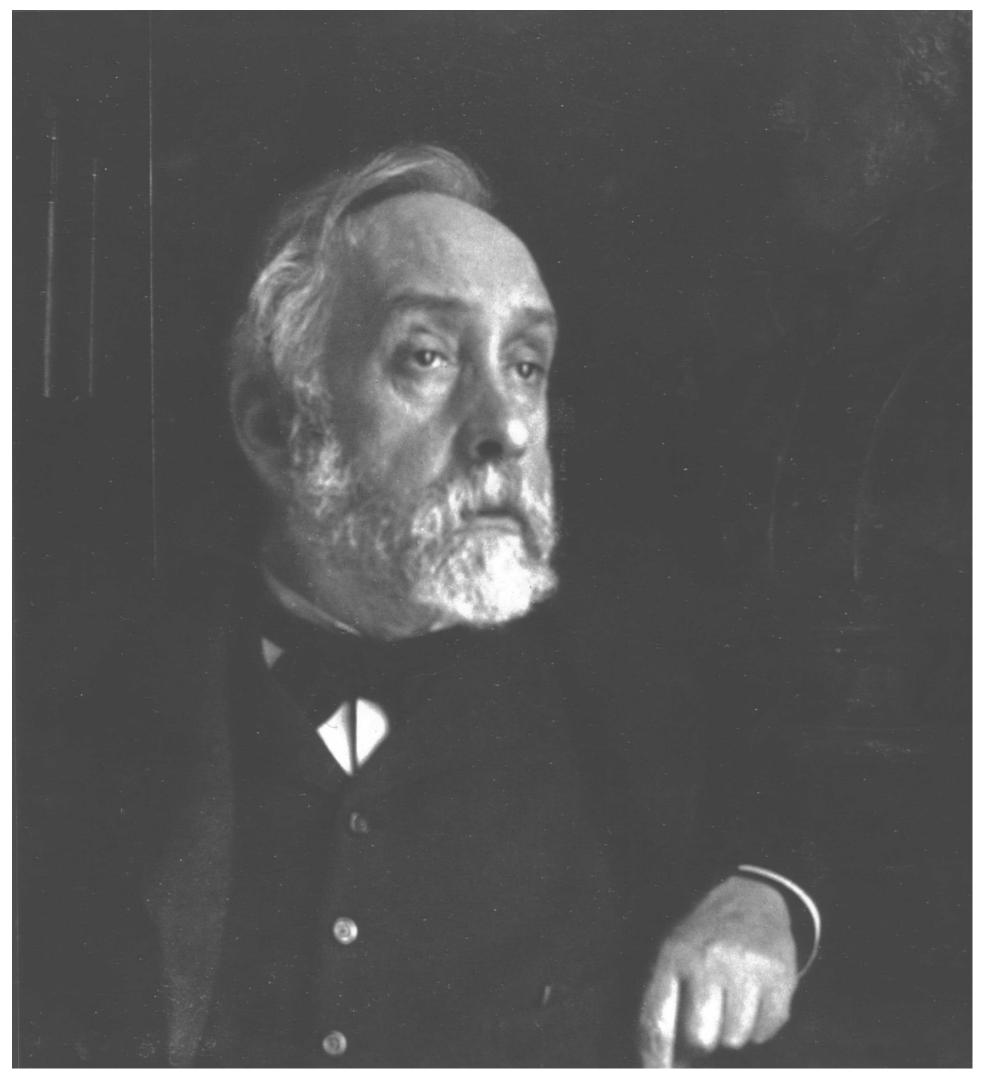
# EDGAR DEGAS, Photographer



The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Edgar Degas, Photographer



## Edgar Degas, Photographer

#### Malcolm Daniel

with essays byEugenia ParryTheodore Reff

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

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#### The exhibition is made possible by **/Etna**.

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Jacket: Edgar Degas, Self-Portrait with Christine and Yvonne Lerolle, plate 33.

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### Sponsor's Statement

Aetna is proud to sponsor this important exhibition of photographs by the renowned and beloved artist Edgar Degas.

Degas is best known for his paintings, pastels, and sculptures of dancers and horses. His photographs are less known, but they too exhibit the individual character, innovative use of materials, and quality of engagement that make Degas's art so memorable. By bringing together all of Degas's major photographs along with related works in other media, The Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition "Edgar Degas, Photographer" gives the public its first chance ever to delight in this little known aspect of the work of one of the greatest artists of the nineteenth century.

When Degas created these photographs in the mid-1890s, Aetna had been in business for nearly four

decades. Throughout its 145-year history, Aetna has been a strong and involved corporate citizen in the communities we serve, supporting a wide range of arts, education, community development, child advocacy, and health and social organizations. Aetna established its first corporate responsibility and volunteerism business objectives nearly forty years ago. That tradition of community support carries on today and is demonstrated by our support of this living tribute to one of history's truly great artists.

Richard L. Huber

Dich Arm

Chairman

Aetna

#### Director's Foreword

For seventy years, since the 1929 bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, The Metropolitan Museum of Art has been the richest repository outside France of Edgar Degas's paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. Cognizant of the responsibilities that accompany this great treasure, the Museum has proudly produced a large and significant body of authoritative scholarship on the artist, providing in-depth evidence and analysis of his extraordinary creativity and his powerful influence on the course of modern art. Within the past quarter of a century alone, the Metropolitan has presented the best of Degas's oeuvre to its international public and has made lasting contributions to the scholarly consideration of his art. In 1976, the Museum published Theodore Reff's volume Degas: The Artist's Mind, a collection of essays that examine Degas's intellectual power and originality, using largely unpublished material from the artist's notebooks. The Museum's 1977 exhibition "Degas in the Metropolitan" was followed by the ambitious, comprehensive retrospective "Degas" in 1988, organized in concert with the Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Musée d'Orsay in Paris and the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and accompanied by a catalogue that remains the most thorough examination of Degas's career. The artist's expressive landscape monotypes were presented in 1995, and in 1997–98, the Museum organized "The Private Collection of Edgar Degas," accompanied by

two volumes that thoroughly document this fascinating and revealing area of Degas's activity. In every instance, our belief in Degas's capital importance has been matched by an overwhelming public response.

The artist's rarely seen and until now largely unexamined photographs are the latest aspect of his oeuvre to receive scholarly treatment and to be the principal subject of an exhibition. Although virtually unknown to the vast art-loving public, Degas's photographs were of interest to Met curators as long ago as the 1940s. In the Summer 1944 issue of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, Associate Curator of Prints A. Hyatt Mayor, who evinced a keen interest in painter-photographers, explored the topic in an article titled "Photographs by Eakins and Degas." In the summer 1946 issue of the Bulletin, Mayor, by then Curator of Prints, included Degas in his larger historical discussion, "The Photographic Eye." Nevertheless, scholarship and connoisseurship of photographs were barely in their infancy, and Mayor, despite his interest, had to content himself with placing in the collection modern copy prints of Degas's original photographs. Only in 1983 did the Metropolitan acquire its first true work in the medium by Degas, his self-portrait with friends Paul Poujaud and Marie Fontaine, a composition reminiscent of the Museum's own canvas of many years earlier titled Sulking. Fifty years after Mayor's initial foray into

this subject, the discipline of photographic history has matured; the creation of an independent Department of Photographs at the Metropolitan is one important indication of the place that photography now holds in the pantheon of the arts. To my immense satisfaction, this newest curatorial department is producing engaging exhibitions and distinguished scholarship on a level with those of other, longer established curatorial areas.

It is therefore a special pleasure to introduce the present project, which both continues the Museum's long commitment to Degas studies and demonstrates the rich fields of inquiry still to be mined in the study of photographic history. We are proud to join the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in organizing the present exhibition, which, for the first time ever, brings together all of Degas's surviving major photographs, approximately forty in number. The exhibition, originally conceived by the Getty Museum, has been carried out with great ability and commitment by Malcolm Daniel, Associate Curator in the Department of Photographs of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. For many reasons, outlined in the preface of this volume, it is no easy task to locate, evaluate, and bring together Degas's rare extant photographs, and indeed, they have only recently been considered a corpus independent of the artist's work in other media. Mr. Daniel's informative essay for this catalogue provides a vivid

view of the context in which Degas made his surprisingly studied and often darkly mysterious images of himself and his circle of friends about 1895, and includes illuminating comparisons with Degas's painting, pastels, and prints. The essay by Eugenia Parry, a longtime scholar of both nineteenth-century photography and Degas, explores the fertile interplay between painting, posing, theatrical direction, and photography as it is manifest in Degas's work. Theodore Reff, Professor of Art History at Columbia University, has once again delved into his vast dossiers of archival research to contribute an essay enlightening us on the heretofore barely known Guillaume Tasset and his daughter Delphine, from whom Degas sought photographic supplies, advice, and services. Finally, this volume contains a catalogue raisonné and census of prints, an essential tool for further study, and one seldom found in photography monographs.

The Museum is extremely grateful to Aetna, and its Chairman, Richard L. Huber, for their generous sponsorship of this exhibition. Their enlightened patronage allows us to present these rarely seen treasures to a broad public, and for that we are sincerely grateful.

Philippe de Montebello Director The Metropolitan Museum of Art

#### Acknowledgments

Our deepest debt of gratitude is owed to the museums and individuals who have generously agreed to share Degas's rare surviving photographs—institutional treasures in some cases, precious pieces of family history in others—with a broad international public, allowing us to present as complete a picture as possible of Degas's work in the medium. We thank: the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Museums, Cambridge; the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester; the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; the Musée d'Orsay, Paris; the Musée Départemental Stéphane Mallarmé, Vulaines-sur-Seine; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Isabelle Hamel, André Jammes, Paul F. Walter, Suzanne Winsberg, and an anonymous lender. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge the important loans of paintings and works on paper that have allowed us to place Degas's photographs in the broader context of the artist's oeuvre and to illuminate his aesthetic strategies and working method: The Art Institute of Chicago; The Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo; and the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, Moscow.

The exhibition was originally conceived by Weston Naef, Curator of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum, and the initial work carried out by him and his staff, and by Lanier Graham on behalf of the Getty, laid valuable groundwork for the organization of the exhibition. The exhibition's curatorial team was composed of Mr. Naef; Maria Hambourg, Curator in Charge, Department of Photographs, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Sylvie Aubenas, Curator of Prints and Photographs at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France; and myself.

Eugenia Parry and Theodore Reff, in addition to contributing their fine essays to this catalogue, have shared their great knowledge of Degas with me. Each has thought about Degas far longer than I and has guided the development of my ideas on the subject through their past writings and recent conversations. Theodore Reff and Gary Tinterow, each familiar with the details of Degas's life, read drafts of my essay to ensure its overall accuracy. Maria Hambourg, too, read drafts of the texts for this book and made many suggestions that deepened the insights and improved the prose, as did Weston Naef.

In Paris, four people have aided the exhibition immeasurably. Robert McD. Parker's research and diplomatic skills have been of great service in the organization of both the exhibition and catalogue. Françoise Heilbrun, Curator of Photographs at the Musée d'Orsay, made the Degas photographs in her care available to me on numerous occasions, shared her research on the subject with me, and supported our extensive loan request. Sylvie Aubenas examined

with me the many Degas prints, negatives, and copy prints donated to the library by Degas's brother René and coordinated the curatorial aspects of the French venue of the exhibition. And finally, Antoine Terrasse welcomed my interest in a subject that he first treated in his 1983 book, *Degas et la Photographie*, warmly encouraged me, and shared information and images.

Many individuals have aided me at various stages of my research, writing, and exhibition planning, and to each of them I am sincerely grateful: Jean Sutherland Boggs, Pascaline Bresson, David Combs, Peter Galassi, Robert Gordon, Laura Harris, Deborah Martin Kao, Richard Kendall, Nora Kennedy, Bertrand Lavédrine, Baudoin Lebon, François Lepage and Paule Charbonneau-Lepage, Gérard Lévy, Kimberly Liddle, Martha Mock, Laura Muir, Therese Mulligan, Claude Nabokov, Rebecca Rabinow, Marie-Anne Sarda, and Barbara Wright.

Barbara Cavaliere edited this catalogue with a delicate touch and calm consistency. The elegant design of the catalogue is the work of Patrick Seymour. Martin Senn made the duotone and tritone film that, in the hands of the pressmen of Meridian Printing, so admirably conveys the spirit and appearance of Degas's originals. Rich Bonk shepherded all aspects of

the book's production, supervised by Gwen Roginsky. Computer Specialist Robert Weisberg fine-tuned the layout and type. As always, the standards of quality throughout this publication bear the imprint of John P. O'Neill's guiding hand.

At the Metropolitan Museum many individuals have helped ensure the success of *Edgar Degas, Photographer*. The exhibition was designed by Dan Kershaw, with graphics by Barbara Weiss and lighting by Zack Zanolli. The exhibition frames, adapted from designs by Degas and Whistler, were designed and produced by Bark Frameworks, with matting, special housings, and installation by Predrag Dimitrijevic. The many logistical aspects of the loans were handled skillfully by Anna Riehl, with legal matters flawlessly attended to by Stephanie Oratz Basta. Margaret Doyle was responsible for all press relations.

Finally, all who love photography or are moved by Degas's art owe thanks to Aetna, whose sponsorship has allowed us to organize this exhibition and bring it to the public.

Malcolm Daniel Associate Curator, Department of Photographs The Metropolitan Museum of Art

#### **Preface**

Nearly everyone who has visited a museum, opened an art book, or taken a survey course in art history knows the name Edgar Degas and can conjure up a mental image of the great Impressionist painter's canvases, pastels, or sculptures. His favored themes are familiar to all: the glance backstage at a young ballerina at the barre, a private glimpse of a woman at her toilette, or a spectator's view of entertainers at a caféconcert. Few people, however, are aware that for a brief period, late in his career, Degas turned his restless imagination and fertile creativity to photography with the same passion he had brought to his work in other media, and that he produced a series of mesmerizing photographs.

Celebrated—revered, by many—during his life, Degas and his oeuvre have been the subject of countless books, articles, and exhibitions since his death in 1917. In the last decade alone, he has been the subject of a mammoth retrospective in Paris, Ottawa, and New York, accompanied by an exhaustive catalogue; a definitive biography by Henri Loyrette; and a host of exhibitions and publications devoted to various aspects of his work. Despite this flood of examination, Degas's photographs remain largely unknown and have, until now, never been gathered together as the primary focus of an exhibition.

There are numerous reasons for the relative obscurity of Degas's photographs. They were never

publicly exhibited during his lifetime and hence were never the subject of thoughtful contemporary criticism in the printed press; unlike the hundreds of paintings, pastels, prints, monotypes, drawings, and sculptures found in his studio at the time of his death, Degas's photographs were not treasured as aspects of his creative output, inventoried, reproduced, and included in the atelier sales of 1918 and 1919 that drew international attention and fierce bidding; and, finally, the photographs are few in number and difficult to identify and attribute with certainty, apart from a few images described or attested to by Degas's sitters. Each of these reasons says more about photography's role in modern life, its position in the hierarchy of art history, and its value in the art market, than it necessarily does about Degas's own valuation of his work in the medium.

Compare the fate of his photographs with that of his sculptures: with the single exception of Degas's Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer, none of his sculptures was exhibited or written about in the press during his lifetime; they were arguably steps in a creative process rather than finished works of art; and they had been seen by only a handful of visitors to the artist's studio. But, when the contents of his atelier were discovered, these sculptures were easily recognized as creative expressions of the artist. The motifs of dancers, horses, and bathers were familiar within Degas's oeuvre; the

crumbling wax statuettes seemed still to pulse with the energy of the artist's touch; and, not incidentally, the artist's family recognized in the original waxes, and in the bronze casts that could be made from them, highly lucrative products for the art market. Such was not the case with Degas's photographs. With few exceptions (among the known works), the subjects were the same as those of many turn-of-the-century amateur photographers—portraits of family and friends. Without the obvious evidence of the artist's hand, the creations of his eye and mind were less readily identifiable, for few artists, collectors, curators, historians, or members of the public had yet developed the language and perspective to evaluate photographs as works of art, and they had little value in the marketplace.

Without knowing whether a substantial body of work was dispersed, discarded, or destroyed after his death, it is difficult now to judge the extent and character of Degas's photographic output, to feel certain that the identified works are representative of his photographic oeuvre as a whole and that we have not overlooked others that have merely lost the threads of evidence that once tied them securely to the artist. As Degas studies have advanced and as public interest and scholarly investigation of photography have grown in the past decade and a half, several authors have tackled this challenging topic. In 1983 Antoine

Terrasse published Degas et la Photographie, the first attempt at identifying all of the artist's photographs. The following year, Eugenia Parry offered an interpretation of Degas's photographic oeuvre, an essay adapted and rewritten for the present catalogue. And in 1988, at a colloquium coinciding with the French presentation of the Degas retrospective, Françoise Heilbrun, curator of photographs at the Musée d'Orsay, presented the most thoroughly researched and carefully substantiated account yet of Degas's involvement with photography. The present volume necessarily rests heavily on these earlier studies as well as on Degas's scattered references to photography in his surviving letters and on the written accounts of those who witnessed his passion for the medium firsthand, particularly his young friends Daniel Halévy and Julie Manet, with whom he spent much time in the mid-1890s.

To modern eyes, shaped by a century of the instantaneous exposures, accidental croppings, and spatial compression that characterize the Kodak snapshot, Degas's paintings of the 1870s seem as though they must have been informed by a "photographic vision" or "snapshot aesthetic." Likewise, it is easy to imagine Degas with camera in hand, delighting in the unexpected viewpoints and slices of modern life that photography offered. Such imaginings, however, would be twice mistaken. On the one hand, to the

extent that Degas's painterly vision was shaped by photography (an issue explored in Eugenia Parry's essay), it was shaped by the conventions and novelties of Second Empire picture-making rather than by those of the Kodak snapshot, which generally postdate his paintings by a decade or more. On the other hand, most of Degas's own photographs are the antithesis of the unstructured and instantaneous images one might imagine: they are carefully posed and lit, often requiring exposures of several minutes.

What should surprise no one familiar with his work is this: Just as he picked up the traditional materials of etching plate and printer's ink and produced unprecedented monotypes, transformed the disciplined application and soft rendering of pastel into a vibrant and physical medium, and combined the bronze caster's wax with fabric, plaster, and other materials to shape a new colorful, textural type of sculpture, Degas took up photography without heed to the accepted standards of photographic practice, the established fashions of the professional portrait studio, or the aesthetics of the "Photo-Club" artist. His utterly distinctive works stretched the expected physical and expressive limits of the medium.

Malcolm Daniel

Edgar Degas, Photographer



## "The Atmosphere of Lamps or Moonlight"

MALCOLM DANIEL

Mont-Dore is a small and charming town tucked in the valley of the Dordogne, in the central French region of the Auvergne, with the lofty peaks of the Monts Dore rising on three sides. Its twelve mineral springs of varying temperatures were known as far back as Roman times and, in the nineteenth-century, were thought beneficial for respiratory ailments. Thousands visited its Thermal Establishment each summer between mid-June and mid-September to take the waters. Edgar Degas arrived August 5, 1895, for a twenty-one day cure. "I have been sent here on the mountain for treatment," he wrote to his cousin Lucie De Gas. "I am fairly confident. My attacks of bronchitis have left me very vulnerable and force me to protect myself better for the winters." His days and evenings were mostly filled with the pleasurable boredom of hot baths, vapor inhalations, and other aspects of treatment, and by eating well, socializing, and letter writing. "One forgets here . . . a little of one's life," he wrote to his friend Henri Rouart. "In a word one vegetates fairly pleasantly, because one knows that it will end. In the evenings I digest and photograph in the twilight."<sup>2</sup>

Degas was sixty-one. The eighth and final Impressionist exhibition was nearly a decade in the past, and his reputation was long since secure. Back in Paris he lived in comfortable but unpretentious bourgeois style at 23 rue de Ballu, on the lower slopes

of Montmartre, attended by a single devoted maid, Zoé Closier, who protected the artist's privacy when he required it, cooked (poorly, by all accounts), attended to the chores of daily life, and cared for him in illness. What was remarkable about his apartment was on the walls—not only his own work but the art he collected so assiduously in the 1890s: works by his friends and contemporaries Édouard Manet, Mary Cassatt, Camille Pissarro, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and many others, as well as the drawings and paintings he so prized by Ingres, Delacroix, and El Greco.<sup>3</sup> "In his house," wrote Julie Manet, "the paintings are hung any old way or simply put on the floor. His dining room is decorated with yellow handkerchiefs and above are some Ingres drawings."4 Degas's studio, a few blocks away at 37 rue Victor Massé, was a place of work where "an indescribable disorder reigned"—a capharnaum of easels with half-finished canvases; stacks of drawings, prints, and pastels; tables covered with lumps of clay and wax, crumbling statuettes, paint-boxes, and lithographic stones; walls lined with paintings; and studio space encumbered by a printing press and an array of props from tubs to violins. This was *not* the opulent salon-with-easel of so many academic painters.<sup>5</sup>

Degas's approach to his materials was even less orthodox than his approach to his subjects. By the 1880s and 1890s the motifs in his art—dancers,

Detail of pl. 20, Mathilde and Jeanne Niaudet, Daniel Halévy, and Henriette Taschereau, Ludovic and Élie Halévy.



Fig. 1. Walter Barnes, *The Apotheosis of Degas*, 1885, albumen silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

women at their toilette, horses, and even his rare forays into landscape—were established; so too were his untraditional viewpoints, lighting effects, and compositions. What was revolutionary was his manner of working: he might paint and smear his composition in ink on an etching plate, print it as a monotype, make a counterproof of that by pressing the wet print against a clean sheet of paper, and then continue his work on the counterproof with oil paints and pastels. He explored the plastic possibilities of every medium he used, unfettered by generally accepted rules of proper technique.

Not quite the recluse that history has made him out to be, Degas enjoyed taking long walks, riding the omnibus, attending art exhibitions, and going to the opera (with amazing frequency through 1892). In the



Fig. 2. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827, oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

evenings, he often enjoyed witty conversation over dinner with intimate friends that included the Halévy, Rouart, Blanche, Jeanniot, or Valpinçon families; Albert Bartholomé, Auguste Renoir, Stéphane Mallarmé, or Berthe Morisot; or the Proustian social circle of Madame Howland. He made trips to Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Switzerland in the late 1880s and 1890s, and traveled frequently in the summers to Normandy, Provence, and the Pyrenees to visit friends, including a three-week tour through Burgundy with Bartholomé in September 1890, progressing slowly in a tilbury drawn by a white horse that was the subject of much amusing correspondence.<sup>6</sup>

"Paris was well aware of Degas," wrote his friend the British painter Walter Sickert, "and surrounded him with the profoundest veneration, fear and affection." At the same time, however, Degas felt old and was not beyond self-pity. His letters are filled with complaints about various ailments, most frequently and most poignantly about his failing eyesight. Although he never completely lost his vision, he was increasingly frustrated by a hypersensitivity to bright light, a blind spot in one eye, and general myopia. To his friend Évariste de Valernes he wrote in 1891,

"I see worse than ever this winter, I do not read the newspapers even a little. . . . Ah, sight, sight, sight! My mind feels heavier than before in the studio and the difficulty of seeing makes me feel numb"; and later: "Since my eyesight has grown still worse, my twilight years have become darker and more solitary. Only my love of art and the desire to succeed sustain me." But these same letters to Valernes evince an affectionate and tender compassion, and before going to Mont-Dore in 1895, Degas traveled to Provence to visit the ailing artist, no doubt surmising that it might be the last time the two would see each other. (Valernes, in fact, died the following March, and Degas returned to Carpentras one final time to attend Valernes's funeral.)

As his letter to Rouart indicated, Degas took a camera with him on his trip in 1895. He was certainly no stranger to photography—no one could be—for it was already a pervasive presence in society by the 1860s and 1870s. He himself had sat for carte-de-visite portraits (fig. 47), had made use of photographic models on at least one occasion, 12 and had studied and copied Eadweard Muybridge's stop-action photographs of horses.<sup>13</sup> While visiting the Halévy and Blanche families in Dieppe in 1885, Degas had amused the group by arranging a tableau vivant before the camera of a local photographer, Walter Barnes, 14 with the Lemoinne sisters and the young Élie and Daniel Halévy surrounding him in a parody of Ingres's Apotheosis of Homer (figs. 1, 2). 15 This amusing photograph was one of many that Degas, Halévy, and Blanche commissioned from Barnes that summer in an effort to provide some income for an artist fallen on hard times. Even so, Degas could not help but bring his critical eye to the result; he wished afterward that he had grouped his "three muses and two choirboys" against a lighter background and that he had compressed the group more. 16 A few years later, in 1887 or 1888, Degas posed with friends in front of Madame Howland's camera and shaped the entire tableau through his body language and expression (figs. 3, 52).

The only references to Degas's *firsthand* use of the medium earlier than summer 1895, however, are in letters from the Italian painter Federico Zandomeneghi to his compatriot Diego Martelli. In one, written in August 1895, he mentioned "four little [photographic] portraits that Degas made of me on one dreadful day last winter in his studio," and in another he promised "a portrait of me that I had enlarged from a small negative made again by the same Degas last March in his studio. . . . You will think you are looking at a Velasquez." <sup>17</sup> We cannot judge Degas's level of mastery for ourselves, since none of these early portraits has survived, but his



Fig. 3. Hortense Howland, A Group of Friends (Degas, Geneviève Straus, Albert Boulanger-Cavé, and Louis Ganderax), 1887–88, albumen silver print. Private collection.

correspondence from the Auvergne suggests that—Zandomeneghi's admiration notwithstanding—Degas probably left Paris for Carpentras and Mont-Dore with more enthusiasm for photography than experience or expertise.

For supplies and advice and for the printing and enlarging of his photographs, Degas turned to Guillaume Tasset, a minor painter and supplier of artists' materials, frames, and photographic supplies, whose conversation and counsel he enjoyed, and whose daughter Delphine he found ravishing (see the essay in this publication by Theodore Reff). 18 The shop Tasset et Lhote was located at 31 rue Fontaine Saint-Georges, across from the Académie Julian, on a street inhabited by more than a dozen painters and a handful of photographers, and conveniently situated around the corner from Degas's studio. 19 A small flurry of correspondence from Degas in Mont-Dore to Tasset in Paris in mid-August 1895 provides a rare firsthand account of the artist's zeal for photography.<sup>20</sup> The first of these letters, written August 11, suggests that Degas had already been in correspondence with Tasset earlier on his trip (It begins, "I have indeed received the papers") and contains a description of several negatives that he was sending to Paris for Tasset to print in various ways.

Degas described four photographs—all now lost—made before he arrived in Mont-Dore. The first was "a snapshot of two old people from Carpentras sitting in their garden"; the second, "an elderly invalid, in black skullcap; a friend stands behind his armchair"; and the third and fourth, portraits of the same man alone.21 The "elderly invalid" was surely Valernes. Degas's description of the photograph of the old man and his friend corresponds closely to a painting of another of Degas's intimates, Henri Rouart, and his son, begun the same year (fig. 4). Jean Sutherland Boggs, who first suggested a connection between this canvas and the lost photograph, also detected the possibility of a photographic source for this painting in its muted colors and opacity of paint application, as well as in Degas's portrayal of the

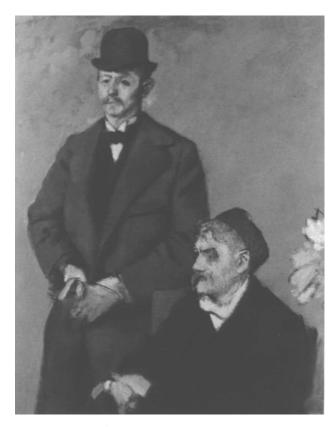


Fig. 4. Edgar Degas, *Henri Rouart and His Son Alexis*, 1895–98, oil on canvas. Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

elder Rouart—a more vigorous figure than depicted—on whom Degas may have projected the frailty of the dying Valernes.<sup>22</sup> One also cannot help but compare Degas's brief description of this lost photograph to his self-portrait with Valernes in a black top hat (fig. 5), painted three decades earlier, and wonder whether the "friend standing" was not Degas himself, present in the picture as he is in several of his surviving photographs. Might he have had in mind the earlier expression of friendship (a canvas that remained in his possession throughout his life) as he photographed Valernes in 1895 and as he ordered enlargements from Tasset to be sent to Mont-Dore for forwarding to Carpentras?<sup>23</sup>

Other correspondence from the same moment also suggests that photography might have represented



Fig. 5. Edgar Degas, Self-Portrait with Évariste de Valernes, ca. 1865, oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

for Degas a means of obtaining and preserving a sense of the physical and spiritual presence of friends or relatives distant or destined to be lost, just as it had for so many people since the medium's introduction in 1839. In addition to ordering supplies from Tasset for his own photography, he had sent "a camera, capable of both posed and instantaneous views, along with accessories, products, etc."24 to Bordeaux, whence it was to be shipped by boat to his sister Marguerite De Gas Fevre and her family in Buenos Aires. Degas's beloved sister had departed France hastily for Argentina in July 1889 after the failure of a speculative real estate endeavor engineered by her husband, Henri. Learning of her illness, not two years after the death of their brother Achille, Degas wrote to Marguerite insisting that they make a "sacred promise" to exchange letters on the fifteenth of each month, even if only to say hello. "Otherwise," Degas wrote, "our hearts will be as distant as the places on the map, and we will end up isolated from one another."25 The camera was to be one more means of linking them, "an infallible way of having something."26 Possibly drawing on his own experience as a novice in the medium, he ventured that "with no more than a month of practice you will be able to send me (for lack of letters, if you are too hard-hearted) a few good portraits of people or of places or of the interiors."27 A few days later he wrote again and added, "I'm waiting for some prints and even some negatives that I can have enlarged to see you better,"28 and by his mid-September letter to Marguerite he was imagining "the surprise and the pleasure that the photography equipment must have given you" and reminding her that he was "absolutely counting on this new and essential activity."29

At Mont-Dore, Degas encountered an old friend of the Fevre family and teacher of young Henri Fevre, Père Guyot, and resolved to photograph him for the family in Buenos Aires.<sup>30</sup> His first attempt ended in failure when he broke the negative holder ("too delicate, too light, too pretty,"31 he told Tasset), an accident that he reported to his sister with the parenthetical explanation "(because, I too . . .)"—implying that he, too, was new to the game but would not be discouraged. "In another letter, you will have your giant in several poses."32 Three days later, just in time to reach the Bordeaux boat on August 20, Degas succeeded and hurried off another letter to Marguerite with a picture of the Dominican priest enclosed: "At the last moment, yesterday, I made this little negative of Père Guyot in front of his hotel that I developed last night and that I have just printed and toned." Again, the photograph is lost, but Degas's critical evaluation of his own work implies that he had not yet mastered the technical aspects of the medium: "All of this is provisional, because the negative isn't great, the figure is not well focused. It's the window and the servant that are right. And then, poor toning and the same with washing. It will arrive a bit faded, I am afraid." $^{33}$ 

Even if motivated to pursue photography in part by the feelings of connection and intimacy that inevitably reside in photographs of dear friends and family, Degas could not help but bring his visual sensibilities and creative enthusiasm to this new medium. His letters to Tasset and to his sister reveal the intensity of his direct personal involvement with photography at that moment and his firsthand engagement with the mechanics and chemistry of the medium specifying certain materials, developing his own negatives, proofing them himself on occasion, and giving instructions and suggestions for the printing of enlargements. His letters also reveal, without embarrassment, the technical failures he encountered as he attempted to achieve certain effects in what was, for him, still a new medium.

On August 12, he wrote to Tasset for six boxes of 8 x 10 centimeter Lumière Blue Label plates, remarking, "I have already spoiled quite a lot of negatives." 34 The following day he wrote again, this time asking, "Would it be possible to have cut right away to 8 x 10 several dozen Lumière panchromatic plates?"35 And two days later he wrote yet again to say, "I have just telegraphed you to order me six dozen 8 x 10 panchromatics. That is what there is the greatest shortness of."36 This request for panchromatic plates—negatives equally sensitive to all colors of the spectrum—shows a surprising awareness (through Tasset, most likely) of recent innovations in the medium, for these new plates were described by the Lumière Brothers in the Bulletin de la Société française de Photographie just two months earlier and were not yet widely available.<sup>37</sup> Foreseeing the problems that might be caused by the need to cut down the standard 9 x 12 centimeter plates to fit his smaller camera, he suggested that Tasset might have a new, larger camera made for him-"Work out the quickest way," he wrote. Indeed, in the course of cutting down the photographic plates, Tasset must have exposed them to light and fogged them; Degas wrote on August 19 that "nothing comes out, dear M. Tasset, on those cursed panchromatics. . . . Order the 9 x 12 camera like the one I sent off [to Buenos Aires], and tell your man to hurry. I don't trust these cut-down plates. After just a moment in the [developing] bath, everything becomes black and nothing."<sup>39</sup>

Most revealing are Degas's comments about the pictures themselves and the enlargements that he wanted Tasset's daughter, Delphine, to make. For each of the photographs of Valernes, he asked Delphine to make two enlargements—"one matte, one glossy (ferrotyped)."40 On one negative he noted a tear in the emulsion that was to be filled in if possible, or cropped off the print if not, and on another he asked for a slight adjustment, giving directions to crop a centimeter from the right edge. 41 The negative of the old couple seated in the garden presented a more complicated situation, not having been developed long enough ("I couldn't see with the round red lamp bought at Avignon,"42 he explained). Already, though, he had begun to think about how to push the normal limits of the medium: "All is there, but very weak," he wrote. "Would it be possible to intensify it, and intensify very lightly, to keep the somewhat gray appearance? If that can be done, make a print of it and send it to me. Later you can make an enlargement, not too big, if I find the print sharp."43 Then, a few days later: "Is it impossible to make a positive from the gray garden, then a negative that can be intensified? Or else make from the first negative an enlargement that can be forced in development or, better, in exposure? Thanks!"44 His thought process here sounds very much like his practice of making counterproofs and tracings of his prints, drawings, and pastels, slightly adjusting the composition or color in each successive generation of the picture. Finally, the following day he confessed: "I think that there is no way to improve the garden. What I suggested yesterday seems absurd to me."45

That Degas spoiled dozens of negatives, was eager for panchromatic plates, and ended up with images in need of correction in printing is no surprise,

for in some of his pictures he was attempting a feat near to impossible: "I'm trying to photograph almost at night," he wrote Tasset. "Do you have any tips in that case?"46 As in his highly original approach to oil paint, pastel, and printer's ink, <sup>47</sup> Degas's photographic technique was driven by the effect he desired rather than by the accepted practice of other artists. If it seems as though he made more mistakes in photography than in the other media, it may simply be that photography is a less forgiving medium. A false start in painting could be corrected, as in his self-portrait with Valernes (fig. 5), where he scraped and repainted the canvas to obliterate his top hat, cover his white shirt with a black coat, and raise his left hand to his chin<sup>48</sup>; the relationship of foreground to background in a pastel could be adjusted with successive layers of pigment; and an unsatisfactory monotype composition could be manipulated on the plate, or even wiped clean and begun again, before being printed. But in photography, mistakes in composition, focus, exposure, or development could be corrected only slightly in printing; any failure was more total and required Degas to start anew.

We can only imagine what Degas's moonlit photographs looked like, since none has survived, but two daytime landscapes have been identified, Cape Homu and The Hourdel Road<sup>49</sup> (pls. 1, 2). Both were made near the Channel coast town of Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme, where Degas spent five days in early September 1895 after leaving Mont-Dore, and where he traveled several times between 1896 and 1898, executing a dozen canvases depicting the town.<sup>50</sup> Landscapes by Degas, even in other media, are rare; unlike many of his Impressionist colleagues, he seldom painted out-ofdoors, in part perhaps because the bright sunlight was uncomfortable for his eyes, and in part because he was so much more engaged by the human figure. Degas's most notable landscapes are a series of color monotypes begun in George Jeanniot's studio during his 1890 ramble through Burgundy with Bartholomé, images made from his memory of vaguely seen views from the moving tilbury.<sup>51</sup> The spatially ambiguous



Fig. 6. Edgar Degas, Burgundy Landscape, 1890-92, monotype. Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Cape Homu—a crisscross of textured zones, lines, and areas of tone—does bear some resemblance to those very abstract renderings of 1890–92, such as Burgundy Landscape (fig. 6). The Hourdel Road is a more surprising image, unlike his work in other media—a sweeping composition made from the side of the road. Degas's low vantage point and slightly tilted camera angle exaggerate the cant of the trees lining the route and heighten the dramatic perspective of the scene. That these landscapes are atypical of Degas's photography is not altogether surprising. "Daylight gives me no

problem" he said. "What I want is difficult—the atmosphere of lamps or moonlight." <sup>52</sup>

In early September, after traveling to Carpentras, Mont-Dore, and Saint-Valéry, Degas returned to Paris and "finally to my beloved studio."<sup>53</sup> The moment it was possible, his hands were once again caked with the dust of pastels and his days were spent in the clutter of the studio. "You see that in spite of this stinking heat and the full moon," he wrote to Ludovic Halévy, "I cannot leave this damn studio, to

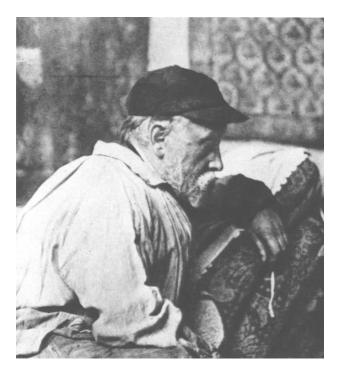


Fig. 7. Attributed to Albert Bartholomé, *Edgar Degas* in *His Studio* (detail), ca. 1903(?). Present whereabouts unknown.

which vainglory binds me"<sup>54</sup> (fig. 7). But photography was not forgotten. By all accounts, this was the moment of Degas's greatest enthusiasm for the medium, and most of his known photographs date from autumn 1895. "These days, Degas abandons himself entirely to his new passion for photography,"<sup>55</sup> wrote Zandomeneghi, recounting an excursion that he, Degas, and Bartholomé made in September 1895 to the château of Dampierre. Degas's love of comic mimicry took hold in much the same spirit, one imagines, as it had a decade earlier when he staged the *Apotheosis of Degas* (fig. 1) for Barnes's camera; in a photograph now lost but described by the Italian painter, Degas posed his companions as reclining river gods before the château. <sup>56</sup>

Most often Degas photographed in the evening. In part this was because he reserved the precious daylight hours for work on pastels and sculpture. In part it was simply that the evenings were when Degas saw



Fig. 8. Edgar Degas, *Ludovic Halévy*, 1895, gelatin silver print. Suzanne Winsberg Collection (cat. 14a)

the people he felt closest to and wanted to photograph—the Halévy family and their relatives; Julie Manet and her cousins Paule and Jeannie Gobillard; Bartholomé, Renoir, and Mallarmé. Perhaps most important, it was in the evenings that Degas could impose the greatest control over the lighting. His delight in transforming a dinner party into a photographic soirée was notorious; "ablaze with enthusiasm," he requisitioned his friends and appropriated their living rooms.<sup>57</sup>

In late September he wrote a note to Ludovic Halévy (fig. 8) with the genial warning, "One fine day I shall burst in on you, with my camera in hand," closing with "greetings to Louise the developer." The Halévys would have understood, for Degas had apparently arrived unannounced the previous day while Ludovic and Louise were, themselves, "photographing with passion." Our understanding of Degas's photography is inextricably tied to his



Fig. 9. Edgar Degas, A Scene from a Brothel, based on Edmond de Goncourt's novel "La Fille Elisa," ca. 1877, pencil. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

friendship with the Halévy family. More than any other source, the young Daniel Halévy's careful notes about Degas's photographic sessions at the Halévy home are vivid accounts of those remarkable evenings, and the prints and negatives preserved by the Halévy family and their descendants now constitute the bulk of Degas's known photographic oeuvre.

Degas's friendship with the Halévys stretched far back. Although he and Ludovic were born in the same year and attended the same school, the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, Ludovic was a year ahead of Degas and the two seem not to have known each other as students. Rather, Degas knew Louise Halévy, née Breguet, from birth. He was, as a student, close friends with Alfred Niaudet, and Degas's sisters Thérèse and Marguerite were close friends of Alfred's sisters Sophie and Alice; the three Niaudets were firstcousins of Louise Breguet and grew up in the same household as she. Degas adopted their home, on the quai de l'Horloge, as his own, showing up on Monday evenings with Marguerite to absorb the words of eminent dinner guests about art, music, and science. Louise, too young to stay up so late with company, pressed her ear to the door that led from her bedroom to the salon. Those childhood evenings were "the origin of all our friendship," she later recalled.<sup>60</sup>

If not before, Degas certainly knew Ludovic Halévy from the time of Ludovic's marriage to Louise on July 3, 1868. By the late 1870s, Degas had made a series of monotypes based on Ludovic's two novels Madame Cardinal and Monsieur Cardinal, kept a notebook at the Halévys' to sketch in after dinners there (fig. 9), and corresponded with Ludovic when one or the other was absent from Paris. Lighthearted, sociable, and forgiving, Ludovic Halévy was a perfect foil to Degas, all the more dear to the painter because they shared a passion for theater and music, and because Ludovic professed to have no knowledge or strong opinions about art. Degas's affection for the Halévy sons Élie and Daniel, and the latter's recorded observation of the painter, began in earnest during the summer of 1885, at Dieppe, a friendship recorded in Barnes's photographs (figs. 1, 51). Ludovic took note of Degas's first use of the informal "tu," in a letter from Cauterets in September 1888,61 and Daniel declared in his journal, after a family dinner on New Year's Day 1891, that "we have made him not just an intimate friend, but a member of our family, his own being scattered all over the world."<sup>62</sup> Degas lived just around the corner from the Halévys' home on the rue de Douai and regularly dined with them on Thursday evenings. This intimate bond between Degas and the Halévys was at its strongest during the period of Degas's photographic activity; over the next two years it would become increasingly frayed and, in January 1898, altogether severed because of Degas's intransigent anti-Semitism and defense of the Army, in contrast to the Halévys' strong Dreyfusard sentiment.

By November 4, 1895, Daniel Halévy could record in his journal that "this autumn [Degas] has spent a number of evenings with us taking photographs,"63 and, indeed, more than a dozen images made in the Halévy home are known. One of the most poetic among them (pl. 5) may also be one of the first, probably from early October, for Degas was still using 8 x 10 centimeter negatives.<sup>64</sup> Louise reclines, her eyes closed as if she has fallen asleep reading; one hand still holds the newspaper, the other is tucked behind her head; her dress spills over the sofa. At the right edge of the frame is the single light source, an oil lamp glaring with such intensity that in the picture it disappears in a flare of bright light—a procedure and an effect that surely went against the rules (softly modulated light, full tonal range) that every good camera-club photographer of the time would have known and respected. The result, however, is startling, as if Degas had photographed an annunciation or revelation, and as if the white patterned antimacassar that stretches across the picture just above Louise's head were an abstract expression of her thoughts or dreams.

In another photograph made the same evening, Louise stretches out on the sofa in the opposite direction and Daniel sits in a chair beside her (pl. 6). Both have their eyes closed, again as if in reverie. A third image, showing Louise Halévy and Degas himself, also dates from the same session (pl. 7). 65 The two sit at a table with a lamp between them; Degas's eyes are downcast and Louise appears to read the newspaper aloud to him. (Degas relied on others to read to him;

his maid, Zoé, read the newspaper over breakfast or lunch, and Daniel Halévy often read Degas's favorite stories from the Thousand and One Nights in the evenings.) Although the lamp on the table seems at first to illuminate the scene, one merely assumes it to be the case; the true light source lies beyond the left edge of the frame, throwing light on Degas's face and casting Louise's, and the newspaper she reads, in shadow. Several printed versions of this image exist with varying cropping and emphasis. The Getty example (pl. 8), utilizing merely a quarter of the negative, reads nearly as a self-portrait. Degas had it printed very dark and cropped so that Louise is barely shown at the left edge, while he himself is closer to the center. A variant enlargement of similar proportion (fig. 10)<sup>66</sup> shows Louise and Degas more equally, like pans on a scale, each balancing the other; Degas's willingness to portray himself as vulnerable, requiring Louise's eyes and voice for his own wholeness, infuses the scene with unexpected intimacy.

Two of Degas's most powerful and engaging portraits in the medium were also made in the Halévy home, on October 14, 1895 (pls. 9–14). Louise in one, Daniel in the other, each sits in a comfortable



Fig. 10. Edgar Degas, Louise Halévy Reading to Degas, 1895, gelatin silver print enlargement. Formerly André Weil Collection; present whereabouts unknown. (Cat. 3d)

armchair, sculpted by the strong chiaroscuro light of a single lamp to the right of the scene and slightly above. The patterned white lace antimacassar behind their heads is visible, but the rest of the surroundings are left mysteriously dark and illegible. This pair of portraits, like the image of Louise reading to Degas, clearly shows the two steps in Degas's photographic picture-making: the careful direction of the scene before his camera and, later, at the time of printing, the determination or discovery of his picture within the broader compass of his negative. His full images show Louise and Daniel, each caught in a moment of meditative isolation, nearly lost in the center of an expanse of darkness (pls. 9, 10); the light source is visible (though shaded from the camera) and lamplight glints off a patterned fabric and a nearby picture



Fig. 11. Edgar Degas, Monsieur and Madame Edmondo Morbilli, ca. 1865, oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Robert Treat Paine II.

frame, but nothing is visible in the foreground and only the ghosts of a few framed pictures are discernible behind the figures. But just as Degas had given Tasset directions for the cropping of his images of Évariste de Valernes, he restructured and reinterpreted these pictures in the course of having them enlarged and printed.

Two pairs of enlargements survive. In one pair now at the Getty Museum (pl. 11) and Metropolitan Museum (pl. 12), Degas brought the edges of his frame in to the point of removing every element other than the figure and imparting that psychological intensity that characterized his painted portraits of an earlier period such as *Monsieur and Madame Edmondo Morbilli* (fig. 11). Degas understood that even slight adjustments to the framing of his composition altered the formal structure and emotional content of a picture; when working in pastel he often added small strips of paper to extend the composition beyond the edges of his original sheet, but with photography, only the reverse—cropping inward from his original frame—was possible.

In another set of prints that Degas gave to the Halévys, now in the Musée d'Orsay (pls. 13, 14), Degas pulled in even closer, utilizing less than a quarter of each negative and enlarging it to more than sixty times its size. In these prints we feel almost uncomfortably close, within the intimate space of the sitters, who seem in mental dialogue with the photographer. Daniel, full of respect for Degas—so much so, in his own words, that he could not love Degas because he admired him too much<sup>67</sup>—stares directly at the camera through half-closed eyes; his right hand reaches across his body to grasp the arm of the chair; his left hand is raised to his chin in a gesture of serious thought. The directional force of the arms, the tense grip of his right hand, the slight cock of the head, and the wary gaze all convey a sense of emotion and self-control, a cerebral equivalent of one of Degas's racehorses champing at the bit. The corresponding image of Louise is different. She looks slightly to her right, somewhat melancholy, averting her eyes from the bright lamplight—but also from the camera and from Degas. Her left hand, draped over the end of the chair arm, emerges from the blackness of her dress and the surroundings, and, with veins emphasized by the raking light, suggests the mortality of flesh and blood. This expressive use of the back of the hand, seen earlier in Degas's painted portraits of his grandfather Hilaire in 1857 (fig. 12) and of the Morbillis about 1865 (fig. 11) and later in his photograph of Émile Verhaeren (pl. 31), is part of the artist's vocabulary of gesture. While Degas's nudes and dancers communicate emotion through every element of body language, the psychological content of his portraits is often conveyed by face and hands alone, all that emerges from the lugubrious lighting and bourgeois black attire.

If there is an element of sadness and mortality in the portrait of Louise Halévy, it may be because both artist and sitter knew that as Degas looked at Louise, who he considered practically a sister, he could not help but think with overwhelming sadness of his ailing sister Marguerite, who Louise, too, loved dearly. Just a few weeks later, Daniel would record in his journal: "[Degas] had not come to the house for several days. The other evening the bell rings and we hear his slow, heavy footsteps. He enters and we greet him gaily. He stops, looks at us: 'I am not very cheerful,' he says, after a short silence, in a quavering voice. 'Marguerite is dead. . . . For the past two months I have been worried, but I kept hoping. Three days ago I received a telegram. The poor creature is dead. When I bade her goodbye eight years ago I didn't think it would be forever."68 For Degas, the illness and death of his sister were the overwhelming emotional events of this period, and naturally colored his image of his surrogate sister Louise.

Degas's desire to feel the physical and spiritual presence of his sister through photographs, expressed in his letters to her from Mont-Dore, resurfaced in his grief and regret after her death. "I waited too long, so I will never see my poor Marguerite again," he wrote to his brother-in-law, Henri Fevre. "Ever since the

fatal black-bordered letter arrived, her entire life, her grace as a child and as a young woman, her motherly bearing, her voice, the way she dressed—I have thought of nothing else, trying to bring her back before my eyes. . . . And I have cursed the late shipment of that camera. One month earlier, and I would have had everything." 69 He found a certain comfort in a photograph that Henri had sent, but chided him for having had it retouched, saying that the portrait of his nephew Gabriel looked as though it could have been taken of a doll. "Truth is never ugly when you find what you need in it," he concluded.<sup>70</sup> Degas rephotographed for his sister Thérèse a postmortem photograph of Marguerite that Henri sent in a subsequent letter and had an enlargement made for himself, which he could not look at without crying.<sup>71</sup>

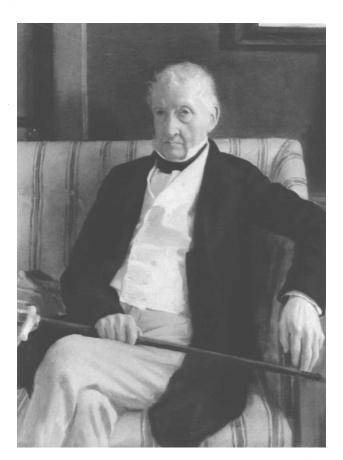


Fig. 12. Edgar Degas, *Hilaire Degas*, 1857, oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

And again, in a later letter thanking Henri for additional photographs: "All of the thoughts that they bring to mind would take a long time to tell you. I had an enlargement made of Marguerite taken from the group. It didn't come out well. Who retouched everything? You must never retouch! It spoils everything."

None of this is to suggest that the photographs sent from Buenos Aires were meant or perceived as art, nor that Degas's photographs from this period were mere aide-mémoire snapshots. Rather, it demonstrates that Degas found a powerful spiritual content in photographs quite separate from artistic intention or appreciation. The British poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning expressed a similar sentiment a half century earlier: "It is not merely the likeness which is precious," she wrote, "but the association and the sense of nearness involved in the thing. I would rather have such a memorial of one I dearly loved than the noblest Artist's work ever produced."<sup>73</sup> Degas's letters give credence also to Daniel Halévy's linking of the artist's melancholy and his photographic activity that photography connected Degas to a surrogate family in a situation he could control, especially during the evening hours when his mind would have dwelled on the death and dispersal, beyond his control, of his own family. "Degas is very sad," Halévy wrote. "His mind is so active, his thoughts are so painful that he is continually swamped by them. His art fills his days, but in the evening he needs something else."74

The coincidence of Degas's grief and his photography was observed by Daniel at several points in his journal. On December 1 Degas arrived again at the Halévy home with heavy footsteps. Earlier that day, he had learned from Daniel that Hélène Berthelot, the daughter of Degas's old friend Sophie Niaudet, had died in childbirth the previous evening. "He said a few words to Mother about Hélène's death. Then, he opened a big envelope he was carrying under his arm and showed us the enlargements he had had made the night before with me. There were

photographs of Haas, of Reyer, of Du Lau, of Madame Howland. He looked at them, talked about the details with childlike joy. Then I read him an *Arabian Nights* tale and afterward we talked a little. Suddenly he became depressed again as he always does these days unless there is some kind of artificial stimulus. Then he told us about his nephews in Buenos Aires, the children of his sister who had just died. He recited their letters to us so fondly."<sup>75</sup>

In mid-December, Louise invited Degas to dinner on the same evening as Louise's brother-in-law and Degas's old friend Jules Taschereau, and Jacques-Émile Blanche and his wife, Rose, also old friends of both Degas and the Halévys. After dinner, Degas went to his studio to fetch his camera, and Daniel went with him. "In his studio I noticed a variety of little pictures from his youth, showing his sister and his brothers. He had been looking for them. After we returned he happened to say to Uncle Jules-I don't know why—'It would have upset me to go alone, but Daniel kept me company.' The sadness of this remark struck me."76 Four photographs from that evening survive, two showing Jacques and Rose Blanche (pls. 17, 18), one showing the Blanches with Jules Taschereau and another woman (fig. 13), and the last showing Degas himself with Jules and Jacques (pl. 16).

Daniel Halévy's richest journal entry concerning Degas and photography (in which the evening with the Blanches and Taschereaus is but an aside) details the progress of another postprandial photographic session at the Halévy home, which took place on December 28, 1895. Present at the "charming dinner party," along with Ludovic, Louise, Élie, Daniel, and Degas, were Jules Taschereau and his twenty-two-year-old daughter Henriette, Jules's sister Sophie Taschereau-Niaudet (widow of Degas's old friend Alfred Niaudet), and her two daughters, Mathilde, twenty, and Jeanne, eighteen. Jules spoke little, Sophie not at all, but Degas was gay and sociable, relishing the company of three attractive young



Fig. 13. Edgar Degas, Jacques-Émile and Rose Blanche, Jules Taschereau, and an Unidentified Woman, 1895, modern print from the original negative. Courtesy Antoine Terrasse. (Cat. 9)

women. Louise had thought for a long time of inviting Degas at the same time as the young Taschereau and Niaudets but feared that Degas's sometimes bawdy language might be too much for such "old fashioned girls." After dinner Degas went to his studio with Jules to fetch his camera. Daniel's evocative account is well worth quoting in full:

They returned together and from then on the *pleasure* part of the evening was over. Degas raised his voice, became dictatorial, gave orders that a

lamp be brought into the little salon and that anyone who wasn't going to pose should leave. The duty part of the evening began. We had to obey Degas's fierce will, his artist's ferocity. At the moment all his friends speak of him with terror. If you invite him for the evening you know what to expect: two hours of military obedience.

In spite of the command to leave if one did not want to pose, I slid into the parlor and silently in the dark I watched Degas. He had seated Uncle Jules, Mathilde, and Henriette on the small sofa in front of the piano. He went back and forth in front of them running from one end of the room to the other with an expression of infinite happiness. He moved lamps, changed the reflectors, tried to light their legs by putting a lamp on the floor—to light Uncle Jules's legs, those famous legs, the slenderest, most supple legs in Paris which Degas always talks about ecstatically.

"Taschereau," he said, "hold onto that leg with your right arm, and pull it that way, that way. And now look at that young lady beside you. More affectionately—still more—come on—come on! You can smile so nicely when you want to. And you, Mademoiselle Henriette, bend your head—more—still more. Really bend it. Rest it on your neighbor's shoulder."

And when she didn't follow his orders to suit him, he grabbed her by the nape of the neck and posed her as he wished. He seized hold of Mathilde and turned her face toward her uncle. Then he stepped back and exclaimed happily, "Let's go."

The pose was held for two minutes—and then everything was repeated. We'll see the photographs tonight or tomorrow morning, I think. He will display them here looking happy—and at times like that he is truly happy.

At half-past eleven everybody left; Degas, surrounded by three laughing girls, carried his camera as proudly as a child carrying a rifle.<sup>78</sup>

Here is the proof, if anyone could doubt it from the pictures themselves, that Degas's working method was nothing like the spontaneous and unstructured snapshooting that the introduction of the Kodak camera a half-dozen years earlier had made possible for the casual photographer. Degas is described as exerting total control over the setting, the poses and expressions of his sitters, and the lighting. And, to judge by Daniel's comment that "all his friends speak of him with terror," this happy dictatorial direction was a typical afterdinner turn of events, not an isolated occurrence.

In all Degas's excitement and effort that evening, however, he made a simple mistake, failing to note which plate holders he had already used, and thereby accidentally double-exposing two negatives instead of properly exposing four separate negatives. All four exposures were made in the same corner of the Halévy sitting room, evident from the pictures on the walls. In one exposure (pl. 19) the poses Daniel described are clearly visible: Jules Taschereau grasps his leg<sup>79</sup> and looks at Mathilde, Henriette rests her head on Mathilde's shoulder, and Mathilde turns (albeit a bit stiffly) toward Jules. Exposed on the same plate, turned ninety degrees, is an image of Sophie Taschereau-Niaudet seated, with her daughter Jeanne standing behind her.

The second plate also has two images, one vertical, one horizontal (pl. 20). For the vertical, Degas barely changed his camera position, lighting, or setup from the image of Sophie and Jeanne Niaudet. Elie Halévy sits this time, with his father standing behind him, leaning on the back of the chair. The horizontal exposure on this plate is more complex: Daniel (who wrongly thought he might escape participation by hiding in the corner) is seated backwards on a chair, with his arm resting on its back and his face nestled in the crook of his elbow; he exchanges glances with Henriette, also seated; Mathilde, standing behind Daniel, looks at Henriette, and Jeanne, standing behind Henriette, looks at Daniel. Arms, hands, and heads are turned at calculated angles.

It would be tempting to imagine these double exposures as the willful act of an artist who took obvious delight in stretching the accepted norms of every medium he picked up, and indeed some writers have interpreted them as such.<sup>81</sup> Neither Daniel Halévy nor Degas himself mentioned the prints that resulted from the session on December 28, but Ludovic did in a letter to Albert Boulanger-Cavé in January 1896, in which he enclosed two "nocturnal photographs" by Degas: "But he made a mistake twice, forgot each time to remove and replace the plates, so that on each plate there are, in a chaotic pell-mell fashion, portraits

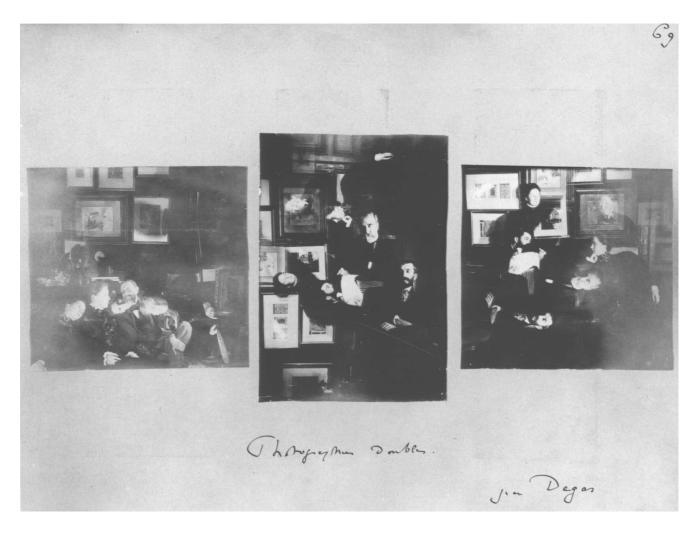


Fig. 14. Page from a Halévy family album, 1895. Private collection. (Cats. 11a, 12a, 12b)

of me, Élie, Daniel, Taschereau, my niece Henriette Taschereau, Taschereau's sister and two nieces. This tangle ["salade," in the original French] has a quite curious effect and will amuse Madame Howland."82 No other example of double exposure survives to indicate that Degas pursued the effects caused here by accident, nor is there any extant enlargement of either of these two negatives.

Recognizing that creation could encompass the unintended, however, Degas thought enough of the results to print them several times. Besides sending a set to Cavé, Ludovic, who once remarked "Degas

always looks for the unexpected,"83 glued these photographs in the family album, putting two prints of the same negative side by side turned ninety degrees and labeled "Photographies Doubles par Degas" (fig. 14). The curious and amusing effect that Ludovic noted is hallucinatory. Because Degas's strong chiaroscuro lighting left large parts of his pictures dark, portions of each negative remained completely unexposed, ready to allow sections of the superimposed image to register with full force (particularly in pl. 20). Thus, Ludovic and Élie emerge with full sculptural presence out of the dark foreground of the exposure of Daniel

and his cousins; and portions of Daniel, Henriette, and Mathilde (as well as the pictures on the wall) register clearly in the black areas to the left of Élie's chair. Rather than appearing superimposed with ghostly transparency, each figure (Jeanne excepted) seems fully substantial in some places and utterly invisible in others, interwoven like warp and woof.

Degas's portraits of Louise Halévy reclining, Jacques-Émile and Rose Blanche, and the Belgian Symbolist poet Émile Verhaeren (pls. 5, 17, 18, 31), in which faces, hands, and isolated details of the surroundings emerge out of blackness, already have within them the seeds of Symbolism, a literary and artistic movement that might seem irreconcilably at odds with both the objective nature of camera images and the careful observation, premeditation, and art historical reference that characterized Degas's painting. In the movement's Literary Manifesto (1886), Jean Moréas described the conception of the Symbolist novel: "Now a single character moves through spheres deformed by his own hallucinations, by his temperament, and the only reality lies in these deformations. Beings with mechanical gestures, with shadowy outlines, shift and turn round the solitary character: they are the mere pretexts for sensations and conjectures. . . . "84 In the double exposures—unintended but accepted—Degas came closer than in any other work to fulfilling that Symbolist ideal.

Wholly consistent with his photographs at the Halévy home, and probably dating from the same months, are a number of portraits and self-portraits made in Degas's own home and studio (fig. 15). Even if someone else was present to operate the camera (suggestions include Bartholomé and Degas's brother René),<sup>85</sup> the vision is clearly Degas's, from pose and lighting to the cropping of the finished prints. They echo not only his photographs of the Halévys but also his own painted self-portraits of decades earlier (fig. 16). In three self-portraits (pls. 21–23) the artist sits in his library, deep in thought, his eyes fixed on something beyond the real world. In two of these Degas

raises his hand to his chin, a gesture of reflection that he used frequently in both photographs and paintings (for example, in his self-portrait with Valernes from thirty years earlier; fig. 5). <sup>86</sup> In each, a single lamp seems to illuminate the scene, lighting Degas's face and hand while leaving the bookshelves and other details of the room in deep shadow. In one of the self-portraits, Degas's faithful maid Zoé stands behind him in the traditional place of the artist's muse, as in Ingres's *Cherubini and the Muse of Lyric Poetry* (fig. 17), not gazing meditatively like the artist but looking instead directly at the camera with an expression of skepticism but also indulgence. <sup>87</sup>

Another photograph from the same period shows Degas seated in his salon with Bartholomé (fig. 55);



Fig. 15. Edgar Degas, *Self-Portrait in the Studio*, 1895–96 (?), gelatin silver print. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. (Cat. 25)

Manet's *Ham* and Degas's portrait of Manet and his wife hang on the rear wall. Throughout the late 1880s and 1890s Bartholomé and Degas were the closest of friends, drawn together by a bond of sorrow after the death in 1887 of Madame Bartholomé, of whom Degas, too, was very fond. It was Degas who encouraged Bartholomé to leave painting for sculpture, believing that the act of sculpting a monument for the tomb of his wife would help ease Bartholomé's grief. It did, and it also set Bartholomé on the path to becoming a celebrated sculptor whose major work, the Monument to the Dead for Père Lachaise Cemetery, consumed his efforts for nine years beginning in 1890. In another self-portrait (pl. 24), Degas leans far back in his chair, just in front of a glass case holding plaster casts of two figures from Bartholomé's project, Weeping Girl and Angel of Death. Only Degas's head and hand (raised to chin again) emerge from the darkness, disembodied, glowing like the plaster sculptures. Degas's hand aligns with a plaster counterpart—perhaps the cast he owned of the hands of his idol, Ingres?—his head with the larger figure of the weeping girl. The correspondence between Degas and the sculptures is an abstracted and symbolic expression of his mental state, burdened with a mournful sense of mortality.

The Halévys were not the only friends to enjoy and endure Degas's attention as photographic subjects in autumn 1895. Julie Manet noted in her journal, too, that "M. Degas no longer thinks of anything but photography." The daughter of Édouard Manet's brother Eugène and Berthe Morisot, Julie was an orphan just turning seventeen; her father had died in April 1892 and her mother on March 2, 1895. She lived at 40 rue de Villejust, with her cousins Paule and Jeannie Gobillard, twenty-eight and eighteen years old, respectively. Julie's mother had installed the Gobillard sisters just four floors above the old Manet-Morisot apartment and had taken them under her wing when they were orphaned by the death of their mother, Berthe's sister Yves Morisot, in 1893. In a

letter to her daughter the day before her death, Berthe Morisot wrote that she hoped Julie would join her cousins in the rue de Villejust apartment. <sup>89</sup> The "little Manet girls," as they were called, <sup>90</sup> enjoyed the protection of Degas, of the painter Auguste Renoir, and of the poet Stéphane Mallarmé, whose daughter Geneviève was their close friend. By the fall of 1895 Degas, Renoir, and Monet were all beginning to prepare a memorial exhibition of Berthe Morisot's work that would eventually be held at Durand-Ruel's gallery on the anniversary of her death, with Mallarmé writing the introduction to the catalogue.

The cousins and their artist-protectors gathered for dinner at rue de Villejust one evening in mid-November. Before the soirée ended, Julie wrote, "[Degas] invited us all to have dinner at his house



Fig. 16. Edgar Degas, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1857–58, oil on paper, laid down on canvas. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

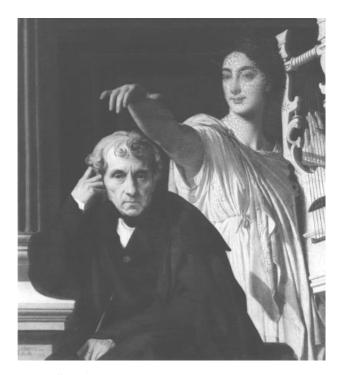


Fig. 17. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Cherubini* and the Muse of Lyric Poetry, 1842, oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

next week. He will make a photograph of us in the light, except that we have to hold the pose for three minutes; he wanted to see if we would be good models and posed M. Renoir, who began to laugh."91 When Julie, Jeannie, and Paule arrived the following Wednesday, November 20, Mallarmé, Renoir, and Bartholomé were there, and Degas was busy arranging a lamp that he had just bought to give the scene a sparkling light. 92 The gossip that these "four great artists" exchanged over dinner about their colleagues Zandomeneghi, Carolus-Duran, and Astruc amused Julie, and it was this that filled the pages of her journal, rather than any details of trials that Degas may have imposed on the group for the sake of photography. In the end, their posing was for naught: when Julie and Renoir paid a surprise visit at the end of the month to Degas's studio ("very cluttered; he is working a lot on a nude figure in sculpture"), he sheepishly

confessed that the photographs were all spoiled, and that he hadn't dared to show his face. 93 Degas tried again a few weeks later, on December 16, when the group gathered in the evening at the Manet-Gobillard apartment.94 Four photographs survive from this session, including Degas's masterful portrayal of Renoir and Mallarmé, perhaps his best known photograph (pl. 26). Mallarmé, leaning against the wall with his hands in his pockets, looks down affectionately at Renoir, seated in front of a mirror. Renoir (not laughing this time) leans a bit toward the poet, tilts his head back slightly, and fixes his gaze on the camera and photographer, which, in turn, are reflected in the mirror, although Degas's head is obscured by the glare of one of the oil lamps set around the room. The indistinct but recognizable forms of Mallarmé's wife and daughter, the subject of a separate photograph (pl. 25), are visible, too, in the reflected room. Paul Valéry, who married Jeannie Gobillard in 1900, inscribed on his print of this image, that "Degas inflicted on [Renoir and Mallarmé] a pose of fifteen minutes, by the light of nine oil lamps,"95 but Valéry wasn't present at the time, and an actual exposure time of two or three minutes is more likely. 96 Some modern commentators have interpreted the photograph as an essay on Degas's relation to Impressionism (represented by Renoir) and Symbolism (represented by Mallarmé).<sup>97</sup> Peter Galassi, quite correctly, has argued instead that to Degas, "these men were not symbols of abstract ideas" but rather "old dear friends whose companionship had long been part of the fabric of his life."98 The psychological interaction, expressed through the exchange of glances between Mallarmé, Renoir, and Degas—the camera eye standing in for his own—is a genuine engagement of three extraordinary and mutually respectful artists.

Daniel Halévy visited Degas on Sunday morning, December 22. After breakfast, with Zoé reading the newspaper and Degas speaking "about France, about photography, about photography, about France, all mixed together with equal excitement," Degas took Daniel to Tasset's to show his latest proofs—"a



Fig. 18. Possibly by Edgar Degas (or Madame Howland), *Charles Haas*, date unknown. Courtesy Bibliothèque National de France, Paris.

Mallarmé and Renoir, one of the Manet family, one of Madame Howland." By "the Manet family," he must have been referring to Degas's photograph of the Gobillard sisters, Julie, and Geneviève (pl. 28). Posing in the same spot as Renoir and Mallarmé, with Degas's camera again reflected in the mirror, the four young women are differentiated in appearance and expression, but are anchored and joined to one another by the continuous blackness of their dresses, a backdrop for the gentle sign language of their hand gestures.

By year's end, the participants themselves had not yet seen the results. Along with a New Year's box of candied fruit, Mallarmé sent a quatrain to each of the young women. For Paule he wrote: "Tors et gris comme apparaîtrait / Miré parmi la source un saule

/ Je tremble un peu de mon portrait / Avec Mademoiselle Paule" (Twisted and gray the way / a willow might by mirrored in a spring / I tremble at the thought / of my portrait with Miss Paule). The paternal pride and tenderness implicit in his poem are visible in his posture and expression in the photograph he awaited with mock trepidation (pl. 27). Julie responded on New Year's day that "All three of us were charmed last night when we came home to find the wonderful boxes of fruit with the quatrains which pleased us so much," adding that "We learned from M. Renoir that the photographs by M. Degas came out well and can be seen at Tasset's." This display at Tasset's, of which no critical notice has been found, was probably a small selection of prints, casually available for Degas's friends to see, rather than a true exhibition. As proud as Degas was to show his latest pictures to friends, he seems always to have kept photography within his intimate circle, not meaning it for public consumption.

Among the images that Halévy mentioned seeing at Tasset's was a portrait of Madame Howland, presumably the photograph shown in plate 29. Madame Howland, "about whom nothing was Anglo-Saxon but her name," 101 was born Hortense-Marie-Louise



Fig. 19. Edgar Degas, *Sulking*, ca. 1869–71, oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.43).

Delaroche-Laperrière in 1835.<sup>102</sup> At a young age she married a wealthy American, William Edgar Howland, but she remained in France when he left her for another woman, returned to the United States, and obtained custody of their young son.<sup>103</sup> The object of Eugène Fromentin's unrequited affection and recipient of 174 lovesick letters from him, she counted the Halévys, Jacques-Émile Blanche, and Degas among her friends, along with Charles Haas, Albert Boulanger-Cavé, Geneviève Straus, and many other men and women who, thinly veiled, would become characters in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*.<sup>104</sup>

"You know that Madame Howland is a photographer,"105 Degas wrote to Ludovic Halévy in 1887, around the time he appeared in some of the many photographs made in the garden behind her house on the rue de la Rochefoucauld or that of her neighbor Robert de Montesquiou (figs. 3, 52, 53). Françoise Heilbrun has shown that these outdoor tableaux vivants, once attributed to Degas, 106 are in fact the work of Howland, and suggests that Degas may even have owed his introduction and early guidance in photography to her. 107 Perhaps it was precisely because of her longer experience as an amateur photographer, Heilbrun suggests, that she felt justified in offering criticism of Degas's camera work. 108 Nonetheless, Howland's suggestions were unwelcome. Degas complained as he showed his portrait of her slightly Whistlerian in its frontal, full-length staging with an Oriental carpet as backdrop and in its elements of japonism-to Daniel Halévy: "Isn't it beautiful? But she won't see it. She'll let her dog lick it. She's a beast. The other day I showed her my beautiful Haas [possibly fig. 18]. 'It's all mottled,' she said. 'You'll have to touch it up.' Monster! I said nothing, gave her a look, tied up my package, and departed."109

Some of the pictorial devices found in Degas's photographs were developed earlier in his painting; the sharp division of a picture into distinctly different zones of space and activity found in the photographs of William Busnach (pl. 15) and Bartholomé and

Degas (fig. 55), for instance, finds antecedents in such paintings as The Ballet from "Robert le Diable" or Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub. The spatial complexity achieved in some of his compositions through the inclusion of doorways, mirrors, and pictures, as in Interior at Ménil-Hubert, 110 is also a central feature of Renoir and Mallarmé (pl. 26), the related photograph of the Gobillard sisters, Julie Manet, and Geneviève Mallarmé (pl. 28), and Paul Poujaud, Marie Fontaine, and Degas (pl. 32). 111 Degas's leaning pose and Poujaud's slouch in this last photograph parallel those of the figures in Degas's early canvas of about 1869-71, Sulking (fig. 19)-so much so that it was once thought that the photograph served as a model for the painting. The similarity is not coincidental. Degas still had the early canvas in his studio and must have been thinking about it during the very months he was photographing, since another painting, entitled Conversation, from about 1895, is clearly based on it. Degas deposited Sulking at his dealer Durand-Ruel's only on December 27, 1895. 112

Perhaps the most intriguing—as well as the most problematic—of Degas's photographs are those directly linked to his works in other media. No example has turned up to substantiate Jean Cocteau's claim that he had seen "photographs of [Degas's], which he enlarged himself, and then worked on directly in pastel, full of admiration of the grouping, foreshortening, and deformation of the foregrounds." Nonetheless, a handful of photographs attest to an explicit interchange between Degas's photographs and his paintings and pastels. Unfortunately, for these works we lack the eyewitness accounts that document so many of the portrait sessions.

Two such works, now lost, were among the four photographs exhibited in the 1936 Degas retrospective at the Pennsylvania (now Philadelphia) Museum of Art, on loan from the critic and collector Marcel Guérin, who indicated that they were found in the artist's studio after his death. The other two photographs exhibited in 1936 are the two landscapes now in the Fogg Art Museum; pls. 1 and 2.) Identified only as *Woman Ironing* and *Women Ironing*, these



Fig. 20. Edgar Degas, *Woman Ironing*, 1885–95, albumen or gelatin silver print. Formerly Collection Marcel Guérin; present whereabouts unknown. (Cat. 39a)



Fig. 21. Edgar Degas, *Woman Ironing*, 1874–78, oil on canvas. Formerly Collection Madame Jacques Doucet, Neuilly; present whereabouts unknown.



Fig. 22. Edgar Degas, *Women Ironing*, 1885–95, albumen or gelatin silver print. Formerly Collection Marcel Guérin; present whereabouts unknown. (Cat. 38a)



Fig. 23. Women Ironing, ca. 1876, oil on canvas, prior to Degas's reworking of the canvas in the mid-1880s (negative of fig. 22).



Fig. 24. Edgar Degas, *The Fireside*, ca. 1876–77, monotype. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, Elisha Whittelsey Collection, Elisha Whittelsey Fund, and Douglas Dillon Gift, 1968 (68.670).

photographs have long remained a tantalizing mystery, since this was a theme that Degas treated in painting and pastel many times in the 1880s and 1890s. We now know that the photographs were proposed for the 1936 show by Eleanor Mitchell, a young woman then finishing her master's thesis at Smith College, to whom Guérin had sent the four photographs, and Mitchell included copy prints and a detailed description of them in her thesis (figs. 20, 22). 115

They were, in fact, photographs of Degas's earlier paintings *Woman Ironing* (fig. 21) and *Women Ironing*. But rather than mere reproductions of the paintings,

these photographs were printed as negatives and laterally reversed. Because the canvas *Women Ironing* was reworked in the mid-1880s, we can be certain that Degas's original negative was made prior to that date—perhaps in 1885, when Degas sent photographs of some of his canvases to Walter Sickert to share with art students in London<sup>117</sup>—since it shows a previously unrecorded state of that painting (fig. 23). Long interested in unorthodox effects of lighting, Degas may have found himself at some later date attracted to the tonal reversal evident in the negatives themselves. To achieve the desired result, he would



Fig. 25. Edgar Degas, *After the Bath*, ca. 1896, oil on canvas. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Purchased: The Trustees of the Estate of George D. Widener.

have contact-printed the original negative onto an unexposed photographic plate to create an interpositive, from which, in turn, he could print a negative image on paper. He may have further altered the photographic image of *Women Ironing* by brushing paint or chemicals onto the negative or interpositive, possibly to soften the contrast.<sup>118</sup>

Although such inversions became characteristic of photographic experimentation by Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, and others between the two world wars, they were not at all standard practice in the 1880s or 1890s. For Degas, however, photography apparently represented a means of reworking an earlier motif in a new medium, and, in seeking a particular effect, he was as willing to stretch the accepted procedures and plastic qualities of his materials in photography as he had been in printmaking and pastel. The resulting images, with white figures against a dark ground, are consistent with the spirit of many of his photographic portraits of around 1895. They also bear a striking resemblance to the effects Degas achieved in his darkfield monotypes from the 1880s, such as The Fireside (fig. 24), and it is this resemblance that Degas may



Fig. 26. Edgar Degas, *After the Bath*, 1896, pastel and charcoal. Private collection.

have recognized and sought. That these photographs were not the discarded refuse of some reproductive endeavor but rather were saved by the artist as works of independent value is indicated by their presentation: Degas mounted each to a large sheet of heavy drawing paper—brilliant yellow for *Woman Ironing*, light green for *Women Ironing*. 119

There are two remarkable instances in which strikingly idiosyncratic photographs informed Degas's paintings and pastels of the late 1890s. In both cases, the link between the photographic source and the works in other media is indisputable, but the photographs themselves have been the subject of much debate concerning authorship, provenance, dating, and technique. An extraordinary nude study in the collection of the Getty Museum (pl. 36) served as the basis for one of Degas's major late canvases, *After the Bath* (fig. 25), painted about 1896, and for several



Fig. 27. Anonymous, ca. 1900. Gelatin silver print postcard.

smaller studies of the same date in pastel and charcoal (fig. 26). Degas's friend Georges Jeanniot witnessed the artist posing a model in this very position: "I saw him with a model, trying to pose her in the movement of drying herself while leaning on the high padded back of a chair covered with a bathrobe. This movement is complicated. The woman being shown from the back, you see her shoulder blades, but the right shoulder, bearing the weight of the body, takes a most unexpected shape, which suggests some kind of acrobatic activity of violent effort." Jeanniot made no mention of Degas photographing the scene (his discussion concerned Degas's understanding of movement), but there can be little doubt that his comments

refer to the pose represented in this photograph. Although the size and color of the print differ from other firmly attributed Degas photographs, the strong directional lighting is familiar, and the patterned fabric on the chaise longue, recognizable in a portrait photograph of Degas (fig. 7), proves that the photograph was made in his studio. 121

Most compelling for the attribution to Degas is the aesthetic quality of the photograph itself. It is difficult to imagine any other photographer of the period making such a nude study. The contortions and distortions of the body are typical of the emotional charge found so often in Degas's late work; equally characteristic of his work is the suppression of the model's head in deep shadow. These wholly personal elements separate his remarkable photograph from each of the contemporary genres of the nude: the boilerplate photographs of classically posed nudes, available to artists as substitutes for the live model beginning in the 1870s; the overtly erotic "French postcard" designed to titillate, in which the thin veil of art covers little of its intention (fig. 27); and the softly focused, vaguely allegorical nudes of Photo-Club pictorialism. Robert Demachy's Académie of 1900 (fig. 28) or René Le Bègue's "painterly" Académie of 1902 (fig. 29), perfect examples of this last genre, are as saccharine and self-consciously "arty" and artificial as Degas's nude is visceral and authentic. One can only guess what Degas thought of the work displayed in the second salon of the Photo-Club de Paris, selected by a jury heavily weighted with painters and sculptors whose taste Degas no doubt deplored and held at Durand-Ruel's (Degas's dealer) in March and April 1895, just at the time of his earliest involvement with the medium.<sup>122</sup>

A second photograph at the Getty (pl. 35), showing a model putting on her stockings, has been closely associated with that of the nude drying herself, but its authorship is less secure. Although the two were found together in a context not otherwise associated with Degas, their earlier provenance is unknown and is not necessarily identical. The intimacy of the



Fig. 28. Robert Demachy, *Académie*, 1900, gum bichromate print. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1933 (33.43.57).

scene, the slight awkwardness of the pose, and the strong directional lighting all suggest Degas, and the size and matière of this photograph are close to those of the first nude. Nonetheless, there is nothing in this second photograph that firmly places the scene in Degas's studio (as the fabric does in the first), and it has no direct corollaries in painting or pastel. The questions posed are, at this point, unanswerable: Was there a larger body of nude photographs by Degas, many of which, like the photograph of the nude putting on her stockings, had no direct association with his work in other media? Conversely, were there other nude studies by Degas, now lost, that corresponded as directly to clusters of his paintings and pastels as the first Getty nude does to the Philadelphia

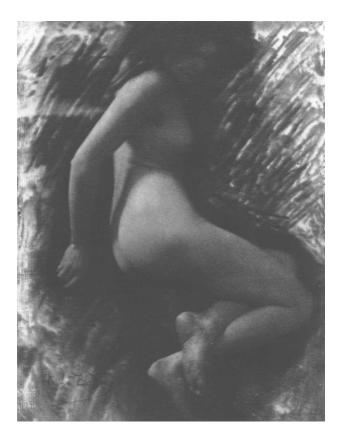


Fig. 29. René Le Bègue, *Académie*, 1902, gum bichromate print. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1933 (33.43.258).

painting and related works? Are the dimensions and print quality of these two photographs truly inconsistent with Degas's other photographs or merely with the identified work, all tightly dated around fall 1895 and different in subject matter? As with the two landscapes from Saint-Valéry, these photographs may seem anomalous only because of the truncated scope of the oeuvre as a whole.

Also problematic is the final group of photographs, three glass negatives showing a dancer in various poses (pls. 37–39; figs. 30–32). These, too, apparently served as direct models for numerous drawings and pastels of the late 1890s, with Degas combining the poses from the three images in a single composition, the magnificent pastel that is in the



Fig. 30. Edgar Degas, *Dancer (Arm Outstretched)*, 1895–96, modern gelatin silver print from the original negative (pl. 37). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Pushkin Fine Art Museum, Moscow, *Behind the Scenes* (Dancers in Blue) of about 1898 (fig. 33). These are among Degas's most appealing photographs, in part because of their unusual appearance—the plates are shades of orange and red, with some portions reading as a negative and others as a positive—and in part because they treat a theme central to his art with a formal structure, grace, and intimacy that are uniquely his.

As with the nude studies, Degas's authorship of these photographs has not been universally accepted. Unlike the two nude studies, however, the negatives of the dancer were among the photographs given in 1920 to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France



Fig. 31. Edgar Degas, *Dancer (Adjusting Her Shoulder Strap)*, 1895–96, modern gelatin silver print from the original negative (pl. 38). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

by the artist's brother René and are assumed to have been found in Degas's studio after his death. The very fact that *negatives* rather than *prints* were found among Degas's possessions also argues strongly for Degas's authorship, for if the work was posed and photographed by someone else, it is unlikely that the negatives would have ended up with Degas.

In truth, the most persuasive evidence lies again in the pictures themselves. It is difficult to imagine Degas basing scores of drawings, pastels, and paintings on photographs as idiosyncratic as these if they were not his own; as with the twisting nude, Degas's use of these images is fundamentally different from his use of, say, Muybridge's photographs of



Fig. 32. Edgar Degas, *Dancer (Adjusting Both Shoulder Straps)*, 1895–96, modern gelatin silver print from the original negative (pl. 39). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

horses in motion; these are not mere raw materials—they are powerfully individual works. It is even more difficult to imagine who but Degas could have made these photographs of dancers, or who would have done so under such seemingly improvised conditions. Again, one need only look at the most advanced photographic art of the day to see what a self-consciously artistic French photographer was producing in imitation of Degas: Robert Demachy's Behind the Scenes (fig. 35), a gum bichromate print from precisely the same time, is a pastiche of Degas dancers. Demachy tries to make a Degas—dressing his models in the appropriate tutus, silhouetting one figure and lighting

the other as if with footlights, and presenting a privileged view backstage during a moment of relaxation—but it remains a tableau vivant, a translation of the surface without the soul. Demachy's photograph lacks the genuine sense of intimacy present in the Degas photographs as well as the astonishing sense of the plasticity of the medium.

By the standards of any professional photographer of the turn of the century, these three negatives are a disaster and would likely have been discarded. In one case (pl. 39) the image is barely visible and overlaid with a rippled texture; in another (pl. 37) the depiction of light and dark is inconsistent and contradictory; and all three have a surprising orange and red tonality, possibly the result of trying to chemically intensify an underexposed negative or reduce an overexposed one. 126 In Dancer (Arm Outstretched), portions of the plate (i.e., of the negative) read positively; for instance, the hand seems to cast a shadow on the screen, and the bowed head appears lit from above, with the face shadowed. The inconsistency is more readily evident in a positive print made from the negative (fig. 30); there, the dress, arms, and chest appear correctly lit, while the head reads like a negative and the hand seems to cast a light shadow instead of a dark one; in addition, the lightest areas, such as the outstretched arm and hand, seem to have a dark halo. This selected reversal of tones, known as the Sabatier effect, or, more popularly, as solarization, occurs when a partially developed but unfixed negative is exposed to light, further developed, and then fixed (stabilized.)<sup>127</sup> Although discovered around 1860 and thought at the time to be a possible means of making direct positives, the Sabatier effect was generally forgotten until Man Ray used it in the late 1920s. 128 As in Degas's creation of negative prints of his paintings (figs. 20, 22) or his acceptance of the accidental double exposures (pls. 19, 20), these photographs of dancers show Degas to have been ahead of his time, willing to exploit unexpected and untraditional properties of photography that would not become a part of the medium's vocabulary until decades later. Trying



Fig. 33. Edgar Degas, Behind the Scenes (Dancers in Blue), ca. 1898, pastel. Pushkin Fine Art Museum, Moscow.

to unravel negative from positive in these images is much like trying to separate in one's mind the double-exposed images of the Halévy family; 129 the unexpected and unexplainable are what make these images mysterious and compelling.

We cannot know whether Degas achieved the effect here by intent or by accident, but the light of the theater—a world of artifice where the expected relationships of the real world are turned upsidedown—was a decades-old preoccupation of his (fig. 36), and the lighting effects seen in these three negatives might well have appealed to him. Although none survives, it seems likely that Degas would have made prints of these images (or had Tasset make enlargements) since the related drawings and pastels generally follow the tonal relationships of the positive images. Nor does it seem unlikely that other figures repeated throughout this series—such as the dancer touching the screen, but with her head raised and her other hand on her hip, seen in several compositions including The Dancers (fig. 34)—had their origin in now-lost

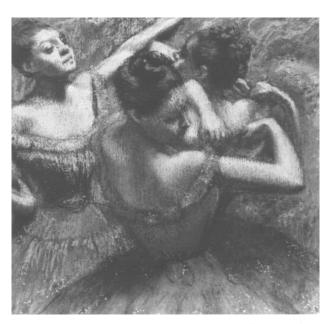


Fig. 34. Edgar Degas, *The Dancers*, ca. 1899, pastel. The Toledo Museum of Art.

photographs of the same model in variant poses. Not necessarily intended as finished works of art, nor as mere mechanical aids to the artistic process, the *Dancer* negatives, like the *Nude*, are best understood as part of a creative continuum that began with the initial posing and lighting of the model, and crossed through various media as Degas copied, traced, counterproofed, and combined his own compositions in a fluid series of pictures and sculpture (figs. 33, 34, 37).

Just how long Degas continued to photograph is unclear. The references in his letters and in the journals of Daniel Halévy and Julie Manet all occur in late 1895. The landscapes near Saint-Valéry, often dated 1896–98, were more likely made in September 1895. That same autumn, or perhaps slightly later in 1896, seems a likely date for the photographs of nudes and dancers, based on the dating of related works in different media. Certain photographs are impossible to date precisely, but in no case does a date of late 1895 seem improbable. Only a single photograph (pl. 34)



Fig. 35. Robert Demachy, *Behind the Scenes* (detail), ca. 1897, gum bichromate print. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949 (49.55.206).

is documented as having been made after Degas's well documented burst of activity in 1895—and that one substantially later, in 1901—suggesting that the camera equipment that still remained in his studio at the time of his death was pulled out from time to time. <sup>131</sup> The story of the little girl who is the subject, Claudie Léouzon le Duc, remembered by her "with a terrifying impression" even in old age, is familiar: Degas arrived for dinner at the home of her parents carrying his tripod and camera. After a cheerful meal, he took charge, placing an oil lamp on a stool and posing his young model nestled in the corner of a settee. "I remember my pose. My legs were folded so that they wouldn't stick out in front, my arm pushed into



Fig. 36. Edgar Degas, *The Song of the Dog*, ca. 1876–77, gouache and pastel over monotype. Private collection.

a cushion, my head placed by his hands as he wished. Only in front of him was I immobile. His eyes fixed on me; my eyelids blinked, but that didn't matter." The pose was four minutes—"and that was hard!" Little had changed in Degas's directorial style since his evenings in the Halévy living room.

In the larger context of Degas's career, photography was clearly a passionate but brief endeavor; why he stopped is as difficult to explain as why he took it up. Had Degas passed through the sadness and grief that accompanied the death of his sister and that helped spur his photographic activity? No. He continued to grieve for Marguerite; other friends died—Valernes in



Fig. 37. Edgar Degas, *Dancer Adjusting the Shoulder Strap of her Bodice*, bronze statuette cast in 1920 from a wax sculpture probably of ca. 1896–99. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.403).

March 1896, for instance; and Degas's own health deteriorated gradually over the years. Nor, given his sense of creative experimentation with other materials, does it seem likely that he would merely have found his frequent mistakes too discouraging to continue—he readily admitted them and seemed willing to risk failure to achieve the effects he sought. Nor, finally, does it seem that his eyesight was simply too poor to continue; although he mentioned in a letter to Whistler that he wanted his brother to be on hand to focus for the "blind photographer," he managed to find ways around his vision problems in many other

activities, and the portrait of Claudie Léouzon le Duc from 1901 indicates that he was still capable of carrying out his camera work without problems five or six years after having largely abandoned the medium.

Perhaps photography was one more experimental means of making pictures that he explored for a short period, like the color monotypes begun in Burgundy in 1890. We might just as well ask why Degas stopped making his dark field monotypes after a brief period and so small a body of innovative and moving works, or why the dreamily abstract rendering of the Burgundy landscapes was not repeated, or why he made fewer than twenty lithographs. In asking the question, we may be making more of a distinction between media than Degas did. Perhaps, despite all the spoiled negatives along the way, he felt that he had solved the problem of the meditative lamp-lit nocturnal portrait. If more work had survived, we might see too that Degas felt that he had sufficiently explored the photographic representation of the nude and the dancer. Perhaps, contrary to expectation and leaving no trace a century later, Degas had even succeeded in photographing the moonlight.

In 1905, at the wedding of Mathilde Niaudet, Daniel and Élie Halévy spotted Degas, looking very old, with long white hair, his eyes clear but too weak to recognize them. At the reception, the Halévy brothers brought various wedding guests to Degas, stationed by the window in Jules Taschereau's study. One guest, who had seen him at Mont-Dore in 1895, made Degas and the others laugh as she reminded him of making photographs at night. "I took the reflections on the walls, and I got results," Degas said. "One night, I remember, as I was working, I heard a woman and her husband passing on the road; and they stopped; and the woman said: 'But what is he doing—photography?' The husband replied, 'Let's go, he's a madman!' Oh, photography, that was a great passion, I bothered all my friends; I made some nice things, didn't I, Daniel? Here's what happened: my blacks were pushed too far, my whites not enough, so that both became simplified, like in the old masters." <sup>133</sup>

## Notes

- Some of the translations cited have been altered slightly for greater accuracy.
- 1. Letter from Degas to Lucie De Gas, Marquise Guerrero, Aug. 18, 1895; Letters of Degas 1947, p. 195; Lettres de Degas 1945, p. 207.
- 2. Letter from Degas to Henri Rouart, Aug. 12, 1895; Letters of Degas 1947, pp. 209–10, incorrectly dated June 30, [1898]; Lettres de Degas 1945, pp. 223–24, incorrectly dated Aug. 12, 1896 or 1898. The correct date is given in Michael Pantazzi, "Lettres de Degas à Thérèse Morbilli conservées au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada" RACAR XV/2 (1988). I thank Theodore Reff for directing me to Pantazzi's correction.
- 3. See *The Private Collection of Edgar Degas* (New York: 1997).
- 4. Julie Manet, in her journal, Nov. 20, 1895; Manet 1979, p. 71; Manet 1987, p. 74.
- 5. Lafond 1918-19, vol. 1, p. 114.
- 6. Richard Kendall, *Degas Beyond Impressionism* (London: 1996). For Degas's correspondence during his trip through Burgundy, see *Letters of Degas* 1947, pp. 153–68; *Lettres de Degas* 1945, pp. 159–74.
- 7. Walter Sickert, "Degas," Burlington Magazine (Nov. 1917), p. 191.
- 8. Richard Kendall, "Degas and the Contingency of Vision," *Burlington Magazine* (Spring 1988), pp. 180–97.
- 9. Letter from Degas to Évariste de Valernes, Dec. 6, 1891. Letters of Degas 1947, pp. 174–75; Lettres de Degas 1945, p. 183, incorrectly dated July 6, 1891.
- 10. Letter from Degas to Évariste de Valernes, undated. Fevre 1949, p. 86.
- 11. Loyrette 1991, pp. 634, 803 n. 550.
- 12. His portrait of the Princesse de Metternich (Lemoisne 89), ca. 1861, is based on a Disdéri carte-de-visite. John Rewald, "Le Portrait de la princesse de Metternich par Degas," L'Amour de l'Art (Mar. 1937), p. 89.
- 13. Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 459–63.
- 14. Françoise Heilbrun provides biographical details about Barnes in Heilbrun 1989, p. 162.
- 15. Élie Halévy remembered that the photograph was prompted by an *Apotheosis of Carolus Duran* in one of the illustrated weeklies that had appeared a few days earlier. Élie Halévy, *Correspondance (1891–1937)*, edited by Henriette Guy-Loë (Paris: 1996), no. 733.
- 16. Letter from Degas to Ludovic Halévy, [Sept. 23, 1885]. Letters of Degas 1947, p. 110; Lettres de Degas 1945, p. 112.

- 17. Letter from Zandomeneghi to Martelli, Aug. 31, 1895, in Francesca Dini, Federico Zandomeneghi, la vita et le opere (Florence: 1989), p. 511. Letter from Zandomeneghi to Martelli, Nov. 1895, in Dini, p. 513. These letters were recognized as the earliest records of Degas's photographic activity by Françoise Heilbrun (Heilbrun 1989, p. 167).
- 18. Jeanne Raunay, "Degas, souvenirs anecdotiques," *La Revue de France*, 11/2 (Mar.-Apr. 1931), p. 472.
- 19. Newhall 1963, p. 62.
- 20. Newhall 1956; Newhall 1963.
- 21. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 11, 1895; Newhall 1956, pp. 125–26; Newhall 1963, pp. 63–64.
- 22. Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 542–44.
- 23. Ibid., pp. 112–14. Degas asked Tasset to send the enlargements to him "to have forwarded to Carpentras." Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 24. Letter from Degas to his sister Marguerite, Aug. 15, 1895; Fevre 1949, p. 93.
- 25. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
- 26. Ibid., p. 93.
- 27. Ibid.
- 28. Letter from Degas to his sister Marguerite, Aug. 18, [1895]; Fevre 1949, p. 99.
- 29. Letter from Degas to his sister Marguerite, Sept. 18, 1895; Fevre 1949, pp. 95–96.
- 30. Fevre 1949, p. 93; Loyrette 1991, p. 801–2, n. 526.
- 31. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 15, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 32. Letter from Degas to his sister Marguerite, Aug. 15, 1895; Fevre 1949, p. 93.
- 33. Letter from Degas to his sister Marguerite, Aug. 18, 1895; Fevre 1949, p. 99
- 34. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 12, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 35. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 13, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 36. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 15, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 37. Auguste and Louis Lumière, "Sur l'orthochromatisme," Bulletin de la Société française de photographie, 2e série, XI (June 15, 1895), pp. 308–12; cited in Newhall 1956, p. 124. Newhall states that Lumière Brothers advertisements offered only "plaques orthochromatiques" through 1895.
- 38. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 13, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.

- 39. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 18, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 40. "Je prie aussi votre fille de tirer 2 épreuves des nos. 2, 3, 4, une sur mat, une sur émail (dans la tôle vernie)..." Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 11, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64. Newhall mistranslated "dans la tôle vernie" as "on varnished cloth." Heilbrun reads the directions literally, indicating a request for a photograph on enamel, which would seem inconsistent with the rest of the sentence, "...mount them and send them to me (to have forwarded to Carpentras)" or his postscript, on second thought, "The three enlargements, send them to me rolled, not mounted."
- 41. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 11, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 125; Newhall 1963, p. 63.
- 42. Ibic
- 43. Ibid.
- 44. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 16, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 45. Letter from Degas to Tasset, Aug. 17, 1895; Newhall 1956, p. 126; Newhall 1963, p. 64.
- 46. Ibid.
- 47. See Denis Rouart, Degas à la recherche de sa technique (Paris: 1945).
- 48. Degas's changes are visible in the X-ray of the canvas, reproduced and discussed in Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, p. 112.
- 49. The precise location of these two views, previously identified by their titles in the 1936 Pennsylvania Museum of Art catalogue, *Cliffs by the Beach* and *Trees by a Road*, is provided by Henri Loyrette in Loyrette 1991, p. 788 n. 210.
- 50. Regarding the dating and attribution of these two photographs, see p. 135, cat. 34. Note that the photographs were made at Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme, not Saint-Valéry-en-Caux as sometimes reported.
- 51. Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 502–6; Richard Kendall, *Degas Landscapes* (New Haven and London: 1993), pp. 145–83.
- 52. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Nov. 4, 1895; Halévy 1964, p. 69; Halévy 1995, p. 140.
- 53. Letter from Degas to his sister Marguerite, Sept. 18, 1895; Fevre 1949, pp. 95–96.
- 54. Letter from Degas to Ludovic Halévy, Sept. 30, 1895; *Letters of Degas* 1947, pp. 195–96, incorrectly dated Sept. 29, 1895; *Lettres de Degas* 1945, p. 208, with the same date. The correct date is given in Michael Pantazzi, "Lettres de Degas à Thérèse Morbilli conservées au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada" *RACAR* 15, no. 2 (1988), p. 132.

- 55. Letter from Zandomeneghi to Diego Martelli, Nov. 1895, in Dini, p. 512; Lamberto Vitali, ed., *Lettere dei Macchiaioli* (Turin: 1953), p. 313; Heilbrun 1989, p. 167.
- 56. Ibid.
- 57. Halévy 1964, p. 91.
- 58. Letter from Degas to Ludovic Halévy, Sept. 30, 1895; Letters of Degas 1947, pp. 195–96; Lettres de Degas 1945, p. 208. Regarding the date of the letter, see note 54.

Degas's greeting to "Louise la révéleuse" has been taken by many authors (Guérin first of all) as indicating that Mme Halévy developed Degas's negatives, a supposition otherwise unsupported (Lettres de Degas 1945, p. 208 n. 2). An alternate meaning, "Louise the dreamer," has been suggested with reference to Degas's portrait of Mme Halévy reclining with her eyes closed (pl. 5), but such a translation does not seem possible linguistically. It has also been suggested that Degas was playing a word game that would have been understood as a punning reference to an anarchist character much in the news at the moment, Louise Michel, popularly referred to as "Louise la petroleuse." In fact, the explanation may be as simple as Louise having been busy developing plates when Degas stopped by without warning the day before (see following note); Degas's letter began: "I can well believe that you did not expect me yesterday, my dear friend, seeing that I had not written."

- 59. Ludovic Halévy in his journal, Sept. 29, 1895; Halévy 1996, p. 157.
- 60. The history of the Breguet and Niaudet families and of Degas's early relationship with them is detailed in Jean-Pierre Halévy's preface to Halévy 1995, pp. 7–12.
- 61. Loyrette 1996, p. 180.
- 62. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Jan. 4, 1891, describing events of Jan. 1; Halévy 1964, p. 45, incorrectly dated Dec. 30, 1890; Halévy 1995, p. 102.
- 63. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Nov. 4, 1895; Halévy 1964, p. 69; Halévy 1995, pp. 139–40.
- 64. Degas's letter of September 30 (see notes 54, 58) implies that he has been holed up in his studio and has not yet photographed at the Halévys'; Daniel's remarks on November 4 (see note 63) indicate that by that date Degas had already photographed several times; and by the session on October 14 (see below) Degas was using 9 x 12 cm negatives.
- 65. The negative here too is 8 x 10 cm. Louise Halévy wears the same dress as in the previous two images, and prints of all three images

- are mounted to the same page in an Halévy family album (cat. nos. 1a, 2a, 3a.) This image has, on occasion, been identified incorrectly as showing Degas and his maid Zoé (e.g., Fevre 1949, frontispiece and p. 140; Hoctin 1960, pp. 40–41; Terrasse 1983, p. 49).
- 66. The print illustrated as fig. 10, apparently passed from the Fevre family to the dealer André Weil. A same-size copy print was made by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1942, and it is that copy print that is illustrated. The present whereabouts of the original is unknown.
- 67. "I have no true affection for Degas, whom I have every reason to love, because I admire him too much." Daniel Halévy in his journal, between April and September 1892; Halévy 1964, p. 65, incorrectly dated April 17, 1892; Halévy 1995, p. 126.
- 68. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Nov. 4, 1895; Halévy 1964, p. 69; Halévy 1995, pp. 140–41.
- 69. Letter from Degas to Henri Fevre, Nov. 18, 1895; Fevre 1949, p. 103.
- 70. Ibid
- 71. Letter from Degas to Henri Fevre, Jan. 19, 1896; Fevre 1949, p. 105.
- 72. Letter from Degas to Henri Fevre, May 18, 1896; Fevre 1949, pp. 106–7.
- 73. Letter from Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Mary Russell Mitford, Dec. 7, 1843, *Elizabeth Barrett to Miss Mitford*, Betty Miller, ed. (London: 1954).
- 74. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Nov. 4, 1895; Halévy 1964, p. 69; Halévy 1995, pp. 139~40.
- 75. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 1, 1895; Halévy 1964, pp. 87–88, misdated Dec. 18, 1896; Halévy 1995, p. 144. For dating, see Jean-Pierre Halévy in Halévy 1995, p. 143, note.
- 76. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 29, 1895 (but writing about events two weeks earlier); Halévy 1964, p. 82; Halévy 1995, pp. 148–49.
- 77. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 29, 1895; Halévy 1964, p. 82; Halévy 1995, pp. 147–48.
- 78. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 29, 1895; Halévy 1964, pp. 82–83; Halévy 1995, pp. 149–50.
- 79. In this picture, contrary to Daniel's description, Jules Taschereau *seems* to grasp his leg with his left hand. In fact, the print is laterally reversed, as shown by the pictures on the wall.
- 80. We have no way of knowing which exposure was made first. Degas may have set the scene with the Halévy father and son and then changed it little for the picture of the Niaudet mother and daughter.

- 81. Most insistently, Crimp 1978, pp. 90–91. Crimp believed that "two photographic negatives [were] sandwiched together and printed at the same time," making possible a carefully calculated relationship of the two images, an assumption made on the basis of copy prints. In fact, one negative from the December 28 session is in the Musée d'Orsay collection and shows the double exposure to have occurred in the camera and not in printing.
- 82. I thank Carlos Alberto Cruz for bringing this letter to my attention. The full letter is transcribed, and its recipient identified, in Halévy 1995, pp. 254–55. The prints sent to Cavé are cats. 11b and 12c.
- 83. Walter Sickert, "Degas," Burlington Magazine (1917), p. 184.
- 84. Jean Moréas, "A Literary Manifesto," Le Figaro (Sept. 18, 1886), in Eugen Weber, Paths to the Present: Aspects of European Thought from Romanticism to Existentialism (New York: 1960), p. 209.
- 85. It is also possible, with exposures of two or three minutes, that Degas may not have needed anyone's assistance in making the exposure.
- 86. Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 112, 114 n. 5.
- 87. Richard Thompson has likened this image to Ingres's portrait of Cherubini, "a portrait [Degas] had copied as a student, in which the pensive artist likewise sits brooding, but attended by a muse rather than a bonne! With Degas, reverence was often mixed with irony." Richard Thompson, The Private Degas (London: 1987), p. 33.
- 88. Julie Manet in her journal, Nov. [13], 1985; Manet 1979, p. 71.
- 89. Letter from Berthe Morisot to her daughter Julie, Mar. 1, 1895; Correspondance de Berthe Morisot (Paris: 1950), pp. 184–85, cited in Paris, Ottawa, New York, 1988–89, pp. 539, 540 n. 3.
- 90. Jean Renoir, Renoir, My Father (London: 1962), p. 268, cited in Paris, Ottawa, New York, 1988–89, pp. 539, 540 n. 5.
- 91. Julie Manet in her journal, Nov. [13], 1895; Manet 1979, p. 71.
- 92. Julie Manet in her journal, Nov. 20, 1895; Manet 1979, p. 72.
- 93. Julie Manet in her journal, Nov. 29, 1895; Manet 1979, p. 73.
- 94. Peter Galassi dates the photographic session December 16, 1895, noting that Julie Manet contracted chicken pox at the beginning of the month and kept away from others, that she wrote a letter to Mallarmé on December 8 inviting him to dinner on the 16th, and that Daniel Halévy reported seeing Degas's

- "latest proofs," including the Renoir and Mallarmé, on December 22. Galassi 1985, p. 120 n.15.
- 95. For Valéry's full inscription, see cat. 15b, p. 130.
- 96. Galassi points out that Valéry did not meet Mallarmé until 1898. Galassi 1985, p. 120 n. 16.
- 97. Roosa 1982; Crimp 1978.
- 98. Galassi 1985, p. 119.
- 99. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 22, 1895; Halévy 1964, p. 73; Halévy 1995, p. 146.
- 100. Letter from Julie Manet to Stéphane Mallarmé, Jan. 1, 1896; Stephanie Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, Henri Mondor and Lloyd James Austin, eds. (Paris: 1959–1985), v. 8, p. 29, n. 2. Mallarme's quatrain has been translated by Jeanine Herman, 1998.
- 101. Daniel Halévy, Pays parisiens. . . (Paris: 1932).
- 102 Not to be confused with Adélaïde Torrance, Mrs. Meredith Howland, born 1846, who moved in some of the same circles of Parisian Society. See Suffel and Wright 1973.
- 103. I am grateful to Barbara Wright for sharing with me her research on Madame Howland.
- 104. Suffel and Wright 1973.
- 105. Letter from Degas to Ludovic Halévy, July 1887; Heilbrun 1989, p. 163.
- 106. Janis 1984, pp. 465-66.
- 107. Heilbrun 1989, pp. 163-66.
- 108. Heilbrun 1989, p. 166.
- 109. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 22, 1895.Halévy 1995, p. 147; Halévy 1964, pp. 73-74.
- 110. The Ballet from "Robert le Diable" is Lemoisne 391; Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub is Lemoisne 872; Interior at Ménil-Hubert is Lemoisne 312.
- 111. See the chapter "Pictures within Pictures" in Theodore Reff, *Degas: The Artist's Mind* (New York: 1976).
- 112. Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 146–48; 534–35.
- 113. Jean Cocteau, "Professional Secrets," in *A Call to Order*, Rollo H. Myers, trans. (New York: 1974), p. 118.
- 114. The Pennsylvania Museum of Art, Degas 1834-1917, Intro. by Agnes Mongan (Philadelphia: 1936), p. 52.

- 115. Mitchell 1936, pp. 58–60 and figs. 115–16.
- 116. Woman Ironing is Lemoisne 361; Women Ironing is Lemoisne 686.
- 117. Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988-89, p. 372.
- 118. Lacking the original print and judging only on the basis of Mitchell's copy photograph and description ("The photograph gives the impression that the surface of the negative must have been wiped across with a coarse brush dipped in some solvent." Mitchell 1936, pp. 59–60), it is difficult to judge how, why, or whether Degas altered the negative.
- 119. Mitchell 1936, pp. 59-60.
- 120. Georges Jeanniot, "Souvenirs sur Degas [part I]," Revue universelle 55 (Oct. 15, 1933), p. 159. Antoine Terrasse first cited this passage in association with the Getty photograph; Terrasse 1983, p. 45.
- 121. Antoine Terrasse was the first to observe the matching fabric; Terrasse 1983, p. 46 and fig. 63.
- 122. The jury was headed by Jean-Léon Gérôme.
- 123. Regarding the provenance of these two photographs, see pp. 136–37, cats. 40a and 41a.
- 124. Allowing for slight trimming at the edges, the size of the two nude studies is consistent with the negatives of dancers, discussed below. Those plates measure  $13 \times 18$  cm.
- 125. For example, George Shackelford writes: "It cannot be proved that Degas made the photographs or even that he directed their composition. The sole basis for our assumption of Degas' authorship is the evident relationship between the photographs and his paintings, pastels, and drawings." *Degas: The Dancers* (Washington, D.C.: 1985), pp. 112–13.
- 126. I am grateful to Bertrand Lavédrine for his examination and analysis of these negatives and to Nora Kennedy for her thoughts on technical issues. Kennedy's observations and Lavédrine's analysis have proven the negatives to be gelatin dry-plates (rather than collodion as Buerger claimed and subsequent writers repeated).
- 127. Strictly speaking, solarization is a reversal of tones resulting from extreme overexposure, whereas the reversal of tones in *Dancer (Arm Outstretched)* occurs in unexposed portions of the negative. In common practice, *Sabatier effect* and *solarization* are used synonymously.

- 128. The effect was first described by Henri de la Blanchère in 1859, and by Sabatier only in 1862. For a technical explanation and historical perspective, see William L. Jolly, "An Explanation of the Sabatier Effect," *Journal of Imaging Science* 29/4 (July/Aug. 1985), pp. 138–43.
- 129. Evidence of how confusing this can beand perhaps the cause of some of that confusion—is found in Janet Buerger's first article (Buerger 1978), where she misidentified a copy photograph of the plate as being a print made from the plate, and the print from the plate as a photograph of the plate. Needless to say, her subsequent reading of the image, for instance her observation that the plates are positive images and that some of Degas's pastels follow the tonal relationships visible in those plates, is somewhat confused by this error. Douglas Crimp's discussion of these photographs (Crimp 1978, p. 98) appears based on a misconception that the prints he illustrated were vintage prints, positive and negative and laterally reversed from one another, made by Degas.
- 130. Françoise Heilbrun first argued for a much tighter date range for Degas's photographs than had previously been thought (Heilbrun 1989). Two references previously taken as indicative of a later involvement with photography have since been redated: Daniel Halévy's description of Degas arriving at the Halévy home with photographs of Haas, Reyer, du Lau, and Howland (see p. 30), dated Dec. 18, 1896, in Halévy 1960 and Halévy 1964 has now been corrected to read Dec. 1, 1895, in Halévy 1995; and Degas's letter from Mont-Dore to Henri Rouart ("In the evenings I digest and photograph in the twilight"), dated Aug. 12, 1896 or 1898, in Lettres 1931 and Lettres 1945, and June 30, [1898], in Letters 1947, is now correctly dated Aug. 12, 1895 (see note 2).
- 131. Among the items found in his studio at the time of his death were "a very large camera and accessories." Succession de M. Edgar Degas, Prisée des Mobilier au 5e étage; Fevre archives, Centre de documentation du Musée d'Orsay, Paris. I thank Rebecca Rabinow for this information.
- 132. Terrasse 1983, pp. 102–3; Loyrette 1991, pp. 586–87.
- 133. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Nov. 23, 1905; Halévy 1995, pp. 179–80.



## Edgar Degas's Photographic Theater

EUGENIA PARRY

On voit comme on veut voir; c'est faux et cette fausseté constitue l'Art. Degas<sup>1</sup>

Va donc, eh! Faux peintre, faux artiste, faux . . . tographe! Degas to Nadar<sup>2</sup>

That Degas thought like a photographer long before he actually took up the camera is puzzling but essential in explaining how he taught us to see. More than any other nineteenth-century painter, he understood what it is to see photographically, which does not mean fixing on particulars. Degas, who put drawing first, was a confident renderer of facts, attracted to the precision in the millions of photographs of the time around him. But artistically, he believed that the camera's glass-eyed harvest was abominable. Degas's vision was selective. Though representationally eloquent, it subverted mere realism with a philosophy of calculated theatrics.

Theater, to Degas, meant the pose. He was schooled to render the human figure in contours to equal the heroes in classical painting, drama, or scenes from ancient history. Such ideas meant more than defining painting's ethical purpose as he did when he was young. Drawing the players in these tableaux was for Degas, as for his revered master, Ingres, proof of artistic legitimacy.

While photography was developing the technologies to show real life that was believable through a fraction-of-a-second view, Degas contrived to paint familiar events as if caught by a single glance. This temporal reduction alludes to something mysterious, a theater of the modern psyche, in which the artist asks us to ponder the mercurial human spirit of his time.

Meeting this sensation in his actors, we discover Degas's consuming ambivalence toward contemporary existence, and we experience the discomfort he makes us feel with our own.

Degas loved the sublime movements and astonishing drama in the figures of Giotto. As a keen observer of Parisian life, he perceived the drama of older gestures transformed into intrigues composed of contemporary signs. Human behavior in drawing rooms, theaters, cafés, music halls, milliners' shops, laundries, circuses, boulevards, ballet practice rooms, and brothels was for him a kind of performance, all the more poignant when there was no apparent spectacle. The movements signaled oblique and puzzling ironies: anguish in coquetry; boredom and self-doubt against pleasure and popular entertainment; distracted isolation under lascivious gaslight. From these fragments of human feeling, lifted from the flux, he constructed durable modern fictions, as classic as those of the old masters.3 "Ah Giotto!" Degas wrote, "Let me see Paris, and you Paris let me see Giotto!"4

Degas also saw the Paris of his time in commercial portrait photography of the 1850s and 1860s, which attracted sophisticates of the haut monde (and their reasonable facsimiles in the demimonde). These sitters were devoted to displaying wealth and power through face, figure, coiffure, couture, and livery, as well as to routines requiring minutely scrutinized

"performances" in cheval-glass mirrors, salon, boulevard, and *Bois*. Inured to the lengthy examination of externals, fashionables posed incessantly before the camera. Capitalizing on an inbred, finely tuned sense of occasion, they learned to shape the space of the lens's gaze to suit themselves. Through this entertainment, they were amused to test the descriptive limitations of portraiture, to try and summarize the nuances behind perfected social masks and demeanors.

The posers were guided by Disdéri, Nadar, Carjat, Petit, and Mayer and Pierson, among many other photographers whose studios sprang up along the great boulevards. The interfering judgment of these "directors" shaped a sitter's form through skilled manipulations of light, besides eliciting postures that defined a palpable individual presence. Edmond Duranty, defining the rules of realism in the 1850s, recalled later that someone's back alone could reveal "a temperament, an epoch, social status; a pair of hands explains a judge or businessman: a whole range of feelings lies in a single gesture. . . . Hands held in pockets could be eloquent" (fig. 38). Disdéri interpreted such perceptions as the portrait photographer's imperative. He must "completely empathize with the sitter, feel the true palpitation of his life, spontaneously understand his character, his private life, his habits. More than photography, the photographer must produce a biography"6 (fig. 39).

Like the photographic posers, Degas's painted performers, of all social classes, flaunt their epoch. Laundresses bare their arms, yawn, raise a bottle to their lips. Women of the bourgeoisie are confined in snoods, corsets, vibrant, voluminous yardage of crinolines, and flounced *polonaises*. They are shielded by parasols, weighed down by black jet trim and hats piled with *éclats* of ribbons and silk flowers. Men wear mustaches, "imperial" goatees, funereal-black frock coats and top hats. Penetrating this fashionable upholstery, Degas revealed through gesture what was hidden and mute. He did this with an uncanny sense of placement, so that his actors, whether staring, waiting, bending, turning toward or away, seem to speak in



Fig. 38. Count Olympe Aguado, *Self-Portrait in His Studio*, ca. 1853, albumen silver print. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

paragraphs, recalling the clouded destinies of characters in the novels of Zola and James or plays by Ibsen and Chekhov.

These writers sculpted narratives of disturbing detail in sequential time that, despite the conflicts described, fulfill expectations of dramatic completeness. To reveal the same conflicts in painted freezeframes, Degas risked the opposite: a man and woman in a small banking office stop what they're doing (fig. 19). Someone has interrupted their discussion. From the look of the situation, maybe the discussion was an argument. We don't know. The girl, cool in bluegray, locks the intruder in a gaze that betrays nothing; her older companion, face blood-red behind the desk, fairly curdles at being so cruelly witnessed. The

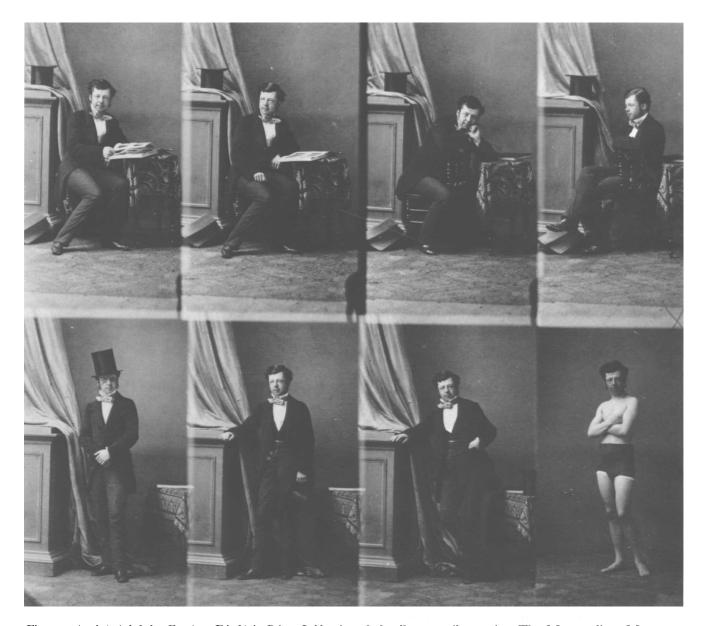


Fig. 39. André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, *Prince Lobkowitz*, 1858, albumen silver print. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, 1995 (1995.170.1).

space between them, erected as a further barrier against the outsider, resonates in the sporting print on the wall in which steeplechase riders scramble to surmount an obstacle.

When Ludovic Lepic, his daughters, and their pet wolfhound cross the Place de la Concorde in Paris (fig. 40), "Everything seems pregnant with its contrary," as Karl Marx noted about modernity. In the expressions of the family parade, contraries fairly cauterize the surrounding urban space. The Lepics, a modern family, were aberrant in their day. Degas directed them to play his reading of their situation:

the girls' youthful dependence on a father of dubious nobility, whose patent dandyism only thinly disguised irritation and horror at single parenthood.

The scene of the Lepics seems complete, but Degas added a passerby, planted to represent the viewer's riveted amazement at the family's insouciance and also to stand for the fleeting source of the painter's conception. The eyes of the unknown man click an imaginary shutter, extracting from the complex family knot an instant insight that incorporates all we are meant to grasp.

In 1865 Degas converted a late summer bouquet into paint, rendering so faithfully the form of each flower that any gardener quickly recognizes asters, gaillardia, centaurea, dahlias, and stock (fig. 41). The spectacle, like that of the Lepic family, is arresting but insufficient for the artist's purposes. He included a woman—not to court favor with a pleasing feminine equivalent to the bouquet but as a modern contrast. The woman leans on the still-life table. Flowers caress her sleeve. She doesn't seem to notice. A hand raised to her face suggests thoughts beyond horticulture. She is mentally absent from this table piece. Her intelligent glance directs us toward something we can't see and persuades us that it is compelling.



Fig. 40. Edgar Degas, *Place de la Concorde, Paris* (Viscount Lepic and his daughters), ca. 1875, oil on canvas. The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.



Fig. 41. Edgar Degas, A Woman Seated beside a Vase of Flowers, 1865, oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.128).

Aborted narratives and calculated diversions are today familiar photographic devices. They were a dramatic conceit in commercial photography and the pictures of imaginative amateurs when Degas began painting. Around 1859 the firm of Mayer and Pierson turned a sitting with the Prince Imperial, aged two or three, into a theatrical scene recalling Degas's strategies (fig. 42). The photographers enthroned the royal heir sidesaddle, carefully roped to his pony, Bouton d'Or, posed on an oriental carpet. The tiny rider is framed perfectly against a square cloth backdrop. With a ribboned hat forming a halo around his face, he confronts the lens like a Byzantine emperor.

The photographers designed the effect centerstage, intending to isolate the prince on horseback later by cutting away the extraneous figures before pasting the print to a cabinet-sized card for public sale. One of these figures, Bachon the equerry, frames the prince on one side. He is balanced on the other by an unintended marginal guardian. This is not a servant or studio assistant; it is Emperor Napoleon III with his walking stick, a casual stroller observing the performance as if from the wings.

Daylight raking across the high-ceilinged room describes the doll-like prince. It also backlights the Emperor, dramatizing his form on the periphery. His top-hatted silhouette, like that of stylish photographic posers, speaks biographically of a monarch who, as the Goncourt brothers noted, was "slow, automatic, somnambulant, with the eye of a lizard who seems to sleep, but doesn't. With an impenetrable face, he listens and looks from the sidelines."

The division in a single image, between what is meant to be seen and what is accidentally included and inadvertently revealed of a moment's greater whole, lies at the heart of what was considered dramatically authentic in photographs Degas knew. Faithful to the precedent of Velasquez's Las Meninas, model for so many contradictions appreciated and desired in the portrayal of modernity, and in line with the period's addiction to all things Spanish (including the Empress Eugénie herself), Mayer and Pierson's image, playing rigid formality against casualness, intention against accident, questions what is being portrayed. A sitting becomes a scene of daily life. The vagrant spaniel at the Emperor's feet backs into the camera's gaze and, in seeming to parody the profile of the obedient pony, provides yet another diversion. The dog and superfluous Emperor-flâneur at a formal portrait session are banal incongruities alluding to unpredictable actualities that turn premeditated posing into an appreciation of the truth in pure chance.<sup>10</sup>

In this strategy of displacement, the couple in the office becomes a new subject through the appearance of an interloper—the viewer; the bold Lepic family, with its display of eccentricities, is a monument to the passerby's peripheral vision; the woman near the bouquet who turns away from the confines of still life declares another drama outside our field of vision. The paintings are biographies. Truncations of ongoing time, they ask us to contemplate a variable modernity in which the ephemeral is made classic and durable.

Degas also used the same device to transform certain figures beyond the narrative and make them emblems. At the races, a young woman looks through a pair of field glasses that obscures her comely expression and reads like a mask that dominates her head to resemble the eyes of an insect (fig. 43). Such a refusal to be conventionally portrayed was deemed high chic in the photographic studios of the period. Countless visiting-card (cartes-de-visite) style and privately made photographs portray fashionables turning their backs on the lens with deliberate effrontery to show a lost profile, a bustle, or fine tailoring instead of a face (fig. 45).

Taking stylish obliqueness to the realm of abstraction, Degas transformed the woman's hand, grasping



Fig. 42. Pierre-Louis Pierson, *Napoleon III and the Prince Imperial*, ca. 1859, albumen silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.



Fig. 43. Edgar Degas, Woman Looking Through Field Glasses, 1869–72, oil on paper on canvas. Glasgow Museums: The Burrell Collection.

the glasses and arms squared to support and steady her hold, into a kind of architecture, equivalent to a camera tripod. She is a spectator at a sporting event, but nothing in her pose suggests a reaction to the scene within her range. The race is nowhere to be found; it is replaced by the woman's attention to the viewer. Her absorption dehumanizes her. A fashion plate becomes an instrument of sight. More than a voyeur, she is a vehicle of voyeurism, a kind of camera.

Degas, like so many in his social set, was a photographic *curieux*. His studio contained numerous photographs that he used as models (though actual evidence of this is sparse). Besides the well-known motion studies of 1887 by Eadweard Muybridge, from which



Fig. 44. Edgar Degas, A sketch of two young women in contemporary costume, 1859–64, brown ink. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Degas drew and sculpted, he had the catalogue for, and purchased many photographs of monuments and works of art from the firm of Adolphe Braun and Co. (which bought the studio of Mayer and Pierson).

In a notebook of 1859–64, Degas parodied the Disdéri *carte-de-visite* portrait style in a pen sketch of two female sitters (one next to a sort of *pentimento* of herself), posed as conventional fashion plates, to show off crinoline, stock studio drapery, and chair props (fig. 44). Degas's imitation signature of *Disdéri*, *photog.* at the lower left seems like a comic flourish but should be considered, as Theodore Reff has suggested about Degas's signature imitations of other artists, a sign of regard and even conscious comparison. <sup>12</sup>



Fig. 45. Count Olympe Aguado, *The Empress Eugénie and Members of Her Court at Compiègne*, October–November 1856, albumen silver print. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

In keeping with the fashion of collecting such images, Degas possessed *cartes-de-visite* of theatrical celebrities that Disdéri, Mayer and Pierson, and others sold by the thousands, besides portraits of the imperial family and their entourage. Many directly served his painting. Disdéri's portrait of Princess Pauline and Prince Richard de Metternich, of about 1860, is the source of a small painted portrait of a woman, of about 1861, in the National Gallery, London. Ignoring the prince, Degas borrowed the princess's gown, coiffure, turn of head, and placement of arms and hands, characteristics that she herself compared to those of a stylish monkey—"singe à la mode." 14

When he wrote to the baritone Jean-Baptiste Faure in 1876 asking to be sent photographs of Louis

Mérante, Degas said he needed them in order to "work out what I can make of this dancer's talent." To signal fashionable urbanity in a portrait of Mary Cassatt of about 1884, he showed her seated in a street costume holding *cartes-de-visite* spread out like a fan (fig. 46). He punctuated the theatrics in such photographs when painting a dancer before a camera, aware that members of the ballet and Opéra merely gave up one stage for another arena of the pose.

Degas himself also frequented the commercial studios. Several portraits of him looking very much the morose son of a successful banker survive. Three from around 1860 belonged to critic and art collector Marcel Guérin (fig. 47). Another, from the 1850s in the Bibliothèque Nationale, served for at least one



Fig. 46. Edgar Degas, *Mary Cassatt*, ca. 1884, oil on canvas. The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Gift of the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation and Regents' Major Acquisitions Fund, Smithsonian Institution.

painted self-portrait.<sup>18</sup> Degas was a timid actor then—far from the *flâneur* of fifty whom Italian photographer Giuseppe Primoli in 1889 would catch leaving a public toilet (fig. 48). Degas was shy even about that. Thanking Primoli for sending him the photograph, he later wrote, "If it were not for the person going in, I'd have been caught buttoning my trousers like a fool, and the whole world would be laughing."<sup>19</sup>

The dark silhouettes in the photographs of the young Degas parallel the endless stream of male figures in black frock coats and top hats who performed in the studios of Disdéri and others (figs. 38,



Fig. 47. Photographer unknown, three portraits of Edgar Degas, ca. 1860, *carte-de-visite* photographs. As reproduced in *L'Amour de l'Art*.

39). Variations on a theme, these phantoms are the originals of the poignant males in top hats whom Degas transposed into less-than-glorious emblems of male modernity: "Adonises-over-forty," as Balzac called the type, these hesitant connoisseurs, devotees, and brave onlookers were essential to Degas's sexual voyeurism. Invading the closed spaces of his preoccupied women, they are necessary counterparts to the notion of performance onstage, in theater corridors, or in boudoir (fig. 49). By the late 1880s, to his more imaginative acquaintances and friends, Degas himself was identified with these figures, leading to Primoli's delightful, startling, but otherwise inexplicable street portrait.

Degas actually turned to photography in the mid-1880s, though he probably did not yet own a camera.<sup>20</sup> In Dieppe, while vacationing with Helleu, Sickert, the Blanche and Halévy families, he collaborated with Walter Barnes, a local photographer discovered to be living in penury, and with his friends, Degas



Fig. 48. Count Giuseppe Primoli, *Degas Leaving a Public Convenience ("Vespasienne")*, 1889, photograph. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

gave Barnes work. Barnes photographed all his patrons—Degas, Ludovic Halévy, and Albert Boulanger-Cavé, dressed identically; and Degas, alone in profile, in full sun without much attention to form or lighting (fig. 50).

Degas had Barnes record a tableau vivant arranged by the painter to parody Ingres's *Apotheosis of Homer* (fig. 2). This photographic *Apotheosis of Degas* (fig. 1), made in front of painter Jacques-Emile Blanche's house in Dieppe in September 1885, features Degas, in a rigid pose not unlike that of a fearful grocer submitting to the daguerreotype vise. Grasping top hat and walking stick, he is sheltered with "laurel" by three muses (daughters of John Lemoinne, editor of the *Journal des Débats*) and adored by "choirboys" (Élie and Daniel, sons of Ludovic and Louise Halévy).

Degas was absorbed by photographic composing, which he conceived of and criticized like a stage



Fig. 49. Edgar Degas, "Pauline and Virginia Conversing with Admirers," for *La Famille Cardinal* by Ludovic Halévy, ca. 1880–83, monotype. Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., bequest of Meta and Paul J. Sachs.

director: he thought the group in the *Apotheosis* lacked consolidation; the background color was wrong and swallowed up the women's figures; and generally the whole lacked clarity and definition.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the image's humorous self-consciousness has a stilted charm that, as Antoine Terrasse has pointed out, acknowledges the tradition of the tableau vivant in earlier photography as well as in theater.<sup>22</sup>

Degas probably directed another image by Barnes in front of Blanche's house around the same time (fig. 51). Far right, the painter stiffens, leaning on his walking stick as if he'd just viewed the group under the dark cloth and run back to be included in the shot. Fifteen intimates gather into a portrait family. But it is clearly a collocation of separate "biographies," as Disdéri meant the word. All are players for the occasion, diverting attention away from the mutuality of the group toward themselves. Madame Ludovic Halévy, far left, leans on a banister. Stylish in striped wool, she stares into space, like Degas's woman near the bouquet (fig. 41), lost in her own thoughts. Catherine Lemoinne, above her in a boater, leans backward, head tilted as if puzzled by the lens. Blanche, center, one hand raised to his mouth, the other points toward painter Walter Sickert, who plays a beau self-possessed dandy; it is as if Blanche were saying, "Don't look at me. It's him you want to immortalize." Nanine Halévy, the white-haired old lady seated at the left (for whom photography, not to mention its antics, would surely have been bewildering), is a study in confusion. Bearded Boulanger-Cavé, at the top left, looks beatific. The woman next to him is unable to suppress a smile. Yoyo Lemoinne embraces Daniel Halévy with both arms, as if to keep him still, like the ropes securing the Prince Imperial on his pony. A flurry of feelings ruffles these actors like wind over calm seas. Most play their own personas with certain confidence. Like Disdéri's sitters, they have learned to be photographed.

Degas participated in other portrait sessions that serve to demonstrate his interest in actual photographic seeing and its inextricable connections to theater. In 1889, Hortense Howland, a friend of the painter, posed and photographed friends around Geneviève Straus (widow of Georges Bizet, remarried since 1886 to a rich influential lawyer, Émile Straus, counselor for the Société des Auteurs). Count Primoli described Madame Straus's social circle on the boulevard Haussmann as "elegant and intellectual, verging on the bohemian through its intelligence and on the fashionable world through its elegance." With the same appreciation he noted her celebrated *mots*: "Tell him to wait five minutes; I'll be down in a quarter of an hour."<sup>23</sup>



Fig. 50. Walter Barnes, *Portrait of Edgar Degas*, ca. 1885, albumen silver print, *carte-de-visite*. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

In a vine-covered garden, probably Howland's, Madame Straus, a graceful hourglass, is flanked by drama critic Louis Ganderax and Degas, with Boulanger-Cavé behind them (fig. 3). The males, impeccably dressed, wear identical hats and frock coats. Leaning on parasol or walking sticks, three of the friends convey their rapport through glances that peer in unison into the aperture. The exception is Degas, who with the faintest smile fixes his glance on the tea table with a plate of peaches.



Fig. 51. Walter Barnes, The Halévy Family and Their Friends, 1885, albumen silver print. Private collection.

The same strategy—attention divided between purported subject and its counterpart of distraction—occurs in another photograph (fig. 52). Appearing with the same performers—Ganderax, Madame Straus, Boulanger-Cavé, and Degas—are the "utterly contrived" ladies' man Charles Haas, Madame Grandval, and Madame Halévy-Chaparède all but concealed under an open parasol. In the frieze arrangement of this exquisitely attired and positioned Proustian community—Haas would be Proust's model for Swann, Madame Straus for the Duchesse de Guermantes—Degas again assumed a contrary role.

Placing himself in the rear, but dead center, he turned his profile to the camera like a head on a coin.

Madame Howland was behind the camera. Yet Degas subverted each staging, proposing dramatic ironies essential to his psychology of modern life. Another photograph, which the author has referred to as "Un rat! Un rat!" (fig. 53) from the same group by Madame Howland, has Haas, Monsieur and Madame Straus, and Boulanger-Cavé enclosed by a brocaded screen. Haas excitedly points to something outside the frame, his gesture unifying the gazes of the curious friends. The tactic was all too familiar to Degas.<sup>24</sup>



Fig. 52. Hortense Howland, *A Group of Friends* (Charles Haas, Louis Ganderax, Madame Grandval, Degas, Madame Straus, Boulanger-Cavé, Madame Halévy-Chaparède), 1887–88, photograph. Private collection.

In 1895 pictorially staged performance found forceful final expression when Degas began to make photographs. When using the camera, he became a tyrannical director, hypersensitive to criticism, forcing his friends—Ludovic and Louise Halévy, Paul-Albert Bartholomé, as well as Émile Verhaeren, Renoir, Mallarmé, and others—to remain immobile for long exposures in the heat and in the dim, disembodying illumination cast by oil lamps. The enforced intimacy of Degas's own little photographic theater also served as an arena of personal discovery. Whether in the

Halévy family's salon or his own studio or library, Degas surrendered to the lens with ease and even a certain joy. "I find I always look too nice. I want to look fierce." Viewing his own physiognomy in halflight, he puzzled over the mysteries of an unknowable self (for example, pls. 23, 24).

Regarding critical responses to his own photographs, Degas was unusually sensitive, even anxious. If he was modest about his paintings, he fairly crowed about his efforts with the camera and expected the same response from everyone else. Hortense Howland



Fig. 53. Hortense Howland, Charles Haas, Geneviève Straus, Albert Boulanger-Cavé, and Émile Straus, 1887–88, photograph. Private collection.

posed for him in December 1895, standing on and against Persian carpets and wearing a kimono as carelessly as a shawl (pl. 29). Degas's composition recalls American Photo-Secessionist creations of Japanese influence, for the stage space is as compressed as an Asian screen. When Howland, who hadn't yet seen the work, didn't praise her portrait appropriately, Degas exploded. "Isn't it beautiful? But she won't see it. She'll let her dog lick it. She's a beast. The other day I showed her my beautiful Haas [portrait of Charles Haas]. 'It's all mottled,' she said. 'You'll have to touch it up.' Monster! I said nothing, gave her a look, did up my package and departed." <sup>26</sup>



Fig. 54. Count Giuseppe Primoli, An Admirer of Réjane, July 25 or 26, 1889, photograph. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

By creating such arrangements, Degas was working against the popular grain. Instantaneity dominated amateur photography in the 1890s. George Eastman's Kodak Number One, with its new roll film, was taking America by storm. Handheld cameras also abounded in Europe, though many practitioners, like Degas, continued to use glass plates in them. These cameras could be attached to tripods. Degas slung his over his shoulder, as proudly as a child with a rifle.<sup>27</sup> It was infinitely more voguish to chase after subjects in the streets, as Count Primoli did when he captured Degas himself in the entourage of the actress Réjane (fig. 54), or to wander in and out of drawing rooms or theaters grabbing unsuspecting subjects with camera and flash.

Degas hated this "cancan." "Speed, speed, is there nothing more stupid?" Besides, compared to the sociable Primoli, "le plus invité de Paris," Degas couldn't photograph anyone he didn't know well. By 1895 he was photographing Ludovic and Louise

Halévy, at whose house he was then dining two or three times a week. He was happiest when his sitters were comfortably inert, steadied by the antimacassared cushions of an armchair (for example, pls. 9–14) or "asleep" during the long duration of some of his exposures.

Louise Halévy, a regular sitter, was practically a sister to Degas. Like his maid Zoé Closier, who read to him from the newspaper, Louise became another reader captured under the shadows of lamplight (pls. 7, 8). Madame Halévy with her husband was also photographing passionately. When she played "la révéleuse" (the developer, or she who reveals or brings to light) (pl. 5), she is clearly having pleasant dreams.

Like Carpaccio's Saint Ursula, she is approached by an unearthly glow, which comes not from a kindly angel but from the "spirits" of halation, infiltrating the darkness from a lamp Degas placed at her feet. Degas joyously wrote to the Halévys that one fine day he'd burst in on them with a camera. This projection into Primoli's spontaneity and that of so many snapshooters was a photographic pipe dream. "In the evening I digest and photograph in the twilight" more accurately describes the artist's method.

Degas's way of working in any new medium, if not progressive, was always radical. Turning from etching and painterly inking to monotype in 1876,<sup>33</sup> he asserted the power of ink alone, graphic art's



Fig. 55. Edgar Degas, Albert Bartholomé and Degas, ca. 1895–1900, gelatin silver print. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. (Cat. 24)P

essential quality. Degas's photography is similarly distinguished by an acute awareness of the uniqueness of his medium as well as its origins and history. Degas's photographs resemble the older, more primitive camera work of daguerreotypes and the earliest paper negatives (calotype),<sup>34</sup> in which the subject, deathly still and bathed in unearthly light, is timeless.

He had explored the same effects in some of his graphic work. Reconceiving Rembrandt's so-called "night pieces," he made a "gaslight Impressionism," that is the counterpart of Monet's sunstruck regattas.<sup>35</sup> In Degas's mind photography was another of these graphic arts. Daylight was too easy. Closing the curtains, he called for lamps. Or he worked after sunset; "I'm trying to photograph practically night itself," he tried to explain to his printer Tasset.<sup>36</sup> One evening, when he took his camera out to photograph, he noticed a crowd gathering near him. Hearing whispers, he decided the people must have thought he was crazy.<sup>37</sup> Ambroise Vollard, recalling Degas's preference for long exposures, required by working in the dark, joked that the photographer "had set about photographing the moon, but 'it moved." The results of these lunar excursions haven't survived. A few portraits in lamplight succeed, further proof of Degas's insistence that everything about his art was trial and error.

In the interiors from the mid-1890s, the artist "trying to photograph night" selectively extracted forms from opaque darkness. The flattened spatial effect has led certain writers on Degas's photography to link this work to the spaces of his dark-field monotypes. In *The Fireside* (fig. 24), a blazing hearth, roughly indicated by selective wiping, dominates a large room, wildly casting radiance to reveal two women, furniture, and other vague shapes. In Degas's photographs of interiors, the room becomes a similar dark field in which figures break into fragmentary silhouettes through selective spotlighting. Monotype ink is viscous, subject to any change the artist cares to make. Its texture in *The Fireside* is more tangible than the figures it attempts to define. The darkness of black

ink seems strange for nudes, even with the pretext of the fireplace. Rembrandt and Castiglione had taken the same liberties centuries before. By heavily inking their subjects, they were not literally depicting night but conjuring spiritual atmospheres.

In the first attempts at photographic picturing during the 1820s, after more than a half-day's exposure out a window, feeble chemistries only recorded vague contours and masses. The aim was realism. The result was mirage. Degas alluded to this in his own photographic theater. In a self-portrait with two sisters, Christine and Yvonne Lerolle (pl. 33), light entering the dark field does not fully describe the sitters. Degas's somnolent profile appears to surface, arbitrarily, from the opaque ambience. The girls' dresses, bold accumulations of luminous yardage with leg-o'-mutton sleeves, have absorbed all of the lamplight. One sister, in a pose like a kind of cocoon, also seems to have fallen asleep; the other anchors our intrusion with the forthright gaze of a hypnotic. Each player is caught in a psychic space of his or her own devising. Clear photographic representation is forsaken for barely recalled dream figments of a thousandand-one nights.

By the 1890s this symbolist way of seeing forms stressed not rendering things or personages but variable states of mind. The Lerolle sisters have left Degas's avuncular acquaintanceship to become abstractions, youthful auras of the feminine. Such effects may be what led poet and writer Paul Valéry to observe that Degas, sacrificing detail for its own sake, made photography "intelligent," though Degas would protest the terms of this praise: "You have one great fault, Valéry. You want to understand everything." 41

A photograph of the artist with his friend the sculptor Bartholomé in Degas's study (fig. 55) also exemplifies this mental theater. Like *The Fireside* and Degas's self-portrait with the Lerolle sisters, it divides into two parts. A door to the study opens onto a dark hallway, throwing the right side of the image into total obscurity. Thin white lines betray some vertical moldings, which appear, as if from nowhere, with

striking modernity. White marks glint from an armchair, hinting at its presence. An oil lamp, center foreground, is a huge theatrical footlight, flooding the left side of the stage to reveal Degas at a desk, wearing tinted glasses to protect his eyes during the long pose. In the blaze of this selective illumination, Bartholomé's face loses all definition. His head is a white cutout, as bright as the lamp's flaming chimney.

The relationship between forms verges on incoherence. Lack of foreground definition owes in part to the sculptor's placement in front of the plane of focus. Degas reserved the focal plane of the lens for the wall of paintings behind him. Two of these read clearly: Manet's The Ham, of about 1870,42 and Degas's own portrait of Monsieur and Madame Edouard Manet, of about 1868-69, which Manet had mutilated by cutting off the figure of his wife. An enraged Degas took the picture back. It is in the context of this photographic experiment that these paintings are meant to be read.<sup>43</sup> They are counterparts to the head of Bartholomé, which is illegible, except as a mask. Contradicting the tradition of material description in The Ham and in the physiognomies of the Manets, Degas plotted a transformative vision. It undermined what Edmond Duranty called "the new painting" of 1870s Impressionism and subverted the scientific role of photography to replicate facts. The photograph thus proposes an equation between realism and the uncertainties of evocation.

Another self-portrait, with Bartholomé's sculpture of a weeping girl (pl. 24), shares the aims of the double portrait. Leaning back in a chair in profile, right hand characteristically stroking his chin, the artist seems to float in the dark space. The extreme whiteness of the sculpture is a radiant source, illuminating his face (a cameo, coin, mask). A section of brocade, presumably the end of a chair or couch, on the same focal plane as the sitter, contributes another segment of legibility to the organization of the void. The photograph seems like a meditation. Above all, it is private. Degas reflects in his hermetically sealed interior, a fragment surrounded by fragments.

The despairing posture of Bartholomé's sculpted nude suggests another photograph (pl. 36) now firmly associated with Degas's photography. It is clearly the source for the painting After the Bath, 1896, in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (fig. 25).44 Although Degas had access to many kinds of photographs, this one does not look like anything available commercially. The model appears to be drying herself, but her gesture hardly conveys the usual intimacies of the toilette. She seems to writhe in pain. The lines of her shoulders and spine are more comparable to the agonized torsos of the damned in Rodin's Gates of Hell than to most nudes drawn by Degas. A bold spotlight of unknown origin, the effect of lamplight preferred by Degas, obliterates the middle-gray values that would give the body an illusion of sculptural weight.

The head has succumbed to deep shadow. The psychic pain expressed through the figure, twisted into an agitated shadow pattern, and the awkwardly projecting knees and elbows are strikingly reminiscent of Degas's early interpretations of the nude. Scene of War in the Middle Ages, of about 1863-65, with its studies of tragic females (figs. 56, 57), is a clear psychological prototype for the photograph. This isn't the only photograph that refers back to Degas's artistic goals of the 1860s, as we have seen through the inclusion of works involving Manet in Degas's photograph with Bartholomé. At the same time, despite the anguish conveyed, there is decided eroticism in this nude, not sexual desire in the usual sense. We are moved, as always with Degas, by our privileged access to a private performance.<sup>45</sup>

Degas exploited the formal language of Symbolism by eradicating clues of tactile experience and navigable space for unknowable darkness. Figures arise like lost souls from deep shadows, having relinquished their worldly identity. These Symbolist qualities are perhaps more apparent in Degas' photography than anywhere else in his work. He extended the interest by making two portraits of important Symbolist writers.

Nothing is known of his relationship with Émile Verhaeren (pl. 31), who is regarded by the French as



Fig. 56. Edgar Degas, *Scene of War in the Middle Ages* (detail), ca. 1863–65, paint and turpentine on several pieces of paper joined and mounted on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

one of the greatest Belgian Symbolist poets. Degas was writing poetry himself under the guidance of Stéphane Mallarmé, who perhaps introduced them. Verhaeren's work relied on themes that Degas explored in painting and printmaking throughout his career. Between 1893 and 1898 Verhaeren published four volumes on modern life written in the suggestive shadings of Symbolist language: "Les Campagnes hallucinées," "Les Villages illusoires," "Les Villes tentaculaires," and "Les Aubes." "Les Villes



Fig. 57. Edgar Degas, *Standing Nude Woman*, study for *Scene of War in the Middle Ages*, ca. 1863–65, pencil heightened with white. Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

tentaculaires" is a vast panorama of the modern city, its ports, factories, cabarets, brothels, etc. The soul of the city lies in its smoke, noise, and fumes that pour from innumerable ships and trains at a feverish tempo. He Verhaeren emerges from such a murky ambience in Degas's portrait. The chimneys of the oil lamps rise above his head as in his "Villages illusoires."

Mallarmé was the other Symbolist poet who submitted to Degas's photographic theater (pls. 26, 27). In

1895, along with Renoir, he stood immobile for a "fearful quarter hour" in the light of nine oil lamps. 47 The appeal of this portrait, one of Degas's greatest successes, involves the sitters' sustained gazes and clear relationship to one another, as well as to the figure of Degas, who is reflected with his camera in the mirror. Renoir sits back with a foot raised on an ottoman, letting the lens take him in. Standing beside him, braced against the wall for the duration of the pose, Mallarmé gazes down at Renoir. The men's inclined heads alone express their perfect rapport. Although the lighting would subsume much detail into shadow, Degas elicited from his actors subtle gestures emerging from the darkness that can speak for an epoch. Renoir's pose would have served him nicely in Second-Empire commercial studios. Mallarmé's well-placed hands recall Duranty's prescription that "even hands held in pockets could be eloquent."

Mallarmé's head, turned in near-profile toward the camera, casts a shadow on the wall. His face, beautifully sculpted by the raking lamplight, is a cameo-relief. By contrast, the blast of illumination onto the mirror from the same lamp obliterates Degas's face, and an arrangement of two friends becomes a startling balance created among three. Degas's phantom reflection is not insignificant. The dark distant shape aligns with that of Mallarmé to look like its miniature. Whereas the camera eye clearly defined the poet's features into what Paul Valéry called the most "spiritual" of practically all the portraits of him, 48 Degas's head is only an aureole of light.

That the portrait is consciously Symbolist is debatable. 49 Degas was not very sympathetic to Mallarmé's poetry. But he was not beyond making obscure poetic allusions in his photographic staging. Mallarmé is beautifully rendered, but it is Renoir who anchors the composition. A symbolist interpretation must take Renoir fully into account, for the two other figures are arranged to divert visual interest against his central presence. When Degas posed in Madame Howland's earlier Proustian photographs, he opposed the witty humor of the group by staring at the peaches or

turning an abrupt profile to the viewer. Here he repeated the strategy by including himself with his apparatus in a zone of mirror reflection where we find many of his café-concert singers or dancers in other media quite at home. From this domain, as a photographer, Degas suggested a renewed relationship to classic Impressionism (Renoir) and to the poetic imagination of Symbolism (Mallarmé).

Degas had begun to reexamine his relationship to Impressionist landscape in a glorious series of monotypes in colored inks that he covered with pastel and exhibited at Durand-Ruel in 1893. These landscapes, done from memory, were based on observations made while riding in a horse-drawn cart through Burgundy. The images seem more like poetic evocations of dreams than replications of specific places. Similarly, Degas's retrograde interpretation of photographic practice was guaranteed to radically change common notions of the camera's purported exactitude. His photographic experiments—the Renoir-Mallarmé portrait is a fine example—demanded the discipline of the long pose; ironically, they left more to chance than might be expected. Degas extracted from photography's exact science a process of suggestion, and the effects, if not strictly Symbolist, at times approached the expressive fantasy of pure imagination.

Mallarmé himself made this clear in his poetic response to another of Degas's "spiritual" portraits of him and Paule Gobillard (pl. 27):

Tors et gris comme apparaîtrait
Miré parmi la source un saule
Je tremble un peu de mon portrait
Avec Mademoiselle Paule.
(Twisted and gray the way
a willow might be mirrored in a spring
I tremble at the thought
of my portrait with Miss Paule.)<sup>50</sup>

For Degas, photography was an arena of experimentation—not a complete body of work in the usual sense. It is an odd mix, reflecting differing intentions and serving different purposes. There is no dominant photographic style, except for the dark-field images. Degas's photographic diversity reflects the devouring curiosity of his entire career. Diversity was not only necessary, it was justifiable. Degas loved to tell a story about Ingres, bastion of consistent classical rectitude, approached by two visitors to an exhibition of his work. When one criticized the stylistic discrepancies between the paintings, Ingres retorted: "Monsieur, I have more than one paintbrush!" "Isn't that lovely?" Degas would chortle, repeating Ingres' phrase over and over.

As a photographer, "more than one paintbrush" was probably less important than the camera's theatrical arena, in which Degas was director, lighting designer, and principal actor all in one. His instrument and collection of oil lamps were perfect for summarizing the "vie artificielle" of his version of Impressionism.

"He who says art says artifice." For Degas the two were inseparable. Creating from direct observation

had to be "an effort of the will,"<sup>54</sup> involving mental transformations and an artistic philosophy that was "dishonest and cruel."<sup>55</sup> We don't merely observe. The mind interferes, guarding certain details, brutally sacrificing others. "We see what we want to see; it's false [faux], and this falsity [fausseté] constitutes art,"<sup>56</sup> he said

Photographic art required the same conjuring to reveal modern truths. Degas admired the staged naturalism of Nadar's portraits, but he probably flinched at the incorrigible ego of that former pamphleteer, caricaturist, and artistic arriviste: "Sir, in my day one did not 'make good," sa favorable defense against upstarts. Hailing Nadar, Degas's ambivalence, bathed in banter, was strident. Nadar, a popular success with the camera, was also a master of the creative lie: "Hey! There he goes! *Faux* painter, *faux* artist, *faux* . . . tographer!" Waggish wordplay, perhaps, but Degas was paying his highest compliment.

## Notes

- I. Françoise Sevin, "Degas à travers ses mots," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, VIe période, tome LXXXVI, 117e année, July-Aug., p 36.
- 2. Ibid., p. 32.
- 3. "Realism," Norman Bryson points out, "lies...in a coincidence between representation and that which a particular society proposes and assumes as its reality; a reality involving the complex formation of codes of behaviour, law, psychology, social manners, dress, gesture, posture—all those practical norms which govern the stance of human beings toward their particular historical environment. It is in relation to this socially determined body of codes, and not in relation to an immutable 'universal visual experience,' that the realism of an image should be understood." Vision and Painting, The Logic of the Gaze (New Haven: 1983), p. 13.
- 4. Notebook 22, 1867–74, p. 5. Theodore Reff, The Notebooks of Edgar Degas, A Catalogue of the Thirty-Eight Notebooks in the Bibliothèque Nationale and Other Collections (Oxford: 1976), vol. I, p. 111.
- 5. Edmond Duranty, La Nouvelle Peinture, à propos du Groupe d'Artistes qui expose dans les Galeries Durand-Ruel (1876), nouvelle édition, avantpropos et notes par Marcel Guérin (Paris: 1946), pp. 42–43. Duranty is recalling in the 1870s what he had observed twenty years previously.
- 6. Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, "Renseignements photographiques," *Le Spectateur, organe de la photographie*, no. 1 (July 1856), n.p.
- 7. Marshall Berman, All That is Solid Melts into Air, The Experience of Modernity (New York: 1982), p. 20.
- 8. Previously known as Woman with Chrysanthemums and thought to depict Madame Charles Hertel, the work concerns neither those flowers nor that particular sitter, as Henri Loyrette demonstrated by identifying all the flowers in the bouquet and arguing that the sitter is probably Madame Paul Valpinçon. See Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 114–18.
- 9. Noted in 1859 by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt in *Journal, mémoires de la vie littéraire* (Paris: 1956), vol. I, p. 646.
- 10. Such images were not odd or unique in Degas's time. Scholarly investigations into the history of French nineteenth-century photography have brought more of these pictures out of the obscurity of national libraries, museums, private collections, and photographic societies, not to mention the descendants of photographers who are making previously unknown family images available to researchers in quantities greater than previously thought to have existed. See note 21 in an earlier version of the

- present essay, in Janis 1984, pp. 451–86 (French edition, *Degas: le modèle et l'espace*) and the argument in Heilbrun 1989, pp. 159–61, which also summarizes the phenomenon.
- 11. Notebook 18, p. 31. Reff, *Notebooks*, vol. I, described on p. 93; illustrated vol. II, n.p.
- 12. Theodore Reff, "Three Great Draftsmen," Degas: The Artist's Mind (New York: 1976), pp. 30–42.
- 13. The splendid exhibition and catalogue of *The Private Collection of Edgar Degas*, by Ann Dumas, Colta Ives, Susan Alyson Stein, Gary Tinterow, et al. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 1, 1997–January 11, 1998), reveals with unparalleled richness and depth, Degas's flawless sense of quality. It entirely excludes Degas as a collector of photographs, mentioning photography in relation to his art only briefly, as a source of "novel pictorial effects." See p. 249.
- 14. Quoted in John Rewald, "Un portrait de La Princesse de Metternich par Edgar Degas," L'Amour de l'Art, tome XVIII, 1937, p. 89. The painting and its photographic source are also illustrated side by side in Aaron Scharf, Art and Photography (London: 1968), p. 146.
- 15. Letters of Degas 1947, p. 44.
- 16. Discussions attempting to explain the "absolute revulsion" Cassatt had for Degas's depiction of her person in this painting identify what she is holding as tarot cards. See Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988-89, cat. no. 268, pp. 442-43, in which Gary Tinterow cites Richard Thomson's argument that Cassatt was shown as a "common," "disreputable," "fortune teller." This seems an unlikely allusion for Degas to make regarding his friend. Nor does it account for why Cassatt held on to the painting for so long. The cards, rendered in black and white, are obviously photographs of the carte-de-visite variety. Cassatt's almost "pathological" repugnance may involve something more sensitive, not being directly linked with photographs at all, since it is increasingly clear in her images of mothers and babies that she probably used photographic sources, which, like her correspondence with Degas, she may also have destroyed.
- 17. They were reproduced in a special issue devoted to Degas in *L'Amour\_de l'Art*, no. 7 (July 1931), p. 266, from which we show them here.
- 18. Scharf illustrated the comparison on p. 147. Another, not mentioned by him, certainly stems from this photograph. See P.-A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre* (Paris: 1946), vol. II, cat. no. 5, *Degas au porte-fusain*, 1854–55.
- 19. Lamberto Vitali, *Un fotografo fin de siècle: il conte Primoli* (Turin: 1968), p. 78. An earlier version

- of the present essay (Janis 1984) includes a full discussion comparing the photographs of Degas and Primoli.
- 20. He knew something about photographic technique, however. When Degas wrote in 1880 to Pissarro, he compared coating an etching plate to the way photographers coat glass plates with collodion. *Letters of Degas* 1947, p. 57.
- 21. Ibid., p. 110.
- 22. Terrasse 1983, p. 30.
- 23. Vitali, p. 60.
- 24. There has been some dispute over whether these photographs were of Degas's own authorship. Luce Hoctin first published the image with Degas looking at the peaches in Hoctin 1960, p. 43. The setting is identified as Madame Howland's garden. Terrasse did not include any of these garden pictures, except for a portrait of Haas ("mon bel Haas," Degas called it), on p. 58. Although Haas is dressed differently in this image than he was on the day of the sitting for the other photographs, one sees behind him the same backdrop as for "Un rat! Un rat!" I discussed the images as if they were of Degas's sole, direct authorship in an earlier version of this essay (Janis 1984). The question was finally settled by Françoise Heilbrun whose careful scholarship uncovered an unpublished letter from Degas to Ludovic Halévy declaring that Madame Howland was in fact a photographer, p. 163. More importantly, Heilbrun discovered, in scholarship on Guy de Maupassant, another in this group of images around Madame Straus, which includes the writer, as well as a letter from De Maupassant to Madame Straus, in 1888, saying he has "received the photographs from Madame Howland" and commenting in detail about the sitting. Heilbrun 1989, p. 164.
- 25. Sevin, p. 43, cited from Halévy 1960.
- 26. Halévy 1964, pp. 73–74. A translation of Halévy 1960, this publication contains some of the best information on Degas's photographic sessions and reveals his anxieties and triumphs as a practicing photographer from the point of view of the then teenaged son of Ludovic and Louise Halévy.
- 27. Ibid., p. 83.
- 28. Degas applied the word to many things he didn't like. See Sevin, p. 23.
- 29. Ibid., p. 46. The source is Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, "Deux Heures avec Degas, interview posthume," *L'Amour de l'Art*, vol. XII, no. 7 (July 1931).
- 30. June 25, 1891. Goncourt, *Journal*, vol. IV, p. 110.

- 31. Sept. 29, 1895. Letters of Degas 1947, p. 196, where Degas also sends greetings to Louise "the developer."
- 32. Letter from Degas to Henri Rouart, Aug. 12, 1895. Ibid., p. 210 (incorrectly dated June 30 [1898]). (See p. 49, n.2.)
- 33. See Eugenia Parry Janis, "Setting the Tone—The Revival of Etching, The Importance of Ink," *The Painterly Print, Monotypes from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: 1980), pp. 9–28, and illustration. Michael Pantazzi, in "The First Monotypes," Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 257–60, argued convincingly to change my date for Degas's first monotype from 1874 to 1876.
- 34. For examples, see André Jammes and Eugenia Parry Janis, *The Art of French Calotype, with a Critical Dictionary of Photographers* (Princeton: 1983), part one and plates.
- 35. See Eugenia Parry Janis, *Degas Monotypes* (Cambridge: 1968), *passim*, and "Degas and the 'Master of Chiaroscuro," *Museum Studies*, 7 (Chicago: Jan. 1973), pp. 52–67.
- 36. From a letter written August 17, 1895, while on vacation. Degas ordered several dozen Lumière panchromatic plates. It was Tasset's daughter Delphine who enlarged and printed the negatives, following his careful instructions about cropping. See Newhall 1963, pp. 61–64. Author's translation.
- 37. Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 1895. Halévy 1964, p. 83.
- 38. Ambroise Vollard, Degas (Paris: 1924), p. 48.
- 39. Crimp 1978 and Roosa 1982.
- 40. Paul Valéry, "Degas, Dance, Drawing," Degas, Manet, Morisot, transl. David Paul

- (New York: Bollingen Series XLV, 12, 1960), p. 82.
- 41. Sevin, p. 35, citing J.-P. Crespelle, *Degas et son monde* (Paris: 1972).
- 42. Denis Rouart and Daniel Wildenstein in Edouard Manet, Catalogue raisonné (Paris: 1975), vol. I, p. 266, cat. no. 351, indicated in the work's provenance that Degas acquired The Ham in June 1888.
- 43. Being another example of "pictures within pictures," a notion that always had meaning for Degas. See Reff, "Pictures within Pictures," *Degas: The Artist's Mind*, pp. 90–146. It does not include this photograph.
- 44. And a number of other drawings and paintings. See Boggs's discussion in Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, pp. 548–52.
- 45. The image is unique in Degas's remaining photographic work but cannot have been his only attempt at such portrayals. It is too accomplished, and like the portraits in the interiors, it would have been part of a larger group. We might speculate that, given the prevailing mood of this image, pictures like it might have been misunderstood and perhaps were deliberately destroyed with other photographs in Degas's studio, photography not being as esteemed as it is today. The present writer is responsible for attributing the Getty nude to Degas because of its clear connection to the Philadelphia painting and other paintings and drawings related to it. But Antoine Terrasse confirmed its linkage to Degas's studio by showing that the printed fabric recurs in a Degas self-portrait (Terrasse 1983, p. 63).
- 46. Eugenia W. Herbert, *The Artist and Social Reform, France and Belgium 1885–1898* (New Haven: 1961), pp. 136–237.

- 47. Valéry, p. 40.
- 48. Ibid., p. 41. We have only to compare Paul Nadar's exceedingly plain portrait bust of Mallarmé of 1895 to appreciate Degas's "spiritual" rendition. See Richard R. Brettell, "Nadar and a Photograph of Stéphane Mallarmé," *The Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin*, new series, no. 14, 1980, which discusses Nadar *fils*'s interpretation at length, comparing it to Carjat's *Baudelaire* and to Munch's portrait lithograph of Mallarmé without alluding to Degas's photograph done the same year.
- 49. See Crimp 1978 and Roosa 1982 for Symbolist interpretations of this portrait and of Degas's photography generally.
- 50. "Vers de circonstance," *Mallarmé: oeuvres complètes* (Paris: 1945), no. XXXII of 1896, p. 124, cited by Boggs, in Paris, Ottawa, New York 1988–89, p. 540; translation by Jeanine Herman, 1998.
- 51. Quoted by Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, "Deux heures avec Degas," *L'Amour de l'Art*, vol. XII, no. 7 (July 1931), p. 270.
- 52. Sevin, p. 23, citing Jaromir Pecirka, *Degas dessins* (Le Cercle d'Art, 1963).
- 53. R. H. Ives Gammell, *The Shop-Talk of Edgar Degas* (Boston: 1961), p. 18; translating from the French of Paul Lafond, *Degas* (Paris: 1918).
- 54. Ibid., translating from the French of Paul Valéry, *Degas*, *Danse*, *Dessin* (Paris: 1938).
- 55. Ibid., from Lafond 1918-19.
- 56. See note 1 above.
- 57. Gammell, p. 36, quoting from Jacques-Emile Blanche, *Portraits of a Lifetime* (New York: 1933).
- 58. See note 2 above.



## Degas Chez Tasset

THEODORE REFF

In 1895-96, when Edgar Degas was most actively involved in making photographs, a small tradesman named Tasset was arguably his most important collaborator, the one from whom he bought cameras and supplies, on whom he relied for enlargement of his negatives, and to whom he turned for technical advice as well as a venue for his only exhibition of photographs. Much of what is known about Degas's brief but intense involvement with photography is in fact derived from the eight letters he wrote to Tasset in the summer of 1895. As such, the latter's name appears frequently in the literature on Degas, but only as a name, an incomplete one at that. Little is noted about him beyond the bare fact that he owned an art supply shop in Degas's neighborhood with a partner named Lhote, about whom still less is known. And assuming that Tasset was merely a color merchant, one writer on Degas's photographs has questioned the quality of his technical advice and his darkroom techniques: "One smiles when Degas writes to Tasset from Mont-Dore: 'I'm trying to photograph almost at night. Do you have any tips in that case?' The color merchant Tasset must himself have had a very mediocre knowledge of photography. His prints were certainly badly washed, for streaks of silver salt are visible today on his enlargements."2

Much more, however, can be learned about Tasset. And the more one learns, the more one sees that

he was not simply a small color merchant with a sideline in photography but a recognized dealer in that field who kept abreast of current developments; that he was also an accomplished painter who exhibited regularly at the Salon and whose artistic nature would have appealed to Degas; that Degas preferred to bring or send him his negatives for enlargement and to discuss technical matters with him, though there were many larger photography shops and darkrooms available in his neighborhood; that Degas also had a high personal regard for Tasset and his children, whose careers he helped to promote, and was still in contact with him as late as 1908, long after he had ceased making photographs.

Guilhermo Carlos (later Guillaume Charles) Tasset was born in Lima, Peru, on February 1, 1843. His father was Charles Anne Jean Marie Tasset, a French citizen; his mother, Tomasa de Goytisolo, presumably an Ecuadoran citizen.<sup>3</sup> Tasset *fils* seems to have immigrated to France in the early 1860s, when he became a pupil of the well-known academic painter Jean-Léon Gérôme.<sup>4</sup> The subject of Tasset's first Salon exhibit, *A Corridor in the Convent of San Francisco, in Lima*, shown in 1865,<sup>5</sup> suggests that he had already received academic instruction in Peru. This was, however, the last subject with a historical association that Tasset showed. In the same year he was also working outdoors at Marlotte, in the Forest of Fontainebleau,

alongside artists from the studio of Charles Gleyre, with Auguste Renoir probably among them; they are shown together, with Renoir's friend and patron Jules Le Coeur, in Firmin Girard's *Hot Day at Marlotte*.<sup>6</sup> At subsequent Salons, from 1870 to 1889, in Paris and in Nantes, Tasset exhibited genre scenes and landscapes painted at Marlotte and other towns in the Île de France.<sup>7</sup>

On October 2, 1875, Tasset married Flavie Octavie Meullemiestre, then thirty years old, and the daughter of gardeners in the town of Petite Synthe, near Dunkerque; among the witnesses was Alphonse Portier, a dealer in artists' materials, who became Tasset's brother-in-law.<sup>8</sup> The couple had been living together since at least 1866, since Flavie had two illegitimate children, whom Tasset later acknowledged and who were subsequently legitimized by their marriage: a son, Charles, born in Paris on July 22, 1867,<sup>9</sup> and a daughter, Delphine, born at Bourron (near Marlotte) on June 10, 1869.<sup>10</sup>

The Salon catalogues and other sources indicate that the Tassets' modest dwellings in Paris were, in the 1860s, on the rue de l'Université, a street of artists' studios; in the 1870s, on the rue Vieille du Temple in a neglected area of the Marais; and from the mid-1880s on, on the rue de Constance and the rue Damrémont in Montmartre, within walking distance of Tasset's shop. They also lived, presumably in the summers, at Bourron and Marlotte in the Forest of Fontainebleau.<sup>11</sup>

In July 1885 Tasset opened an art supply store in Paris at 31 rue Fontaine, in the 9th arrondissement, Quartier Saint-Georges, in partnership with a tradesman named Lhote. 12 Unfortunately, nothing else is known about Lhote, not even his full name, but he seems to have been a silent partner. To their clientele, the store was known as Tasset's shop, and Degas dealt exclusively with the Tassets, father and daughter. The partnership must have been dissolved in 1899, since Tasset alone is listed at that address in the *Bottin* after 1900, and he alone signed a new lease in 1896. 13 He evidently closed the business in 1910, the last year in which it is listed in the *Bottin*. 14

It may have been then that Tasset moved to Nice, where he seems to have taken up again his career as a painter, and where he died on November 23, 1925. His wife and children presumably accompanied him to Nice: Flavie was still married to him at the time of his death; Delphine was living in Nice at that time and indeed at the time of her own death in 1944; 16 and Charles is no longer included in the municipal election lists at the family's Paris address after 1910, 17 though he may of course have moved elsewhere in Paris.

Although less well known to posterity than Julien Tanguy's shop on the rue Clauzel, that of Tasset and Lhote on the rue Fontaine was equally popular among the many artists who lived and worked in the 9th arrondissement in the late nineteenth century. These two, for example, were the ones that Vincent van Gogh patronized almost exclusively, his arrival in Paris in 1886 coinciding with the establishment of Tasset and Lhote. Afterward, he sent them orders via his brother Theo, and from March–April 1888 to June 1890, Tasset's name occurs often in his correspondence. He valued his supplier's expertise, suggesting to Theo that he "ask Tasset's opinion" on technical matters. 19

Renoir, who had evidently met Tasset in Le Coeur's circle as early as 1865, 20 and Paul Helleu, a younger painter who became acquainted with Degas through the sculptor Paul Paulin in the 1890s, also frequented Tasset's shop. 21 Albert Lebourg, another young painter who made Degas's acquaintance through Paulin, just as he made Tasset's through Portier, also remembered frequenting the shop: "I met Degas often, especially in the shop of his color merchant, Tasset, on the rue Fontaine, and also found myself with him in Paulin's home." 22

It is not certain when Tasset and Lhote, who started with artists' materials, added cameras and photography supplies. Clearly, it was at least as early as March 1895, since Degas was already taking pictures by then, presumably with a camera bought from them.<sup>23</sup> The *Bottins* provide no indication of an earlier date, simply listing the partners' business year after

year as "colors." <sup>24</sup> But a change in their letterhead, which has survived because Degas used it on occasion to write a note while visiting them, points to the same year. The earlier form, found on letters of April and November 1895, identifies Tasset and Lhote as "fabricators of fine oil colors, picture canvases, gilding, and framing." <sup>25</sup> The later one, found on a letter of July 1897, adds "cameras and photography supplies." <sup>26</sup> That the earlier form was still in use in November 1895, and in another case as late as September 1897, <sup>27</sup> may simply reflect these small merchants' reluctance to discard it, especially for someone else's correspondence.

It was also in 1897, in the November and December issues of the Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris, that the first advertisement to mention Tasset's shop appeared in a photography journal.<sup>28</sup> It featured new products for developing and fixing films and was probably placed by the manufacturer, E. Lenoir; but its appearance suggests that by this time the shop was considered important enough to be designated the "central depository" for such products. That "D. Tasset" is identified as the proprietor further suggests that it was Delphine, rather than Guillaume, who was active in this branch of the business; this is of course confirmed by her role as Degas's darkroom technician. Throughout the following year, Lenoir's advertisement continued to appear in the Bulletin, though not in any other photography journal.<sup>29</sup> By 1900 Tasset's shop was well enough established as a source of "products and instruments for photography" for him to exhibit exclusively as such in the Exposition Internationale Universelle, in a section that included the most prominent manufacturers and retailers, publishers and printers, photographers and professional societies of the period.<sup>30</sup> Thus it seems likely—and much more likely than the reverse—that Degas's interest in and enthusiasm for the medium, however brief, was a factor in Tasset's increased involvement with it in the late 1890s.

Yet it is also true that Tasset's initial interest in photography was a fortunate development for Degas. In his neighborhood, the same Quartier SaintGeorges, there were many other dealers in art supplies, some of whom Degas is known to have patronized in these years, such as Cluzel, at 33 rue Fontaine, his successor, Vivien, at the same address, and Van Hoof, at 9 rue Caumartin, 31 but none followed Tasset's lead in branching out into photography. According to the *Bottin*, only one color merchant in that part of Paris did so at about this time, and he was in the 17th rather than the 9th arrondissement: F. Alexandre, at 26 boulevard des Batignolles, sold colors and stationery in 1895–1900, added easels, other implements, and photographic equipment in 1901, opened a second store for the latter alone in 1902, but evidently having overexpanded, went out of business by 1904. 32

Equally important for Degas's experiments in photography were the enlargement and printing services that Tasset's shop provided. There was, to be sure, a remarkable concentration of manufacturers and retailers of cameras and frames, plates and films, chemicals and printing papers, etc., in the 9th Arrondissement, many of whom were larger and better known than Tasset.<sup>33</sup> Equally close to Degas geographically, for example, were the well-established firms Gilles et Fils, at 31 rue de Navarin, and Guilleminot et Cie, at 6 rue Choron, whom Degas might just as easily have patronized.<sup>34</sup> Yet neither of them offered the kinds of services he needed, and indeed there were very few establishments that did. The one exception, at least in the 9th arrondissement, was E. Forestier, at 21 rue Rodier, whose advertisements indicate that he could have provided Degas with all the supplies and services that Tasset did.<sup>35</sup> Most amateur photographers seem to have done their own enlarging and printing at home; some did the work themselves in darkrooms their suppliers made available to them. But Degas preferred to collaborate with Tasset, and especially with Delphine, when he was in Paris or to send them detailed instructions when he was not.36

The earliest mention of Tasset in Degas's correspondence occurs in a letter of April 30, 1895, asking his dealer Durand-Ruel to pay a bill from Tasset, which unfortunately does not specify what Degas had

purchased.<sup>37</sup> Only about three months later, on August 12, did he begin writing to Tasset almost daily for frames and plates, prints and enlargements, and technical advice, in a burst of photographic activity he had engaged in while undergoing a cure at the thermal springs at Mont-Dore.<sup>38</sup> But by then Degas was clearly well acquainted with Tasset, to judge from the familiar tone of his letters and the confidence they reveal in his expertise. Had Degas been buying colors from him for some time after Tasset opened his business in 1885? He may well have, since he already knew Portier by then,<sup>39</sup> and from 1877 to 1890 his studio was at 19 *bis* rue Fontaine, on the same block as Tasset's shop; yet there is no record of Tasset's billing him before 1895.

It was in fact Degas who identified Portier as Tasset's brother-in-law, in a letter recommending Tasset's son Charles for a position in a large department store in 1895–96: "It's the younger Tasset who wants to work in the Magasins du Louvre and whom I'm writing to recommend warmly to you. Tasset is the brother-in-law of Portier who, I think, has already spoken to you about his nephew. This Tasset family is altogether interesting and honorable. . . . The elder Tasset has his color store at 31 rue Fontaine St Georges." 40

Portier too had begun as a color merchant, and like Tasset he was located nearby, at the corner of the rue de La Rochefoucauld and the rue Fontaine. Although his business developed in a different direction, into picture dealing, he retained even in this more worldly domain the modesty and devotion to art that also made Tasset an appealing figure for Degas. The artist and art historian Paul Lafond, who knew Tasset and Portier well, described the latter as "the mild and humble Portier, another dealer of a breed that has disappeared today, who loved painting above all else. Portier bought some of his [Degas's] works and only sold them reluctantly to certain intelligent and knowledgeable collectors."

The singer Jeanne Raunay, in a passage of her memoir of Degas that helps explain the appeal for him of simple yet well-informed local tradesmen like Portier and Tasset, and that indeed specifically evokes Tasset, recalled how much Degas "liked to encourage those who had a profession to talk about it, and for that he liked to drop in on the tradesmen in his neighborhood and to strike up endless conversations with them, informing himself about everything, but, unable to stop himself, giving his opinions without rhyme or reason." The same impression is conveyed by the memoir of Degas's niece Jeanne Fevre, who, perhaps repeating family gossip, wrote that "chez Tasset and Lhote, to whom he wrote often, especially when he was away from Paris, Degas often spent the evening in supervising the enlargement of his negatives." <sup>43</sup>

Lafond provided the same information, changing only the timing of the visits, but he added the name of another painter in the circle of Degas and Tasset who had turned to photography: "About 1895, he sometimes went after lunch with one of the Rouarts<sup>44</sup> and the painter [Charles] Tillot to have photographic enlargements made in the shop of a color merchant on the rue Fontaine, Tasset. . . . "45 Tillot's role in Degas's involvement with photography would be worth exploring further: he was not only a friend, a colleague, and a neighbor who lived for many years at 42 rue Fontaine, but he must also have had considerable expertise in photography, since he was a member of the prestigious Société Française de Photographie from 1871 on and had experimented with photographing at night and in unusual atmospheric conditions about 1870.46 In one of the letters he sent Tasset in August 1895, Degas asked his dealer to thank Tillot for some information or advice about panchromatic plates—an innovation so recently published in the Société's Bulletin that he had probably learned about it from Tillot in the first place.<sup>47</sup>

Jeanne Raunay suggests still another reason for Degas's loyalty to Tasset, his attraction to Delphine. "Where he was happiest was chez Tasset, the picture framer, who had a ravishing daughter. Degas looked at her with his eyelids crinkled, as if he were looking at a work of art: Delphine seemed to him to be a [picture by Alfred] Stevens. . . . 'And even better,' he added with a little gesture and a half-smile. And though he liked Stevens, he still preferred Delphine. . . ."48

That Delphine, who was about twenty-six at this time, was unmarried (and remained so all her life) and that Degas, who was sixty-one, seems seriously, or playfully, to have considered the possibility of marrying other young women of his acquaintance in these years<sup>49</sup> were perhaps additional reasons for his readiness to spend long hours in Tasset's shop.

It was probably inevitable that when Degas chose to hold the only exhibition of his photographs in his lifetime, it was also chez Tasset and Lhote. To be sure, it was less a public exhibition than a private viewing of his latest prints; no review or notice of it seems to have appeared in an art or photography journal, and it is doubtful that one appeared in a daily newspaper. Though exhibitions of Degas's work in other media, even when just as small and held just as informally in a gallery's window or back room, <sup>50</sup> were regularly noticed in the press, no critic seems to have commented on his equally remarkable photographs. We have learned about the little show at Tasset's only from a journal entry and a letter written by two of Degas's young friends.

On December 22, 1895, recounting an excursion with Degas after a lunch with his parents, Ludovic and Louise Halévy, who were among Degas's oldest friends, Daniel Halévy wrote in his diary: "We went out; he talked about France, about photography, about photography, about photography, about France, all mixed together with equal excitement; he took me to Tasset's, his photographer, and showed me his latest proofs—Mallarmé and Renoir, one of the Manet family, one of Madame Howland." Ten days later, on January 1, 1896, Julie Manet, a protegé of both Degas and Stéphane Mallarmé (himself a great admirer of

Degas's work), wrote to Mallarmé: "We learned from Mr Renoir that Mr Degas's photographs came out well and were exhibited chez Tasset." 52

It seems fitting that Tasset's name should appear for the last time in the sources on Degas and photography in connection with that exhibition, however ephemeral and neglected it may have been. By the end of 1895, Degas had evidently begun to lose interest in this latest experiment with a new visual art, whereas Tasset, perhaps inspired by his friend's enthusiasm, had just begun his own professional involvement with it.

Yet Degas continued to rely on Tasset's knowledge of artists' materials and on Delphine's photographic skills well after that date. In September 1897, responding to a query from Louis Braquaval, a younger colleague and disciple, about sources of canvas and methods of priming, he wrote on Tasset's letterhead—and no doubt in his shop—to communicate what he had clearly gone there to learn.<sup>53</sup> In February 1800, writing again to Braquaval, who had sent him some tiny portrait photographs, he suggested that Tasset might be able to make enlargements for him.<sup>54</sup> In September 1900 he repeated for their mutual friend Alexis Rouart an observation that Delphine had made; and in July 1901 he again informed Rouart of a recent visit to Tasset.<sup>55</sup> Even as late as 1908, he was in touch with Tasset: writing on January 1st to Luigi Chialiva, another painter interested like them in problems of technique, he noted that he was chez Tasset, surely on a New Year's Day visit.<sup>56</sup> It was only when the Tassets closed their business and moved to Nice two years later that their contacts with Degas, which had continued through more than two decades, were finally broken.<sup>57</sup>

## Notes

- I. Acquired by the George Eastman House, Rochester, in 1955, they were published twice by Beaumont Newhall: in English translation in Newhall 1956, and in the French texts in Newhall 1963. Since their content is discussed by Malcolm Daniel in his essay in this catalogue, I do not discuss them further here.
- 2. Heilbrun 1989, pp. 174-75.
- 3. Information from Tasset's marriage certificate; see note 8 below.
- 4. École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, Register of Enrollments in the Studios of Painting . . . , 1863–75, Studio of M. Gérôme (Archives Nationales, Paris, AJ52/246), p. 11, no. 57: Tasset, Guillaume Charles; Lima, Peru; February 1, 1843. It is not clear whether this was Gérôme's class at the École or one he taught privately.
- 5. Salon of 1865, no. 2036.
- 6. Colin Bailey, Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age (New Haven: 1997), p. 97 and p. 270, fig. 108. Renoir himself is not shown. Le Coeur had bought a house at Marlotte in 1865. Tasset's teacher Gérôme had himself been a pupil of Glevre
- 7. Salon of 1870, no. 2693: The Widow's House at Marlotte; no. 2694: In a Garden. Salon of 1872 (Nantes), no. 672: Interior of a Blacksmith's Workshop; no. 673: A House at Marlotte (Seine-et-Marne). Salon of 1873, no. 1379: On the Hill. Salon of 1875, no. 1865: Playing Hooky; no. 1866: Rest Stop of the Woodcutters. Salon of 1876, no. 1925: In the Woods. Salon of 1877, no. 2001: Coming Out of Mass; Chartres Cathedral. Salon of 1878, no. 2102: At the Edge of the Wood. Salon of 1879, no. 2815: In the Forest. Salon of 1880, no. 3596: Poultry Yard of the Chateau of Nantouillet. Salon of 1881, no. 2220: A Corner of a Farmyard. Salon of 1884, no. 2260: Entrance to Monaco (Alpes-Maritimes). Salon of 1885, no. 2208: The Road to the Railroad Station at Villefranche (Alpes-Maritimes). Salon of 1886, no. 2260: Farmyard. Salon of 1889, no. 2534: Forest of Fontainebleau.
- 8. Marriage Certificate, Mairie du 4ème arrondissement (Archives de Paris, V4E/2868) no. 858, Tasset and Meullemiestre. October 2, 1875. Guillaume Charles Tasset; born at Lima (Peru), February 1, 1843; painter; residing at 78 rue Vieille du Temple, 3ème arrondissement; son of Charles Anne Jean Marie Tasset and Tomasa de Goytisolo, both deceased. And Flavie Octavie Meullemiestre; born at Petite Synthe (Nord), December 4, 1845; unemployed; residing at 19 rue des Blancs Manteaux, 4ème Arrondissement; daughter of Joseph Benjamin Armand Meullemiestre and Dorothée Françoise Loomis, gardeners, at Petite Synthe. [Among

- the witnesses:] Alphonse Portier, 33 years old, merchant, 51 rue de La Rochefoucauld, 9th Arrondissement.
- 9. Birth Certificate, Mairie of the 10th arrondissement (Archives de Paris, V4E/1204), no. 3107. Meullemiestre, Charles. July 22, 1867; son of Flavie Meullemiestre, 21 years old; residing at 15 rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis; unemployed. [Present was:] Guillaume Charles Tasset; painter; residing at 19 rue de l'Université. [Marginal note:] Guillermo Carlos Tasset recognized the child as his at the Mairie of the 10ème arrondissement, June 27, 1871. [Marginal note:] By their marriage certificate, Mairie of the 4th arrondissement, October 2, 1875, Guillaume Charles Tasset and Flavie Octavie Meullemiestre legitimized the child.
- 10. Birth Certificate, Mairie of Bourron (Seine et Marne), no. 96. Meullemiestre, Delphine. June 10, 1869; daughter of Flavie Meullemiestre; unemployed, 24 years old; residing at Bourron (Seine et Marne). [Present was:] Guillaume Charles Tasset; painter, 26 years old; residing in the same place. [Marginal note:] The father recognized the child as his on September 2, 1873; register of 1873, no. 58. [Marginal note:] By their marriage certificate, October 2, 1875, Mairie of the 4th Arrondissement of Paris, Guillaume Charles Tasset and Flavie Octavie Meullemiestre legitimized their daughter.
- 11. See the Salon catalogues cited in note 7, above, and the documents cited in notes 8–10, above, and note 13, below.
- 12. Cadastral Register, 31 rue Fontaine, 1876 (Archives de Paris, D1P4/456). Shop lessee: Tasset, merchant of colors and varnishes for the use of painters, retail; lease of 3–6–9 years from July 1885 to Tasset and Lhote. [Inserted, then cancelled:] Constance 8 Damremont 7. [Below:] Lhote, merchant of colors and varnishes, partner—partner of Tasset (2 partners).
- 13. Sébastien Bottin, Annuaire et almanach du commerce (Paris: 1900–10). The cadastral register (see note 12, above) adds that a subsequent lease for three, six, and nine years, starting in July 1896, was given to Tasset alone.
- 14. Another Tasset, colors and varnishes, 65 rue de Ménilmontant, *is* listed in the *Bottin* from 1909 on, but this turns out to be a misprint for Tassel, who by coincidence was in the same business: he appears, for example, in the election list of 1910, Mairie of the 20th arrondissement (Archives de Paris, D1M2/1153) as Tassel, Edmond Louis Fulgence, born in Paris, October 20, 1876, color merchant, 65 rue de Ménilmontant.
- 15. Death Certificate, Mairie of Nice, no. 3169.Tasset, Guillaume Charles. November 23,

- 1925; in his home, 81 boulevard Sainte-Agathe; born at Lima (Peru), February 1, 1843; of French nationality, a painter; son of Charles Anne Jean Marie Tasset and of Tomasa de Goytisolo, deceased husband and wife; married to Flavie Octavie Meullemiestre. Drawn up on November 24, 1925, from a statement by Delphine Tasset, 48 years old, business employee, daughter of the deceased, residing in Nice.
- 16. Death Certificate, Mairie of Nice, no. 3173. Tasset, Delphine. September 22, 1944; at 87 route de Levens; residing at 81 boulevard Sainte-Agathe; born at Bourron (Seine et Marne), June 10, 1869; unemployed; daughter of Guillaume Tasset and of Flavie Meulemiestre, both deceased; unmarried.
- 17. His name appears regularly in election lists for the 18th arrondissement through 1910 and then disappears; in the list for that year (Archives de Paris, D1M2/1149), his address is still 8 rue Damrémont, the family's residence since about 1889, and his profession is still business employee.
- Vincent Van Gogh, The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh, 3 vols. (Greenwich: 1959), II, pp. 542-43; III, p. 283.
- 19. Ibid., III, p. 19.
- 20. See note 6 above.
- 21. Unsigned notes on Tasset provided to the George Eastman House, Rochester, at the time of its acquisition of Degas's letters to Tasset in 1955. See also Anne-Marie Bergeret-Gourbin and Marie-Lucie Imhoff, *Paul Helleu* (Honfleur: 1993), pp. 13–15.
- 22. Léonce Bénédite, *Albert Lebourg* (Paris: 1923), p. 250, quoting Lebourg; see also ibid., pp. 86–91 on Portier.
- 23. See Heilbrun 1989, p. 167.
- 24. Bottin, *Annuaire et almanach* (1887–99: Tasset et Lhote) and (1900–10: Tasset).
- 25. Letters to Paul Durand-Ruel, April 30 and November 30, 1895, in *Degas inédit*, p. 456, D 48 (where however the letterhead is not fully described) and p. 460, D 60 (where it is).
- 26. Letter to Alexis Rouart, July 28, 1897, in Lettres de Degas 1945, p. 211.
- 27. Letter to Julia Braquaval, September 18, 1897, in *Degas inédit*, p. 389, Braquaval 3 (where however the letterhead is not fully described).
- 28. Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris, nos. 82 and 83 (November and December 1897), n.p.
- 29. Specifically, it appeared in nos. 85–88 (February–May 1898) and nos. 90–93 (July–October 1898), but not in nos. 89 and 94 (June and November 1898). The advertising sections

- of nos. 84 and 95 (January and December 1898) are missing from the set in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
- 30. Exposition Internationale Universelle de 1900, Catalogue général officiel (Paris: 1900), III, p. 38. Tasset, now without Lhote, is one of some thirty-five manufacturers and/or retailers of photographic equipment listed for all of metropolitan France.
- 31. See Degas's letters to Paul Durand-Ruel, December 4, 1895; May 6, 1897; and May 13, 1897, in *Degas inédit*, p. 460, D61; p. 467, D 84; and p. 468, D 85, respectively.
- 32. Bottin, Annuaire et almanach (1895–1904). Like Tasset, Alexandre showed in the photography section of the Exposition Internationale Universelle of 1900; but unlike Tasset, he was also an inventor, and some of his implements would surely have appealed to Degas: "Prébusines et lanterne Phébus pour photographie de nuit" and "Appareils à projection et agrandissement avec générateur acétélyne."
- 33. Thirteen such establishments in the 9th Arrondissement alone are listed in the *Bottin* (1894).
- 34. Gilles had been a member of the Société Française de Photographie since 1882, Guilleminot since 1862; see the list of members in *Bulletin de la Société Française de Photographie*, 2nd ser., 1 (1885), pp. 5–14, and the one in ibid., 2nd ser., 10 (1894), pp. 5–21. Tasset's name does not appear in either list. Both Gilles and Guilleminot ran full-page advertisements in popular manuals such as *Aide-mémoire de photographie pour 1894*, ed. C. Fabre (Paris: 1894), pp. 259 and 288, respectively. Tasset did not.
- 35. Forestier's advertisement in La Photographie (March 1894) and in Ombres et Lumière (March 1894) offers "cameras, accessories, enlargements, reproductions, development of negatives and films, printing, retouching, etc." In the 1st arrondissement, the Comptoir Général de Photographie, at 57 rue Saint-Roch, provided a similar range of goods and services, including an "in-house technician available to amateur photographers," according to their advertisement in the Bottin (1894).
- 36. So great was the expansion of amateur photography in the 1890s that provincial hotels in increasing numbers made fully equipped darkrooms available to their guests; see Lumen (editor's pseudonym), "La vulgarisation de la photographie par le sport photographique," *La Photographie française*, no. 10 (October 1894), pp. 1–5. Was such a darkroom at Degas's disposal at Mont-Dore in August 1895?

- 37. See note 25 above. The bill, for 200 F, may well have been for the camera and developing equipment Degas would have needed for the photographs he is reported to have taken the month before; see note 23 above.
- 38. See note 1 above.
- 39. He had known Portier at least since 1879, when Portier was the manager of the 4th Impressionist exhibition; see Degas's letter to Félix Bracquemond, May 13, 1879, *Lettres de Degas* 1945, pp. 45–46.
- 40. Unpublished letter to Henri Laurent, a senior official who would soon become director of the Grands Magasins du Louvre, datable to 1895–96: Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Autographes, livres anciens et modernes, February 15, 1991, no. 5.
- 41. Lafond 1918-19, I, p. 93.
- 42. Jeanne Raunay, "Degas; souvenirs anecdotiques," *Revue de France* 11 (March–April 1931), p. 472.
- 43. Fevre 1949, p. 140. It is not certain how reliable this account is; Fevre often embroiders, and a footnote to this passage quotes what is called a letter to her from Paul Valéry that is in fact taken verbatim from Valéry's Degas danse dessin.
- 44. Probably Alexis Rouart, whom Degas would advise a few years later to take photographs of flowers, using "ordinary or special Tailfer plates"; letter of September 6–8, 1898, Lettres de Degas 1945, p. 225.
- 45. Lafond 1918-19, I, p. 93.
- 46. Daniel Challe and Bernard Marbot, Les Photographes de Barbizon, la forêt de Fontainebleau (Paris: 1991), p. 83. See also the list of members of the Société in 1885, cited in note 34 above; and Sophie Monneret, Dictionnaire de l'impressionnisme, 2 vols. (Paris: 1978), I, pp. 945–46.
- 47. Letter of August 15, 1895, Newhall 1963, p. 64. As Newhall points out, the key article, by Auguste and Louis Lumière, was published in the June 15, 1895, issue of the *Bulletin*.
- 48. Raunay 1931, p. 472.
- 49. See Loyrette 1991, pp. 659-61.
- 50. Durand-Ruel might well have installed an exhibition of Degas's photographs on that scale. Some eight months earlier, in March—April 1895, he had hosted the much larger "Second Exhibition of Photographic Art," organized by the Photo-Club de Paris. See the announcements in *Photo-Gazette* (February 25, 1895), p. 79, and in *Photo-Revue*, *Supplément*, no.

- 24 bis (April 1, 1895), p. XL. Such an exhibition, in such a venue, at such a time, would surely have interested Degas; and the fact that its organizing committee was headed by Gérôme would surely have interested Tasset.
- 51. Halévy 1995, p. 146. The translation is from the English edition by Mina Curtiss (Middletown: 1964), p. 73.
- 52. The letter, dated January 1, 1896, is reproduced in Julie Manet, Journal (Paris: 1979), p. 76. Among the other artists in Degas's circle who admired his photographs was the sculptor Albert Bartholomé. In an unpublished letter to their mutual friend, the painter Georges Jeanniot, Bartholomé wrote: "Yesterday I also made a date with Degas for the photographs. He definitely wants to take them and it's the day after tomorrow, Sunday, that we're coming to Auteuil. He showed me the photographs he took at St-Valéry, and some are admirable. What goes on in a camera lense to cause the photographs taken by a painter to have a certain resemblance to his painting [?] Mystery! I am aware that the cropping of the subject, the choice of lighting can be the beginning of an explanation. But that doesn't explain everything" (Institut Néerlandais, Fondation Costodia, Paris, 1993—A.936).

The letter must have been written after Degas's trip to Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme early in September 1895, the only one he made there that year; see his unpublished letter to Henriette Jeanniot, September 4, 1895 (Institut Néerlandais, 1993—A.896). But it cannot have been written much later, since it begins: "I went to the rue Picot yesterday, I was about to say rue Boccador," which suggests that Jeanniot had recently moved from one address to the other, and in fact he did move about July 1, 1895, according to the Cadastral Registers, 5 rue du Boccador, 1876, and 4 rue Picot, 1876 (Archives de Paris, D1P4/130 and D1P4/880, respectively).

- 53. Letter to Julia Braquaval, September 18, 1897, *Degas inédit*, pp. 389–90.
- 54. Letter to Louis Braquaval, February 1899, *Degas inédit*, pp. 392–93.
- 55. Letters to Alexis Rouart, September 17, 1900, and July 7–14, 1901, Lettres de Degas 1945, pp. 231 and 232, respectively.
- 56. Unpublished letter to Luigi Chialiva, January 1, 1908, private collection, Paris.
- 57. I am grateful to Sally Lightburn for expert and timely research in Paris and to Malcolm Daniel and Barbara Divver for helpful criticism.

Plates





PL. 2. The Hourdel Road, near Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme (Cat. 35a)



PL. 3. Street Scene (Cat. 37a)









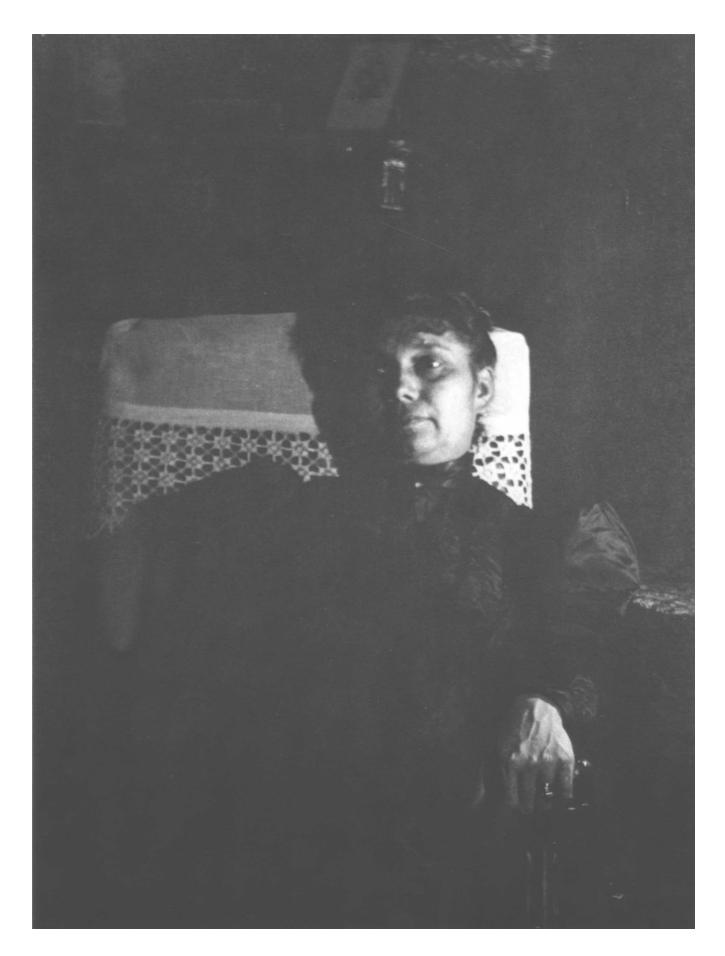


PL. 8. Louise Halévy Reading to Degas (Cat. 3b)

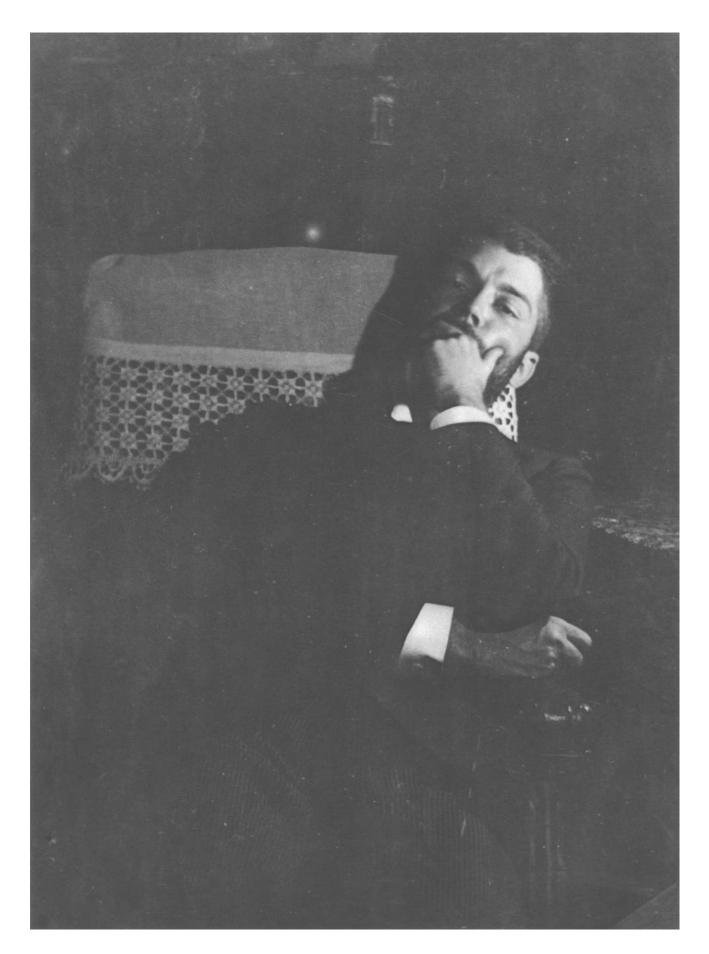


PL. 9. Louise Halévy (Cat. 4a)





PL. 11. Louise Halévy (Cat. 4d)



PL. 12. Daniel Halévy (Cat. 5c)



PL. 13. Louise Halévy (Cat. 4c)



PL 14. Daniel Halévy (Cat. 5b)



PL. 15. William Busnach (Cat. 10a)



PL. 16. Jules Taschereau, Degas, and Jacques-Émile Blanche (Cat. 6b)

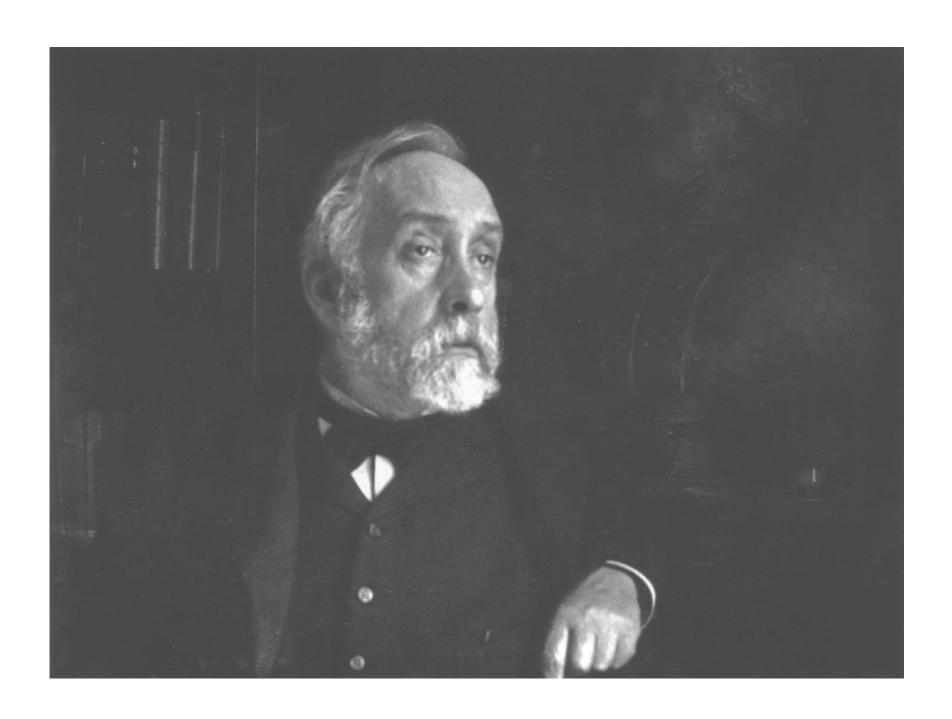


PL. 17. Jacques-Émile and Rose Blanche (Cat. 7a)







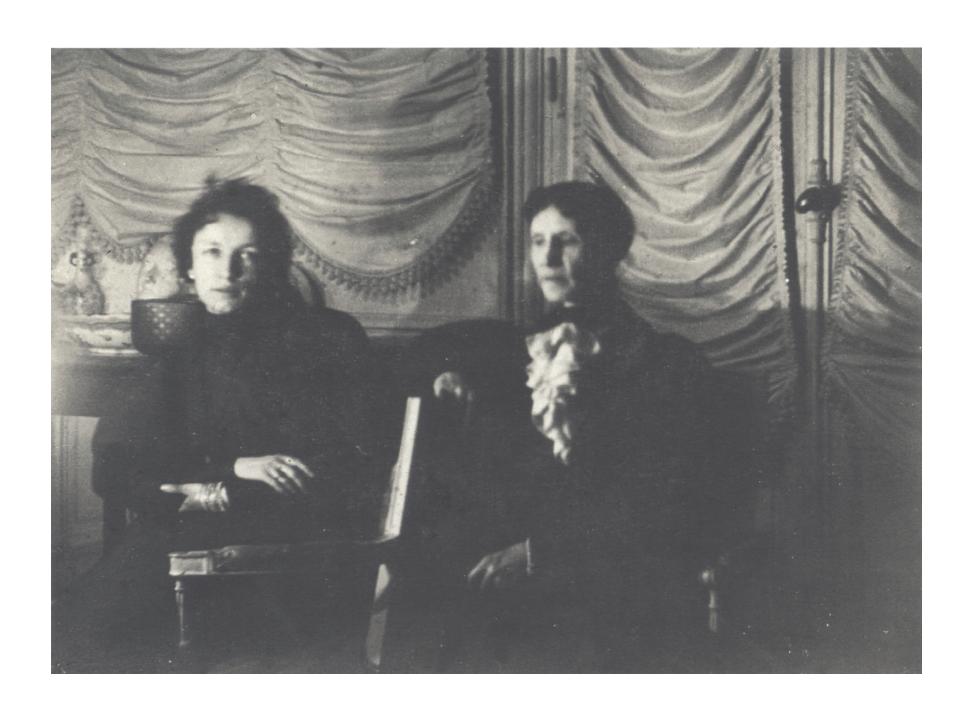




PL. 22. Self-Portrait with Zoé Closier (Cat. 20a)









PL. 26. Auguste Renoir and Stéphane Mallarmé (Cat. 15a)



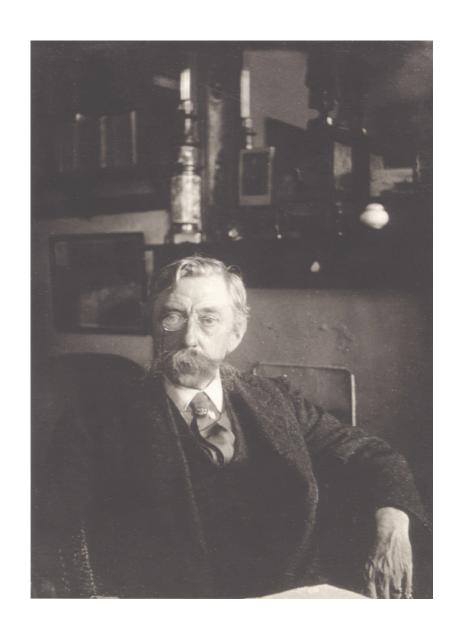




PL. 29. Hortense Howland (Cat. 31a)



PL. 30. René Degas in the Artist's Studio (Cat. 26a)



PL. 31. Emile Verhaeren (Cat. 29a)

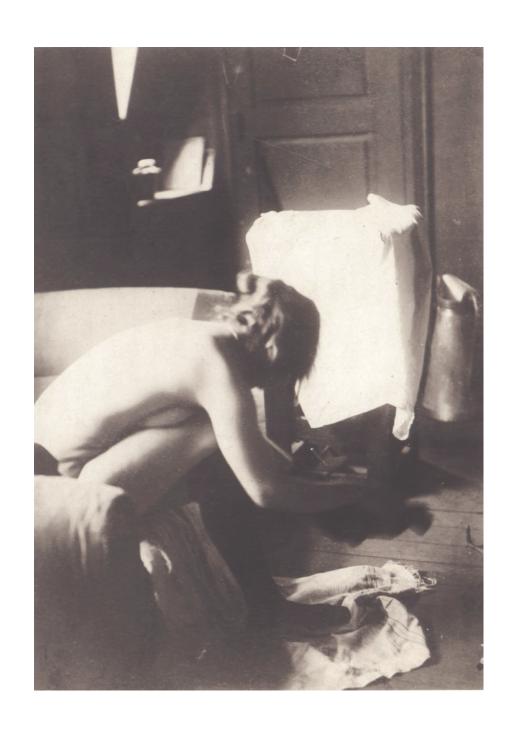




PL. 33. Self-Portrait with Christine and Yvonne Lerolle (Cat. 32a)



PL. 34. Claudie Léouzon le Duc (Cat. 33a)



PL. 35. Nude (Putting on Stockings) (Cat. 41a)





PL. 37. Dancer (Arm Outstretched) (Cat. 42)



PL. 38. Dancer (Adjusting Her Shoulder Strap) (Cat. 43)



PL. 39. Dancer (Adjusting Both Shoulder Straps) (Cat. 44)

## CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ AND CENSUS OF KNOWN PRINTS

Works included in the exhibition Edgar Degas, Photographer are marked with an asterisk.

Copy prints and modern prints are not included in this list.

None of Degas's photographs have titles given by the artist himself. The titles given here are descriptive.

## I. Photographs made at the Halévy home, 22 rue de Douai

## 1. Louise Halévy Reclining

Autumn 1895, probably early October

The sitter is Degas's friend since childhood, Louise Halévy (1847–1930), née Breguet, wife of Ludovic (see p. 26). The size of the negative suggests a date early in the autumn of 1895 (see p. 27).

Terrasse 15

#### Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9.8 x 7.8 cm Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1987-2 Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son, Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; her children; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1987

#### ıa.

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 9.5 x 7.5 cm Mounted to album page with 2a and 3a Album page inscribed, below photograph: "Louise" Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## \*1b. Plate 5

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 9.6 x 7.8 cm The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 86.xm.690.2 Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; Galerie Texbraun, Paris; heirs of François Braunschweig; purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1986

### 2. Louise and Daniel Halévy

Autumn 1895, probably early October
The sitters are Louise Halévy and her son Daniel
(1872–1962). The photograph was made on the same occasion
as **1**. Visible on the wall are two etchings by Paul Renouard,
L'ancienne classe de la rue Richer and Repos from the series A

l'Opéra (1881) for which Ludovic Halévy wrote the preface of the second edition.

Terrasse 16

## Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 7.8 x 9.8 cm Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1987-4 Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; her children; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1987

## **\*2a.** Plate 6

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 7.7 x 9.6 cm Mounted to album page with 1a and 3a Album page inscribed, below photograph: "Louise/ Daniel" Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## 3. Louise Halévy Reading to Degas

Autumn 1895, probably early October
The photograph was made on the same occasion as 1 and 2.
The image has, on occasion, been misidentified as Zoé
Closier (Degas's maid) reading to Degas (see p. 50, n. 65).
Terrasse 37

## Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 7.8 x 10 cm Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Est. Eig no. 1 Provenance: René De Gas; given by him to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1920

## \*3a. Plate 7

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 7.9 x 9.3 cm

Mounted to album page with **1a** and **2a**Album page inscribed, below photograph: "Louise / Degas"

Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## \*3b. Plate 8

Gelatin silver print, 28.7 x 39.7 cm

Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 84.xm.495.3 Provenance: Michel-François Braive; Samuel J. Wagstaff; purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1984 Exhibited: Experimental Photography: The Painter-Photographer, J. Paul Getty Museum, 1989; Capturing Time, J. Paul

Getty Museum, 1997–98 Condition: The print was cleaned, retouched, and lacquered in 1975.

#### 3c.

Gelatin silver print, 14.8 x 9.6 cm

Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

This is a fragment of a mounted enlargement, trimmed to show only Degas's profile.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, legs Le Masle. Pho 1992-3.

## 3d. Figure 10

Gelatin silver print, 27.8 x 38.4 cm

Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

Present whereabouts unknown

Provenance: Jeanne Fevre; given by her to André Weil (documented in Weil's collection, 1942)

### 4. Louise Halévy

October 14, 1895

Terrasse 14

## Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9 x 12 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1987-3

Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; her children; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1987 Condition: The negative is stained in lower right quadrant.

## \*4a. Plate 9

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 11 x 8.3 cm Mounted to album page with 5a

Album page inscribed: "Paris/Photographie Degas/ 14 octobre 1895"

Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 10.9 x 8.1 cm Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Mrs. Milton S. Latham Fund. 1988.3.20

Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; purchased by the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts,

Exhibited: Treasures of the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, 1995

### \*4c. Plate 13

Gelatin silver print, 40.8 x 29.3 cm

Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

Mounted to gray board

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, don des enfants de Mme Halévy-Joxe. Pho 1994-1 (1)

Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; given by her children to the Musée d'Orsay, Paris,

Exhibited: Degas, Grand Palais, National Gallery of Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988-89; La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996; De l'Impressionisme à l'art nouveau: Acquisitions du Musée d'Orsay 1990-1996, 1996-97

#### \*4d. Plate 11

Gelatin silver print, 40.4 x 29.5 cm

Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 86.xm.690.1 Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; Galerie Texbraun, Paris; heirs of François Braunschweig; purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1986 Exhibited: Degas, Grand Palais, National Gallery of Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988-89; Experimental Photography: The Painter-Photographer, J. Paul Getty Museum, 1989

## 5. Daniel Halévy

October 14, 1895

This photograph was made on the same occasion as 4. Terrasse 13

## Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9 x 12 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1987-1

Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; her children; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1987

Condition: The negative is cracked.

## \*5a. Plate 10

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 11.2 x 8.2 cm Mounted to album page with **4a** Album page inscribed: "Paris/Photographie Degas/ 14 octobre 1895" Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## \*5b. Plate 14

Gelatin silver print, 40 x 29.4 cm Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

Mounted to gray board

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, don des enfants de Mme Halévy-Joxe. Pho 1994-1 (2)

Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; given by her children to the Musée d'Orsay, 1994 Exhibited: *Degas*, Grand Palais, National Gallery of Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988–89; *La Famille Halévy*, Musée d'Orsay, 1996; *De l'Impressionisme à l'art nouveau: Acquisitions du Musée d'Orsay 1990–1996*, 1996–97

## \*5c. Plate 12

Gelatin silver print, 40 x 28.7 cm Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, 1998 (1998.56)

Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; Galerie Texbraun, Paris; the heirs of François Braunschweig; Baudoin Lebon; purchased by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998

## **6.** Jules Taschereau, Degas, and Jacques-Émile Blanche Mid-December 1895

In his journal entry of December 29, 1895, Daniel Halévy described the evening when this photograph was made as having taken place about a fortnight earlier (see p. 30). The sitters are Jules Taschereau (1843–1918), Louise Halévy's brother-in-law and an old friend of Degas; Degas himself; and the painter Jacques-Émile Blanche (1861–1942), an old friend of both Degas and the Halévys.

Terrasse 21

## Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9 x 12 cm Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1987-6 Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; her children; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1987

### 6a.

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8 x 8.2 cm
Mounted to album page with 7a, 8a, and 10a
Album page inscribed, below photograph:
"Taschereau/J. Blanche/Degas"
Private collection
Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

\*6b. Plate 16

Gelatin silver print, 23.1 x 24.8 cm Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

Collection André Jammes, Paris

Condition: The print is in its original frame, with a label from the frame shop next door to Tasset et Lhote, L. Vivien, 33 rue Fontaine.

## 7. Jacques-Émile and Rose Blanche

Mid-December 1895

The photograph was made on the same occasion as 6 above. The subjects are Jacques-Émile Blanche and his wife, Rose, née Lemoinne.

Not in Terrasse

### \*7a. Plate 17

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8.2 x 6.6 cm Mounted to album page with **6b**, **8a**, and **10a** Private collection Exhibited: *La Famille Halévy*, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## 8. Jacques-Émile and Rose Blanche

Mid-December 1895

The photograph was made on the same occasion as  $\bf 6$  and  $\bf 7$ . Terrasse 19

## \*8a. Plate 18

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8 x 8.5 cm Mounted to album page with **6b**, **7a**, and **10a** Album page inscribed, below photograph: "Jacques/Rose"

Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## **9.** Jacques-Émile and Rose Blanche, Jules Taschereau and an Unidentified Woman

Mid-December 1895

The photograph was made on the same occasion as 6, 7, and 8.

Terrasse 20

**Negative:** Figure 13 (modern print from the negative) Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9 x 12 cm Present whereabouts unknown; formerly in the collection of Françoise Halévy-Joxe

#### 10. William Busnach

Mid-December 1895

The subject is William Busnach (1832–1907), a librettist friend of Ludovic Halévy. The fact that a print of this image is mounted to the same album page as prints of 6, 7, and 8 suggests that it was made on the same occasion.

Terrasse 22

#### Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9 x 12 cm Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1987-7 Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; her children; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1987

#### 10a. Plate 15

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8.1 x 7.5 cm Mounted to album page with **6b**, **7a**, and **8a** Album page inscribed, below photograph: "Busnach" Private collection

Exhibited: *La Famille Halévy*, Musée d'Orsay, 1996 Condition: The print is severely faded overall.

11. Henriette Taschereau, Mathilde Niaudet, and Jules Taschereau; Sophie Taschereau-Niaudet and Jeanne Niaudet

December 28, 1895

This photographic session was described in detail by Daniel Halévy in his journal (see pp. 31–32). Two exposures are superimposed on the same plate. The horizontal image, with poses described by Halévy, shows Jules Taschereau and his daughter Henriette (1873–1955) on either side of Jules Taschereau's niece, Mathilde Niaudet (1875–1960). The vertical image shows Jules Taschereau's sister Sophie (1847–1924; widow of Degas's childhood friend Alfred Niaudet, cousin of Louise Halévy) seated, with her daughter Jeanne (1877–1960) standing behind her. All of the surviving prints are laterally reversed (see p. 56, n. 79).

## Negative:

Terrasse 17

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9 x 12 cm Present whereabouts unknown; formerly in the collection of Françoise Halévy-Joxe.

\*IIa. Plate 19; figure 14
Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8.8 x 9.6 cm

Mounted to album page with 12a and 12b Album page inscribed: "Photographies Doubles/par Degas"

Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

#### 11b.

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8.3 x 11.2 cm Collection, the deLighted eye, New York Provenance: Ludovic Halévy; Albert Boulanger-Cavé; his descendants; [Christie's, New York, April 23, 1996, lot 27]

12. Mathilde and Jeanne Niaudet, Daniel Halévy, and Henriette Taschereau; Ludovic and Élie Halévy

December 28, 1895

This negative was made on the same occasion as 11. Again, two exposures are superimposed on the same plate. The horizontal image shows Daniel Halévy seated at the left, with Mathilde Niaudet standing behind him, and Henriette Taschereau seated at the right, with Jeanne Niaudet standing behind her. The vertical image shows Ludovic Halévy (1834–1908) standing behind his eldest son, Élie (1870–1937). Terrasse 18

## Negative:

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 9 x 12 cm Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1987-5 Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; her children; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1987

## \*12a. Plate 20; figure 14

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 11.6 x 8.3 cm Mounted vertically on album page with 11a and 12b Album page inscribed: "Photographies Doubles/ par Degas"

Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## \*12b. Figure 14

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8.8 x 9.5 cm Mounted horizontally on album page with 11a and 12a Album page inscribed: "Photographies Doubles/ par Degas"

Private collection

Exhibited: La Famille Halévy, Musée d'Orsay, 1996

## 12c.

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8.2 x 11.2 cm Collection, the deLighted eye, New York



Fig. 58. Cat. 13a.

Provenance: Ludovic Halévy; Albert Boulanger-Cavé; his descendants; [Christie's, New York, April 23, 1996, lot 26]

## **13**. Ludovic Halévy 1895–96?

It is natural that Degas would have photographed his old friend Ludovic Halévy, and the medium and dimensions of this image are consistent with contact prints from Degas's other negatives. However, no elements of the setup or lighting link this image to any of the securely attributed photographs made in the Halévy home in fall 1895 (1–12), and, indeed, the effect of the image is quite different from those in which theatrically lit figures emerge from darkness. The attribution to Degas is possible but unproven.

Not in Terrasse

## \*13a. Figure 58

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8 x 7.7 cm
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 86.xm.690.3
Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son
Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe;
Galerie Texbraun, Paris; heirs of François Braunschweig;
purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1986
Exhibited: *Degas*, Grand Palais, National Gallery of
Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988–89

14. Ludovic Halévy 1895–96? Variant of 13. Not in Terrasse

### \*14a. Figure 8

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8 x 7 cm Collection, Suzanne Winsberg, New York Provenance: Ludovic and Louise Halévy; their son Daniel Halévy; his daughter Françoise Halévy-Joxe; Galerie Texbraun, Paris; heirs of François Braunschweig; Gérard Lévy

## 14b.

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 8.3 x 8.3 cm Collection Pons & Schmid, Brussels Provenance: [Christie's, New York, October 3, 1996, lot 37]

## II. Photographs made in the salon of Julie Manet and Paule and Jeannie Gobillard, 40 rue de Villejust

## 15. Auguste Renoir and Stéphane Mallarmé December 16, 1895

The subjects are the Impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), seated, and the Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), standing. Degas and his camera are seen in the mirror, as are the out-of-focus heads of Mallarmé's wife and daughter. The date of the image was determined by Peter Galassi (see p. 51, n. 94) based on Julie Manet's case of chicken pox in early December, her dinner invitation to Mallarmé for the 16th, and Daniel Halévy's having seen a "Renoir and Mallarmé" at Tasset's with Degas on December 22.

Terrasse 12

## \*15a. Plate 26

Gelatin silver print, 39.1 x 28.4 cm Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Mounted to board

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Paul F. Walter. 207.89

Provenance: Julie Manet and Ernest Rouart; their descendants; William Burke; Paul F. Walter; given to the Museum of Modern Art, 1989

Exhibited: A Personal View, Museum of Modern Art, 1985

## 15b.

Gelatin silver print, 38.9 x 29.2 cm Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Mounted to board. Mount inscribed by Paul Valéry: "Cette photographie m'a été donné/par Degas, dont on voit l'appareil et le/fantôme dans le miroir. Mallarmé est debout/auprès de Renoir assis sur le divan. Degas leur/a infligé une pose de 15 min à la lumière de/neuf lampes à petrole. La scène se passe au/4me étage Rue de Villejust no 40. Dans le miroir/on voit ici les ombres de Madame Mallarmé/et de sa fille. L'agrandissement est dû à/Tasset./Paul Valéry" (This photograph was given me by Degas, whose ghostly reflection and camera appear in the mirror. Mallarmé is standing beside Renoir, who is sitting on the sofa. Degas inflicted on them a pose for fifteen minutes, by the light of nine oil lamps. The location is the fourth floor, no. 40 rue de Villejust. In the mirror can be seen the shadowy figures of Mme Mallarmé and her daughter. The enlargement is by Tasset). Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris. Inv. 79. Provenance: Paul Valéry; bequeathed to the Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet Exhibited: Degas, Grand Palais, National Gallery of Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988-89

15c.

Gelatin silver print, 38.5 x 29 cm

Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Musée départemental Stéphane Mallarmé, Vulaines-sur-Seine

Provenance: Stéphane Mallarmé

Exhibited: Degas Portraits, Kunsthaus Zurich, Kunsthalle

Tübingen, 1994–95

Condition: Removed from original mount.

### 16. Geneviève and Marie Mallarmé

December 16, 1895

The subjects of the photograph are Stéphane Mallarmé's daughter Geneviève, on the left, and wife, Marie, on the right. The photograph was made on the same occasion as 15, above, in which the heads of Geneviève and Marie Mallarmé are visible in the mirror. The relative graininess of this image in comparison with 15 and 17 suggests that this enlargement was made from a detail of the negative. Not in Terrasse

## \*16a. Plate 25

Gelatin silver print,  $28.7 \times 39.7 \text{ cm}$ 

Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

Musée départemental Stéphane Mallarmé, Vulaines-sur-Seine. 985-128-1

Provenance: Stéphane Mallarmé

Exhibited: Degas Portraits, Kunsthaus Zurich, Kunsthalle

Tübingen, 1994–95

Condition: Removed from original mount.

## 17. Paule Gobillard, Jeannie Gobillard, Julie Manet, and Geneviève Mallarmé

December 16, 1895

The subjects of the photograph are, from left to right, Paule (1867–1946) and Jeannie Gobillard (1877–1970), the orphaned daughters of Berthe Morisot's sister Yves; their cousin Julie Manet (1878–1966), the orphaned daughter of Berthe Morisot and Édouard Manet's brother Eugène; and Geneviève Mallarmé. The photograph was made on the same occasion, and in the same spot as the portrait of Renoir and Mallarmé, 15. This is probably the "Manet family" that Daniel Halévy saw at Tasset's on December 22. Not in Terrasse.

### \*17a. Plate 28

Gelatin silver print, 28.4 x 38.9 cm
Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset
Mounted to board
Collection, Paul F. Walter, New York
Provenance: Julie Manet and Ernest Rouart; their
descendants; William Burke; Paul F. Walter

## 18. Paule Gobillard and Stéphane Mallarmé

December 16, 1895

The photograph was made on the same occasion as 15–17. This is the photograph that Mallarmé referred to in his New Year's quatrain for Paule Gobillard, January 1, 1896: "Tors et gris comme apparaîtrait/Miré parmi la source un saule/Je tremble un peu de mon portrait/Avec Mademoiselle Paule." The painting on the wall is Manet's Jeune fille dans un jardin. The relative graininess of this image in comparison with 15 and 17 suggests that this enlargement was made from a detail of the negative. Terrasse 11

## \*18a. Plate 27

Gelatin silver print, 29.2 x 36.8 cm Enlarged detail of the negative printed by Delphine or

Guillaume Tasset

Mounted to board

Inscribed on the mount by Paul Valéry: "Mallarmé et Paule Gobillard/sous un tableau de Manet/Photographie prise par Degas en 1896/rue de Villejust/et agrandi par Tasset./p.v."

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Pho 1986-83

Provenance: Paul Valéry; François Valéry; George Bernier; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1986 Exhibited: *Degas*, Grand Palais, National Gallery of Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988–89; *L'Après midi d'un faune, Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinsky*, Musée d'Orsay, 1989; *De Manet à Matisse; sept années d'enrichissement*, Musée d'Orsay, 1990–91.

## III. Photographs made in Degas's home, 23 rue Ballu, or studio, 37 rue Victor Massé

19. Self-Portrait in Library (Portrait Bust in Background)
Probably autumn 1895

Degas is sitting in his library, with a portrait bust in the darkness to the right. There are no clues regarding the date of this image apart from its aesthetic similarity to, and Degas's similar appearance in, other firmly dated photographs from 1895, for example 3. Some authors (e.g., Lemoisne 1946, pp. 218–19; Paris, Ottawa, New York, 1988) have attributed the photograph to René De Gas. Whether or not someone other than Degas operated the camera, the framing, pose, and lighting of this photograph and 20 and 21 are wholly consistent with Degas's photographic portrait style.

Terrasse 38

#### \*19a. Plate 21

Gelatin silver print, 18.3 x 24.3 cm

Mounted to board

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, don de Mme Robert Devade par l'intermédiaire de la Société des Amis du Musée d'Orsay. Pho 1994-44

Provenance: René De Gas, the artist's brother; his descendants; given to the Musée d'Orsay, 1994 Exhibited: *De l'Impressionisme à l'art nouveau: Acquisitions du Musée d'Orsay 1990–1996*, 1996–97

## 19b.

Gelatin silver print, 11.9 x 16.7 cm

Mounted to board

The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Richard and Ronay Menschel Fund for the Acquisition of

Photographs. P1997.42

Provenance: Agnes Mongan; her estate; purchased by

The Fogg Art Museum, 1997

The date of this print cannot be determined. Exhibited: Edgar Degas: The Reluctant Impressionist, 136 Portraits of Degas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1974; About Face: Artists' Portraits in Photography, Fogg Art Museum, 1907

#### ıqc.

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 6.5 x 8 cm Mounted to board Collection André Jammes, Paris Exhibited: *Degas: Form and Space*, Centre Culturel du Marais, Paris, 1984

#### 20. Self-Portrait with Zoé Closier

Probably autumn 1895

This photograph appears to have been made at the same time as 19 and 21.

Terrasse 36

#### \*20a. Plate 22

Gelatin silver print, 18.2 x 24.2 cm Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Est. Eo 53b Provenance: René De Gas; given to the Bibliothèque Nationale, 1920 The date of this print cannot be determined.

## 21. Self-Portrait in Library (Hand to Chin)

Probably autumn 1895

This photograph appears to have been made at the same time as 19 and 20.

Terrasse 39

#### \*21a. Plate 23

Gelatin silver print, 19.4 x 25 cm

Mounted to board

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, don de la Société des Amis du

Musée d'Orsay. Pho 1992-6

Provenance: the artist's niece, Jeanne Fevre; her descen-

dants; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1992

Exhibited: De l'Impressionisme à l'art nouveau: Acquisitions du

Musée d'Orsay 1990-1996, 1996-97

## 22. Self-Portrait (Profile with Hand to Chin)

Probably autumn 1895

This photograph, first published by Robert Gordon (Gordon 1988, p. 36), appears consistent in pose and lighting, if not in composition or print quality, with the three self-portraits listed above (19–21). An attribution to Degas seems likely, although unproven.

Not in Terrasse

### 22a. Figure 59

Gelatin silver print, approximately 14 x 12.7 cm Present whereabouts unknown; formerly in the collection of Denis Rouart, son of Julie Manet and Ernest Rouart

## 23. Self-Portrait with Bartholomé's "Weeping Girl"

Probably autumn 1895

The photograph was made in Degas's home, with



Fig. 59. Cat. 22a.

Bartholomé's sculptures for the *Monuments aux Morts* in a glass case behind Degas (see p. 21). Terrasse 58

## \*23a. Plate 24

Gelatin silver print, 28.6 x 39.4 cm

Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Musée d'Orsay, Paris, don de la Société des Amis du Musée d'Orsay, 1992. 1992-5

Provenance: Jeanne Fevre; her descendants; purchased by the Musée d'Orsay, 1992

Exhibited: De l'Impressionisme à l'art nouveau: Acquisitions du Musée d'Orsay 1990–1996, 1996–97

## 23b.

Gelatin silver print, 29.6 x 39.2 cm

Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Mounted to board

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, don de Mme Robert Devade par l'intermédiaire de la Société des Amis du Musée d'Orsay. 1994-43

Provenance: René De Gas; his descendants; given to the Musée d'Orsay, 1994

**24.** Self-Portrait with Bartholomé Probably autumn 1895 The photograph was made in Degas's home. Manet's *Ham* and Degas's *Portrait of M. and Mme Édouard Manet* are visible in the background.

Terrasse 59

No vintage print known A copy print exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Figure 55

**25.** Self-Portrait in the Studio Probably autumn 1895 or 1896 Terrasse 23

#### 25a.

Gelatin silver printing-out print, dimensions unknown Collection André Jammes, Paris

A copy print of the fuller image exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Figure 15

26. René De Gas in the Artist's Studio
Probably autumn 1895 or 1896
The subject is Degas's younger brother René. Made on the same occasion as 25.
Terrasse 52

## \*26a. Plate 30

Gelatin silver print, 35.8 x 26.6 cm Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Est. N2 Degas Provenance: René De Gas; given to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1920

**27.** Élie and Louise Halévy in Degas's Living Room Probably autumn 1895



Fig. 6o. Cat. 27.

The photograph was made in Degas's home, where Mary Cassatt's painting *Girl Arranging Her Hair* and Manet's pastel *Madame Manet on a Blue Sofa* are visible on the walls at center and right. Although likely, given the location, attribution to Degas is not altogether certain; the composition and lighting lack the strength of his documented figure compositions, but final judgment is difficult since the image exists only as a copy print.

Terrasse 51

No vintage print known A copy print exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Figure 6o



Fig. 61. Cat. 28.

### 28. Young Girl in Coat

Date unknown

Richard Kendall has shown that the photograph was made in Degas's home or studio by identifying Ingres's drawing *Study of a Woman* in the background (Kendall 1996, p. 25). Although this makes it likely, the attribution to Degas is not altogether certain.

Terrasse 47

Negative: Figure 61 (modern print from the negative) Gelatin dry-plate negative, 10 x 7.8 cm Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Est. Eig no. 1 Provenance: Presumably found in the studio of Degas after his death; René De Gas; given to the Bibliothèque Nationale, 1920

No vintage print known

## IV. Other portraits

## 29. Émile Verhaeren

Probably autumn 1895

The subject is the Belgian Symbolist poet Émile Verhaeren (1855–1916). No correspondence or other documentation has been found to shed light on the relationship between Degas and Verhaeren, but the poet was often in Paris during the period of Degas's photographic activity, and may have been introduced to him by their mutual friend Stéphane Mallarmé. The location has not been identified.

Terrasse 62

## \*29a. Plate 31

Gelatin silver printing-out print, 11 x 7.9 cm George Eastman House, Rochester, N.Y. 80:0246:0001 Provenance: "Madame Louette" (Alain Brieux); purchased by the George Eastman House, 1956, through Kodak Pathé

Exhibited: Technology and Art: The Impact of Photography upon the Visaul Arts, Davidson College, 1985. Images of Excellence, George Eastman House, Brackett Clark Gallery, 1987; Masterpieces of the Art of Photography, George Eastman House, 1989; Beginnings of Art in Photography: Selections from the Museum's Collection, George Eastman House, 1989

## **30.** Paul Poujaud, Marie Fontaine, and Degas Probably autumn 1895

Paul Poujaud described the session in a letter to Marcel Guérin in 1931: "I am sending you for your Degas archives a small document that might interest you. It is a photograph made by Degas after dinner in the salon of [Ernest] Chausson, in 1894, during the period of his great passion for photography:—Degas in a very familiar pose, Mme Arthur Fontaine [née Marie Escudier], sister of Mmes Lerolle and Chausson, and me, still Poujaud the dark. Degas composed the group and on the sign from him Guillaume Lerolle closed the lens." (Lettres de Degas 1945, pp. 249–50). Françoise Heilbrun points out that no other evidence indicates Degas's use of photography as early as 1894 and suggests that Poujaud's

memory, thirty-five years later, was simply mistaken (Heilbrun 1989, p. 167). Paul Lemoisne, reproducing a print then in the collection of Albert S. Henraux, Paris, incorrectly states that the photograph was made in the salon of Mme Fontaine, rather than in the salon of her sister and brother-in-law, M. and Mme Chausson, that it was made in 1890, and that Degas operated the camera with a rubber bulb (Lemoisne 1946, v. 1, p. 218). Poujaud's recollections appear relatively more accurate. Terrasse 9

#### \*30a. Plate 32

Gelatin silver print, 29.4 x 40.5 cm

Mounted to board

Inscribed in ink on mount, verso: "Paul Poujaud/13 rue Solferino"

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1983. 1983.1092

Provenance: Paul Poujaud (though an attestation of François Valéry at Bievres, May 25, 1983, states that it was given by Degas to Paul Valéry); Paul Valéry; François Valéry; Alhis Matheos, Basel; purchased by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983

Exhibited: *Photographs from the Collection*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984–85; *Degas*, Grand Palais, National Gallery of Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988–89; *The Art of Fixing a Shadow*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Art Institute of Chicago, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989–90

## 31. Hortense Howland

November 1895

The subject is Hortense Howland (1835–1920), née Hortense-Marie-Louise Delaroche-Laperrière (see pp. 37–38). Daniel Halévy reported that Degas appeared at the Halévy home on December 1, 1895, with "enlargements he had had made the night before, with me" including a photograph of Madame Howland; and on December 22 he reported that a print of Howland was among the photographs displayed at Tasset's. Terrasse 8

## \*31a. Plate 29

Gelatin silver print, 33.7 x 16.5 cm Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Private collection

Provenance: Halévy family

# **32.** Self-Portrait with Christine and Yvonne Lerolle Probably 1895–96

The photograph was made in the home of Degas's good

friend the painter Henri Lerolle. In addition to Degas, the photograph shows Lerolle's two daughters, Christine (1879–1941; later Mme Louis Rouart) and Yvonne (later Mme Eugène Rouart). The Lerolle daughters were also the subject of a painting by Renoir in 1897. There is no way to date the picture precisely, but late 1895 or 1896 (when Degas was most actively photographing and when the Lerolle daughters would have been sixteen and eighteen), or perhaps a bit later, is likely.

Terrasse 57

## \*32a. Plate 33

Gelatin silver print, 35.5 x 29 cm

Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume

Collection Mme Isabelle Hamel, née Rouart, Paris Provenance: Henri Lerolle; his daughter Christine Rouart; her daughter Isabelle Hamel

## 33. Claudie Léouzon le Duc

1901

The subject is Claudie Léouzon le Duc (1892–1969), later Mme Raymond Escholier. Nearly seventy years later she retained vivid recollections of the portrait session (see p. 47). The date of the photograph—substantially later than any other documented photograph by Degas—is attested to by a letter written by Mme Léouzon le Duc (see 59–60, below).

Terrasse 56

## 33a. Plate 34

Gelatin silver print, dimensions unknown Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

Present whereabouts unknown; documented in the collection of Mme Raymond Escholier, 1965.

## V. Photographs made out-of-doors

#### 34. Cape Hornu, near Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme

Probably early September 1895

The dating and attribution of this photograph and 35 have been much debated. Marcel Guérin reported that these two photographs were found in Degas's studio after his death and assumed them to have been made by or under the direction of Degas. An attribution on stylistic grounds is difficult since no other securely attributable landscape photographs by Degas have been identified. In the past, these two photographs have been dated 1896–98 or ca. 1898, presumably to coincide with Degas's dozen canvases of Saint-Valéry; however, no

source indicates that Degas was making photographs during that period, and the paintings of Saint-Valéry bear little resemblance to either of these landscape photographs. Instead, a more likely date is early September 1895, when Degas is known to have spent five days in Saint-Valéry, right at the moment of his most intense involvement with photography. A letter from Albert Bartholomé to Georges Jeanniot, most likely from fall 1895, confirms that Degas photographed at Saint-Valéry in early September: "He showed the photographs he took at Saint-Valéry, and some are admirable" (see p. 81, note 52). The dimensions and print quality here are consistent with other enlargements by Tasset from autumn 1895, and an attribution to Degas seems wholly justified.

Without ruling out an attribution to Degas, Heilbrun suggested that they could have been made by Louis Braquaval, citing the young painter's sending of sketches and photographs to Degas in 1897 (Heilbrun 1989, pp. 172–73.) Loyrette also cites René De Gas as a possible attribution, noting his frequent presence in Saint-Valéry and his activity as a photographer (Loyrette 1988, p. 788 n. 210). Terrasse 60

#### \*34a. Plate 1

Gelatin silver print, 27.5 x 37.8 cm
Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset
The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gift of Paul J. Sachs.
Transferred from the Fine Arts Library. P 1974.4
Provenance: Found in Degas's studio after his death;
Marcel Guérin; Paul J. Sachs; gift to the Harvard Fine
Arts Library; transferred to the Fogg Art Museum
Exhibited: *Degas*, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, 1936

**35.** The Hourdel Road, Near Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme Probably early September 1895 The dating and attribution of this photograph are discussed in **34**.

Terrasse 61

#### \*35a. Plate 2

Gelatin silver print, 27.8 x 37.8 cm
Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset
The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art
Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gift of Paul J.
Sachs. Transferred from the Fine Arts Library. P 1974-5
Provenance: Found in Degas's studio after his death;
Marcel Guérin; Paul J. Sachs; gift to the Harvard Fine
Arts Library; transferred to the Fogg Art Museum
Exhibited: Degas, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, 1936;
Chasing Shadows: Photographs for the Collection, Fogg Art
Museum, 1995

## 36. Street Scene

Date unknown

The print quality, dimensions, and mounting of 36a and 37a are consistent with Tasset's enlargements from autumn 1895, and the provenance of these two photographs is the same as that of 15a and 17a. The attribution to Degas seems secure, therefore, although the subject and date of these images are uncertain. According to Rouart family tradition, these two photographs show the double wedding of Julie Manet and Ernest Rouart and Jeannie Gobillard and Paul Valéry in December 1900. Peter Galassi points out, however, that the building in the background is not Saint Honoré d'Eylau in Paris, where the wedding took place, nor does the group appear dressed for a wedding (Galassi 1985, p. 119). Indeed, the architecture looks civil and provincial; might these two scenes have been made in Mont-Dore or Saint-Valéry in August or September 1895? None of the details are sufficiently distinctive to pinpoint a location.

Not in Terrasse

#### \*36a. Plate 4

Gelatin silver print, 29.1 x 39.8 cm Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset Mounted to board

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Paul F. Walter. 208.89

Provenance: Julie Manet and Ernest Rouart; their descendants; William Burke; Paul F. Walter; given to the Museum of Modern Art, 1989 Exhibited: *A Personal View*, Museum of Modern Art,

Exhibited: A Personal View, Museum of Modern Art, 1985

#### 37. Street Scene

Date unknown

Attribution, dating, and subject of this image are discussed in 36.

Not in Terrasse

## \*37a. Plate 3

Gelatin silver print, 28.5 x 39.5 cm Enlarged and printed by Delphine or Guillaume Tasset

Mounted to board

Collection Paul F. Walter, New York
Provenance: Julie Manet and Ernest Rouart; their
descendants; William Burke; Paul F. Walter
Condition: Water-damaged at lower edge; removed from
original mount.

## VI. Photographs related to works of art in other media

## 38. Women Ironing

Date unknown

The photograph is a negative print of Degas's painting Women Ironing (Lemoisne 686), prior to his having reworked the canvas in the mid-1880s (see pp. 38–41). The original negative, surely made for reproductive purposes, was probably made by a professional photographer, but the decision to transform it into a negative print is more consistent with Degas's fluid and untraditional use of materials than it is with contemporary photographic practice.

This photograph and **39a** belonged to Marcel Guérin and were said by him to have been found in Degas's studio at the time of his death. Along with the two Saint-Valéry landscapes (**34a** and **35a**), they were loaned by Guérin to Eleanor Mitchell, a young woman writing her thesis on Degas at Smith College. On Mitchell's suggestion, all four photographs were included in the 1936 Degas retrospective at the Pennsylvania (now Philadelphia) Museum of Art. At the conclusion of the exhibition, the four photographs were sent to the Fogg Art Museum, along with several other works to be returned to Paris. There is no documentation indicating that they ever left the Fogg, nor that they were given, like the landscapes, by Paul Sachs.

Not in Terrasse

## **38a.** Figure 22

Albumen or gelatin silver print, 26.7 x 25.4 cm Mounted to light green heavy drawing paper Present whereabouts unknown; formerly documented in the collection of Marcel Guérin Exhibited: *Degas*, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, 1936

## 39. Woman Ironing

Date unknown.

The photograph is a negative print of Degas's painting, Woman Ironing (Lemoisne 361). See 38, above. Not in Terrasse

## 39a. Figure 20

Albumen or gelatin silver print, 21 x 22.9 cm Mounted to bright yellow heavy drawing paper Present whereabouts unknown; formerly documented in the collection of Marcel Guérin.

Exhibited: Degas, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, 1936

**40.** Nude (Drying Herself)
Late 1895 or 1896

This photograph bears a direct relationship to several pastels and oil paintings, most notably the Philadelphia Museum's *After the Bath* of about 1896 (Lemoisne 1231). Georges Jeanniot described watching Degas pose the model in precisely this position, and Terrasse has proven that the photograph was made in Degas's studio by identifying the patterned fabric as being identical to that shown in another photograph of Degas in his studio (fig. 7) (Terrasse 1983, p. 46). Despite all of these factors the attribution to Degas is not universally accepted (see pp. 41–43).

Terrasse 25

#### \*40a. Plate 36

Gelatin silver print, 16.5 x 12 cm
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 84.xm.495.2
Provenance: Gérard Lévy, Paris; Samuel J. Wagstaff;
purchased by the Getty Museum, 1984
Exhibited: *Degas*, Grand Palais, National Gallery of
Canada, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988–89; *Experimental Photography: The Painter-Photographer*, J. Paul
Getty Museum, 1989

## 41. Nude (Putting on Stockings)

Late 1895 or 1896

Nothing in this photograph firmly places the scene in Degas's studio (as the fabric does in 40) and it has no direct corollaries in painting or pastel. 40a and 41a were found together in a context not otherwise associated with Degas; their earlier provenance is unknown and is not necessarily identical. Nonetheless, the intimacy of the scene, the slight awkwardness of the pose, and the strong directional lighting all suggest Degas, and the size and matière of 41a are close to those of 40a.

Not in Terrasse

## \*41a. Plate 35

Gelatin silver print, 17 x 12 cm
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 84.xm.495.1
Provenance: Gérard Lévy, Paris; Samuel J. Wagstaff;
purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum, in 1984

## 42. Dancer (Arm Outstretched)

Late 1895 or 1896

Despite the fact that this image, 43, and 44 were used by Degas as the basis for numerous paintings and pastels of the late 1890s, the attribution to Degas is not universally accepted. The idiosyncratic nature of the images, the fact that these negatives were found in Degas's studio after his death, and, paradoxically, the evident technical problems all argue for an attribution to Degas (see pp. 43–46). The negatives

have, until now, been described as collodion on glass (Buerger 1978 and all subsequent references), which has led to much debate regarding their date: Buerger argued that they might have been made as early as 1873; others have suggested a date of 1895–96 but have gone to pains to explain Degas's use of a long outmoded medium. Laboratory analysis has now shown the three glass plates to be standard, commercially available gelatin dry plates; their startling color probably resulted from chemical intensification to compensate for underexposure or weak development or from chemical reduction to compensate for overexposure.

Terrasse 30

#### \*Negative: Plate 37

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 18 x 13 cm

Partially solarized

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Est. Eig no. 7 Provenance: presumably found in the studio of Degas after his death; René De Gas; given to the Bibliothèque Nationale, 1920

Exhibited: Degas, 1988 (Paris only)

No vintage prints known.

## 43. Dancer (Adjusting Her Shoulder Strap)

Late 1895 or 1896

Dating and attribution are discussed above, at **42.** Terrasse 29

## \*Negative: Plate 38

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 17.9 x 12.9 cm Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Est. Eig no. 8 Provenance: Presumably found in the studio of Degas after his death; René De Gas; given to the Bibliothèque Nationale, 1920

No vintage prints known.

## 44. Dancer (Adjusting Both Shoulder Straps)

Late 1895 or 1896

Dating and attribution are discussed above, in 42. Terrasse 33

## Negative: Plate 39

Gelatin dry-plate negative, 18 x 13 cm Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Est. Eig no. 15 Provenance: Presumably found in the studio of Degas after his death; René De Gas; given to the Bibliothèque Nationale, 1920

No vintage prints known.

## VII. Lost photographs described in period documents

## 45-48. Federico Zandomeneghi

March 1895

In a letter to Diego Martelli, Zandomeneghi mentioned "four little [photographic] portraits that Degas made of me on one dreadful day last winter in his studio." In a subsequent letter he promised "a portrait of me that I had enlarged from a small negative made of me again by the same Degas last March in his studio" (see p. 20).

49. An Old Couple from Carpentras in Their Garden

**50.** An Elderly Invalid in a Black Skullcap; Behind his Armchair, a Friend Standing

51. The Same Elderly Man

52. The Same

July-August 1895

Described by Degas in his letter to Tasset, August 11, 1895 (see p. 20).

## **53.** Père Guyot, in Front of a Building in Mont-Dore August 17, 1895

Degas wrote in a letter to his sister Marguerite, August 18, 1895, "At the last moment, yesterday, I made this little negative of Père Guyot in front of his hotel. . . . The negative isn't great, the figure is not well focused. It's the window and the manservant that are right" (Fevre 1949, p. 99).

**54.** Federico Zandomeneghi and Albert Bartholomé as River Gods, in Front of the Château of Dampierre

September 1895

Zandomeneghi wrote to Martelli in November 1895, describing a photograph made one day two months earlier: "I am sending a little photograph by the tiresome Degas representing Bartholomé and me posing as rivers and the château of Dampierre in the background" (Dini 1989, p. 512).

- 55. Charles Haas
- **56.** Ernest Reyer
- 57. Marquis du Lau

November 1895

Daniel Halévy recorded in his journal, December 1, 1895, that Degas "showed the enlargements he had had made yesterday evening with me. There was Haas, Reyer, Du Lau, Mme Howland" (Halévy, 1995, p. 144).

A photograph (fig. 18; Terrasse 7) made in the garden of Madame Howland or that of Robert de Montesquiou (the floral screen matches that shown in one from the series of photographs now attributed to Madame Howland, ca. 1887,

fig. 53) has generally been accepted as the photograph of Haas described by Halévy, and which Degas described as "my beautiful Haas" according to Halévy's journal entry of December 22. Such an attribution is possible but unlikely; the sole surviving print exists in a Haas album, along with other photographs now attributed to Howland and was attributed by Philippe Jullian (Jullian 1971) without any substantiation. It is more likely that it, too, is by Howland, and that Degas's photograph of Haas, like those of Reyer and du Lau mentioned in the same journal entry, is now lost.

#### 58. Portraits of Whistler

Date unknown

In an undated letter to James Abbott McNeill Whistler, Degas wrote of the unsatisfactory results of a first photographic sitting and of plans for a second attempt: "I see, my dear Whistler, that you are eager to see the proofs, however mediocre, and I am sending them to you so that you won't climb all the way to Montmartre. Monday evening I will see my brother and will ask him which day, Tuesday or Wednesday, he could come to dinner with you. For focusing, he is a great relief to the blind photographer. And you, the model, will you be free Tuesday or Wednesday?" (Margaret MacDonald and Joy Newton, "Letters from the Whistler Collection [University of Glasgow] Correspondence with French Painters," Gazette des Beaux-Arts [December 1986], p. 209.)

59. Louise and Claudie Léouzon le Duc

60. Claudie Léouzon le Duc and Maître Chenu

190

These photographs were made on the same occasion as 33. Louise Léouzon le Duc, Claudie's mother, wrote to her husband:

Degas brought two large photographs of Claudie and me, nice overall, from afar. I moved. The one of Claudie with Chenu will perhaps be enlarged quite well, but Degas is giving it to Chenu.

I saw him at the end of the day Monday in his studio. He greeted me saying: "You moved. Only the little one poses well. She is wonderful. Chenu jokes. Lawyers don't understand anything about painting; he asks me why I don't photograph during the daytime. What do you want me to tell him! . . . That in daylight the blacks become flat and the lights are without reflections, and that that is what gives a masterpiece its character, making the blacks flat and the shadows and the halftones. . . .

What can they understand? I don't understand anything they talk about.

But seriously, the photographic soirées must be lugubrious. I'm going to enlarge the photograph of Chenu and the little one and I'll pass by his house tomorrow when I go to Rouart's for dinner. If I don't, he'll think very badly of me, he who is in the photo-club."

The other photographs are all overexposed and altogether lacking. The lights were too close. (Loyrette 1991, p. 587)

## VIII. Other photographs that have been attributed to Degas

Charles Haas

See the discussion of 55-5. An attribution to Degas is possible, but evidence suggests instead that it was made by Hortense Howland.

Figure 18
Terrasse 7

Degas and Ernest Chausson

Philippe Jullian attributes this photograph, or at least its composition, to Degas without any substantiation (Jullian 1971) and Terrasse accepted the attribution (Terrasse 1983). Lacking any evidence beyond Degas's presence in the picture, and finding the image wholly inconsistent with his documented work, an attribution to Degas seems unfounded. Terrasse 10

In the Driveway at Menil-Hubert

A series of snapshots made in the driveway at Menil-Hubert, home of Degas's friends M. and Mme Jacques Fourchy, are said to have been posed by Degas and perhaps even made with his camera. Nonetheless, they are fundamentally different in conception from those included in the artist's photographic oeuvre. Whereas the Halévys and their friends, Julie Manet and her circle, or Degas himself are carefully posed and lit to create a specific effect and composition in the finished photograph, the roles are reversed here: the photographs at Menil-Hubert were made to record the antics of Degas and his friends. In that respect, this series is akin to Degas's tableau vivant *The Apotheosis of Degas* (fig. 1) before Barnes's camera, or perhaps the lost photograph of Bartholomé and Zandomeneghi as river gods before the château of Dampierre (54).

Figure 62 Terrasse 40-46

René De Gas

Two photographs of Degas's brother René were given to the

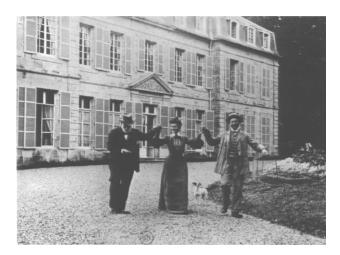


Fig. 62. In the Driveway at Menil-Hubert.



Fig. 63. René De Gas.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France in 1920 by him with other material by and about Degas, including photographs by and of the artist. In both cases the prints are copy prints of poor quality, making it difficult to judge whether or not the originals were by Degas. An attribution to Degas is possible but unproven.

Figure 63 Terrasse 53-54

Young Woman on Balcony Young Woman against Floral Wallpaper Young Woman on a Sofa Girl with Lace Shawl in Background

These four images exist only as negatives at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, among the materials donated in 1920 by René De Gas. A variant of the *Young Woman on Balcony* exists as a negative in the Musée d'Orsay (Heilbrun 1989, p. 172). Again, neither the evidence within the images nor the evidence of the negatives themselves is adequate to confirm an attribution to Degas; they may well be the work of his brother René. The composition and lighting of these portraits have little in common with Degas's predominant style of portrait photography from the photographs of the Halévy family in 1895 through the self-portrait with the

Lerolle sisters to the portrait of Claudie Léouzon le Duc of 1901.

Figure 64
Terrasse 48-50, 55

Marie and Geneviève Mallarmé in the Salon of Julie Manet
This photograph in the Musée Stéphane Mallarmé was identified by Terrasse (Zurich 1994–95, p. 313) as being by Degas. Although the subjects are posed before the same mirror as Degas's images of Renoir and Mallarmé and of the Gobillard sisters, Julie Manet, and Geneviève Mallarmé (15 and 17), the photograph is a small albumen print mounted to a commercial cabinet card mount—an entirely different presentation from that of any photograph by Degas. Jean-Michel Nectoux, in a forthcoming book on Mallarmé, identifies the photographer reflected in the mirror as Ernest Rouart, husband of Julie Manet.

Photographs in the Garden of Madame Howland or Robert de Montesquiou

This series of photographs (including figs. 3, 52, and 53), once attributed to Degas, has been shown by Françoise Heilbrun to be the work of Madame Hortense Howland (Heilbrun 1989, pp. 163–66).

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