

Centre
Pompidou-Metz



Seeing time in colour

The challenges of photography

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1.

PRESENTATION

SEEING TIME IN COLOUR THE CHALLENGES OF PHOTOGRAPHY

From 13 July to 18 November 2024

Galerie 2

Curator: Sam Stourdzé

From July 13 to November 18, 2024, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is featuring photography in all its forms in the exhibition Seeing time in colour. It is curated by leading photography specialist Sam Stourdzé, who is currently director of the Villa Médicis in Rome and was formerly director of *Les Rencontres d'Arles* from 2014 to 2020 and the *Musée de l'Élysée* in Lausanne from 2010 to 2014. The exhibition brings together around 250 works and 50 photographers, offering a unique overview of the major technical challenges that have marked the history of the discipline. It will provide an opportunity to discover exceptional works: from very rare plates showing the restoration of masterpieces from the Italian Renaissance to rarely exhibited seascapes by Gustave Le Gray and autochrome plates from the collection of Albert Kahn recreated for the exhibition.

Optical and mechanical features, chemical procedures, innovative physical properties: for a long time, technology was lumped together with the objective sciences. However, more than just a simple means of photographic production, its developments have paved the way for, or given rise to, all of its most important artistic revolutions.

Divided into three sections, the exhibition examines key issues connected with the reproduced image, the origins of photography, the rise of the snapshot, which enabled the discipline to be considered "modern", as well as its relationship to colour, a pivotal development that led to an unprecedented democratisation of the practice. In each of these three sections, the photographic work of a particular iconic figure will be showcased: Constantin Brancusi, who hijacked the reproducible function of the image in order to

produce hundreds of photographic interpretations of his sculptures; Harold Edgerton, who, in the 1950s, fixed time in the image eventually causing it to break down; and Saul Leiter and Helen Levitt, pioneers of colour photography who through their use of areas of colour transformed reality into a poetic form. Around these figures will emerge a multitude of other artists who have explored unknown facets of photography.

Interweaving periods, the exhibition will bring together the pioneering works of 19th- and 20th-century photographers and those of contemporary artists, from Hans Peter Feldmann, who revisits the camera obscura with his installation *Shadow Play* as an inaugural form of the reproduced image, to Dove Allouche, Ann Veronica Janssens, Laure Tiberghien and Hugo Deverchère, whose works highlight, throughout the exhibition, the many paths that are still being opened up, even today, by the technical manipulations of the medium.

Infinite reproduction

The historic essay written by Walter Benjamin in 1935, *The Work of Art in the Era of Mechanical Reproduction*, laid the foundations for the great challenge posed for all of the arts of the 19th century by the emergence of photography: the possibility of immediate and infinite reproduction undermined the work of art's unique sacred status. Although the concept of reproduction is central to the photographic process, artists have continually sought to reinvent it, formally and conceptually. Constantin Brancusi, the first great figure in the exhibition, photography

was not a way of documenting his works, but rather an embodiment of his thinking about his sculptures. The multiple views that he made of his works in the studio reveal his interest in *mise en scène*, in which no detail was left to chance, from the position of the base to the lighting and the choice of background colours for controlling the light.

From the outset, photography was used as a way of objectivising reality. By making accessible what had up until then eluded the realm of observation, it turned out to be a unique tool for documenting, disseminating and encouraging the great conquests of modern western history. Thanks to the Bisson brothers, who took nearly a thousand panoramic views of mountain chains between 1858 and 1862, the mountain and its peaks, previously hostile or simply unknown places, were now within reach of the image.

In parallel, astronomical views multiplied, notably under the impetus of the Henry brothers, who in 1884 produced the first map of the sky, and took numerous photographs of planets, stars and astronomical phenomena, which were widely distributed among the scientific community and the general public. In this respect, the iconic photographs of Nasa's space conquests in the 1960s, rarely shown in France, are a reminder of the extent to which photography structures our imaginations as much as it serves a political objective. Another conquest, that of the realm of the infinitely small, saw photography supplant the microscope. Little by little, it left the realm of the sciences and became a form of visual experimentation, epitomised in particular by the photographer Laure Albin Guillot who in 1931 unequivocally renamed it "decorative micrography".

Encapsulating time

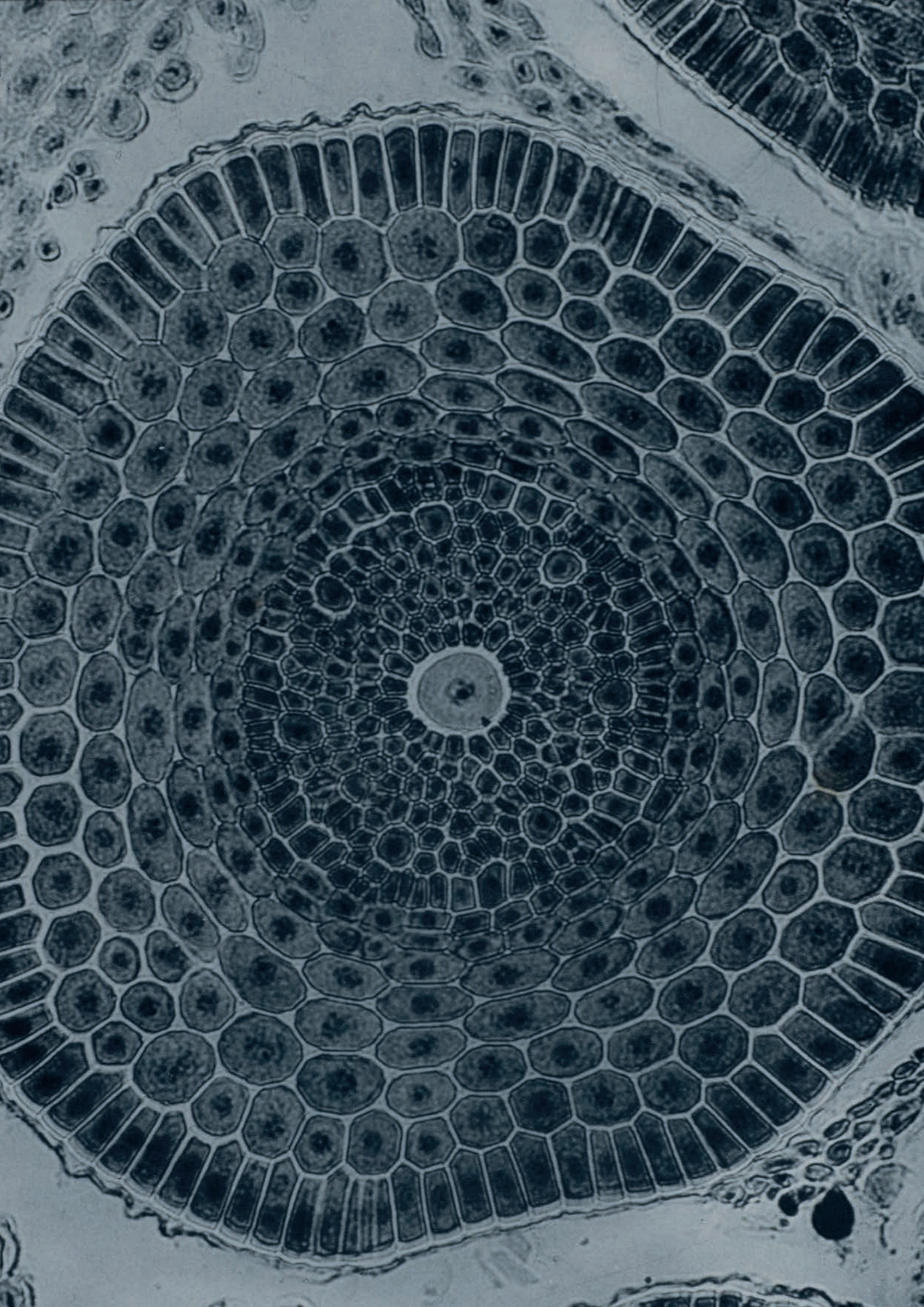
The most radical transformation in photography was the mastery of the snapshot, achieved for the first time in 1841 with the first negative/positive process in history. In 1856, thanks to a much shorter shutter

speed, Gustave Le Gray was able to take his famous *Seascapes [Marines]*, photographic landscapes of oceans captured on the spot and whose picturesque aesthetic adopted the conventions of landscape painting. With the arrival of the snapshot, our entire relationship to the tool was transformed: photography was no longer simply a means of obtaining an image that was planned in advance, but rather an end in itself, leading to a dizzyingly infinite number of possibilities. There remained one challenge for it to overcome: in order to capture a dense, cloudy sky, the sea had to be under-exposed, thus appearing too dark; in the opposite case, the sky, over-exposed, would disappear. To get around this, Gustave Le Gray produced the first manipulated images, the first photomontages in history, by combining one negative for the sea with another for the sky. He thus obtained a perfectly density, from sea to sky.

In the context of the technical modernity of the late 19th-century, glorified by speed, the exactness and precision of these new processes paved the way for a variety of experiments. In the United States and France, the pioneering work of the physicists Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey transformed our understanding of human and animal physiology.

With the chronophotograph, invented by Étienne-Jules Marey in 1882, it was possible to record a series of successive images, taken at a thousandth of a second, on a single surface, thus revealing the imperceptible trajectory of bodies in movement. The revolution extended well beyond the realm of photography, serving the visual arts – it preceded by nearly 30 years the experiments of the Futurists, and opened the way to proto-cinema – as well as medicine and the physical and natural sciences.

Artists and scientists worked together to push back the limits of the visible. Harold Edgerton, a professor of electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), used his stroboscopic



flash device to push the photograph to its furthest limits. The falling drop of milk he managed to capture, at the precise second when it hit a flat surface, reflected his desire to expose the passage of time. He became obsessed with this quest, devoting two decades to it, from the first crown formed by a splash that he produced in 1936, to the brightly coloured version in 1957, which is striking in its immense visual clarity. Here, at last, was one of photography's great achievements: encapsulating time.

Fixing colour

The ultimate challenge was to capture colour. As testified by the humanist utopia of the banker Albert Kahn, who wanted to create an archive of the planet, colour was initially the preserve of scientists, from the pioneering experiments of Louis Ducos du Hauron, who took the first colour photograph in history in 1877, to the dazzling success of autochrome plates in the first quarter of the 20th century. In the 1930s, with Yevonde Middleton, a pioneer of colour photography in England, it acquired burlesque, eccentric and, for the first time, feminist aesthetic qualities. Thanks in part to Saul Leiter, one of the greatest colour photographers, it became a photographic style in its own right. He declared: 'Painting is glorious. I love photography, but I'm not sure photography can do what painting can.' And yet, he rendered in colour what few had managed to convey before him. Playing with large areas of colour and often monochrome palettes, Leiter worked colour in a body of work that anticipated Helen Levitt, William Eggleston, Joel Meyerowitz and Stephen Shore, even though, paradoxically, he was only celebrated for his achievements after them.

Seeing time in colour: three periods when technological advances made it possible to capture on paper the great achievements of photography: reproducing an image, capturing time and fixing colour. Like utopias conquered anew each time, photography reminds us of its importance in the discovery of the world as we know it. It enables us to see, and asserts its political and societal subjectivity. We take it for granted, sometimes forgetting that capturing the image of the world is also a technical challenge, and above all, an infinite source of inspiration for artists.

2.

INTERVIEW

WITH THE CURATOR

SAM STOURDZÉ

What gave you the desire to re-examine the history of photography through time and colour?

This exhibition is a vast journey through the history of photography. I was interested in looking at the major conquests of the medium, namely fixing an image, instant photography and finally colour. These challenges would offer artists – who were often also scientists – new artistic perspectives. Their obsession with capturing what we see on paper became a quest for the holy grail. Each technical advance got them a little bit closer. But it remained a kind of unattainable utopia, for the image of reality would never be reality itself.

The exhibition brings together a range of young photographers who dialogue with the pioneers of photography. How did you envisage this conversation?

The exhibition is not historical, it's a journey. Different media dialogue with each other. There is some painting – *the Mona Lisa!* – and some sculpture – Degas's horses. In each of the three chapters, we stop at each of the four figures whose work is on display: Brancusi, Edgerton, Levitt and Leiter. A number of contemporary figures interrogate the medium, question photography, raising the same issue that obsessed their elders: what is seeing?

What determined the selection of the works?

The pleasing idea of wandering about in photography. We have brought together an exceptional ensemble of loans, with major historic pieces, such as the very first colour photographs dating from the end of the 19th century.

What does the following quotation from Saul Leiter, one of the greatest colour photographers, inspire in you?: "Painting is glorious. I love photography, but I'm not sure that photography can do what painting can."

I admire Saul Leiter hugely. I knew him towards the end of his life. He was always a bit grumpy. He would like to have been recognised as a painter. He succeeded in investing his photography with his painter's gaze, working with areas of flat colour, and creating overlapping planes. But he never succeeded in doing in his paintings what he did in his colour photographs. He is a great photographer. And as for the quotation, it also works if you substitute "photography" for "painting": "Photography is glorious. I love painting, but I am not sure that painting can do what photography can." I think this is what the exhibition tells us.

With the digital revolution, how do you see the future of photography?

The digital revolution is yet another conquest. We do not deal with it in the exhibition. It's perhaps a bit early to assess the aesthetic advances it has led to.

Which is your favourite from among the 300 works on display?

The exhibition is extremely rich, with more than 300 works. What interests me are the links, for example to see Douche Allouche dialogue with the *Mona Lisa*, Degas with Muybridge, Laure Tiberghien with Ducos du Hauron. And then there are the astonishing ensembles: Edgerton is an exhibition within the exhibition. Middleton is a revelation, and one never tires of seeing Saul Leiter's work.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1973, Sam Stourdzé specialises in the contemporary image and links between art, photography and cinema. He has curated numerous exhibitions and has written several authoritative books.

A former resident of the Académie de France in Rome - Villa Médicis in 2007 in the cinema section, Sam Stourdzé was director of Les Rencontres d'Arles from 2014 to 2020 after being director of the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne in Switzerland from 2010 to 2014 and working as editor of the magazine ELSE.

During his six years as director of Les Rencontres d'Arles, he organised 225 exhibitions, celebrated the festival's 50th anniversary in 2019, launched a Chinese version of the festival in Xiamen (Jimei x Arles International Photo Festival) and created the Institut pour la Photographie in Lille with the Région Hauts-de-France. With Les Rencontres d'Arles, he attempted to decompartmentalise photography by creating dialogue with other disciplines: contemporary art, music, cinema, architecture and literature.

In 2020, Sam Stourdzé was appointed director of the Académie de France à Rome - Villa Médicis. His project revolved around the idea of mobility, be it artistic, social or European.



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"This exhibition is a vast journey through the history of photography. I was interested in looking at the great conquests of the medium, namely fixing an image, instant photography and finally colour."

3.

FEATURED ARTISTS

Berence ABBOTT
 Laure Albin GUILLOT
 Dove ALLOUCHE
 James ANDERSON
 Anonyme, d'après Léonard De Vinci
 Louis-Auguste et Auguste-Rosalie BISSON
 Constantin BRANCUSI
 BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CIE
 Léon BUSY
 Paul CASTELNAU
 Georges CHEVALIER
 Fernand CUVILLE
 Edgar DEGAS
 Henri DESLANDRES
 Hugo DEVERCHÈRE
 Louis DUCOS DU HAURON
 Harold Eugene EDGERTON
 William EGGLESTON
 Hans-Peter FELDMANN
 Achille FERRARIO (FRATELLI ALINARI)
 Frédéric GADMER
 Fernand Valentin GOSSART
 GOUPIL & CIE
 Philippe HALSMAN
 Paul-Pierre et Prosper-Mathieu HENRY

Ann Veronica JANSSENS
 Gustave LE GRAY
 Saul LEITER
 Auguste LÉON
 Helen LEVITT
 Albert LONDE
 Étienne-Jules MAREY
 Joël MEYEROWITZ
 MADAME YEVONDE (Yevonde MIDDLETON, dit)
 Gjon MILI
 Abelardo MORELL
 Eadweard MUYBRIDGE
 Nasa
 Arnold Abner NEWMAN
 Constance NOUVEL
 Jean PAINLEVÉ
 Stéphane PASSET
 Auguste PONSOT
 Gerhard RICHTER
 Wilhelm Conrad RÖNTGEN
 Thomas RUFF
 Camille SAUVAGEOT
 Stephen SHORE
 Edward STEICHEN
 Hiroshi SUGIMOTO
 Laure TIBERGHEN

4.

EXHIBITION ITINERARY



SEEING

HANS-PETER FELDMANN

What is it to see? Even before the birth of photography, the idea that to understand reality we had to represent it guided early optical experiments. In *Shadow Play (Paris)*, Hans-Peter Feldmann turned the classic experiment of the most famous of them all – the camera obscura, photography's distant ancestor – on its head by projecting an inverted, upside-down image of reality through a small hole into a darkroom. But he restored its lost ambitions, preferring spectacle to the serious study of reality. A collector of old knickknacks and toys, he brought together some forty objects that come to life in a strange mechanical ballet. In the end, the artist tells us that what matters more than the object is its image – reduced to a dancing silhouette on the wall. And if it exists, it is because it is multiple.



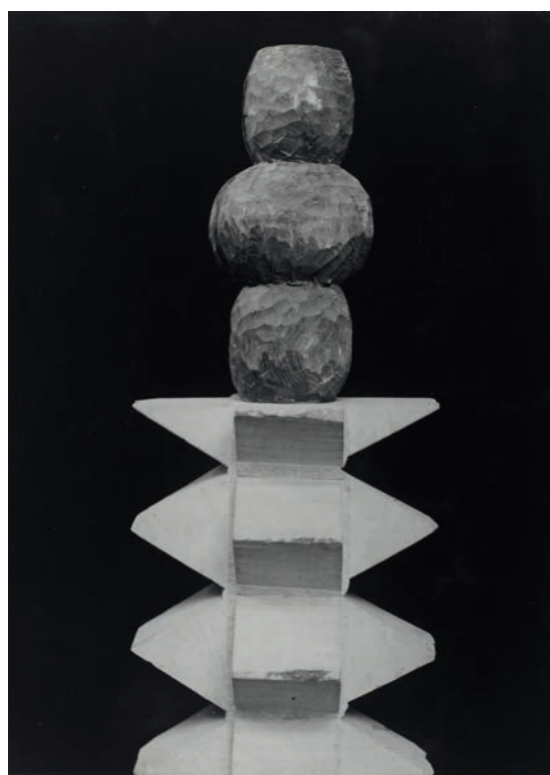
Hans-Peter Feldmann, *Shadow Play (Paris)*, 2011
 wood, electric motors, lamps, metal, ceramics, plastic, paper, fabric,
 glass, tinplate. Variable dimensions. Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris
 Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle, AM
 2012-64 © Adagg, Paris 2024



Goupil & Cie, *La Joconde, reproduction de peinture*, 1864
Albumen print, 25 x 17 cm
Paris, musée d'Orsay PHO 1991 12 274

CONQUERING WORKS OF ART

Among 110 known copies of the *Mona Lisa*, a canvas created by a painter from the 17th-century Italian school bears witness to the importance of training painters' eyes and hands in the works of the masters. Two centuries later, the possibility of reproducing them mechanically led to the mass dissemination of these images in visual culture. The artist and theorist Gustave Le Gray photographed Aimée Millet's drawing of the *Mona Lisa*, the infinitely reproducible muse, in 1855, and manipulated the chemical agents in his prints in order to study their tonal variety. Trained as a painter, he championed an aesthetic approach to photography that interpreted more than it revealed. For the first time, in 1895, a campaign to restore Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* was based on large-format photographs. The many views of Botticelli's masterpieces also raise questions about the information that the photographic image carries with it for archival purposes. With *Repeint*, a photograph enlarged to nearly a million times the size of a sample of paint taken from an Italian Renaissance painting in the Louvre, Dove Allouche shifts the reproduction of works of art to an experimental register.



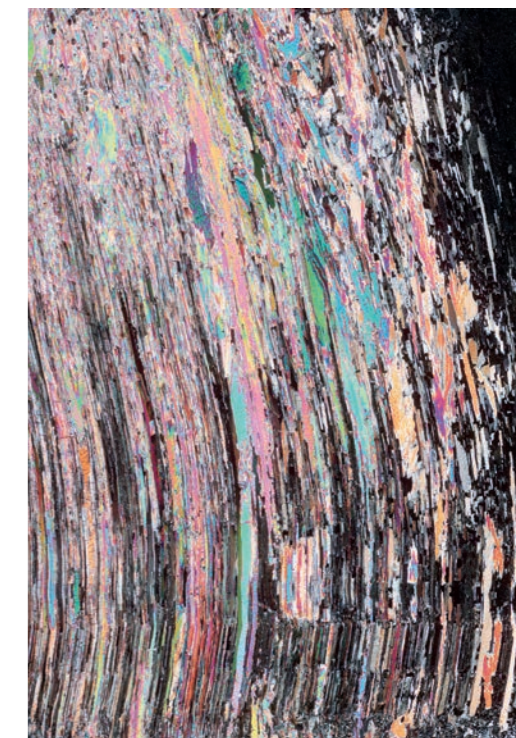
Constantin Brancusi, *Plante exotique*, 1925.
Gelatin-silver print, 39,9 x 29,9 cm
Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris
Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle 647
© Succession Brancusi - Adagp, Paris 2024

CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI AND PHOTOGRAPHY

"Why write about my sculptures? Why not simply show photographs of them?" For Constantin Brancusi, photography was more than a tool for documenting. It was a study medium for the conception of his sculptures. He began taking photographs in 1904, when he moved to Paris. In 1914, when a group of his sculptures was exhibited in New York, Brancusi, unhappy with the images he was receiving, decided that – from then on – he would photograph his work himself. Supported by his friend Man Ray who advised him on the purchase of photographic equipment, he built a darkroom in his studio during the 1920s. The series he produced between 1920 and 1940 revealed Brancusi's ambitious mise en scène, which left no detail to chance, from the position of the plinth to the lighting via the use of coloured backgrounds to control the light.

CONQUERING THE INVISIBLE

In the late 19th century, as the profound aspirations of an expanding world resonated, new ways of recording reality ushered in a host of experiments. From the invention of microphotography to the discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895, reality extended beyond simple observation by the naked eye. Representations of the infinitely small gradually moved from the scientific field into the realm of the arts. Jean Painlevé, who was close to the cinematographic avant-gardes, gave his observations of underwater life new dreamlike perspectives, while in 1931, Laure Albin Guillot discovered decorative applications for her microscopic views of plant and mineral cells. Today, the conquest of the invisible extends to subterranean matter: made from finely sliced strips of sedimentary rock, Dove Allouche's photographs demonstrate the as yet unexplored potential of the photographic medium.



Dove Allouche, *Evaporite_19*, 2019
Lambda silver print from a thin slide
taken from a block of gypsum, 175 x 125 cm
Paris, collection particulière Photo Dove Allouche © Adagp, Paris 2024

CONQUERING SPACE

From the first astronomical photographs to NASA's Apollo missions, space has been the terrain for a battle fought over images. In the late 19th century, photographic techniques were evolving and the sensitivity of the plates made it possible to record objects invisible when viewed through a telescope. The Henry brothers produced numerous photographs of stars while expanding our knowledge of the moon's surface to a new level of precision. In the 1960s, images taken from space – the ultimate icons of the conquest of space – gave photography the onerous task of showing us a reality to which it alone had access. They permeated the media to such an extent that, for contemporary artists, they have become images to outmanoeuvre. For Thomas Ruff, whose photographs come from scientific archives and magazines, and for Hugo Deverchère, who produces terrestrial views based on a captation technique used by astronomers for space observation, it is a question of moving this imagery from one world to another, from the sciences to the sublime.



NASA, *Première sortie extravéhiculaire non attaché (Bruce McCandless II)*, 1984
Vintage chromogenic print on paper
"This Paper Manufactured by Kodak", 33,6 x 26 cm
Paris, collection Jean-Fabien G. Phinera

TIME

CONQUERING THE MOUNTAINS

The mountains were still *terra incognita* when the Bisson brothers, explorers and technicians second to none, set about photographing their peaks. Between 1855 and 1862, they produced almost a hundred panoramic views of the Mont-Blanc range, which owe their astonishing sharpness to the wet collodion process. The challenge was a technical one, as the Bisson brothers carried up to 250 kilograms of equipment with them to develop their glass plates on site. And while some of the solarised skies show the limits still faced by the medium, their interest lies above all in their subject. By capturing in images a reality in which the viewer had no part, the Bisson brothers established an idea that would traverse the 19th century: you have to see to discover.



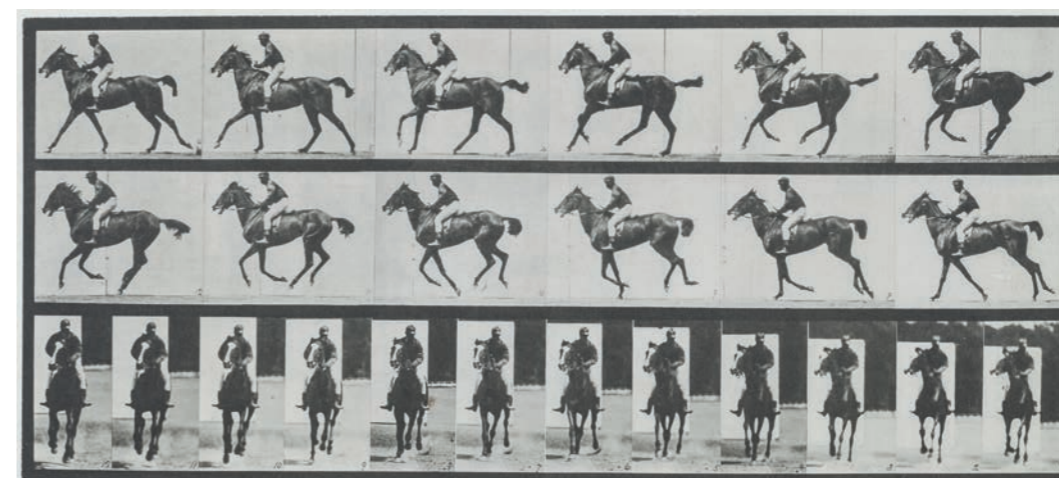
Gustave Le Gray, *La Grande Vague à Sète, n° 17*, 1857
Albumen print from a wet collodion glass negative, 33,9 x 41,4 cm
Bar-le-Duc, musée barrois, 14.01.30.1
© Photo Musée barrois / N. Leblanc

CONQUERING THE MOMENT

The seascapes that Gustave Le Gray produced between 1856 and 1858 marked a unique and decisive stage in a career reminiscent of that of the Romantic painters. The main challenge, however, was technical: Le Gray was the first to succeed in simultaneously recording the sea and the sky, with their irreconcilable light intensities, on a single print. By combining two negatives, one for the sea and one for the sky, he created the first photomontages in history. The photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto takes the opposite approach to the instantaneous: this time, the theatricality is achieved through very long exposure times. The vaporous rendering recalls what Le Gray's seascapes were already implying: that the photographer is just like any painter who plays with perception.

CONQUERING MOVEMENT

In the context of the technological modernity of the late 19th century, exalted by speed, the pioneering work of physicists Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey in Great Britain and France revolutionised our understanding of human and animal physiology. With the chronophotograph, invented by Marey in 1882, it was possible to record a series of successive images taken at a thousandth of a second on a single surface, thus revealing the imperceptible trajectory of moving bodies. The revolution went far beyond photography, serving the visual arts – Edgar Degas used Muybridge's discoveries, published in the magazine *La Nature* in 1878, to create his own horse sculptures – as well as medicine, the physical and natural sciences and, later, the cinema.



Eadweard Muybridge,
Cheval au galop, 1887
Photomechanical proof
(rotogravure) 18 x 41,5 cm
Paris, Musée d'Orsay, PHO 1983 165 160 22
© Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais /
Patrice Schmidt

DR EDGERTON'S STROBOSCOPIC FLASH

The 1930s marked the culmination of a quest begun half a century earlier with chronophotography. For Harold Edgerton, professor of electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and inventor of the stroboscopic flash, capable of flashing at a millionth of a second in 1926, movement ceased to be an obstacle. His striking images of bodies in motion, rifle bullets fired at full speed and liquids weighed down by gravity celebrated the unambiguous marriage of photography's status as both a tool of representation and a mode of expression. Two decades later, the American Berenice Abbott saw in her predecessor's work "a real hyperreality, a true fantasy beyond what the subconscious could concoct". She was involved with the artistic avant-garde from an early age, first in Paris and then in New York, and it was to the laws of physics that she dedicated her series *Documenting Science*, produced in the late 1950s for MIT, against a backdrop of the race for scientific innovation at the heart of the Cold War.



Harold Edgerton, *Batterman Dives*, 1955
Dye-Transfer, 50,8 x 40,64 cm
Boston, Collection Arlette et Gus Kayafas
© Harold Edgerton/MIT, courtesy Palm Press, Inc., from the Kayafas Collection

JUMPOLOGY

In the 1940s, which saw a boom in magazines and advertising, Philippe Halsman's work met with great success. On the eve of war, he left Paris for New York, where he quickly made a name for himself. Interested in photography's technical innovations, he designed his own double-lens camera in 1936 and, in the 1950s, equipped himself with an electronic flash to photograph the precise moment when his subjects took flight. He called the method "jumpology", convinced of its power to capture the hidden personalities of celebrities who played along, from Marilyn Monroe and Salvador Dalí to Alfred Hitchcock and Grace Kelly. In *Dalí Atomicus*, a surrealist ode to the new laws of physics, trickery and artifice are used to celebrate the recreational aspect of photography.

IN COLOUR

THE CONQUEST OF COLOUR

The very first colour photographs were the result of scientific discoveries. One of the first to find "the solution to the problem" – as he referred to his patent in 1869 – was the inventor Louis Ducos du Hauron, thanks to the indirect method of trichromatism based on the combination of three coloured filters. But it still did not solve the collective aspiration of fixing colour directly onto a sensitive plate. In 1891 the physicist Gabriel Lippmann followed in his footsteps, developing a new method that preserved the purity of colours and all their variations by the simple force of light wave interference. A true technical feat, his discovery won him the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1908 and was used by a number of scientists for experimental purposes. His pupil Auguste Ponsot, a lecturer at the Lille Faculty of Science, set about improving the method in 1904, as shown by the rare surviving iridescent colour plates.

THE ARCHIVES DE LA PLANÈTE

In 1912 the banker, patron of the arts and philanthropist Albert Kahn launched the Archives de la planète project, a visual inventory dedicated to archiving a rapidly changing world. For over twenty years, under the supervision of geographer Jean Brunhes, a dozen operators travelled to nearly fifty countries, photographing landscapes and topography, as well as human societies and traces of their activities. Using the Autochrome colour process invented a few years earlier by the Lumière brothers, they produced almost 72,000 photographs with a characteristic grainy appearance.

More than a hundred years later, Laure Tiberghien examines the material of the image to discover the secrets of colour. She studies its variations through rigorous darkroom protocols and reconstructs the conditions that presided over its birth: light, the action of silver salts on a sensitive surface and time.

MADAME YEVONDE'S PHOTOGRAPHY AS CHROMOTHERAPY

While colour photography was still in its infancy in England, from the 1930s onwards, Yevonde Middleton campaigned for the recognition of an art form that had "no history, no tradition, no old masters, but only a future!" Committed to women's rights, she joined the suffragette movement in 1910 and signed several public statements calling for the recognition of women photographers. Between the wars, she benefitted from the growth of the advertising sector and received numerous portrait commissions. Her originality lay in her use of colour. Using the Vivex process, an innovative printing technique for manipulating the effects of colour, Middleton produced her most famous series, including *Goddesses* (1935), a surrealist satire of the female bourgeoisie in England.



Léon Busy, *Kyôto, Japon Des actrices-danseuses habillées en geishas, entourant une maiko (apprentie geisha)*, 1912
Facsimile from an original autochrome plate, 12 x 9 cm.
Musée départemental Albert-Kahn, Département des Hauts-de-Seine, A7289



Yevonde Vivex, John Gielgud as Richard II in 'Richard of Bordeaux', 1933
by colour print NPG x11658 © National Portrait Gallery, London

SAUL LEITER'S COLOURS

At a time when only black and white was considered worthy of interest, Saul Leiter was a pioneering figure in colour photography. In 1946 he left his native Pittsburgh and moved to New York, the birthplace of a new generation of photographers practising socially conscious street photography. Although he owed his first photographs to this legacy – he bought his first Leica after visiting photojournalist Henri Cartier-Bresson's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York – it was with colour, applied in fleeting strokes or large flat areas to transcend the ordinary, that Leiter produced his most famous series. Close to the abstract expressionists, an admirer of the Nabis and himself a painter, he succeeded in liberating colour from its form by means of unusually tight framing, interstices, superimposition and transparency. However, this part of his work remained relatively unknown until it was rediscovered in the early 1990s.



Saul Leiter, *Taxi*, 1956
Cibachrome, 27,94 x 35,56 cm
Collection Florence et Damien Bachelot

COLOUR TAKES AMERICA BY STORM

In the United States, the 1970s came to be known as the new age of modern photography, characterised by the widespread popularisation of colour. New practices emerged around the pioneering figures of Helen Levitt, Joel Meyerowitz and Stephen Shore (sometimes grouped together as the New York school of photography), marked by the effervescence of the melting pot of megalopolises. Ordinary subjects – the city, the automobile, everyday objects, the family – were transformed into American archetypes, while the first critical voices against consumerism were raised. But because it was first circulated in the illustrated press and advertising, colour photography initially met with great resistance. It was not until William Eggleston and Shore's solo exhibitions, held within a few months of each other at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in 1976, that black and white ceased to be the standard. Levitt had opened the way in 1974 with a slide show of forty colour photographs projected continuously for a month at MoMA.

GERHARD RICHTER'S PHOTOGRAPHIC PAINTINGS

While the arrival of colour allowed more immediate access to the event photographed, which had previously been neutralised by black and white, blur as an artistic effect has long served to focus our gaze on a specific part of the photograph, bringing the photographer's work closer to that of the painter. For Gerhard Richter, who began his series of "photographic paintings", canvases based on photographs, in 1962, blurring served the opposite purpose: "I blur to make the whole homogeneous, so that everything is of equal importance." By concealing the painter's gesture, the blur reinforces the sensation of realism and reminds us that while photography is first and foremost a matter of accuracy, its technical failings also mark out the boundaries of the medium. The traditional question about the future of painting in the face of the multiplication of its image was replaced by a completely different one by Richter then and Constance Nouvel today: what happens to the photograph that can now be reproduced by painting?



Stephen Shore, *Conoco Sign, Center Street, Kanab, Utah, August 9, 1973*
Tirage 2007, C-Print, 50,8 x 61 cm
Londres, Sprüth Magers
© Stephen Shore, Courtesy 303 Gallery, New York and Sprüth Magers

5.

ASSOCIATED EVENTS

CONFERENCE

LE MONDE EN COULEUR : L'AUTOCHROME AU SERVICE DES "ARCHIVES DE LA PLANÈTE"
[THE WORLD IN COLOUR: AUTOCHROME IN THE SERVICE OF THE "ARCHIVES OF THE PLANET"]
by Julien Faure-Conorton, research and collections development officer at the Musée Albert Kahn

THU 07.11.2024 | 6:30PM

Known for its huge landscaped garden, the Musée Départemental Albert Kahn in Boulogne-Billancourt (Hauts-de-Seine) is home to the "Archives of the Planet", a collection of around 72,000 autochromes (the first colour process) and around one hundred hours of film brought back from fifty or so countries by twelve filmmakers between 1910 and 1932. This talk provides an introduction to this unique collection, the new museum that houses it and the two major figures who were responsible for creating it, the banker and philanthropist Albert Kahn (1860–1940) and the geographer Jean Brunhes (1869–1930), the project's scientific director. It will also look at the role of colour in this vast inventory of the world at the beginning of the 20th century.

LES DÉFIS DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE
[THE CHALLENGES OF PHOTOGRAPHY]

by Sam Stourdzé

THU 17.10.2024 | 6:30PM

This talk will retrace the major technical challenges that have marked the history of photography. Taking as his starting point the exhibition's three central themes of revelation, time and colour, its curator Sam Stourdzé will examine how photography, science and aesthetics have been interlinked from the beginnings of photography to the present day. Through the exhibition's four leading figures, Constantin Brancusi, Harold Edgerton, Saul Leiter and Helen Levitt, he will show how the medium's technical revolutions have transformed our vision of the world.

Toute la beauté et le sang versé
by Laura Poitras

CINEMA

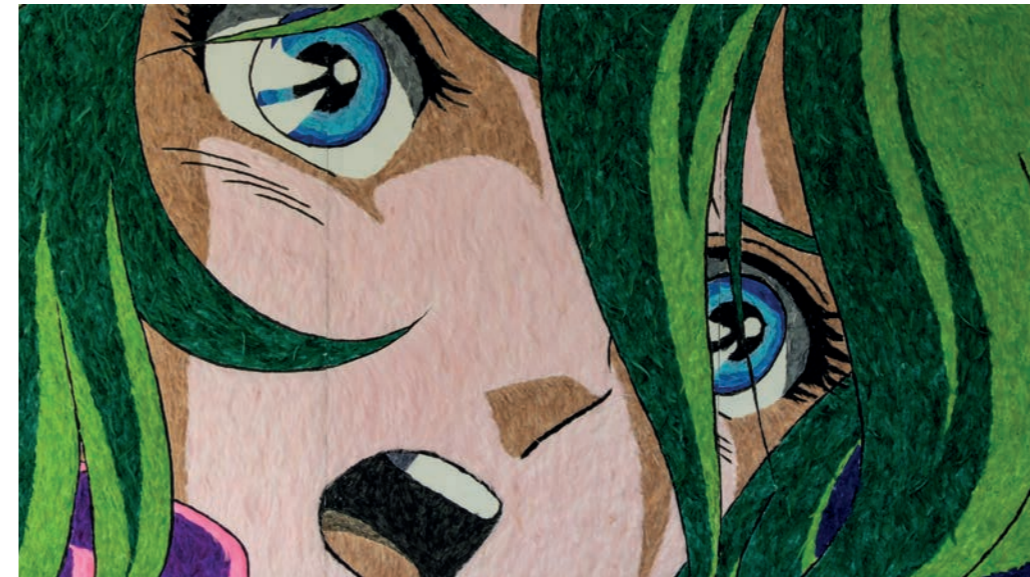
TOUTE LA BEAUTÉ ET LE SANG VERSÉ

by Laura Poitras

WED 10.07.2024 | 10:30PM

Nan Goldin revolutionised the art of photography and reinvented the concept of gender and definitions of normality. A major artist, she is also a tireless activist who, for many years, has been fighting against the Sackler family, who are responsible for the opioids crisis in the United States and throughout the world. *Toute la beauté et le sang versé* takes us to the heart of her artistic and political battles, driven by friendship, humanity and emotion.

In partnership with the City of Metz



Omar Castillo Alfaro, *Andromeda - Quiero andar volando, lejos, lejos de la realidad y no quiero bajar.* (Amantecas, chapitre 1 : Pedro , série), 2024
Pigmented natural bird feather, cotton paper and wood
300 x 150 x 3 cm © Photo Elias Galindo López

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP

TOTOTL*
(AMANTECAS CHAPITRE 1 : PEDRO)

by Omar Castillo Alfaro

BY 14.09.2024 TO 31.01.2025

"Pedro, a parrot from the state of Tampico (north-east Mexico), grew up with my family. Pedro was removed from his region so that we could humanise him. Pedro was the starting point for my research." Omar Castillo Alfaro.

Before America was colonised, there were featherwork schools known as amantecas. For Mesoamerican cultures, the use of birds was a reference to Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent (a god in Aztec mythology). This god was the guardian of the art of featherwork. Exotic birds were bred for their colours. The feathers were used in rituals, funerals, festivities and war; it was an art that required great skill. The first religious miniatures that circulated in Latin America were made using this technique, which was thus closely bound up with the birth of the image on this continent. The work of Omar Castillo Alfaro attempts to construct contemporary imagery based on the skills that captivated Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries and which today have practically disappeared today.

In a mysterious and enchanting setting, the artist will invite children to discover a sacred Mesoamerican art, the respectful practice of which is also a way of raising awareness about the importance of protecting endangered species.

**Bird in Náhuatl*



Children's workshops are supported by AÉSIO health insurance.

STUDENTS

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS AROUND PHOTOGRAPHY

Various projects will be carried out with 400 middle and high school students, during "special days". Students from the École Supérieure d'Art de Lorraine will present their photographic creations to secondary school pupils. Other students will be demonstrating and experimenting with the École d'art's new photographic laboratory. Finally, a guest lecturer will talk about the relationship between art and photography, using historical references.

ACCESSIBILITY

Mindful meditation

Workshop held in the exhibition spaces in front of selected works. 2 sessions - 6 participants.

Hypnosis-relaxation

Workshop held in the exhibition spaces in front of selected works. 1 session - 8 participants.

In collaboration with the Centre Hospitalier de Jury – Clinique Tivoli – Alzheimer's disease

Dance and therapy workshop

A workshop combining contemporary dance and discovery of artworks on display in the exhibition. The session begins with a period of self-reflection, rootedness and travel through the body. It continues through the use of music with an exploration of space and the discovery of a selected work, with the aim of absorbing and contemplating it, and seeking a new perspective. Movement, alone, in pairs and then as a group, is guided by metaphors and mental images.

In collaboration with the Ateliers Roses association from Metz.

6. PARTNERS

The Centre Pompidou-Metz is the first example of the decentralisation of a major national cultural institution, the Centre Pompidou, in partnership with local authorities. As an independent institution, the Centre Pompidou-Metz benefits from the experience, expertise and international reputation of the Centre Pompidou. It shares its predecessor's values of innovation, generosity, multidisciplinary and openness to all audiences.

It is also developing partnerships with museums around the world. In addition to its exhibitions, the Centre Pompidou-Metz offers dance performances, concerts, films and conferences.

It is supported by Wendel, one of its founding patrons.



Founding sponsor



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Media partnerships



With the participation of :
Département des Hauts-de-Seine, musée départemental Albert Kahn



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Wendel has been committed to the Centre Pompidou-Metz since it opened in 2010. Wendel wanted to support an emblematic institution whose cultural influence reaches as many people as possible.

Because of its long-standing commitment to culture, Wendel was awarded the title of "Grand Mécène de la Culture" in 2012.

Wendel is one of Europe's leading listed investment companies. Its business is that of a long-term investor, which requires a shareholder commitment that nurtures trust, and a constant focus on innovation, sustainable development and promising diversification.

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7.

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Étienne-Jules Marey, *Pole vault* [Saut à la perche], 1890
Print of a chronophotograph pasted on a cardboard plate with annotations, 46,5 x 61,5 cm
Paris, Collège de France, Archives, 55.1.55



Helen Levitt, *N.Y.*, 1971
Dye-transfer, 31,8 x 43,2 cm
Cologne, Galerie Thomas Zander
© Film Documents LLC Courtesy Thomas Zander, Cologne



Léon Busy for "Les Archives de la Planète"
Un acteur et une actrice du Théâtre Saïgonnais, en costume de scène, dans un jardin, Ha-Noï, Tonkin, Indochine, 1915
Facsimile from an original autochrome plate, 12 x 9 cm,
Musée départemental Albert-Kahn, Département des Hauts-de-Seine, A7289



William Eggleston, *Untitled*, vers 1971-1973
Pigment print
Paris, Galerie David Zwirner
by Eggleston Artistic Trust. Image courtesy of Cheim & Read, New York

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OPENING HOURS

Every day except Tuesday and 1 May

01.11 > 31.03

MON. | WED. | THU. | FRI. | SAT. | SUN. : 10:00 – 18:00

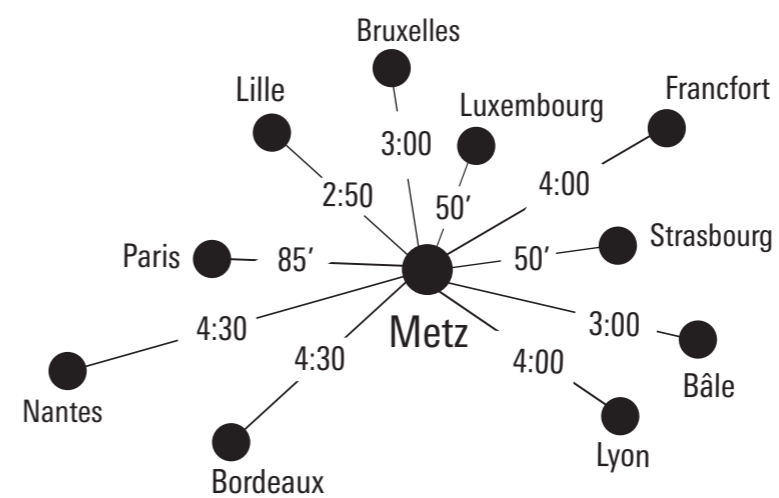
01.04 > 31.10

MON. | WED. | THU. : 10:00 – 18:00

FRI. | SAT. | SUN. : 10:00 – 19:00

HOW TO GET THERE ?

The shortest journeys via the rail network



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