



LITERATURE:

Larry Schaaf (text), Joshua Chuang (ed.), *Sun Gardens: Cyanotypes by Anna Atkins*, New York 2018, p. 185

PROVENANCE:

...; Michael Weintraub, New York; from whom to Michele Oka Doner, New York, 1980s; from whom to Zucker Art Books and Hans P. Kraus Jr, New York; purchased with the support of the BankGiro Lottery, the Familie W. Cordia/Rijksmuseum Fonds and the Paul Huf Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2016

(inv. no. RP-F-2016-133-1 to 307).

Acquisitions: Photographs – Anna Atkins to Anne Geene

• MATTIE BOOM AND HANS ROOSEBOOM •

1 ANNA ATKINS (Tonbridge 1799-1871 Halstead Place, Sevenoaks)

Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions, 1843-53

Book containing 307 cyanotypes, all approx. 250 x 200 mm

Inscribed, on the spine: *British Algae*; on the first leaf: *British Algae | represented by the rare | Cyanotype process | unpublished*; on the first leaf, on a label, in ink: 1889

Watermarks from 1840 to 1851

Anna Atkins was not just a female photographer; she was the very first one. She was followed by many others who also became famous – from Germaine Krull and Dorothea Lange to Cindy Sherman and Francesca Woodman – but Atkins led the way. And more importantly, she is not only a historic figure who is dutifully mentioned in every book on the history of photography, her work is so stunning and timeless that even now – 175 years after she made her first photographs – it manages to surprise and inspire photographers and viewers. Originally made to serve science, her photographs now attract a wide public in their own right. The acquisition of a copy of Atkins's very rare *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* is the crowning glory of fifteen years of collecting cyanotypes by the Rijksmuseum.

The most notable property of cyanotypes, which distinguishes them from all other photographs, is the blue colour, which occurs when the two ferrous salts applied to the paper are exposed to light (forming Prussian blue) and developed in water. Anything placed on the paper blocks the light. Invented in 1841 by Sir John Herschel, the cyanotype process was initially sparsely used. In the early years Anna Atkins was the only one

whom we know used this technique on a large scale. Between 1843 and 1853 she made up to ten thousand photographs of British varieties of seaweed, which she intended to be the plate volume to the *Manual of the British Algae* by William Henry Harvey, which was published unillustrated in 1841. The photograph reproduced here shows *Dictyota dichotoma* in different stages of its growth, in the young state and in fruit (inv. no. RP-F-2016-133-144).

Atkins had to make every photograph by hand: she applied a light-sensitive layer to each individual sheet of paper, dried them in the dark, exposed them to sufficiently strong sunlight for 5 to 15 minutes, developed them in water and finally dried them again. It took her ten years to make the total number of illustrations. The size of the print run of *Photographs of British Algae* is unknown, but we do know that there are fewer than twenty in existence today worldwide. Every copy is different because they were handmade and Atkins was not and did not hire a professional publisher who strived for a uniform edition. The copy that the Rijksmuseum acquired was the first voluminous copy that had appeared on the market since 2004, which confirms its great rarity.

HR

2 GUSTAVE LE GRAY (Villiers-le-Bel 1820-1884 Cairo)

Un Effet de Soleil. Océan – no. 23, c. 1856

Gold-toned albumen print from a wet collodion glass negative, 324 x 415 mm, on a cardboard mount, 538 x 679 mm

Signed, lower right of the print, in red ink: *Gustave Le Gray*

Inscribed, lower left of the cardboard, in ink: 15971.; lower right, on the printed label: *UN EFFET DE SOLEIL – OCEAN NO. 23.*

Upper right corner of the cardboard mount: embossing stamp of the papermaker Ernest Binand

Gustave Le Gray, who had trained as a painter, was one of the most important photographers of the nineteenth century. He gave lessons in photography to the many artists who met in his house in the Paris suburb of Clichy. There was no-one else who succeeded in mastering the art of photographic printing in this early period. His prints are beautifully coloured with warm hues, from sepia to deep red and chocolate brown (Sylvie Aubenas (ed.), *Gustave Le Gray 1820-1884*, exh. cat. Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France) 2002, no. 121, pp. 105-29, 363-67). Le Gray made his photograph series for a clientele of connoisseurs and enthusiasts that included the English clergyman Chauncy Hare Townshend and the Amsterdam-based collector Abraham Willet, who both bought photographs by the French master around 1860. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert also owned his seascapes, possibly received as gifts. He would have specifically had the market in mind when he embarked on the monumental seascapes with the series title *Océan* in 1856. But above all it must have been an artistic challenge: an interplay of changeable and unpredictable elements of light, sky and water and with space and composition. He made more than thirty sea studies in Normandy and around the Mediterranean, the undisputed highlights of his oeuvre. Le Gray exhibited these seascapes at the international photography exhibition in London in 1856 and in Amsterdam in 1860 (Ken Jacobson, *The Lovely Sea-View: A Study of the Marine Photographs Published by Gustave Le Gray*, Petches Bridge 2001).

Le Gray looked for a high vantage point in the dunes to get a sweeping view of the sea. In this photograph the sun is high and casts – half-hidden behind a patch of clouds – a powerful shaft of light in the centre of the photograph, zig-zagging over the sea. This leads the gaze towards the horizon, with the silhouettes of ships barely visible on it. The foreground remains dark. The photograph measures 324 by 415 mm. This was also the size of

the glass negative and the back plate of the huge camera that Le Gray and his assistants lugged along the dune paths. They also had a tripod and chemicals with them, and a cart so that they could treat the wet glass plates immediately after the shoot. Occasionally Le Gray took two separate shots of the surface of the sea and the sky which he combined into one print, because for him it was all about the clouds. Sky and clouds were hard to photograph and with their high light intensity required a much shorter exposure time than the land. In this case, as far as we know, there was only one negative.

MB

PROVENANCE:

...; sale, 15 March 2012, to a private French dealer, Tajan, Paris; from whom to Robert Koch Gallery, San Francisco; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Seascape Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds and the Paul Huf Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2018

(inv. no. RP-F-2018-187).



- 3 CHARLES LEANDER WEED (Conesus, New York (?) 1824-1903 Oakland)
Mammoth Tree, Hercules, Calaveras County, California, 1862-65
 Albumen print, 516 x 400 mm
 Inscribed, on the verso, in ink: *California. Yosemite Valley. Cathedral Rocks* (referring to another photograph)

Charles Leander Weed's greatest claim to fame is that in 1859 he was the first photographer to visit Yosemite Valley. This is invariably mentioned in all the books about early American landscape photography and in monographs about his major rivals, Carleton Watkins in particular, followed by the statement that Watkins also visited the valley in California in 1861 and surpassed Weed. Since then Weed has always remained in the shadow of his better-known fellow landscape photographers.

The Rijksmuseum recently chanced upon an amazing photograph taken by Weed. It is a shot of the butt end of a mammoth tree in Calaveras County, California. This giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) had come down during a severe storm in December 1861. Weed probably photographed the tree (called 'Hercules') in 1864 when he visited the neighbouring Yosemite Valley again. In 1865 Lawrence & Houseworth (San Francisco) published *Yosemite Valley, Mariposa County, and the Big Trees, Calaveras County, California*, which contained thirty of Weed's photographs. Four of them were taken in Calaveras County including one titled 'The Fallen Tree Hercules, 325 feet. Mammoth Grove, Calaveras County, Cal.' The photograph that the Rijksmuseum purchased was made from the same negative, but mounted on a different type of cardboard, and untitled.

Weed may have been the first photographer to visit Calaveras County, as he was in the Yosemite Valley. Afterwards the mammoth tree was photographed on many occasions. Photographers often chose to photograph the entire length of the fallen trunk – with a few people standing on it – to show how long it really was. Some pictured the underside of 'Hercules' with its enormous roots. Weed opted for a different, less conventional viewpoint. Admittedly, he only captured a small part of the tree, but because of the difference in thickness by comparison to the trees in the background and the positioning of three people in front of the tree, he created a magnificent impression of the tree's spectacular girth.

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PROVENANCE:
 ...; Robert Hershkowitz Ltd., Lindfield, UK; purchased with the support of Baker McKenzie, 2018
 (inv. no. RP-F-2018-186).



- 4 Attributed to ANTONIUS FRANCISCUS ('ANTOON') BAUDUIN (Dordrecht 1820-1885 The Hague)
Portrait of Two Samurai, 1862-66
 Albumen print, 154 x 108 mm (partially burnt)

Between 1862 and 1870, the Dutch military doctor Antoon Bauduin lived in Japan (with a brief interruption when he went on leave), to begin with on the artificial island of Dejima, later in Osaka and Tokyo. Until shortly before, Japan had been almost entirely closed to foreigners – with the exception of Dejima, which was a Dutch trading post. At the request of the Japanese government, Bauduin gave lectures at the first western-style hospital in the country, which had been founded by his predecessor J.L.C. Pompe van Meerdervoort. Bauduin was not the first Dutchman to take photographs in Japan, but he was the first whose photographs have survived. These photographs had long remained in his family. Most of them (750 or so) were sold to the Nagasaki University Library in 2007 and 2014, and in 2016 the remaining 121 photographs were gifted to the Rijksmuseum. Their historical importance is beyond dispute.

Bauduin's brother Albert had already gone to Japan in 1859 for the *Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij*, and returned to the Netherlands in 1874, after Antoon. Transcriptions of letters that Albert wrote to his family in the Netherlands are the major sources of information about the photographs. The few references to photography suggest that Antoon took his own photographs while Albert just bought photographs taken by others, but we cannot be completely certain. The collections in Nagasaki and in the Rijksmuseum contain photographs taken by Bauduin as well as photographs by the British-Italian Felice Beato, the Japanese photographer Ueno Hikoma and others. Photography had not got started in Japan until 1854, more than ten years later than in most of the other non-western parts of the world. Three years after that, a photograph was taken by a Japanese person for the first time.

Bauduin worked at a time when only a few people practised photography as a profession or – like him – as a hobby. He may never have taken photographs before his time in Japan. With his medical background he would have undoubtedly mastered the technique in a short time, possibly helped by his predecessor Pompe van Meerdervoort, who is known to have photographed in Japan. Because foreigners were not allowed to travel freely, Bauduin took most of his photographs

on Dejima. Many of them were taken in a makeshift studio in a garden, possibly behind his house or his brother Albert's. He made portraits of westerners as well as Japanese, like these samurai.

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LITERATURE:

Herman J. Moeshart, *Arts en koopman in Japan, 1859-1874. Een selectie uit de fotoalbums van de gebroeders Bauduin*, Amsterdam 2001, p. 208

PROVENANCE:

By inheritance to Mrs M.A. van Munster van Heuven-Sprenger van Eijk, Warnsveld; gift of the Bauduin Collection of M.A. van Munster van Heuven-Sprenger van Eyk, Warnsveld, 2016
 (inv. no. RP-F-2016-76-2).



5 Attributed to LOUIS DUCOS DU HAURON (Langon 1837-1920 Agen)

'Le transformisme / Sic transit' (Self-Portrait), 1891

Cyanotype, 170 x 117 mm

Scratched into the negative: *SIC TRANSIT*Inscribed, centre left, in ink: *Le transformisme*; on the verso, in ink: *1891* and *Chloé*

At a small sale in Paris in November 2017, an intriguing anonymous photograph was offered for sale, the image in the catalogue not immediately revealing exactly what it was of and how it had come to be made. The face of a man (with a bald forehead and a sharp nose) can be made out with some effort and there is a portrait painting in a frame in the background, but all of it is distorted. The word 'transformisme' in the title also alludes to this. At the time this photograph was taken, according to the date (1891), a variety of books and articles for amateur photographers were published, discussing all kinds of tricks that could be used while taking photographs or making prints.

The term 'transformisme' appears in a number of them, such as in *Les récréations photographiques* by A. Bergeret and F. Drouin of 1891, Walter E. Woodbury's *Photographic Amusements* of 1896, and in *La photographie récréative et fantaisiste* by C. Chaplot of 1904. All three make a direct connection with the Frenchman Louis Ducos du Hauron. In 1888-89 he designed an optical device which partially elongated a person's face and partially compressed it. The effect is similar to that of a distorting mirror. We know of a small number of distorted self-portraits by Ducos du Hauron, which were reproduced in these books as engravings (in the book by Bergeret and Drouin only in the second edition of 1893). Five original prints are in the George Eastman Museum Collection in Rochester, New York.

Although the photograph the Rijksmuseum bought has the word 'transformisme' on it, it was made in a different way. This variant method is explained in Chaplot's book and in a similar German book (Hermann Schnauss's *Photographischer Zeitvertreib*, fourth edition 1893). When a glass negative is warmed, the gelatin (the binding agent that makes the light-sensitive emulsion stick to the glass plate) spreads out, so that the image is distorted. It was important not to let the emulsion 'run' too much because there would be nothing left of the image. After the gelatin had dried, the negative could be printed in the usual way.

Although we do not know if Ducos du Hauron ever used this method, an attribution to him is plausible – not only because the man in the photograph the Rijksmuseum has acquired undeniably looks very much like him, but also because of the date and the use of the term 'transformisme'.

HR

PROVENANCE:

...; sale Leclere, Paris, 10 November 2017, no. 102

(inv. no. RP-F-2017-221).



6 EMIL OTTO HOPPÉ (Munich 1878-1972 London)

Manhattan Bridge, Seen through the Cables of Brooklyn Bridge, New York, probably 1921
Gelatin silver print, 193 x 246 mm

Inscribed, on the verso, in pencil: *N. Y. C. and ships and bridges*

Stamped, on the verso: *COPYRIGHT | E.O. HOPPÉ | MILLAIS HOUSE | 7, CROMWELL PLACE | SOUTH KENSINGTON, S.W.*

Emil Otto Hoppé was one of the many photographers who, around 1920, had one foot in Modernism and kept the other in the old, traditional Pictorialism. That is evident in this photograph. Nowhere is it completely sharp, it expresses a mood; it can be called *pictorialist*. At the same time the photograph, because of the grid of bridge cables in the foreground, is a composition of lines with a strong graphic effect, which makes it *modernist*. No matter how successful his career had been initially, this ambivalence undoubtedly contributed to Hoppé's decline into oblivion. It was not until the end of his long life that he was rediscovered, followed by a slow return into the canon of photographic history.

In 1919 and 1921 he stayed in New York twice; in 1926 he travelled through the rest of the United States. *Manhattan Bridge, Seen through the Cables of Brooklyn Bridge* was probably taken in 1921. As is often the case with autobiographies, Hoppé's *Hundred Thousand Exposures: The Success of a Photographer* (London 1945) is not always that accurate. His claim to have been the first to photograph New York 'through the steel network of the Brooklyn Bridge' is not true according to Phillip Prodger (*E.O. Hoppé's Amerika: Modernist Photographs from the 1920s*, New York/London 2007, p. 13). Be that as it may, relatively early on Hoppé showed an interest in photographing factories, oil rigs, elevators, bridges, skyscrapers and other modern objects. This was highly unusual in 1921; in photographic circles structures like these were in general thought to be unattractive and unsuitable as subjects.

Hoppé's vista is one of the fifty photographs (and a finger painting on glass by Daguerre) that the Rijksmuseum acquired in 2017 from the Amsterdam private collector Josje Janse. This photograph in particular had stayed in the minds of the museum's photographic curators since their first visit to her, some fifteen years ago. This acquaintance followed the discovery that she was the unknown underbidder for a photograph that the Rijksmuseum bought by telephone at a London sale in 2001 (inv. no. RP-F-2001-6).

In many cases Janse's taste turned out to correspond with the museum's. The relationship that arose had already resulted in a number of gifts (including eleven photographs by Charles Nègre in 2002). With the acquisition in 2017 (part purchase, part gift, part loan) 51 important works from her collection have been secured for the Dutch public art collection.

HR

PROVENANCE:

...; sale, New York (Christie's), 9 October 1997, no. 50; Josje Janse-de Ronde Bresser; purchased with the support of Baker McKenzie, 2017

(inv. no. RP-F-2017-206-5).



7 TINA MODOTTI (Udine 1896-1942 Mexico City)
Portrait of Marín María de Orozco, 1925
 Gelatin silver print, 215 x 187 mm

At the age of sixteen, the Italian Tina Modotti emigrated to the United States to work in San Francisco and Los Angeles as an actress – she acted in a number of silent films – and do modelling work. She met the photographer Edward Weston and formed a relationship with him. Weston left his family and followed Modotti to Mexico. In 1923 the couple settled in Mexico City, where they opened a small portrait studio. They mainly moved in artistic circles and became friendly with such people as Diego Riviera and Frida Kahlo, and with the painter José Clemente Orozco. Aided by Weston, Modotti became a talented photographer with her own entirely individual style. In 1926 Weston returned to California, but Modotti remained in Mexico. From that time on her work became more politically-based, because she became a Communist and knew many of the leaders of the party. In 1930 she was thrown out of Mexico for political reasons and stopped taking photographs. She then went to Europe, where she lived in Berlin, Paris, Moscow and elsewhere. For a time, she was active on the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War. After the Nationalist victory she had to leave Spain. In 1940 she returned to Mexico where two years later at the age of forty-five she died in the street from a heart attack. Her sudden death was controversial: some believed that she had been murdered.

Modotti's career as a photographer was unusually short, lasting only from 1923 to 1930 (Margaret Hooks, *Tina Modotti: Photographer & Revolutionary*, Madrid 2017). During that time, she took around 250 photographs. She was mainly interested in the New Vision and took detailed shots of architecture and still lifes. The main thing was the form, even in her photographs of the Mexican population. This was not surprising with Weston beside her. He was a form specialist par excellence and he sought new pictorial elements in photography such as the close-up, texture and perspective from above. These elements can also be found in Modotti's work. The photograph of Marín María de Orozco, the wife of the painter and cartoonist Carlos Orozco Romero and sister-in-law of Diego Rivera, in all its simplicity is a clear, strong portrait with a fine softening of the outlines. The profile of a light shadow cast on

the wall is reminiscent of similar work by Man Ray from the same period.

MB

LITERATURE:

Sarah M. Lowe, *Tina Modotti: Photographs*, Philadelphia 1995, p. 28; fig. 47
 Mildred Constantine, *Tina Modotti, a Fragile Life: An Illustrated Biography*, New York/London 1975, p. 71

PROVENANCE:

From the photographer to anthropologist Frances Toor, Mexico City; from whom to her son; from whom to the dealer Spencer Throckmorton, New York, 1980s; from whom to Thomas Walther, New York; ...; Michael Shapiro Gallery, San Francisco, 1998; from whom to Dr Melvin Rubin, Gainesville; from whom to the Michael Shapiro Gallery, San Francisco; purchased with the support of the Familie W. Cordia/Rijksmuseum Fonds and the Paul Huf Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2014
 (inv. no. RP-F-2014-52).



8 ED VAN DER ELSKEN (Amsterdam 1925-1990 Edam)

Self-Portrait with his Wife Ata Kando at the Mirror in their Apartment in Paris, 1952

Gelatin silver print, 392 x 498 mm

Stamped, on the verso of the cardboard, in purple ink: *Crescent Illustration Board Cold Press Surface No. 100 Heavyweight. A Product of Chicago Cardboard Company*

Ed van der Elsken was one of the most important photographers during the post-war period in the Netherlands (Evelyn de Regt, 'Ed van der Elsken', *Depth of Field (Fotolexicon)* 8 (1991), no. 16). The Rijksmuseum has a small group of photographs which came from the Hartkamp Collection. In recent years a selection, including this photograph, has been added to it by way of the De Bont donation and through other gifts and purchases. The monumental self-portrait in front of the mirror above the kitchen sink is a charming image from the early nineteen-fifties in which the photographer unequivocally presents himself as an artist. During that period, he made more self-portraits, alone and with the children in front of the mirror. This self-portrait with his wife, Ata Kando, who was also a photographer, is full of meaning. The photographer stands in the background, Leica conspicuously in shot; Ata is in the foreground washing up. It encapsulates the straitened circumstances they were living in in Paris at that time while trying to keep their heads above water. The scene takes place in 1952 in their apartment in Sèvres in Paris where they lived with her three children. Van der Elsken was an observer of his own life, as it were: the tough life of a photographer and artist in a big city. Van der Elsken had moved to Paris shortly before and was earning a living as an assistant working for the Pictorial Service, the photographic laboratory of the Magnum agency, where he met the Hungarian Kando. At the same time, he worked on his own projects and photographed a group of adolescents in Paris with whom he spent a lot of time. He also recorded family life with Kando and her children, because he wanted to make a photo-book – a story in pictures – about it. In 1954 the Christmas edition of *Drukkers-weekblad Autolijn* featured a prepublication of the first chapters under the title 'Wij wachten tot deze deur opengaat' (We wait until this door opens) with Van der Elsken's photographs and autobiographical captions, but this photograph was not included. He may, though, have chosen the photograph – maybe even this copy – for his solo exhibition in the Art Institute of Chicago

in 1955. That same year Van der Elsken's work, which had earlier hung in the Modern Museum of Art in New York, was also selected for the famous *Family of Man* exhibition staged by Edward Steichen. Van der Elsken did not see his own exhibitions in America, the journey was too expensive. A year later, in 1956, the photographs of the adolescents appeared in his first photo-book *Een Liefdesgeschiedenis in St. Germain des Prés*, which was published in four languages.

MB

LITERATURE:

Ed van der Elsken, Evelyn de Regt (co-author), *Once upon a Time | Ed van der Elsken*, Amsterdam 1991, pp. 12-18, 21

PROVENANCE:

Anneke van der Elsken, 2017; from whom to Howard Greenberg Gallery; from whom purchased with the support of Jan & Trish de Bont and the Paul Huf Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2017

(inv. no. RP-F-2017-217).



9 WILLIAM KLEIN (New York 1928)

A Guest at Elsa Maxwell's Charity Toy Ball in het Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, 1954-55

Gelatin silver print, 345 x 272 mm

Inscribed, on the verso of the grey cardboard, in blue chalk: *William Klein 1954-55*; in pencil:

Camera 3 Tiefdruck; 24.6 cm (instruction for the typesetter) and *PF92387-111*

Stamped, in black ink: *Collection Romeo Martinez*

William Klein was drafted into the American army and served in France. He was discharged in 1948 and, like many American servicemen who benefited from the G.I. Bill, he decided to study art, in his case at the Sorbonne. Klein began his career as a painter of abstract work and sculptor of kinetic works, and worked for a short time with Fernand Léger in Paris. He took photographs because he was interested in capturing movement. When he returned to New York in 1954 and the art director of *Vogue* saw his photographs, he offered him a contract as a fashion photographer. The magazine was ready for a new approach: Klein had to take fashion photographs outdoors in a modern photo-reportage style.

Two years later, in 1956, Klein published his much-discussed photo-book *Life is Good & Good for You in New York: Trance Witness Revels* in which he brings to life the metropolis of New York in a breath-taking, dynamic layout. He captured the dynamism of that city in an accumulation of extremely coarse-grained and blurred black-and-white images. Klein liked to move among people in the streets as an invisible observer, producing exciting layered images. The Rijksmuseum holds a photograph like this (from the same book) of people in front of Macy's, the New York department store (inv. no. RP-F-2012-40). This picture of a fashionable woman at a charity event hosted by the vitriolic gossip columnist Elsa Maxwell at the Waldorf Astoria is also in the book. On the one hand we see a life of wealth and glamour and on the other the (unrecognizable) woman shows us the boredom and transience of high society life. In the end, the unconventional blurred photographs Klein took for *Vogue* that evening did not appear in the magazine.

The rapid improvement of the light sensitivity of roll film in the nineteen-fifties made it far easier to take photographs in the evening and at night and to record any scene you liked. Klein took full advantage of these possibilities: blurred, moving, almost graphic photographs were the result. Twenty of the New York photographs, including this one, were later published in the

Swiss magazine *Camera* in March 1957. This print came from the collection of Romeo E. Martinez, one of the editors of the magazine and the author of the article it devoted to Klein on that occasion.

MB

LITERATURE:

Erik Mortenson, *Ambiguous Borderlands: Shadow Imagery in Cold War America*, Carbondale 2016, pp. 159-60

William Klein, *William Klein: New York 1954-55*, Manchester 1995, p. 196

Romeo E. Martinez, 'William Klein', *Camera* 36 (1957), no. 3 (March), pp. 95-108 (this print)

William Klein, *Life is Good & Good for You in New York: Trance Witness Revels*, Paris 1956, p. 162

PROVENANCE:

Romeo E. Martinez, Paris, 1955; ...; Paul F. Walther; his sale, New York (Sotheby's), 15 October 2008, no. 180 ('The Queen of Clubs'), to Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York; from which purchased with the support of Baker McKenzie, 2016 (inv. no. RP-F-2016-88).



10 AAT VELDHOEN (Amsterdam 1934-2018 Amsterdam)
Self-Portrait with a Folding Polaroid Land Camera, c. 1969-72
 Polaroid, painted with acrylic paint, 80 x 103 mm

Aat Veldhoen was one of the most productive post-war Dutch artists. He trained at the Rijksnormaalschool which at that time was housed in the Rijksmuseum. He was a great admirer of Rembrandt, and this is reflected in his etchings; he made self-portraits, a portrait of a nude old woman in a chair, a couple kissing and a series of victims of traffic accidents. Veldhoen was mainly known during the 'swinging sixties' when he went on to make cheap Rota prints for a wide public. Everybody in the Netherlands had to be able to buy an artwork in the form of a Rota print for a guilder. He sold the prints door-to-door in Amsterdam by bicycle. He also made etchings in all shapes and sizes, even the huge size of the wall of his studio, and he made paintings, ceramics and sculptures. He painted almost all of the objects in his house, from his Polaroid cameras to his tea cosy. In 2016 the Rijksmuseum acquired a specific part of his oeuvre: 3,944 Polaroids that Veldhoen had made between around 1968 and 2004, the period in which the Polaroid finally disappeared from the market.

Veldhoen was one of the Dutch artists in the nineteen-sixties and seventies who got free cameras and photographic material from Polaroid. The idea was that it would be a good promotion of instant photography. Veldhoen immediately elevated it to a form of instant miniature art. He owned a number of Polaroid cameras: different models of the folding Polaroid Land Cameras from the earlier 340 to the SX-70, which came on to the market in 1972. In this oeuvre the self-portraits with their snapshot, Nan Goldin-like quality immediately stand out. We can follow the artist from his mid-thirties until later in his life. He also photographed himself, his wives and his children, and took nudes and sex scenes inspired by Japanese Shunga prints. His cityscapes of Amsterdam, and the landscapes, seascapes and ice scenes are remarkable. His adaptation of Polaroid prints was very characteristic: he painted them with gold paint and neon acrylic paints, and with the back of the brush he inscribed or drew on them when they had just come out of the camera and were not yet dry. Many of the Polaroids were preliminary studies for the paintings he was

working on. He took photographs of clouds from an aeroplane so he could put them on canvas and he photographed people in the bus shelter on the other side of the street from the window of his living room (Mattie Boom, 'Een instant proeftuin', in Ed de Heer, Natasja Rietdijk and Ton van der Stap (eds.), *Aat Veldhoen: De roes van het scheppen*, Eindhoven/Amsterdam 2015, pp. 193-214).

MB

PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the photographer by the museum, 2016
 (inv. no. RP-F-2016-147-1).



II GEERT VAN KESTEREN (Amsterdam 1966)
Dr Saadoon's Friend, Amman, Jordan, 2006-07
 From the series *Baghdad Calling*
 Inkjet print, 6000 x 8000 mm

Like all far-reaching innovations, the digital revolution, which has enabled people to increasingly communicate in images, had a primitive beginning. Mobile phones like the Nokia and the Sony Ericsson were able to take photographs and send them for the first time in 2003; they were still simple, rough snapshots. In the early days of the telephone photograph, the Dutch photo journalist Geert van Kesteren did something unusual with them.

Van Kesteren had made his name in 2003-04 with the shots he took in Iraq during the Second Gulf War. In the Netherlands his reports were published in the daily newspaper *Trouw*. Before long, his photographs appeared all over the world and he joined the elite corps of international photo journalists. He continued to work in the Middle East, following developments there. His much-praised book *Why Mister Why?* with four hundred photographs of the American invasion of Iraq and its aftermath was published in 2004.

After four million Iraqis had fled their country in 2006 in the greatest exodus ever recorded, Van Kesteren thought about how essential the mobile phone photograph had been in this refugee crisis. The Iraqis had maintained contact with friends and loved ones and at the same time had given a first-hand eyewitness account of the destruction, the homelessness and the total distress and misery. Van Kesteren began to collect mostly anonymous photographs from friends, contacts and blogs from Baghdad and countries around Iraq to show the extent of the humanitarian crisis in the region. This project resulted in the photo-book *Baghdad Calling* (2008) with a combination of mobile phone photographs and his own photographs from the region. A tableau of large blown-up mobile phone photo works was exhibited at the Barbican Art Gallery in London in 2008. Of this installation, the Rijksmuseum purchased twenty-five works, plus a selection of Van Kesteren's own photographs as well.

In this blow-up we see a wounded Iraqi sitting in a hospital bed. An American bullet hit him in the stomach in Iraq. His friend, the doctor Saadoon, did not have the equipment on hand to operate on him. A hospital was found in Baghdad, but the

surgeon there had been kidnapped. In the end friends raised money to take him to a private clinic in Amman, where one of them made this portrait. A few weeks later, the man died.

MB

LITERATURE:

Geert van Kesteren, *Baghdad Calling*, Rotterdam 2008, pp. 161, 230-33

PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the photographer by the museum, made possible by the Stefanie Georgina Alexa Nühn Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2016

(inv. no. RP-F-2016-23-12).



12 ERWIN OLAF (the pseudonym of Erwin Olaf Springveld; Hilversum 1959)

Self-Portrait: I Wish, I Am, I Will Be, 2009

Inkjet prints, each 1007 x 781 (image); 1047 x 821 mm (paper)

Erwin Olaf is one of the today's most important and most acclaimed Dutch photographers. His varied work is well known to a wide public. He has had many exhibitions in the Netherlands and around the world and has undertaken prestigious art commissions. He delights in getting involved in social discussions and does so with passion. He recently made portraits for the Dutch royal family and a design for the new euro coin with the likeness of King Willem-Alexander.

Having started out as a photo journalist documenting the gay scene, and in addition to his contract work for the Netherlands National Ballet and major international companies like Diesel and Heineken, Erwin Olaf increasingly sought and defined his own subjects. He did this in black and white with *Blacks* and *Chessmen*, and in colour for the series *Mind of Their Own*; *Grief*; *Dawn*; *Dusk*; *Hope*; *Berlin* and *Shanghai*. In recent years he has focused on huge tableaux in series, taking on the role of a true director. Silence, contemplation and the quest for the expression of human emotions are central to those works. Olaf is the master of his craft and dominates the art of photography in the finest of subtleties; in terms of craftsmanship, the execution is faultless. Olaf draws inspiration from great artists and from works in the Rijksmuseum. He is a true 'image maker' who can hold his own with a photographer like Robert Mapplethorpe, and with old masters such as Hendrik Goltzius. His work deliberately builds a bridge between the image makers of the past and present.

In 2018 he transferred his most important works (some of them artist's proofs) and a number of videos from his oeuvre to the Rijksmuseum. The Rijksmuseum supplemented this gift with the purchase of sixty works and three videos. The Erwin Olaf Collection in the Rijksmuseum now contains more than five hundred works.

It is interesting that Olaf has made self-portraits throughout his working life, making a particular statement about himself and his time in each period. In this triptych he comments on the inevitable process of aging. A relevant factor during this period was that he was diagnosed with emphysema.

MB



LITERATURE:

Erwin Olaf, *Erwin Olaf. I Am*, Veurne 2019, pp. 219-21
Francis Hodgson (essay), *Erwin Olaf: Photographs and Film Stills: Volume II*, New York 2014
Lesley A. Martin (ed.), Alasdair Foster (essay), *Erwin Olaf*, New York/London 2008

PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the photographer by the museum, with support from the BankGiro Lottery
(inv. no. RP-F-2018-38-50-1, 2 and 3).



13 MICHAEL WOLF (Munich 1954-2018 Hong Kong)
Architecture of Density # 119, 2009 (printed 2017)
 Chromogenic print, 970 x 1225 mm

It is a classic problem for photographers: how should you photograph abuses, problems or misery without lapsing into cheap, false sentimentality? A photographer who wants to go beyond the straightforward reporting so often seen in newspapers, on TV and on the Internet is forced to be inventive. This can result in indirect, subtle references to and images of the issue at stake.

The eight photographs from the *Shelter* series by Henk Wildschut (inv. nos. RP-F-2013-137 to 144) which the Rijksmuseum bought in 2013 with the support of the Stefanie Georgina Alexa Nühn Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds are a good example. This Dutch photographer subtly recorded the refugee problem in Calais by photographing the tents and huts in which the refugees were living. These photographs are all the more incisive in the absence of people.

In 2017, with the support of the same fund, the museum acquired two photographs by the recently deceased Michael Wolf (inv. nos. RP-F-2017-219, 220), a German photographer who had lived in Hong Kong since 1994. The city is one of most heavily built-up and densely populated in the world, with more skyscrapers than any other city. There are almost no low-rise buildings. In 2003 Wolf began to photograph the city where by then he had been living for nine years, but had mainly been using as a base for his many trips. This culminated in the *Architecture of Density* series, in which he photographed the immense apartment blocks in Hong Kong straight on, without sky or ground. This radical framing produces photographs in which you initially see just one or two facades and only at a second glance realize how huge the buildings are and how many people are packed into them. The cheerful colours on some of the flats are in stark contrast to the poor quality of life that these same flats provide. As in Wildschut's images, there are no people in the photographs in this series (Michael Wolf, *Hong Kong Outside*, Hong Kong/Berlin 2009).

In an interview in 2017 Wolf explained his stylistic device: by photographing parts of the buildings you get no idea how large the entire building is, how much larger it is than the section he took. Wolf believed that these 'monstrous immense buildings' are 'a metaphor for

megacities'. 'Behind every window, there is a family or a human being': you ask yourself how they live. The washing hanging out to dry is the main sign of human life.

HR

LITERATURE:

Michael Wolf, *Hong Kong Outside*, Hong Kong/Berlin 2009, pp. 33, 111

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Wouter van Leeuwen, Amsterdam; from which purchased with the support of the Stefanie Georgina Alexa Nühn Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds (inv. no. RP-F-2017-219).



14 ANNE GEENE (Breda 1983)

Holes, 2018

Inkjet print, 900 x 650 mm

Line #1, 2018

Inkjet print, 297 x 420 mm

The Rijksmuseum endeavours to show the full history of photography from its introduction in 1839 to the present day. Whereas initially (from 1994) the emphasis was on the nineteenth century, in 2005 the museum also began to focus on collecting twentieth-century photographs. The decision was very much bound up with the fact that the Rijksmuseum was undergoing a massive renovation at that time and at the end of it would devote more attention to twentieth-century art and history. In recent years the Rijksmuseum has acquired many modern and contemporary photographs by Erwin Olaf, Henk Wildschut, Ruud van Empel, Viviane Sassen, Stefan Vanfleteren, Koos Breukel, Jan Banning, Martin Roemers, Michael Wolf, Geert van Kesteren and others. And each year, thanks to Document Nederland (an annual commission awarded by the History Department), a series of recent photographs comes in.

Eight photographs by Anne Geene were recently added to the collection. More than an artist and a photographer, she is perhaps first and foremost a collector. The photographs the Rijksmuseum acquired show this clearly. They are all based on her search for leaves from trees which have something 'wrong' with them: they are partially discoloured, damaged or diseased. She collects uniform 'defects', stores them between the blank pages of a dummy (or something else in which they can be temporarily kept safe) and scans the individual leaves; then she assembles the individual scans into a new image. In *Line #1* (RP-F-2018-178) Geene combined fourteen leaves that were discoloured to different extents. *Line #2* (RP-F-2018-179) is a variation of it, with eight leaves. In *Holes* (RP-F-2018-177) she arranged 368 leaves from various plants and trees in the city, in which the order was determined by the size of the hole in each leaf, from extremely small to so large that the leaf is almost invisible. In the five photographs from the *Peloria* series (RP-F-2018-180-1 to 5) she brought together five identical areas of damage.

Geene's work is similar to that of Anna Atkins, whose work was discussed at the beginning of this acquisitions series: not only because she does not use a camera, but also because of her fascination for natural shapes. Geene's photographs are a combination of scientific (botanical) interest and a playful mind, of objectivity and a personal fascination with natural shapes, of cool indexing and intervention. The pleasure in seeking and finding, the arranging and indexing, the recording and showing, is very evident.

HR

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Caroline O'Brien, Amsterdam; from which acquired with the support of the Paul Huf Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds (inv. no. RP-F-2018-177, 178).





