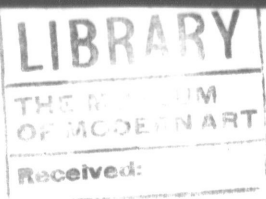


# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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PRESS PREVIEW: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26  
2 to 5 p.m.

FOR WEDNESDAY RELEASE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEWIS CARROLL, AUTHOR OF "ALICE," TO GO ON VIEW

Photographs by Lewis Carroll (Rev. Charles L. Dodgson, 1832-1898) will form an exhibition on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, from September 27 through November 19. Arranged by Edward Steichen, Director of the Department of Photography, the exhibition comes to this country from the London collection of Helmut Gernsheim, Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and author of the recent book "Lewis Carroll, Photographer"; and also from the M.L. Parrish Collection, Princeton University Library. The exhibition will include 4 original Carroll photo albums from the Princeton Library and the following material from the Gernsheim collection: 5 original albums; 16 original prints by Carroll; 6 of his cartes-de-visite portraits including one of "Alice"; 37 reprints and copies from Carroll photographs made by Helmut Gernsheim; 12 copies and prints by Soichi Sunami, and the original negative and a print from Carroll's favorite portrait of himself taken about 1863 by O.G. Rejlander.

Some letters by Lewis Carroll about his amateur photographic pursuits will also be shown. One letter, written after he had already had 8 years of experience in photography, describes his visit to Mrs. Julia Margaret Cameron, who had then had only a few months of photographic experience, and states: "Hers are all taken purposely out of focus - some are picturesque - some merely hideous - however, she talks of them as if they were triumphs in art."

A great many of Lewis Carroll's photographs, like his stories, are devoted to little girls. He has left an interesting comment on these young friends: "About nine out of ten, I think, of my child friendships get shipwrecked at the critical point 'where the stream and river meet', and the child friends, once so affectionate, become uninteresting acquaintances whom I have no wish to set eyes on again."

In addition he photographed many important people of the time as well as their children, their relatives and their relatives' children. Among these are the pre-Raphaelite painters Rossetti and Millais; Alfred Lord Tennyson; Ellen Terry at the age of 18; Tom Taylor, editor

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of "Punch" and a number of people of clerical importance - known particularly to him since he was himself an ordained deacon - including Dr. Longley, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Carroll first showed an interest in photography in 1855 at the age of 23 while watching his uncle photograph, and in this year he wrote an article entitled "Photography Extraordinary." This was 10 years before he published "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." He took his first successful photographs in 1856 and a year and a half later showed 4 photographs at the exhibition of the Photographic Society of London.

Helmut Gernsheim comments:

Technically it is interesting to note the advantages to Carroll, as pointed out in Mr. Gernsheim's book, of being able, later on, to photograph in a glass house. Many of his photographs had been taken in Oxford in the Deanery, in his rooms or in a hired studio. But in 1871 he had a glass house built on the flat college roof.

"The glass-house enabled him to take photographs in the winter months, a thing which he rarely did before on account of the long exposures required. All the same, a minute and a half is a very long time for a little girl to sit still, even with the support of a head-rest, which Lewis Carroll did not disdain to use occasionally. Naturally, on a really fine day the exposure was considerably shorter; according to a diary entry of 28th October 1876, it was 45 seconds."

An outburst of costume pictures appeared in the 1870's, Mr. Gernsheim notes. In these, Carroll indulged ever increasingly "dressing up his child friends as Roman girls, in Greek dress, in Indian shawls, in Danish costume, as Chinamen, in South Sea Island costume, in beach dress, and occasionally still further undressing until there was no costume at all. The chief sitters during this period were Julia and Ethel Arnold, Alexandra (Xie pronounced 'Ecksy') Kitchin---who was posed one afternoon in three different fancy pictures, 'with spade and bucket, in bed, and in Greek dress.' Soon afterwards Lewis Carroll met Xie's father and asked him if he knew how to get excellence from a photo. The Rev. G.W. Kitchin was at a loss for an answer. 'All you have got to do is to get a lens and put Xie before it.'

"'I wish I dared dispense with all costume,' wrote Carroll. 'Naked children are so perfectly pure and lovely; but Mrs. Grundy would be furious - it would never do.' In his hobby there was no danger of outraging Mrs. Grundy provided he found little girls - and parents - who raised no objection."

Edward S. Steichen says of this exhibition:

"In January 1856, the same year he first used the pseudonym 'Lewis Carroll,' the Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson wrote to an uncle requesting him to procure a photographic apparatus 'as I want some other occupation here than mere reading and writing.'

"It is almost incredible that the extraordinary collection of photographs being shown in this exhibition by so celebrated a writer could have been overlooked until 50 years after his death. A salute is certainly due here to Helmut Gernsheim for bringing these fine photographs and the details about their production into the public domain. There is included in the collection a bouquet of lovely photographs of children that enriches our appreciation of the unique quality of Lewis

Carroll's highly sensitized understanding of the miracle of childhood. The author of 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' is introduced to you in this exhibition as an amateur photographer in days when photography was in its infancy.

"There are reported to be between 25 and 35 million amateur photographers in the United States. Carroll's photographs were made with an apparatus less practical than the least expensive box brownie any one of these millions ever used. With a brownie you can shoot a picture in a fraction of a second. Carroll had first to coat and sensitize his own plates, and the shortest exposure he could make was 1/5 seconds during which time the children had to remain motionless. Here is a demonstration that perfect facilities, the slickest technique and the most expensive and gadgety equipment are minor contributions in the making of fine photographs.

"Individually these photographs are outstanding achievements, collectively they document human grace and dignity as vividly as they portray the postures and attitudes born of a period. They are conceived and copied in the style and language of painting as it was understood at that time. They were created in an atmosphere of security in Peace; they were rediscovered into the world we now live in."