

The Museum of Modern Art

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PHOTOGRAPHS FROM OUTSTANDING PRIVATE COLLECTION ON VIEW AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

One of the world's finest private photography collections is featured in A PERSONAL VIEW: PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE COLLECTION OF PAUL F. WALTER, on view at The Museum of Modern Art from May 23 through August 11, 1985. Organized by John Szarkowski, director of the Museum's Department of Photography, the exhibition comprises seventy prints ranging in date from the 1840s to the 1930s.

A PERSONAL VIEW includes both well-known masterpieces and impressive fresh discoveries that represent a diversity of subjects, styles, and periods. The exhibition reflects the complexity of photography's history and the adventurous range of Paul F. Walter's taste.

The chief executive of an electronics manufacturing firm, Walter began to collect art as a college student while vacationing in New York. His interests as a collector have been broad. Prior to his first photographic purchase in 1975, his collection included contemporary paintings and sculptures, architectural drawings, and Indian miniatures. His early acquisitions in photography were often pictures made in Asia, in part because these enriched the intellectual and cultural context of his collections of traditional Eastern art. An interest in Whistler prints led in turn to acquisitions from photography's pictorialist period.

According to Szarkowski, "The photography collection of Paul F. Walter is the reflection not only of a love for that medium, but of a deep interest in the things and places the photographs describe; one might assume that the former has grown from and been nourished by the latter."

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A PERSONAL VIEW includes early works by British masters Hill and Adamson and Roger Fenton; nineteenth-century views of the Middle East by Felix Teynard and Auguste Salzmänn; official images of Second Empire France by Charles Negre and Gustave Le Gray; portraits by Nadar, Julia Margaret Cameron, and Edgar Degas; and mammoth-plate landscapes of the American West by Eadweard Muybridge and Carleton E. Watkins. Twentieth-century pictures include outstanding works by Paul Strand, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Cecil Beaton, August Sander, and Brassai. Also presented are a number of striking pictures by anonymous photographers, such as a police record of the Paris flood of 1910, and an aerial view of the Croydon Aerodrome, London's first airport, made in 1921-22.

A special section of the exhibition is devoted to nineteenth-century photographs of India, of which Walter is an especially enthusiastic connoisseur. In the middle of the last century, commercial photographers made pictures of Indian culture and daily life for sale to an avid audience in Great Britain. The architectural views, landscape studies, and portraits made by Samuel Bourne, Linnaeus Tripe, and other British commercial photographers constitute a document of remarkable richness.

"It is a special pleasure to exhibit this selection of photographs from the Walter Collection in the knowledge that these superb pictures are pledged to the Museum and will greatly enhance our ability to illuminate the story of photography, both in public exhibitions and in our service to individual scholars," states Szarkowski.

In conjunction with the exhibition, The Museum of Modern Art is publishing a 136-page catalog in which all the works on view are reproduced in full-page duotone plates. In an introductory essay, John Pultz, Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Curatorial Fellow at the Museum from 1981-84, traces the attitudes of private

collectors of photography from the nineteenth century to the present day. The photographs are accompanied by extensive notes prepared by the curatorial staff of the Department of Photography. Filled with new documentation and interpretations, the notes explore photography's interaction with commerce, politics, science, and the arts. A Personal View: Photography in the Collection of Paul F. Walter, distributed by New York Graphic Society Books/Little, Brown and Company, Boston, is available for \$40.00 clothbound, \$18.50 paperbound.

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For additional information contact the Public Information Department of The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9750.