History of photography (part 3): photography as art

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CS 178, Spring 2010

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Outline

- photography as an aid to artists
- genres
  - allegory
  - still life
- Naturalism
- Pictorialism
- profile: Alfred Stieglitz
Photography as an artistic medium

William Talbot, The Open Door, 1843
Photography as an aid to artists

Eugène Durieu, Figure Study, 1853

Eugène Delacroix, Dante and Virgil in Hell, 1822

- Delacroix collaborated with Durieu on these figure studies

(Rosenblum)
Photography as an aid to artists

Thomas Eakins's students, 1883

(Rosenblum)

Thomas Eakins, The Swimming Hole, 1883

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Photography as an aid to artists

Kitty Owen (granddaughter of William Jennings Bryan)

Maxfield Parrish, illustration for Life, 1923

(Ludwig)
Planning a photograph

Henry Peach Robinson, Carrolling, 1887
Photography struggles for respect

“Photography asking for just a little place in the exhibition of fine arts.”

Gaspard Tournachon ("Nadar"), from Le Journal Amusant, 1857
Francois-Joseph Heim, The Exhibition of 1824
Photography struggles for respect

“Photography asking for just a little place in the exhibition of fine arts.”

Gaspard Tournachon ("Nadar"), from Le Journal Amusant, 1857
Genres

- allegory
- still life
Thomas Cole, The Voyage of Life (1842) I: Childhood
Thomas Cole, *The Voyage of Life* (1842)  III: Manhood
Allegorical collage

- huge print (31” wide)
- composite of 30 negatives
- widely denounced as mechanical
- made the artist rich and famous

Oscar Rejlander, Two Ways of Life, 1857
One-frame movie

- perfectly healthy 14-year old girl
- photograph as theatrical narrative
- 5 differently exposed negatives, hence early example of HDR!

Henry Peach Robinson, Fading Away, 1858
The Dutch still life

• balanced composition
• variety of textures
• specular highlights
  (white if glass, colored if metal)
• interreflections
• reflected windows

Willem Claesz Heda,
Still Life with Oysters, Rum Glass, and Silver Cup, 1634 
(Gardner)
Vanitas

- intended to symbolize the transience of life, the futility of pleasure, and the certainty of death
- common symbols are a skull, clock or candle, pipes for blowing bubbles, leaning glass, rotting fruit

Willem Claesz Heda, Still Life - Vanitas, 1628
Hans Holbein, The Ambassadors, 1533

- anamorphic image of skull
- to view without distortion, stand near lower-left corner of painting
- salvation is represented by crucifix in upper-left corner
Memento mori  ("Be mindful of death")

Caravaggio, St. Jerome, 1606

Photographic still life

Hermann Krone, Still Life of the Washerwoman, 1853

(Rosenblum)
Charles Aubry,
Leaves, 1864

(Rosenblum)
Dead nature

Adolphe Braun, Still Life with Deer and Wildfowl, 1865

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, Hare, Sheldrake, Bottles, Bread and Cheese, 1742
Genres: still life

Adolphe Braun, Still Life with Deer and Wildfowl, 1865

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, Le Pâté, 1743 (at the S.F. Palace of Legion of Honor)
Ansel Adams,  
Still Life, 1932
Still life photographs from CS 178

Nora Willett, Memento Mori (2009)
Tatiana Iskandar
Vanitas (2009)
Wajahat Qadeer
Heart Ring  (2009)
Naturalism

- reaction against the artificiality of genre photographs
- blend of Romanticism, lyricism, and early Impressionism
- importance of pose, camera vantage point, and atmosphere

Frank Sutcliffe, Water Rats, 1886
George Caleb Bingham, *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, 1845

Frank Sutcliffe, *Water Rats*, 1886

(Honour)
Lidell Sawyer, In the Twilight, 1888
Édouard Manet, Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 1863

Lidell Sawyer, In the Twilight, 1888
Pictorialism

- photography needed to emulate the art of painting
- extreme manipulation of the photograph
- photographic Impressionism

Edward Steichen, *The Flatiron*, 1904
Claude Monet, The Thames and the Houses of Parliament, 1871

Edward Steichen, The Flatiron, 1904
James Craig Annan, 
A Black Canal, 1894
Claude Monet, La Grenouillère (The Frog Pond), 1869

James Craig Annan, A Black Canal, 1894

(Rosenblum)
E.J. Constant Puyo, Summer, 1903
Claude Monet, Poppy Field near Vétheuil, 1879

E.J. Constant Puyó, Summer, 1903
Claude Monet, Bridge at Argenteuil, 1874
Animating pictures
[Chuang SIGGRAPH 2005]
Animating pictures
[Chuang SIGGRAPH 2005]
Alfred Stieglitz  (1864 - 1946)

- began as a Pictorialist
- became a Realist as he addressed social themes, then a Modernist as he photographed urban landscapes
- photographed (and married) painter Georgia O’Keeffe
- first of the “heroic age” of artist photographers
Sun’s Rays - Paula,
Berlin, 1889
Venetian Canal, 1897
Leonardo, Mona Lisa (detail), 1503-1519
example of sfumato

Miss Thompson, 1907
(collaboration with Clarence White)
The Terminal, 1893 (printed 1913)
The Steerage, 1907
Portraits of Georgia O’Keeffe
Spiritual America,
1923
From the Shelton
Westward, New York,
1931
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