

SHOWCASING ART HISTORY, SEASON XII, 2017-2018

Autumn term 2017: *A different light: How photography re-imagined the world*



A Different Light is a series of ten lectures exploring photography's historical engagements with the idea of the real. From its inception, photography was celebrated both for its scientific objectivity and for its capacity for invention, idealism, and visual fantasy. The photographic pioneers of the nineteenth century documented archaeological sites, Civil

War battlefields, and the working lives of the urban poor; others sought to establish the new medium as an art form, staging and photographing fictional scenes that reflected the classical conventions of *Salon* painting. In the twentieth century, and through to the present day, photographers have continued to play on this dual identity, exploring the tension between the apparent objective 'truth' of the photographic image and the photographer's subjective framing of their visual material.

The lecture series, presented by six of the UK's leading photographic historians, introduces the work of key practitioners, genres, and movements, in which the mythic objectivity of photography has been both exploited and challenged. Nineteenth-century topics include the American Civil War photography of Roger Fenton and Mathew Brady, Eadweard Muybridge's pioneering studies in human and animal movement, and the late Victorian craze for 'spirit photography'. The pictorialist movement in art photography is discussed, in terms of its self-conscious attempts to downplay and subvert the mechanical nature of the photographic medium. A further lecture, on art photography in the early twentieth century, describes the seminal photography of Eugène Atget, and the appropriation of his work by surrealist photographers in the interwar decades. We will hear about the revelatory visions of scientific photography, consider the critiques of photographic 'realism' in the work of feminist photographers such as Cindy Sherman, Martha Rosler, and Carrie Mae Weems and, finally, explore the vernacular realism of the twentieth-century American photographer and writer Walker Evans.

Provisional timetable:

3 October 2017	Dr Tim Satterthwaite	<i>The Pencil of Nature</i>
10 October 2017	Professor Marta Braun	Eadweard Muybridge, title tbc
17 October 2017	Professor Roger Hargreaves	Legacies of War, title tbc
24 October 2017	Professor Roger Hargreaves	Art and photojournalism, title tbc
31 October 2017	Dr Kelley Wilder	Observing Reality, title tbc
7 November 2017	Dr Tim Satterthwaite	Between Worlds, title tbc
14 November 2017	Dr Tim Satterthwaite	Pictorialism, title tbc
21 November 2017	Dr Tim Satterthwaite	Atget/Surrealist photography, title tbc
28 November 2017	Dr Harriet Riches	Questioning the Real, title tbc
5 December 2017	Dr David Company	Walker Evans: photographer, writer, title tbc

Preliminary reading:

Marta Braun, *Eadweard Muybridge*, Reaktion Books, 2010

Vicki Goldberg, *The Power of Photography*, Abbeville Press, 1993* [no longer in print, but you can find second-hand copies online and elsewhere]

Peter Hamilton, Roger Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned: The Creation of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Photography*, National Portrait Gallery, Lund Humphries, 2001

Marien, Mary Warner. *Photography: A Cultural History*, Lawrence King, 2014

Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, 2015