

Photography



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著者:Mark Haworth-Booth

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The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) has one of the finest and oldest collections of photography in the world. In this fascinating book, Mark Haworth-Booth, Curator of Photographs at the V&A, offers the first comprehensive introduction to this extensive and impressive collection. In the process, he provides the reader with a general history of photography from its beginnings as a scientific curiosity, through its international commercialization, to its coming of age as an art form in its own right.</p>

Because of the V&A's uniquely long collecting history--dating back to 1856--many different epochs of photography's shifting identity can clearly be seen in this book. Reminding us that photography was not always viewed as a serious artistic medium, Haworth-Booth explores the changes and shifts in the perception of photography that have occurred over the years. In the 1850s, photography was a new and malleable medium that could result in anything from fine art to a commercial fortune. In the 1860s, photography became an industry practiced worldwide, but its new commercial status inspired creative radicals like Julia Margaret Cameron to emphasize its artistic potential instead. By the 1930s, photography became the dominant medium for mass communication, as a result of illustrated magazines. Photography returned as a fashionable medium for fine art in the 1960s--the same year television superseded

magazines as the primary disseminator of information.</p>

The V&A's Victorian holdings are outstanding, with major photographs by Roger Fenton, David Octavius Hill, Robert Adamson, Julia Margaret Cameron, Gustave Le Gray, Camille Silvy, and Lady Hawarden. In recent years, the museum has acquired significant works by such twentieth-century master photographers as Bill Brandt, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paul Martin, Walker Evans, Paul Strand, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, and Cecil Beaton. A number of these photographs are published here for the first time.</p>

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