

For immediate release

Photography exhibition
at Spencer Museum of Art
follows form from its roots
through contemporary times

Through February 2004

**Spencer Museum of Art, North & South Balcony Galleries, The University of Kansas
1840-1940 currently on view; 1940-present opens Nov. 12**

MEDIA CONTACT

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JPEG publicity images available

Lawrence, KS—Progressing from daguerrotype's copper-plated images and calotype's paper negatives to digital's high-resolution pixel prints, photography has advanced as dramatically as any technology in the past two centuries.

Not that this should be any surprise. When Parisian painter Louis-Jacques Mondé Daguerre announced in 1839 his invention of a technique for making a positive print on a light-sensitized copperplate, he prompted the publication by an English scientist, William Henry Fox Talbot, of yet another scientific method for capturing images: the calotype.

Because his calotype (a paper negative) could be used to print an unlimited number of positives as opposed to daguerrotype's single shot, Talbot's process usurped Daguerre's as the basis of modern photography, and instigated—what else?—yet another argument for the ages between

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Spencer Museum of Art Media Release, Page 2

France and England, this one over which nation rightfully could claim the invention of the medium.

Franco-Anglo relations aside, photography has flourished as a modern art form.

Now a two-gallery exhibition at the Spencer Museum of Art will survey the subsequent history of photography. Currently on view in the museum's North Balcony Gallery is an installation that includes photographs covering the period from 1840 to 1940. Opening Wednesday, Nov. 12, in the South Balcony Gallery will be a complementary display of photographs since 1940. The earliest included work dates from 1842, while the most recent is from 2001. The works will be on display until February 2004.

The exhibition includes examples of all the important types of photographs including daguerreotypes, tintypes, ambrotypes, gelatin-silver prints, and color prints. Many forms of 19th-century portraits are displayed, along with French photographs from the 1850s made from paper negatives and American photographs from the Civil War and the Western Expansion that followed. Other highlights include European and American explorations of 20th-century modernism as photographed by such notables as Hans Bellmer, Imogen Cunningham, Aaron Siskind, and Alfred Stieglitz. Recent acquisitions by Izis, James Casebere, and Nikki Lee will also be shown.

John Pultz, the Spencer's curator of photography and an associate professor of art history, organized the exhibition, which includes many acquisitions from his 10-year tenure at KU, as well as long-time favorites from the collection. From a strictly educational standpoint, Pultz notes that the exhibition features representative samples of important photographs from throughout the medium's history, and greatly benefits students in his history of photography survey class.

From the curatorial perspective, mounting such a display also serves another purpose, Pultz says.

"This exhibition demonstrates the incredible quality and breadth of the Spencer's photography collection," says Pultz. "But it also lets me see some of the gaps in the collection, and makes me think what else is needed."

(continued)

Spencer Museum of Art Press Release, Page 3

Certainly, Pultz considers organizing the exhibition an eye-opening challenge.

“To review the collection and select some of its best works to show photography’s history was rewarding, but it was also difficult,” Pultz says. “For every photograph I selected there were others just as good. I had to make tough choices as I edited piles of pictures down to what would fit in the galleries.”

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Also find the Spencer...

- On the Web: www.ku.edu/~sma
- E-mail: spencerart@ku.edu

Gallery hours

Tues., Wed., Fri., & Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Thurs. 10a.m.–9 p.m.

Sun. Noon–5 p.m.

Closed Monday

- Free parking in Lot 91 after 5 p.m. on weekdays and all day weekends, excepting home football games.
- Parking garage adjacent to Kansas Union is \$1 per hour weekdays, free on Saturdays and Sundays (but unavailable on home football games).
- No admission fee; \$3 donation suggested.