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Vienna to San Francisco via Chicago: Camera Club Exchanges in the 1890s

Carolin Görgen

Elitist organizations such as the Linked Ring Brotherhood and the Photo-Secession were not the only channels of photographic exchanges across the Atlantic at the turn of the 20th century. An active network of clubs, publications and events spanned a massively expanded transatlantic cultural space stretching from Vienna to San Francisco.

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In July 1896, the *American Amateur Photographer* published a review of an exhibition at the Syracuse Camera Club which showed "[a] collection of the best work of the best men and women throughout the world," including 278 prints by seventy-seven photographers from twelve countries. Assembled by New York businessman and camera club supporter George Timmins, the collection included established East-Coast photographers Alfred Stieglitz, Rudolph Eickemeyer, and Alfred Clements, slightly lesser-known Catherine Weed Barnes and Mary A. Bartlett of Chicago, as well as aspiring artist Jessie F. Banks of San Francisco. English and Scottish contributors were Henry Peach Robinson, along with J. Craig Annan and W.J. Anckorn. France was represented by Robert Demachy, Italy by German-born Baron Von Gloeden, and the Netherlands by locally renowned S. Van Genderingen. The event was a popular success (with an initial six-day display extended to three weeks), and described as "a highly satisfactory result of over six years of almost constant correspondence and communication." Although the whereabouts of the collection are unknown today, it remains one of the earliest American exhibition endeavors—and one with a decidedly transatlantic flavor.

By the time the Timmins collection was displayed in Syracuse, camera clubs were thriving across the U.S. and Europe. Thanks to the commercialization of dry plates and pocket cameras, the introduction of roll film in 1888, and massive promotion by firms like Eastman Kodak, photography became an accessible pastime for an increasingly affluent middle class. The early 1880s saw the emergence of photographic societies in Boston, New York, and San Francisco, and the U.S. counted more than one hundred camera clubs in the mid 1890s. For the same period, historians have listed some 400 photographic societies in the UK, more than eighty in France, forty in Germany, fifteen in the Netherlands, and at least a dozen in Italy. The majority of these societies, be they located in metropolitan areas or provincial towns, engaged in some form of exchange with peers locally, nationally or abroad.

VIDEO

View online: https://archive.org/embed/cameraobscura2190unse

Cover of *Camera Obscura* Vol. 1. Amsterdam: J.G.A. Schouten, 1899-1900

Source: Internet Archive. Original from Getty Research Institute

Alongside outings, lectures, and exhibitions, clubs contributed to magazines about technical issues, artistic taste, and at times broader sociocultural matters. Although each of the aforementioned countries had its own magazines$—$many of which circulated abroad—the desire for an international platform was such that in 1899 *Camera Obscura*, a journal in four languages, was launched. In its opening pages, Amsterdam editor J.G.A. Schouten declared that a transatlantic dialogue on photography was necessary: "What the new world has produced in this field remains too unknown on the European continent and, similarly, what European scholars have written remains more or less ignored in America." [1] This call struck a responsive chord with readers, notably San Francisco's *Camera Craft*, which ran a "foreign journals" column with translations from Europe. Its editor identified *Camera Obscura* as "perhaps, the very best monthly published." [2] Certainly, contributions from some twenty photographers in each of the French-, German-, Dutch-, and English-speaking sections facilitated correspondence among photographers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Despite the variety of nationalities and actors involved, photo-historical research of the late nineteenth century has placed at its center a more selective circle that pursued a rigorous artistic practice. The Linked Ring Brotherhood of London and the New York Photo-Secession have been considered seminal

organizations in the fine-art history of photography—at the expense of the many eclectic, regional, and transnational photography networks. To this day, turn-of-the-century histories are dominated by the exclusive approach to the medium defined by Secessionist Alfred Stieglitz, his East Coast colleagues, and cherrypicked affiliates abroad. In Europe, scholarship has demonstrated a renewed interest in the broader camera club culture around 1900, especially through the lens of emerging national identities. While this research sheds new light on collective photography, it remains mostly confined within national and/or language boundaries.

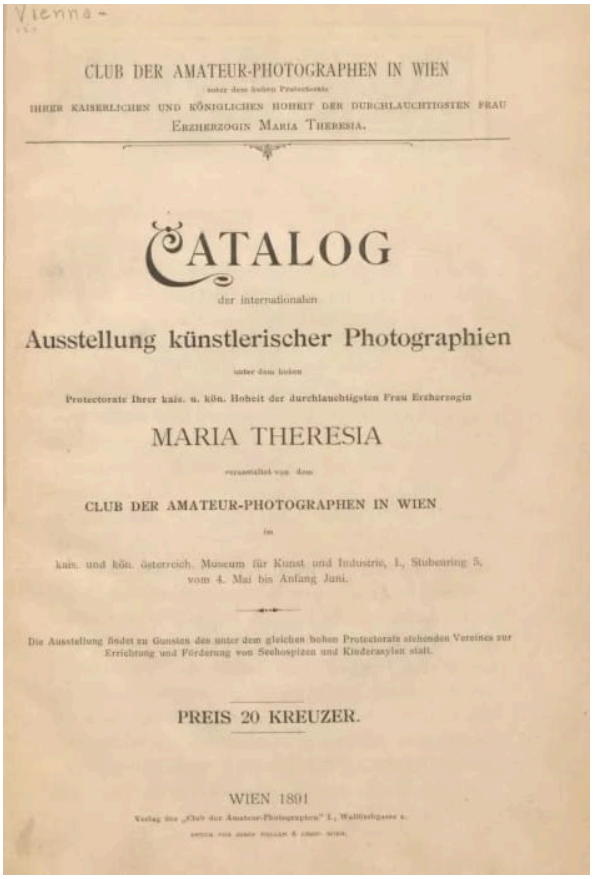
Given the international character of Timmins' 1896 exhibit, much remains to be said about the materials, knowledge, and aesthetic trends that traveled not only between the photographer communities of Syracuse and San Francisco, but also between the coastal regions of the U.S. and European photography hubs like Vienna, Hamburg, Paris, and Brussels. Moving beyond the selective circles of New York and London, the following discussion provides a snapshot of the diversity of photographic exchanges across the Atlantic between 1891 and 1901. It surveys early channels of photographic circulation in Europe sought by American practitioners and, conversely, retraces the increased attraction of U.S. venues for Europeans. From the first international salon in Vienna in 1891 to a series of forgotten San Francisco salons in the early 1900s, the following article reconstructs the channels of "constant correspondence and communication" before the formation of the Photo-Secession in 1902. The aim is to uncover the often-overlooked early club-network of the 1890s that spanned a massively expanded transatlantic space, reaching from the Pacific Coast of the U.S. all the way to Central and Southern Europe.

Setting the scene

With the onset of amateur photo-culture in the 1880s, clubs rapidly mounted their own modest exhibitions. After Boston in 1883, New York in 1885, or San Francisco in 1886, photographers across the U.S. gathered to display their work with a generous embrace of quantity rather than quality (Boston and San Francisco showed between 700 and 1,100 prints). As numerous studies have shown, when photography moved from professional circles to the leisure sphere, it took on a congenial dimension. The display of one's work, the collective criticism of prints, and the attribution of prizes instilled photographic communities with friendly competition. The rising trend of pictorial photography—also known as Pictorialism—spread across the club scene. Pictorialists conceived of their creations as photographic pictures with a painterly value, instead of mechanical images. Practitioners, many of whom camera club members, favored the display of these prints as it allowed them to present their work as unique pieces of art made with diverse processes, such as platinum or bromide, and papers adding a soft texture and matt finish. In addition, the Pictorialist community adopted an artistic vocabulary: they held *salons* instead of mere shows, evaluated composition and light, and thus defined a shared standard of photographic knowledge.

In Europe, the exhibition tradition dates back to the mid-1850s when the Royal Photographic Society and the Société Française de Photographie started regular programs. By the 1870s and 1880s, however, photography shows also diversified in Europe, notably in Vienna, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Berlin. The onset of a transatlantic photo-exchange came in 1891 with the *Ausstellung künsterlischer Photographien* by Vienna's Club of Amateur Photographers. The exhibition aimed at assembling the best photographic work in an international setting. The Vienna Club drew on generous patronage from the Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria, an amateur photographer herself, and benefited from a prestigious venue at the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Arts and Industry. In 1890, journals like New York's *Wilson's*

Photographic Magazine announced the salon, specifying that it would include "only such photos as have artistic value." [3] American contributors were invited to send their work to Alfred Stieglitz who managed the shipping of prints. A jury of eleven painters from the Academy of Fine Arts eventually selected 600 works by 176 contributors. As curator Weston Naef explains, the jury "exercised considerable foresight in being the first to include the younger generation who would actually make a mark on the esthetic development of photography." [4] While Alfred Stieglitz would become the most prominent advocate of this generation, several names represented in the 1896 Timmins collection also showed their work in Vienna, notably English pictorial photographer Henry Peach Robinson, the Scottish couple of Mr. & Mrs. W.J. Anckorn, and Mary A. Bartlett from Chicago. The rigorous selection by the Vienna jury left a lasting impression, especially in London where it inspired Robinson and others to break with the Royal Photographic Society and establish the more elitist Brotherhood of the Linked Ring in 1892. This new organization followed the Vienna model in its rejection of both an award system and professional sponsorship.


Vienna -

CLUB DER AMATEUR-PHOTOGRAPHEN IN WIEN

unter dem hohen Protectorate

IHRER KAISERLICHEN UND KÖNIGLICHEN HOHEIT DER DURCHLAUCHTIGSTEN FRAU

ERZHERZOGIN MARIA THERESIA.

CATALOG

der internationalen

Ausstellung künstlerischer Photographien

unter dem hohen

Protectorate Ihrer kais. u. kön. Hoheit der durchlauchtigsten Frau Erzherzogin

MARIA THERESIA

veranstaltet von dem

CLUB DER AMATEUR-PHOTOGRAPHEN IN WIEN

im

kais. und kön. österreich. Museum für Kunst und Industrie, I., Stubenring 5,
vom 4. Mai bis Anfang Juni.

Die Ausstellung findet zu Gunsten des unter dem gleichen hohen Protectorate stehenden Vereines zur Errichtung und Förderung von Seehospizen und Kinderasylen statt.

PREIS 20 KREUZER.

WIEN 1891

Verlag des „Club der Amateur-Photographen" I., Wallfischgasse 8.

Catalog der internationalen Ausstellung künsterlischer Photographien. Wien: Verlag des "Club der Amateur-Photographen," 1891

Source: Collection of Alfred Stieglitz, N1300, Joyce F. Menschel Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)

In the U.S., the same year, clubs developed a timid outlook across the Atlantic. First attempts were made in the joint exhibitions of the New York, Boston, and Philadelphia clubs which started in 1887. Their fourth annual show in the summer of 1891 demonstrated some overlap with the Vienna exhibition that took place simultaneously, notably in the contributions of Henry Peach Robinson and the Anckorn couple. American photographers also started to reach out to non-English speakers in the shape of announcements in French and Dutch photography journals. The first issue of the *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris* of 1891,

for example, printed an invitation to the exhibition at the Fifth Avenue art galleries. As the cost of transatlantic shipping was high, the New York society advertised that foreign exhibitors were exempt of display fees. [5] A similar strategy had been adopted earlier by the Vienna committee which provided frames free of charge. While no French contributors were eventually part of the 1891 show in New York, Dutch photographers responded positively to the call for contributions: the *American Amateur Photographer* reported that the Amateur Society of Amsterdam had sent a separate exhibit for display. [6]

Enter Women Photographers

The rise in international exhibitions and magazines provided a particularly fruitful terrain for female photographers, who were still partly excluded from the American club scene. Two women especially benefited from this expanded network—Mary A. Bartlett and Catherine Weed Barnes. A member of the Chicago Lantern Slide Club, Bartlett would show her print *At the Spring* in New York in 1891 where it was praised for its "grouping, arrangement of the background, and position of the figures," which "was so artistically done that it could not be improved." [7] The same year, it was sent to Vienna where, according to American authors, "[n]one but the highest artistic work was accepted." [8] A few weeks after the Vienna exhibit, the *American Amateur Photographer* proudly reproduced Bartlett's print as the frontispiece. Based on her international success, the accompanying text predicted "a great future in store for women camerists." [9] If Bartlett's work had been appreciated by American audiences, it gained in relevance for the local photographer community through its validation at an internationally acclaimed salon.



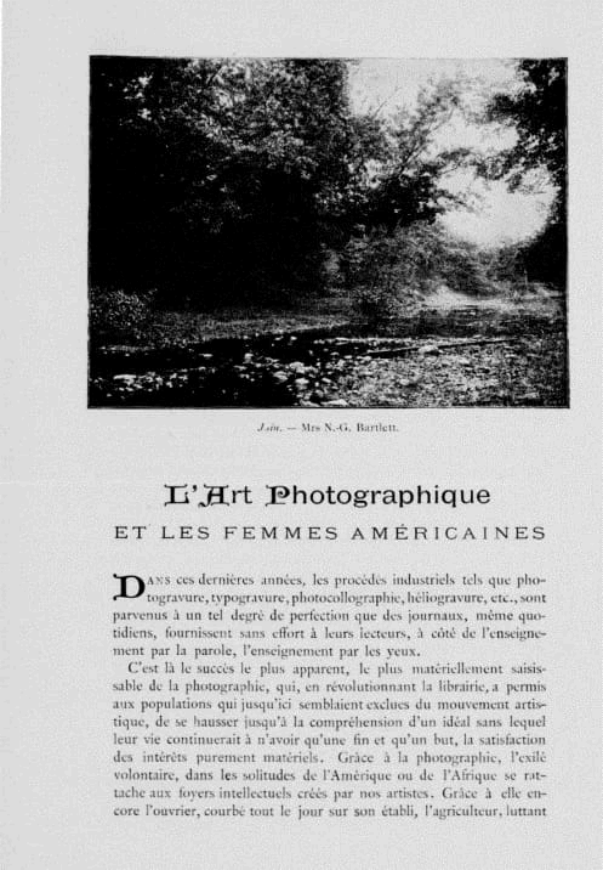
Mary N. Bartlett, "At the Spring", in *American Amateur Photographer* Vol. 3 (1891): 205

Source: HathiTrust Digital Library. Original from University of Michigan

Key to this domestic success of female photographers was Catherine Weed Barnes, who, in lectures and editorial work at the *American Amateur Photographer*, actively pushed for female inclusion in both amateur and professional circles. A member of the New York Society of Amateur Photographers, Weed Barnes had exhibited her work as early as 1888 and was admitted, by 1891, to the annual exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society in London. As the first woman to give a speech at a camera club in the U.S., in 1889, Weed Barnes embarked on a lecturing tour across Great Britain and Scotland in the summer of 1892. That year, she presented the paper "American work and workers" before the Birmingham Photographic Society. Far from limiting her remarks to pictorial commentary, Weed Barnes lectured in detail on the technical qualities of English and American plateholders, and the advantages of newly available film holders in the U.S. To complete the exchange circle, her paper was reprinted the *American Amateur Photographer* alongside comments from the *London Amateur Photographer* agreeing with Weed Barnes' technical evaluation. Beyond club circles, the public was informed of her travels, as the *New York Times* commented on her "cordial reception" on the other side of the Atlantic. [10] By supporting workers at home and exporting their work to Europe, Weed Barnes shaped the onset of an American school of photography, fueled by an active female workforce.

By the time of the World's Columbian Fair at Chicago in 1893, both Weed Barnes and Bartlett had gained international recognition. In proximity to the fairgrounds, a five-day photography congress was organized in August 1893, where Bartlett served as chairperson of the women's committee and Weed Barnes was appointed as the first speaker to give a paper on amateur photography. In a veritable get-together of the late nineteenth-century photographic scene, the congress hosted speakers from Chicago, San Francisco, Honolulu, Tokyo, Bombay, as well as London, Paris, Vienna, and Prague. The panel covered topics ranging from advances in color photography (Fred Ives, Philadelphia), to astro-photography (Prof. E.E. Barnard, San Jose), platinum prints (Charles Scolik, Vienna), photographic optics (Adolph Miete, Germany), portraiture (Shapoor N. Bhedwar, Bombay), as well as "present and future possibilities" of the medium (Leon Vidal, Paris). [11] To make these exchanges accessible to the transatlantic community, many congress papers were reprinted in international photography journals; that way, even practitioners in California could read the speech of a French photographer given in Chicago.

By the mid 1890s, Weed Barnes' American circle of women photographers was covered in the international photographic press. In 1895, the *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris* ran a nine-page article on "Photographic Art and American Women." Complaining that "yet again France is arriving late," the author and member of the Photo-Club, Emmanuel Mathieu, explained that while French photographers were still hesitating, American women had engaged in a continuous fight for inclusion in exhibitions against the odds of a "celebrated establishment." Opening with a reproduction of Mary A. Bartlett's *June*, the article recounted her success at Vienna, her organizational work in Chicago, and her production of platinum paper.



Juin. — Mrs N.-G. Bartlett.

L'Art Photographique

ET LES FEMMES AMÉRICAINES

DANS ces dernières années, les procédés industriels tels que photogravure, typogravure, photocollographie, héliogravure, etc., sont parvenus à un tel degré de perfection que des journaux, même quotidiens, fournissent sans effort à leurs lecteurs, à côté de l'enseignement par la parole, l'enseignement par les yeux.

C'est là le succès le plus apparent, le plus matériellement saisissable de la photographie, qui, en révolutionnant la librairie, a permis aux populations qui jusqu'ici semblaient exclues du mouvement artistique, de se hausser jusqu'à la compréhension d'un idéal sans lequel leur vie continuerait à n'avoir qu'une fin et qu'un but, la satisfaction des intérêts purement matériels. Grâce à la photographie, l'exilé volontaire, dans les solitudes de l'Amérique ou de l'Afrique se rattache aux foyers intellectuels créés par nos artistes. Grâce à elle encore l'ouvrier, courbé tout le jour sur son établi, l'agriculteur, luttant

Mrs. N.-G. Bartlett, June, in Emanuel Mathieu, "L'art photographique et les femmes américaines", *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris*, Vol. 5 (1895), 166

Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Next to Emma Justine Farnsworth, who would soon be celebrated in international photography circles, Mathieu also introduced Washington, D.C., photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston as a woman with a "complete education in the fine arts and thorough knowledge of photographic science." [12] As Michel Poivert has noted, articles like Mathieu's substantially increased the visibility of a group of photographers whose work was still little known in Europe. [13] While Johnston would create a lasting impression at the Paris World's Fair in 1900, it was the international visibility of this female circle which helped establish a reputation for American women's excellence, be it artistic, technical, or administrative.

Crisscrossing the Atlantic: 1893-1898

Before a second wave of American women photographers would arrive in Paris in 1900, exchange channels across the Atlantic multiplied in the mid-1890s. A few months after the Chicago congress, Hamburg hosted an international exhibition of amateur photography in the fall of 1893. It included more than 6,000 prints by 417 contributors from ten different countries in a "democratizing" framework proposed by the director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle, Alfred Lichtwark. Hamburg's photographic society had already welcomed several renowned Americans as corresponding members, notably Rudolph Eickemeyer and later Alfred Stieglitz. The society's president, Ernst Juhl, endorsed a "competition between countries" for the 1893 exhibition—as opposed to the more restrained Vienna model two years earlier. Among the submissions, praise went to Eickemeyer, who received a gold medal for his *Lily Gatherer*, resulting in a favorable appraisal of U.S. contributors at large.



Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. *The Lily Gatherer*, 1892. Carbon print

Source: The Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr. Collection (3920.A29), National Museum of American History

While prints by East Coast photographers had become common at European venues, the desire to be displayed across the Atlantic expanded to the West Coast in this period. Two members of San Francisco's recently established California Camera Club, A.G. McFarland and Miss M.H. Philips, were awarded prizes in Hamburg, the latter for her portraits of children. Due to the considerable distance of more than 8,500 kilometers and the overall isolation felt by photographers in California, this success was celebrated in local newspapers. The *Chronicle* printed an engraving of Philip's prize-winning picture, the only known reproduction of the image.

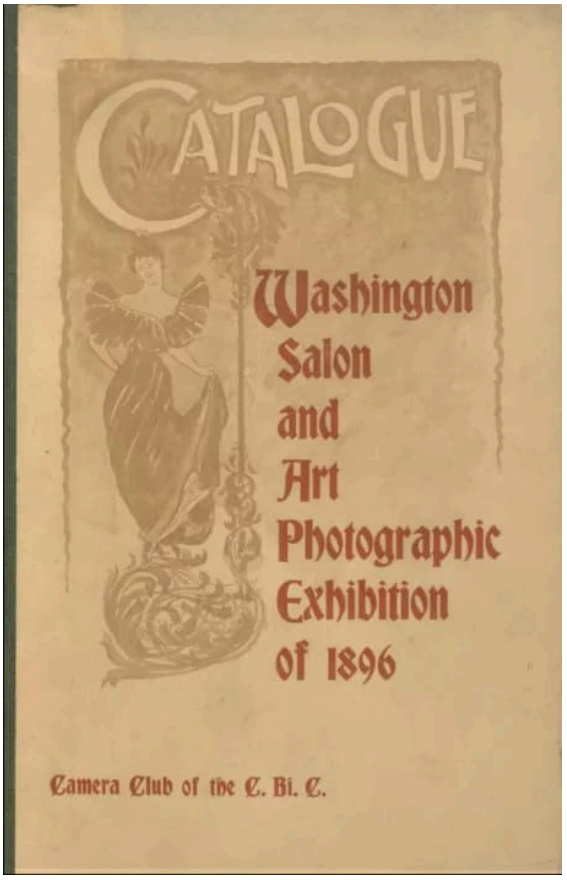


Miss Philips, "Herself a Fairer Flower", in *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18, 1893, 10

Source: Historical Digital Newspaper Collection, San Francisco Public Library

The trajectory of her photograph—from print displayed for an international audience at Hamburg to an engraving seen by local readers—reflects the notion of "circularity" proposed by François Brunet, suggesting that "an artwork 'returns,' transformed or not, to where it came from." [14] The transformation of Philip's artwork becomes tangible in its reproduction in a daily newspaper where it took on communal meaning as it had traveled across continents and oceans to represent the city.

Given the notable success of American photographers in exhibitions abroad, several clubs worked toward a proper domestic salon. The Washington Salon and Art Photographic Exhibition was the first of its kind, held in May 1896 at the assembly hall of the Cosmos Club—a private gentleman's club.



Catalogue. *Washington Salon and Art Photographic Exhibition of 1896*. Washington, D.C.: Camera Club of the C.Bi.C., 1896

Source: Collection of Alfred Stieglitz, N1311, Joyce F. Menschel Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)

Although all entrants were from the U.S. (and one from Canada), the list of exhibitors included many a familiar name from previous international shows as well as those who would, at the same time, display prints with Timmins in Syracuse. Like previous events with large-scale attendance, the Washington salon relied on a prize system. Among the winners were Alfred Clements of Philadelphia whose *Evening Light* earned him a silver medal. In Pictorialist softness, it showed delicate blades of grass on a sand dune set against a painterly sky.



Alfred Clements, *Evening Light*, n.d. Modern silver print from original platinum print

Source: National Museum of American History

Despite the salon's domestic outlook, prints like Clements's would eventually travel internationally, for example in the shape of a (rather poor) photomechanical reproduction in the *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris* where it was identified specifically as a prize picture.



Alfred Clements, *Evening Light*, reproduced in C. Puyo, “Du rôle de l’épreuve positive”, *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris* Vol. 7 (1897), 251

Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France

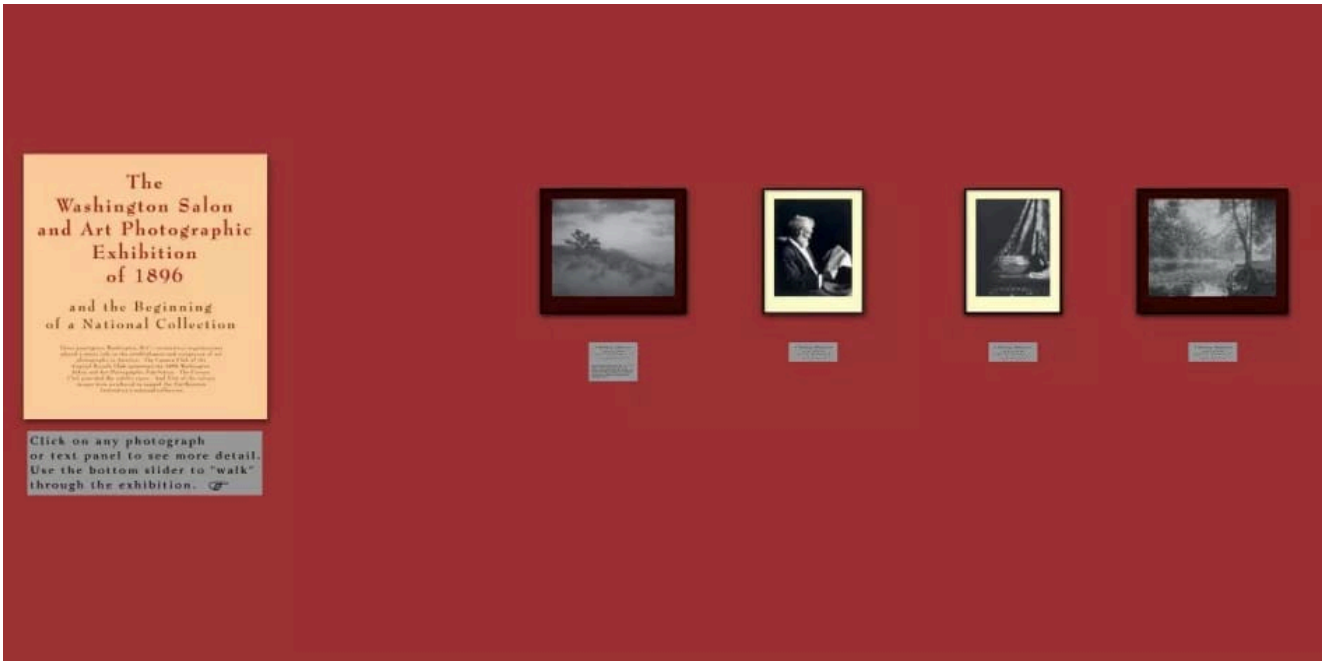
Drawing on their earlier success, Mary A. Bartlett, Frances Benjamin Johnston, and Emma J. Farnsworth were also included in the Washington event. The latter, who had been recognized by Mathieu, a member of the Photo-Club de Paris, as part of the rising "American school," submitted a total of eight works, including *To a Greek Girl*—a work which exemplifies the Pictorialist preference for re-enacting classic scenes.



Emma Justine Farnsworth, *To a Greek Girl*, n.d. modern silver gelatin print from original platinum print

Source: National Museum of American History

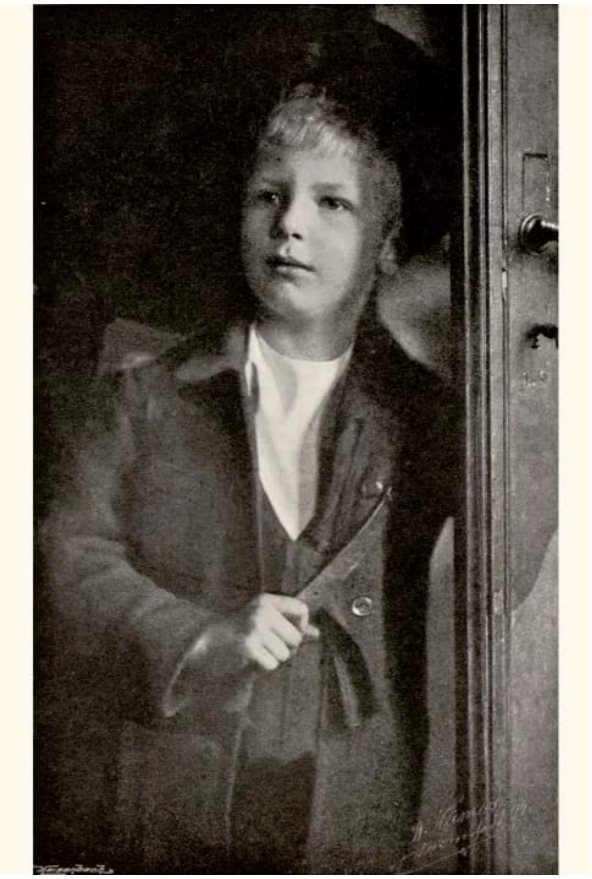
Thanks to its national success and international reputation, the Washington salon attracted the attention of the Smithsonian Institution which acquired fifty prints for its collection. Today, a digital walk through the salon is available on the [Smithsonian website] (https://americanhistory.si.edu/1896/index.htm). The virtual gallery includes framed prints, information on contributors, and additional context on the emergence of amateur photography.



The 1896 Washington Salon and Art Photographic Exhibition and the Beginning of a National Collection

Source: National Museum of American History. Screenshot, September 14, 2020

After the Washington and Timmins shows of 1896, a more deliberate effort was made to bring acclaimed photographic work to the U.S. This active outreach can be retraced in numerous European journals which, by early 1898, reprinted announcements for a salon to be held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, hosted by the Photographic Society of Philadelphia. The *Photographische Rundschau*, published in Berlin and available across German-speaking countries, regularly featured ads for the salon. The results of this new strategy are reflected in the Philadelphia salon catalog, which listed Wilhelm Stadler, an amateur from Graz, Austria, and Wilhelm Weimer, from Darmstadt, Germany. The latter's submission, a portrait titled *Schoolboy*, was later praised in the salon report of the *Rundschau*, specifying that Germany had been honorably represented through Weimer's print. The dynamic exchanges of the 1890s are visible in the *Schoolboy*'s trajectory: the portrait had not only traveled from Darmstadt to Philadelphia in 1898, but was also shown at the annual exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society two years earlier.



Wilhelm Weimer, *A Schoolboy*, n.d. Exhibition Catalogue of 1896 Forty-first Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society (1896 E96S017A)

Source: Exhibitions of the Royal Photographic Society 1870-1915: Catalogue records from the annual exhibitions

Next to contributors from English-speaking countries (England, Scotland, and even Australia), Italian-based photographer Ernest G. Boon showed *A Venetian Byway* in Philadelphia. This was another successful print that would make the transatlantic roundtrip, with an exhibition in London at the Royal Photographic Society in 1897, in Philadelphia the following year, and four years later, at a salon in San Francisco. Each time the print re-surfaced in a new context, it impressed audiences, for example in 1902, when a writer from the *San Francisco Call* described the *Venetian Byway* as "an atmospheric study." [15]



Ernest G. Boon, *A Venetian Byway*, n.d. Exhibition Catalogue of 1897 Forty-second Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society (1897 17864)

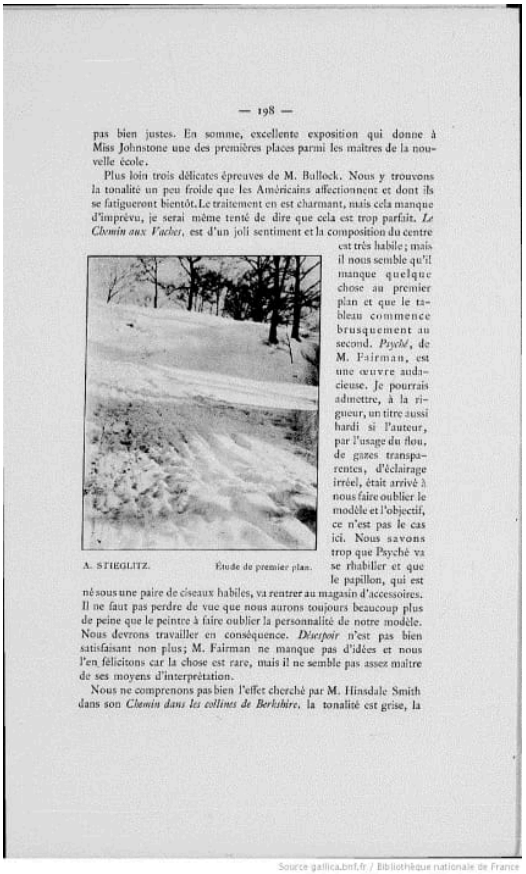
Source: Exhibitions of the Royal Photographic Society 1870-1915: Catalogue records from the annual exhibitions

The Hamburg, Washington, and Philadelphia exhibitions of the mid 1890s demonstrate the emergence of a two-way dialogue on photography across the Atlantic, including the circulation of news, ideas, and eventually prints. Americans continued sending their work to Europe to promote clubs and nourish the early reputation of an advanced "American school." This successful development spurred the desire to establish official U.S.-based venues for photographic exchange. As American salons became more prestigious, for example at the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, international participants were attracted to showcasing their work in such a competitive setting abroad.

The Turn of the century: Selecting vs. Expanding the Atlantic Scene

While the Vienna Salon of 1891 saw the onset of a more elitist exhibition model without prizes and with limited participation, this restrained framework blossomed in 1902 with the formation of Alfred Stieglitz's New York Photo-Secession. Yet, at the same time as Stieglitz established a select circle of photographer-artists, the more popular salon model with large-scale participation continued to thrive across Europe and the U.S. As both movements drew on the variety of clubs formed during the 1890s, it is of interest to examine how the two converged in their mobilization of transatlantic networks.

Inspired by London's Linked Ring Brotherhood, the Photo-Club de Paris (1894), the 1898 Munich Secession exhibition as well as the Vienna Secession movement, Stieglitz's very own Secession followed the European trend of cutting away from traditional Victorian styles and exploring new, radical aesthetics. As editor of the *American Amateur Photographer* (1892-1897), the more prestigious *Camera Notes* (1897-1902), and as vice-president of the Camera Club of New York, he was fully integrated in the European-American web of photo-exchange. In 1902, he drew on these contacts to establish the Photo-Secession. Before the formation of this vanguard group, Stieglitz had developed friendships both with Linked Ring members, like Henry Peach Robinson, and with Parisian Photo-Club photographers, like Robert Demachy, both of whom participated in the Timmins show in 1896. Stieglitz and Demachy cultivated a mutual support system in which the New York photographer regularly covered the Frenchman's work in *Camera Notes*. In turn, when Stieglitz displayed at the Photo-Club, for example in 1898, Demachy wrote an extensive review in the *Bulletin* that would later be translated for *Camera Notes*.



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pas bien justes. En somme, excellente exposition qui donne à Miss Johnstone une des premières places parmi les maîtres de la nouvelle école.

Plus loin trois délicates épreuves de M. Bullock. Nous y trouvons la tonalité un peu froide que les Américains affectionnent et dont ils se fatigueront bientôt. Le traitement en est charmant, mais cela manque d'imprévu, je serai même tenté de dire que cela est trop parfait. *Le Chemin aux Vaches*, est d'un joli sentiment et la composition du centre est très habile; mais il nous semble qu'il manque quelque chose au premier plan et que le tableau commence brusquement au second. *Psyché*, de M. Fairman, est une œuvre audacieuse. Je pourrais admettre, à la rigueur, un titre aussi hardi si l'auteur, par l'usage du flou, de gazes transparentes, d'éclairage irréel, était arrivé à nous faire oublier le modèle et l'objectif, ce n'est pas le cas ici. Nous savons trop que Psyché va se rhabiller et que le papillon, qui est né sous une paire de ciseaux habiles, va rentrer au magasin d'accessoires. Il ne faut pas perdre de vue que nous aurons toujours beaucoup plus de peine que le peintre à faire oublier la personnalité de notre modèle. Nous devrons travailler en conséquence. *Désespoir* n'est pas bien satisfaisant non plus; M. Fairman ne manque pas d'idées et nous l'en félicitons car la chose est rare, mais il ne semble pas assez maître de ses moyens d'interprétation.

A. STIEGLITZ. Étude de premier plan.

Nous ne comprenons pas bien l'effet cherché par M. Hinsdale Smith dans son *Chemin dans les collines de Berkshire*, la tonalité est grise, la

Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

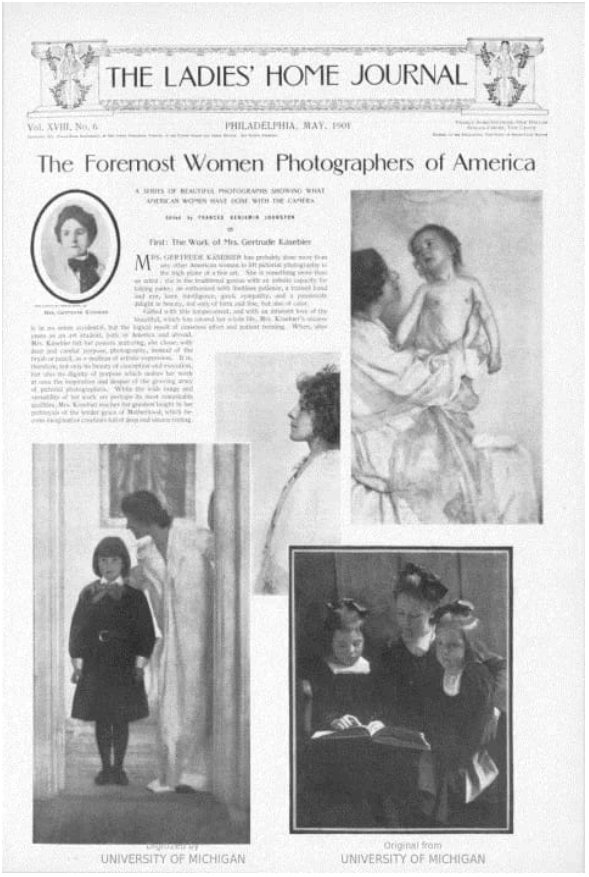
Alfred Stieglitz, *Étude de premier plan*, n.d., *in* Deambulator [Robert Demachy], "Les Anglais et les Américains à l'exposition du Photo- Club", *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris* Vol. 8 (1898), 198

Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France

As the Secession was gradually forming, other practitioners—like Stieglitz's colleague and rival Fred Holland Day—also promoted American photographers abroad, notably with the traveling exhibition "The New School of American Photography," at the Royal Photographic Society and at the Photo-Club de Paris in 1900 and 1901. It featured 375 photographs by forty-two Americans, notably Edward Steichen, who

went on to become a Photo-Secessionist. Despite Stieglitz's rejection of venues like the Royal Photographic Society for their sweeping embrace of all kinds of submissions, there is a tangible overlap between the Photo-Secession membership and participants of these more popular salons.

Gertrude Käsebier's work is emblematic of this flexible approach: a student at the Pratt Institute of Art and Design and a professional photographer, she was admitted both to the Linked Ring Brotherhood and the Photo-Secession in 1902. While Stieglitz would regularly sponsor her work in his high-art journal *Camera Work* (1903-1917) and its predecessor *Camera Notes*, Käsebier continued to participate in camera club salons across the U.S. and Europe, submitted prints to prize competitions, sold commercial work, and was sponsored in popular magazines like *The Ladies' Home Journal*.



"The Work of Mrs Gertrude Käsebier" *in* Frances Benjamin Johnston, "The Foremost Women Photographers of America", *The Ladies' Home Journal* Vol. 18 (1901), 1

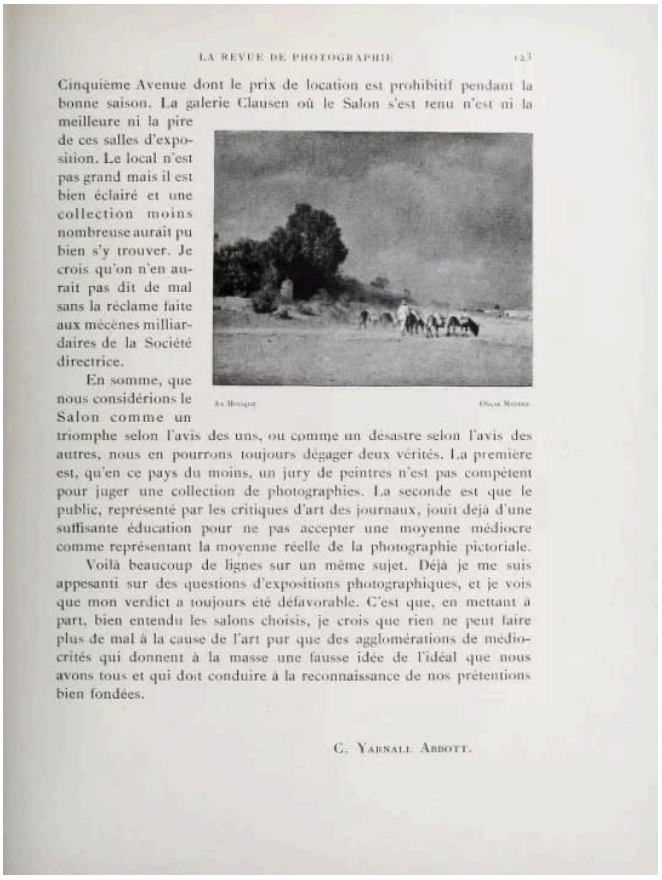
Source: HathiTrust Digital Library, original from University of Michigan

Shortly before becoming a Secessionist, Käsebier had been part of Frances Benjamin Johnston's collection of American women photographers displayed at the Paris World's Fair in 1900—another event rejected by Stieglitz on the ground that it did not feature photography in the fine-art section. This exhibit of some thirty American workers was the sole representation of U.S. Pictorialism at the fair, and included a vast panel of both artistic and commercial practitioners, selected solely for the quality of their work. An inventory in the centennial catalog of the fair, entitled *Ambassadors of Progress*, reveals the markedly transatlantic character of these women's careers, many of whom frequented the fine-art circles of London and New York while also attending shows in Hamburg, Turin, or Montreal.

Despite her acquaintance with Stieglitz, Johnston chose a less distinguished venue for photographic display that provided international visibility for practitioners who otherwise would not have reached the shores of Europe. While Käsebier, Bartlett, and Farnsworth's prints continued to circulate across borders, photographers from more remote locations could access the European stage for the first and only time at the Paris fair thanks to Johnston. Examples are Annie Nelson Crowell and Floride Green of San Francisco, both locally renowned members of the California Camera Club yet unknown internationally. Although their Paris prints are now lost, their inclusion in Johnston's collection points to the ever-expanding network of photographers that was forming beyond the Photo-Secession.

Since the Stieglitz circle and its international collaborations—with a select group of photographers from New York, Paris, and London—has dominated historical research, the women in the Johnston collection provide an excellent point of departure to survey marginalized events. As the *Ambassadors* inventory indicates, both Crowell and Green participated in the first San Francisco photographic salon, organized by the California Camera Club in January 1901 as the first proper photo-exhibition west of the Mississippi. Drawing on the success of club member Oscar Maurer with his print *The Storm* at the Chicago salon a few months earlier, Western photographers felt the necessity to stage their own show. Although participation in the salon remained mostly regional, the news of the show must have traveled far beyond the state, as entries were listed from Scotland (by William Norrie, who had shown in the 1898 Philadelphia salon) and from Turkey (by Wilfred de Sain, private photographer of the Sultan, based in Constantinople).

If we are to search both the prints and the names listed in the 1901 San Francisco catalog, the network draws even wider circles: After Chicago and San Francisco, Maurer's *The Storm* reached the Royal Photographic Society in London 1902 and appeared in the French *Revue de Photographie* as late as 1905.



LA REVUE DE PHOTOGRAPHIE 123

Cinquième Avenue dont le prix de location est prohibitif pendant la bonne saison. La galerie Clausen où le Salon s'est tenu n'est ni la meilleure ni la pire de ces salles d'exposition. Le local n'est pas grand mais il est bien éclairé et une collection moins nombreuse aurait pu bien s'y trouver. Je crois qu'on n'en aurait pas dit de mal sans la réclame faite aux mécènes milliardaires de la Société directrice.

Au Mexique. Oscar Maurer.

En somme, que nous considérions le Salon comme un triomphe selon l'avis des uns, ou comme un désastre selon l'avis des autres, nous en pourrons toujours dégager deux vérités. La première est, qu'en ce pays du moins, un jury de peintres n'est pas compétent pour juger une collection de photographies. La seconde est que le public, représenté par les critiques d'art des journaux, jouit déjà d'une suffisante éducation pour ne pas accepter une moyenne médiocre comme représentant la moyenne réelle de la photographie pictoriale.

Voilà beaucoup de lignes sur un même sujet. Déjà je me suis appesanti sur des questions d'expositions photographiques, et je vois que mon verdict a toujours été défavorable. C'est que, en mettant à part, bien entendu les salons choisis, je crois que rien ne peut faire plus de mal à la cause de l'art pur que des agglomérations de médiocrités qui donnent à la masse une fausse idée de l'idéal que nous avons tous et qui doit conduire à la reconnaissance de nos prétentions bien fondées.

C. Yarnall Abbott.

Oscar Maurer, *Au Mexique [The Storm]*, 1899, *in* C. Yarnall Abbott, "A l'Étranger : États-Unis," *La Revue de Photographie* Vol. 3 (1905), 123

Source: Internet Archive, original from Getty Research Institute

Similarly, international participants of the 1898 Philadelphia salon, like the aforementioned Ernest G. Boon, re-appear in the catalog of the San Francisco salon a year later. Emboldened by this international appeal, Western photographers circulated ads for their 1903 salon as far as Brussels, to the *Bulletin de l'Association Belge de Photographie*, resulting in several submissions by the Belgian Victor Stouffs whose print *Swans* was reproduced in the catalogue.



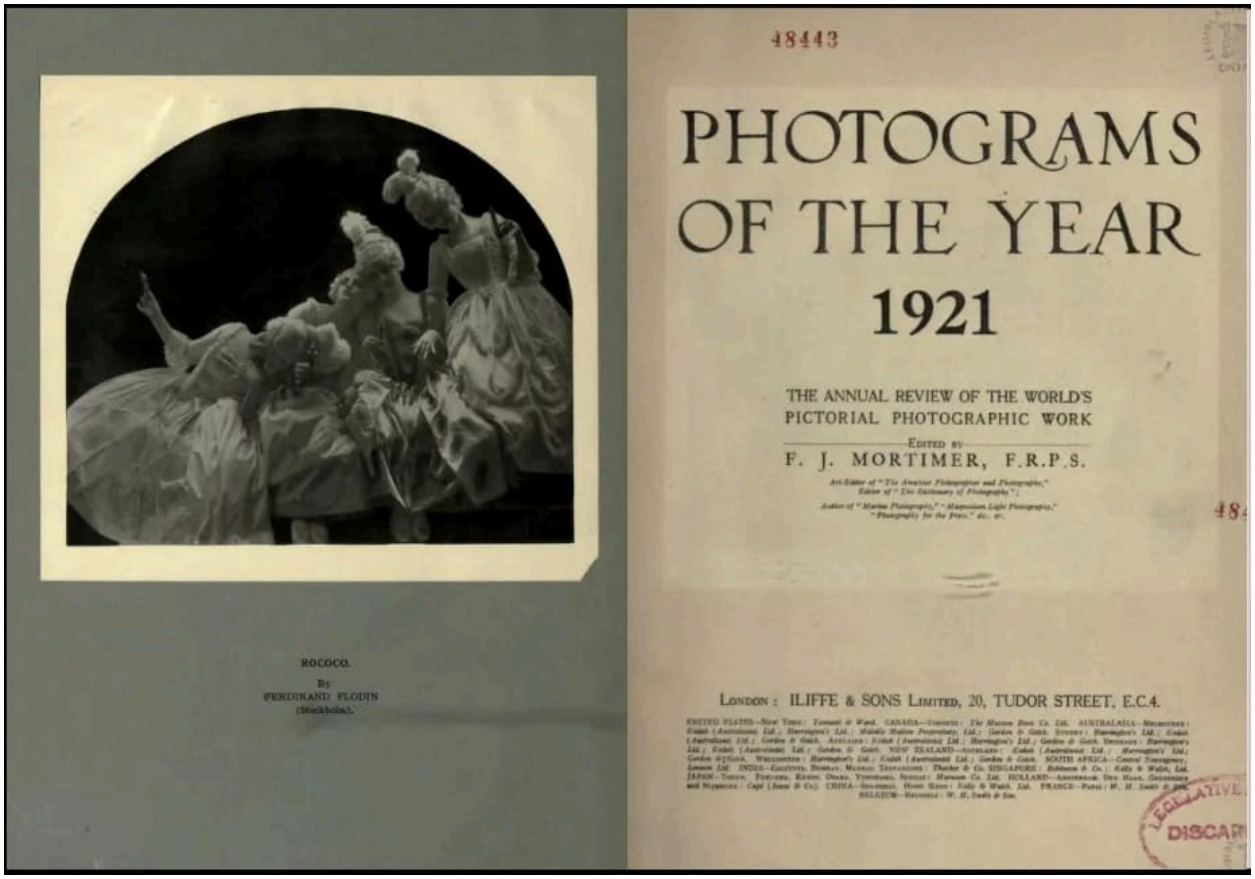
Victor Stouffs, *Swans*, n.d. in Catalogue of the third San Francisco Photographic Salon at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art: October eighth to twenty-fourth, nineteen hundred and three (San Francisco: California Camera Club, 1903)

Source: Collection of Alfred Stieglitz, N1357, Joyce F. Menschel Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)

What then is the legacy of this vast crisscrossing of salons, catalogs, and magazines when compared to the impeccably organized and easily retraceable Stieglitz record? While the New York circle certainly left the most exhaustive archive of transatlantic photography around 1900, this documentation does not automatically imply that exchanges between less elitist circles were declining. On the contrary, as Johnston's selection of pictures to be displayed in a mass cultural event demonstrates, many a photographer's work circulated smoothly between Stieglitz's circle and the broad camera club web, while yet others completely eluded the New York fine-art scene. The absence of this kind of popular production in the Stieglitz record does not mean that it was irrelevant at the time—as the vast Californian photography scene demonstrates. As Roger Hull has argued, it seems as though the dominance of the Secession is due to its complete documentation in fine-art institutions which has come at the expense of other, more eclectic and less well-preserved exchanges. The strategy adopted by camera clubs—disseminating images in magazines, newspapers, catalogs, and later municipal archives—has led to their "fusion with the culture bank of American images." [16] It is therefore worthwhile exploring the numerous now digitized photo-historical records of this period to reconstruct the complex and ever-expanding web that crossed the Atlantic, and stretched out both to the Pacific and the Mediterranean. [17]

Outlook and Tools

As European-American collaborations continued over the course of the early twentieth century, other international events with a deliberately inclusive format emerged. In the mid-1900s, for instance, the Salon Club of America was founded by Stieglitz's rival Curtis Bell, who insisted on large-scale participation and foreign admissions. Simultaneously, salons were continued to be held in London and Dresden, Los Angeles and Berlin over the course of the following decades. International publications, like *Photograms of the Year*, documented what was being achieved in pictorial photography not only across the Atlantic but globally, including short reports from countries alongside photomechanical reproductions.



Cover of *Photograms of the Year 1921*. The Annual Review of the World's Pictorial Photographic Work. Edited by F.J. Mortimer. London: Iliffe & Sons, 1921

Source: Internet Archive, original from University of Toronto – Robarts Library

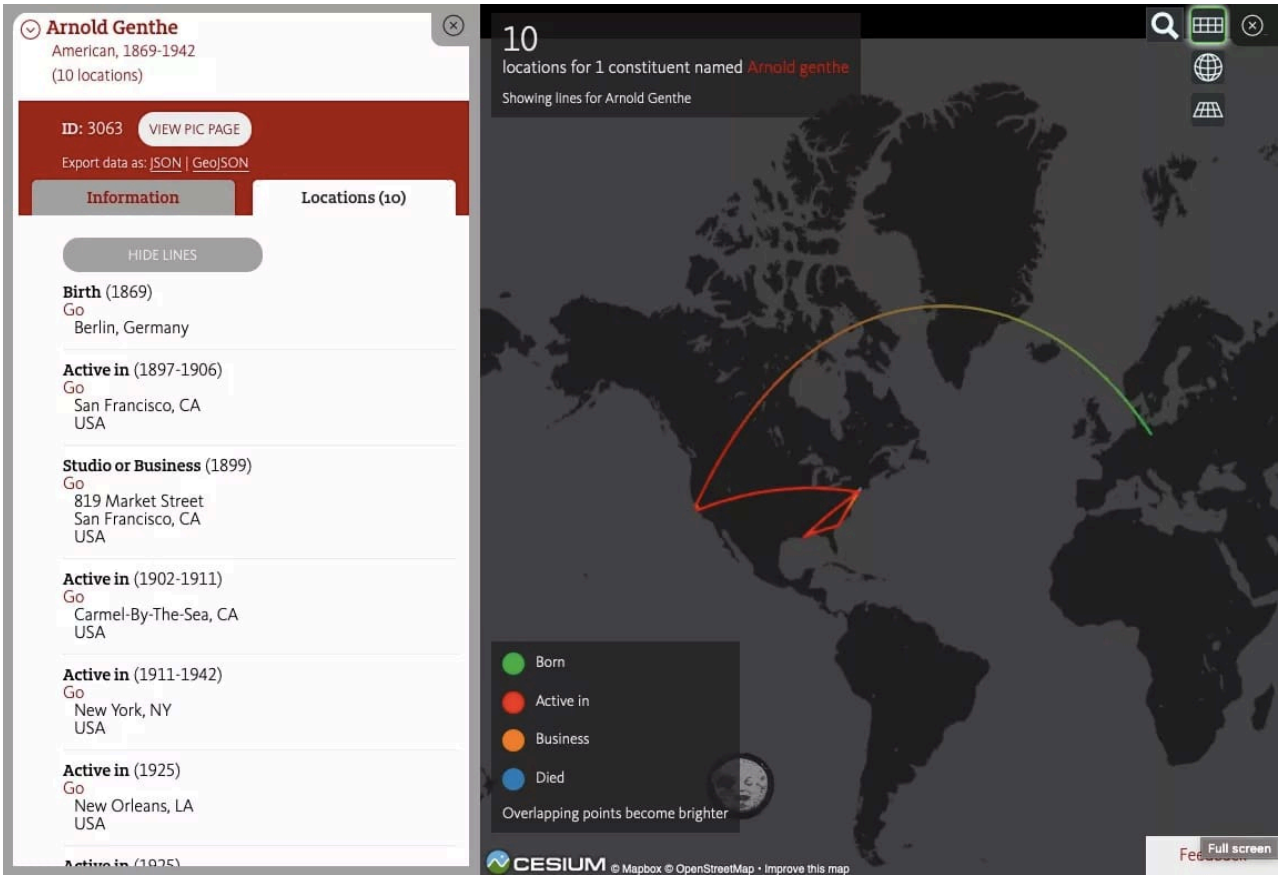
While the Photo-Secession disbanded in the 1910s, the popular camera club model survived well into the twentieth century with a web of actors interested in display, friendly competition, and exchange of knowledge, fueled by regular exhibitions and publications like *Photograms*. Although absent from the museum histories of the medium that were written in the 1930s, the longevity of this collective practice is remarkable. As Christian Peterson remarked in his study *After the Photo-Secession*, "Pictorialism was a victim of its own success," meaning that it was practiced by such a vast number of associations by the 1920s and 1930s that it eventually "splintered and diluted." [18]

The platforms of this later twentieth-century network were largely developed by the transatlantic photographer community prior to the turn of the century. As the history of these non-secessionist "outsiders" has lacked visibility for decades, it appears necessary to highlight the various collections and tools that are digitally available to explore their complexity. As a major catalyst of transatlantic

communication, photo-journals are a useful point of departure. In the history of the medium, these sources have been consistently overlooked. However, as Katherine Mintie recently suggested, they furnish an unprecedented insight into the transatlantic exchange of the photographic medium's first century, as they "offer a broad view of the international goods that [...] photographers relied on and experimented with [...], especially the period in which paper photography came into prominence." [19]

Given the number of camera clubs across Western countries, the count of photo-magazines in European and English-speaking countries is proportionately high. Today, a large number of journals, be it the *American Amateur Photographer*, the *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris*, the *Bulletin de l'Association Belge de Photographie* or the *Photographische Rundschau* are available in digital, keyword-searchable format via the Internet Archive or the HathiTrust Digital Library. In addition, more than 100 catalogs that accompanied exhibitions and salons between 1891 and 1914 are available through the Thomas J. Watson Library Digital Collection of the Metropolitan Museum. Another extremely valuable tool are the catalogue records from annual exhibitions of the Royal Photographic Society between 1870 and 1915, in which exhibitions, exhibitors, judges, and prints can be explored.

Ultimately, to visualize the many trajectories undertaken in this period, the Photographers' Identities Catalog by the New York Public Library is an excellent tool. Via digital mapping, it fuses information on photographers, studios, dates, and locations into a searchable index. The map resulting from a search for photographer Arnold Genthe, member of the California Camera Club in 1897, drives home the international dynamics prior to 1900. From Germany to the West Coast of the U.S. and back to New York City, photographers like him remind us of the many trajectories still to be explored across and around the Atlantic world.



(Screenshot). Locations of Arnold Genthe (1869-1942) in *Photographers' Identities Catalog*

Source: New York Public Library Photography Collection

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NOTES

1 J.R.A. Schouten, "Introduction," *Camera Obscura* Vol. 1 (1899): 1-2. Author's translation.

2 "The Foreign Journals," *Camera Craft* Vol. 1 (1900): 249.

3 "The World's Photography Focussed," *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*, Vol. 27 (1890): 604-605. See also "Amateur-Kunst: 1891 Vienna Exhibition," *PhotoSeed*.

4 Weston J. Naef, *The Collection of Alfred Stieglitz: Fifty Pioneers of Modern Photography* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Viking Press, 1978), 23.

5 *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris* Vol. 1 (1891): 31.

6 F.C. Beach, "The New York Exhibition," *American Amateur Photographer* Vol. 3 (1891): 220-224.

7 "Society News," *American Amateur Photographer* Vol. 3 (1891): 151.

8 "Artistic Photography at Vienna" *American Amateur Photographer* Vol 3. (1891): 269.

9 "Our Illustrations," *American Amateur Photographer* Vol. 3 (1891): 205.

10 Quoted in *New York Times*, September 18, 1892, p. 14.

11 "Congress of Photographers at the World's Fair," *American Amateur Photographer* Vol. 3 (1893): 230.

12 E. Mathieu, "L'Art photographique et les femmes américaines," *Bulletin du Photo-Club de Paris* Vol. 5 (1895) : 166-174. Author's translation.

13 Michel Poivert, "Un Avant-goût de l'avant-garde. La réception française des photographes américaines à Paris (1900-1901)," in *Les Ambassadrices du Progrès. Photographes Américaines à Paris, 1900-1901*, ed. Bronwyn A.E. Griffith (Paris and Washington, D.C.: Musée d'Art Américain Giverny in collaboration with the Library of Congress, 2001), 40.

14 François Brunet, Introduction to *Circulation. Terra Foundation Essays* Vol. 3, ed. François Brunet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017): 13; on "cultural circularity," see also Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, 2^nd^ ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008): 134.

15 "Society Views Works of Art," *San Francisco Call*, January 10, 1902, 11.

16 Roger Hull, "Emplacement, Displacement, and the Fate of Photographs," in *Multiple Views: Logan Grant Essays on Photography, 1983-89*, ed. Daniel P. Younger (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 187.

17 Camera clubs and photo-exchange networks more generally expanded far beyond the European-U.S.-Atlantic world discussed in this article and stretched toward Eastern Europe, the Balkans, as well as Central and South America; however, the digital tools available for these networks are far less exhaustive and could not be included in this essay.

18 Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography, 1910-1955* (Minneapolis and New York: The Minneapolis Institute of Art and W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 152.

19 Katherine Mintie, "Material Matters: The Transatlantic Trade in Photographic Materials during the Nineteenth Century," *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* vol. 6, No. 2 (2020): https://doi.org/10.24926/24716839.10597.