

136

THE WORK OF
ATGET

OLD FRANCE

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK
OCTOBER 3, 1981—JANUARY 3, 1982

Page 2
NO. 51
FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

FIRST ATGET VOLUME
TO ACCOMPANY PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

The Work of Atget: Old France will be published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same title, on view in The Museum of Modern Art's East Wing Galleries from October 3, 1981 through January 3, 1982. THE WORK OF ATGET: OLD FRANCE is the first of four exhibitions exploring the art of the French photographer; each will be accompanied by a volume of The Work of Atget. Besides Old France (Vol. I), the series includes The Art of Old Paris (Vol. II), The Ancien Régime (Vol. III), and Modern Times (Vol. IV). All four exhibitions and their accompanying publications are being generously supported by Springs Mills, Inc.

The Work of Atget: Old France is co-authored by John Szarkowski, director of the exhibitions and of the Museum's Department of Photography, and Maria Morris Hambourg. The 180-page book will contain Mr. Szarkowski's introductory essay, 121 plates and 83 reference illustrations with notes by Mrs. Hambourg.

Eugène Atget was a commercial photographer who worked in and around Paris for more than thirty years. When he died in 1927, his work was known only to a few archivists and artists. Little is known about his life, and less about his intentions, except as they can be inferred from his work. In his lifetime Atget made perhaps 10,000 photographs. Almost all of these describe the historic character of French life, as indicated by its

continued/

137

architecture, its landscape, and its traditional labors and vernacular gestures. To many photographers today his work stands not only as a heroic and original achievement, but as an exemplary pedagogical lesson, the full implications of which are only now beginning to be perceived.

The particular subject of this first volume in the series is the French countryside, the rural roots of the nation, the vital vestiges of "La Vieille France," which were disappearing even in Atget's own day. These pictures are a personal part of Atget's oeuvre, less known than his photographs of Paris. Many of them have never before been published. Spanning Atget's entire career, they show both the beginnings of his artistry and its flowering.

This volume and the other three books in the series will be published by The Museum of Modern Art and will be distributed by the New York Graphic Society, Boston. Clothbound only, \$40.00.

This exhibition is part of the Springs Mills Series on the Art of Photography, and is supported by grants from Springs Mills, Inc. and the National Endowment for the Arts.

August 1981

For further information, please contact Luisa Kreisberg, Director, (212) 956-2648, or Sharon Zane, Associate Director, 956-7295, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019
