

The Museum of Modern Art

No. 63

ADVANCE FACT SHEET

For immediate release

EXHIBITION: THE WORK OF ATGET: MODERN TIMES

DATES: March 14 - May 14, 1985

SPONSOR: This exhibition and THE WORK OF ATGET: THE ANCIEN REGIME, which are being shown concurrently, are part of the Springs Industries Series on the Art of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art and are supported by a grant from Springs Industries, Inc. Together they make up the final half of the Museum's four-part series exploring the art of the turn-of-the-century French photographer Eugène Atget.

DIRECTOR: John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

CONTENTS: Paris at the start of a new age is the subject of MODERN TIMES, the fourth and final exhibition in the series THE WORK OF ATGET. In 117 pictures taken in the years 1898-1927, the exhibition presents photographer Eugène Atget's view of the broad center of Parisian society as it moved into the 20th century. With their emphasis on work and the working class, these pictures are far removed from the lyrical reflections of France's aristocratic past in THE WORK OF ATGET: THE ANCIEN REGIME, on view concurrently with MODERN TIMES.

Eugène Atget (1857-1927) specialized in photographs documenting the historic quality of French culture--urban scenes and rural views that recreated the atmosphere of 18th century France. However, throughout a career spanning more than thirty years, Atget also produced studies of daily life in contemporary Paris. MODERN TIMES includes works from his series on Petits Métiers ("small trades"), which featured portraits of traditional street merchants--knife grinders, peddlers and window-washers, among others--who already verged on obsolescence. Atget also made numerous photographs of the array of vehicles to be seen in the streets of Paris at a moment when mechanization promised to make horse-drawn carts and carriages relics of an older age.

Through these and other studies of street scenes, shop-window mannequins, domestic interiors, and displays of housewares, old clothes and other materials of vernacular culture, Atget expressed a veiled but distinctly personal comment on the ephemeral nature of contemporary life.

All the works selected for this exhibition are drawn from the Abbott-Levy Collection of more than 5,000 prints and negatives of Atget's work, acquired by The Museum of Modern Art in 1968.

TRAVEL:

After closing at The Museum of Modern Art, THE WORK OF ATGET: MODERN TIMES will travel to:

Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Minneapolis, Minnesota

November 16, 1985-January 5, 1986

Detroit Institute of Arts
Detroit, Michigan

May 13 - June 29, 1986

Corcoran Gallery of Art
Washington D.C.

November 11, 1986-January 4, 1987

PUBLICATION:

The Work of Atget: Modern Times, co-authored by John Szarkowski and Maria Morris Hambourg, will be published by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the exhibition. The 192-page book will contain an introductory essay by John Szarkowski, 117 triple-tone plates and 80 reference illustrations. The publication of all four volumes of The Work of Atget is made possible with the generous support of Springs Industries, Inc. Modern Times will be distributed by New York Graphic Society Books/Little, Brown and Company, Boston. Clothbound only, \$45.00.

PRESS PREVIEW:

Wednesday, March 13, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

For further information, please contact Debra Greenberg, Senior Press Officer,
Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street,
New York, NY 10019. (212) 708-9750
