

# The Museum of Modern Art

No. 90

ADVANCE FACT SHEET

For immediate release

EXHIBITION: THE WORK OF ATGET: THE ANCIEN REGIME

DATES: March 14 - May 14, 1985

SPONSOR: This exhibition and THE WORK OF ATGET: MODERN TIMES, 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 exhibition series exploring the art of turn-of-the-century photographer Eugène Atget.

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

CONTENTS: THE ANCIEN REGIME, the third installment in the exhibition series THE WORK OF ATGET, presents 120 photographs made by Eugène Atget in the years 1901-27. Atget's deep interest in documenting the art and history of French culture led him to explore the region surrounding Paris, where many of the most venerable monuments of the old French aristocracy are located. Among the sites Atget photographed were the chateaux and parks of the French kings and noble families, paying particular attention to the historic gardens at Versailles, Saint-Cloud and Sceaux. With its pictures of reflecting pools, garden vistas and time-worn statuary, THE ANCIEN REGIME contains much of Atget's most lyric work and many of his finest prints.

Atget's photographs of Versailles, taken over a number of years, recreate the grandiose garden on a more human scale; his views of the trees and reflecting pools of Saint-Cloud are somewhat more abstract and filled with radiant light. Near the end of his career, Atget photographed the park at Sceaux, which had fallen into a state of picturesque decay. The pictures he made there, of lichen-covered steps, enigmatic sculptural motifs and stately, aged trees constitute some of the most beautiful photographs of his long career.

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: THE ANCIEN REGIME had its first showing at The Houston Museum of Fine Arts (October 13-December 18, 1983) and has since been seen at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (September 15-November 11, 1984), The Detroit Institute of Arts (December 4, 1984-January 13, 1984) and The Cleveland Museum of Art (January 23-March 3, 1984).

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After closing at The Museum of Modern Art on May 14, the exhibition will travel to The St. Louis Art Museum (June 13 - July 28, 1985) and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (August 29 - October 27, 1985).

## PUBLICATION:

The Work of Atget: The Ancien Régime, co-authored by John Szarkowski and Maria Morris Hambourg, has been published by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the exhibition. The 192-page volume contains an essay on Atget's method by Mrs. Hambourg and notes to the photographs by Mr. Szarkowski. With 120 plates and 47 reference illustrations, the volume will be available for \$40.00 in a clothbound edition only. The publication of all four volumes of The Work of Atget is made possible with the generous support of Springs Industries, Inc. The Ancien Régime will be distributed by New York Graphic Society Books/Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

## PRESS PREVIEW:

Wednesday, March 13, 1985, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

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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

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