

THE ORIGINAL COPY EXAMINES THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE PERCEPTION AND CREATIVE REDEFINITION OF SCULPTURE

The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today

August 1–November 1, 2010

The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art Gallery, sixth floor

NEW YORK, May 27, 2010—*The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today*

presents a critical examination of the intersections between photography and sculpture, exploring how one medium informs the analysis and creative redefinition of the other. On view at The Museum of Modern Art from August 1 through November 1, 2010, the exhibition brings together over 300 photographs, magazines, and journals, by more than 100 artists, from the dawn of modernism to the present, to look at the ways in which photography at once informs and challenges the meaning of what sculpture is. *The Original Copy* is organized by Roxana Marcoci, Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art. Following the exhibition's presentation at MoMA, it will travel to Kunsthaus Zürich, where it will be on view from February 25 through May 15, 2011.

When photography was introduced in 1839, aesthetic experience was firmly rooted in Romanticist tenets of originality. In a radical way, photography brought into focus the critical role that the copy plays in art and in its perception. While the reproducibility of the photograph challenged the aura attributed to the original, it also reflected a very personal form of study and offered a model of dissemination that would transform the entire nature of art.

"In his 1947 book *Le Musée Imaginaire*, the novelist and politician André Malraux famously advocated for a pancultural 'museum without walls,' postulating that art history, and the history of sculpture in particular, had become 'the history of that which can be photographed,'" said Ms. Marcoci.

Sculpture was among the first subjects to be treated in photography. There were many reasons for this, including the desire to document, collect, publicize, and circulate objects that were not always portable. Through crop, focus, angle of view, degree of close-up, and lighting, as well as through ex post facto techniques of dark room manipulation, collage, montage, and assemblage, photographers have not only interpreted sculpture but have created stunning reinventions of it.

Conceived around ten conceptual modules, the exhibition examines the rich historical legacy of photography and the aesthetic shifts that have taken place in the medium over the last 170 years through a superb selection of pictures by key modern, avant-garde, and contemporary artists. Some, like Eugène Atget, Walker Evans, Lee Friedlander, and David Goldblatt, are best known as photographers; others, such as Auguste Rodin, Constantin Brancusi, and David Smith, are best known as sculptors; and others, from Hannah Höch and Sophie Taeuber-Arp to such contemporaries as Bruce Nauman, Fischli/Weiss, Rachel Harrison, and Cyprien Gaillard, are too

various to categorize but exemplify how fruitfully and unpredictably photography and sculpture have combined.

The Original Copy begins with **Sculpture in the Age of Photography**, a section comprising early photographs of sculptures in French cathedrals by Charles Nègre and in the British Museum by Roger Fenton and Stephen Thompson; a selection of André Kertész's photographs from the 1920s showing art amid common objects in the studios of artist friends; and pictures by Barbara Kruger and Louise Lawler that foreground issues of representation to underscore photography's engagement in the analysis of virtually every aspect of art. **Eugène Atget: The Marvelous in the Everyday** presents an impressive selection of Atget's photographs, dating from the early 1900s to the mid 1920s, of classical statues, reliefs, fountains, and other decorative fragments in Paris, Versailles, Saint-Cloud, and Sceaux, which together amount to a visual compendium of the heritage of French civilization at the time.

Auguste Rodin: The Sculptor and the Photographic Enterprise includes some of the most memorable pictures of Rodin's sculptures by various photographers, including Edward Steichen's *Rodin—The Thinker* (1902), a work made by combining two negatives: one depicting Rodin in silhouetted profile, contemplating *The Thinker* (1880–82), his alter ego; and one of the artist's luminous *Monument to Victor Hugo* (1901). **Constantin Brancusi: The Studio as Groupe Mobile** focuses on Brancusi's uniquely nontraditional techniques in photographing his studio, which was articulated around hybrid, transitory configurations known as *groupe mobiles* (mobile groups), each comprising several pieces of sculpture, bases, and pedestals grouped in proximity. In search of transparency, kineticism, and infinity, Brancusi used photography to dematerialize the static, monolithic materiality of traditional sculpture. His so-called *photos radieuses* (radiant photos) are characterized by flashes of light that explode the sculptural gestalt.

Marcel Duchamp: The Readymade as Reproduction examines *Box in a Valise* (1935–41), a catalogue of his oeuvre featuring 69 reproductions, including minute replicas of several readymades and one original work that Duchamp "copyrighted" in the name of his female alter ego, Rose Sélavy. Using collotype printing and *pochoir*—in which color is applied by hand with the use of stencils—Duchamp produced "authorized 'original' copies" of his work, blurring the boundaries between unique object, readymade, and multiple. **Cultural and Political Icons** includes selections focusing on some of the most significant photographic essays of the twentieth century—Walker Evans's *American Photographs* (1938), Robert Franks's *The Americans* (1958), Lee Friedlander's *The American Monument* (1976), and David Goldblatt's *The Structure of Things Then* (1998)—many of which have never before been shown in a thematic context as they are here.

The Studio without Walls: Sculpture in the Expanded Field explores the radical changes that occurred in the definition of sculpture when a number of artists who did not consider themselves photographers in the traditional sense, such as Robert Smithson, Robert Barry, and Gordon Matta-Clark, began using the camera to document remote sites as sculpture rather than

the traditional three-dimensional object. **Daguerre's Soup: What Is Sculpture?** includes photographs of found objects or assemblages created specifically for the camera by artists, such as Brassai's *Involuntary Sculptures* (c. 1932), Alina Szapocznikow's *Photosculptures* (1970–71), and Marcel Broodthaers's *Daguerre's Soup* (1974), the last work being a tongue-in-cheek picture which hints at the various fluid and chemical processes used by Louis Daguerre to invent photography in the nineteenth century, bringing into play experimental ideas about the realm of everyday objects.

The Pygmalion Complex: Animate and Inanimate Figures looks at Dada and Surrealist pictures and photo-collages by artists, including Man Ray, Herbert Bayer, Hans Bellmer, Hannah Höch, and Johannes Theodor Baargeld, who focused their lenses on mannequins, dummies, and automata to reveal the tension between living figure and sculpture. **The Performing Body as Sculptural Object** explores the key role of photography in the intersection of performance and sculpture. Bruce Nauman, Charles Ray, and Dennis Oppenheim, placing a premium on their training as sculptors, articulated the body as a sculptural prop to be picked up, bent, or deployed instead of traditional materials. Eleanor Antin, Ana Mendieta, VALIE EXPORT, and Hannah Wilke engaged with the "rhetoric of the pose," using the camera as an agency that itself generates actions through its presence.

SPONSORSHIP:

The exhibition is made possible by The William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund. Additional support is provided by David Teiger and The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.

PUBLICATION:

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication, *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today*, edited by Roxana Marcoci with essays by Ms. Marcoci, Geoffrey Batchen, and Tobia Bezzola. Like the exhibition, the book is divided into the ten conceptual themes, and an introductory text begins each section. It is published by The Museum of Modern Art and will be available at the MoMA Stores and online at MoMAstore.org in July 2010. It is distributed to the trade by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers in the United States and Canada, and by Thames & Hudson outside North America. 9.5 x 12 in.; 242 pp.; 120 color / 180 b&w illustrations. Clothbound: 978-0-87070-757-5, \$55.00.

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

The Original Copy: A Panel Discussion on Photography and Sculpture

Tuesday, September 14, 6:00 p.m., The Celeste Bartos Theater, 4 West 54 Street

A panel discussion moderated by Roxana Marcoci, curator of the exhibition, also includes George Baker, Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art and Vice Chair, UCLA Department of Art History; Mark Godfrey, Curator, Tate Modern; Sarah Hamill, Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art, Oberlin College; and Rachel Harrison, artist.

Tickets (\$10; members \$8; students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$5) can be purchased at the lobby information desk, the film desk, or online at www.moma.org/thinkmodern.

TRAVEL:

The exhibition will travel to Kunsthaus Zürich, where it will be on view from February 25 through May 15, 2011.

PRESS CONTACT:

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For downloadable high-resolution images, register at www.moma.org/press.

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Public Information:

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Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)