

Why photography is buoyant — and the artists on the rise

As *Paris Photo* celebrates its 20th edition the fair's director, Florence Bourgeois (below), discusses the medium's irresistible upwards trajectory — and the young photographers to watch



This year, the world's biggest photography fair celebrates its 20th edition. How has photography changed since *Paris Photo* began?

Photography is undoubtedly a medium that's on the rise — it's witnessed phenomenal growth over the last two decades. That change is reflected in the size of *Paris Photo*, which has expanded tremendously since its debut in 1997. At first there were just 50 galleries and 10 publishers; today, we've tripled that number.

This year's edition features 153 galleries from across Europe and America, with an increased number of participants from Asia, notably Japan. Publishers remain at the heart of the fair, and we have 30 exhibiting, representing 11 different countries.

With the advent of camera phones and social media, we're exposed to more images than ever before. Can photography still stand out?

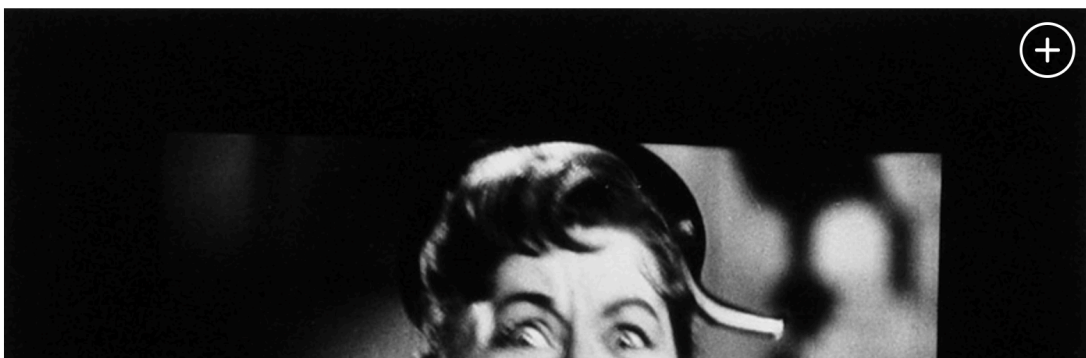
In many ways, everyone today has become a photographer — but not everybody is an artist. That, I believe, is the difference: an artist reflects on the long-term shape of their practice in a way that those taking a quick photograph do not. Of course, we're interested in the images that appear on social networks, but that's not at the heart of what we wanted to present.



Noémie Goudal, *Les Mécaniques 1*, 2016. Triptych (detail). Courtesy Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire

Which works are you particularly excited about this year?

There are a lot. A section entitled *PRISMES* is dedicated to exceptional projects including large-formats, series and installations. Here, we're showing work by Noémie Goudal, who's represented by [Les Filles du Calvaire](#), a gallery that has participated in *Paris Photo* since its foundation. She creates work that's absolutely extraordinary, and in my opinion is an artist worth watching.





Diane Arbus, *Murder Witness, 'N.Y. Confidential'*, 1958. Gelatin-silver print. © The Estate of Diane Arbus, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Stéphane Couturier's practice is very interesting and, at *Paris Photo*, he'll be presenting three new series for the first time. Then of course there are all of the artists presented by galleries renowned for their work with the established greats of photography — Fraenkel, Gagosian, Hamilton, Penn and so on.



Mustapha Azeroual, *Radiance#4_Aurora*, 2016. Épreuve à la gomme bichromatée Trichrome, multicouche sur papier 100% coton 300g/m2, © Mustapha Azeroual, courtesy Galerie Binôme

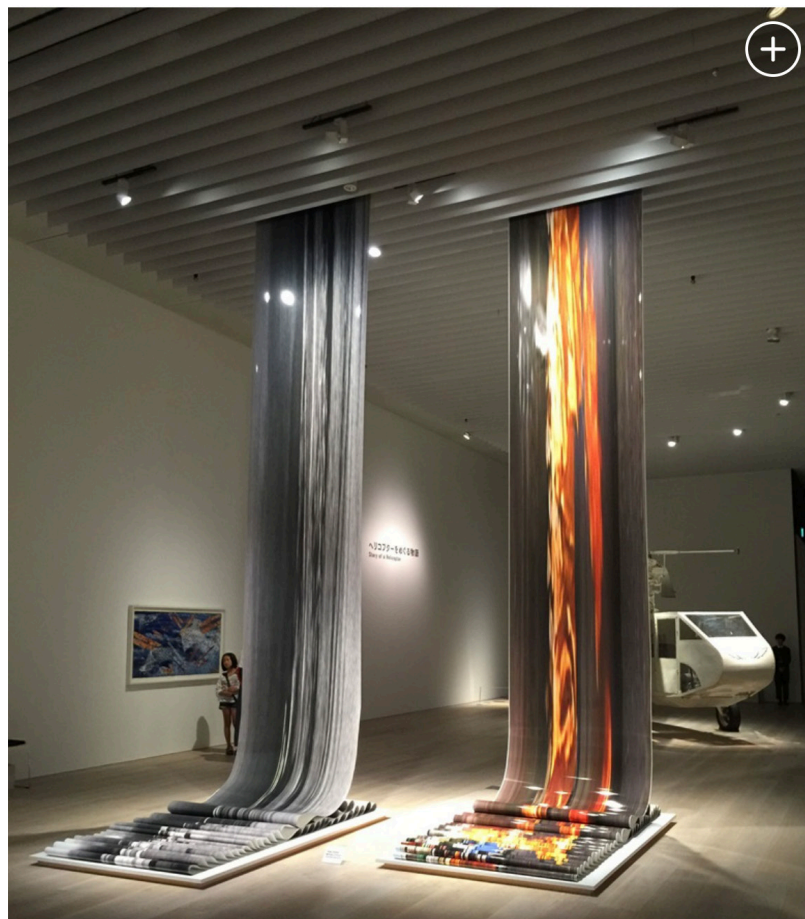
You mentioned Noémie Goudal as a young artist to watch. Are there other emerging names collectors should be aware of?

We're always keen to promote the work of young photographers; it's something our selection committee makes a point of focusing on. This year, Galerie Binôme is presenting a 'duo show' featuring young artists Thibault Brunet and Mustapha Azeroual. Azeroual explores traditional photographic techniques — daguerreotype, gum bichromate and lenticular painting — while Brunet creates images without a camera, using a 3D scanner, video game virtual worlds and Google Earth.



Thomas Mailaender, *Dude*, 2015. Cyanotype print on paper with leaves rayogram. Courtesy Roman Road and the artist

There's also Thomas Mailaender (Galerie Roman Road) who reworks cyanotypes. It's interesting to see these young artists returning to traditional techniques.



Dinh Q. Le, *TWC in Four Moments*, 2016

Can we say this return to traditional techniques is a trend?

I'm always reluctant to describe things as being 'on trend'. There are many trends, but it's true that one of the 'themes' that arose this year was research into photography, and photographic techniques. Gallery Shoshana Wayne, for example, is presenting work by the Vietnamese American artist Dinh Q. Lê, who has created four digitally stretched photographs of the World Trade Center.



Thomas Barrow, *f/t/s Cancellations — Storm over Sandias*, 1975. Toned gelatin silver print. Anne de Villepoix

Then of course there are young artists who have reworked photography in its purest form: Eric Baudelaire, who adds graffiti tags to photographs, or Thomas Barrow, who scarifies works. There's this focus on the medium itself, and the treatment of paper.

Overall, however, the fair presents a panorama of photography from the 19th century to the present day, so there's something for every taste — from small formats and vintage and historic pieces to contemporary works covering anything from portraiture to landscape. There's nothing that's not permitted.

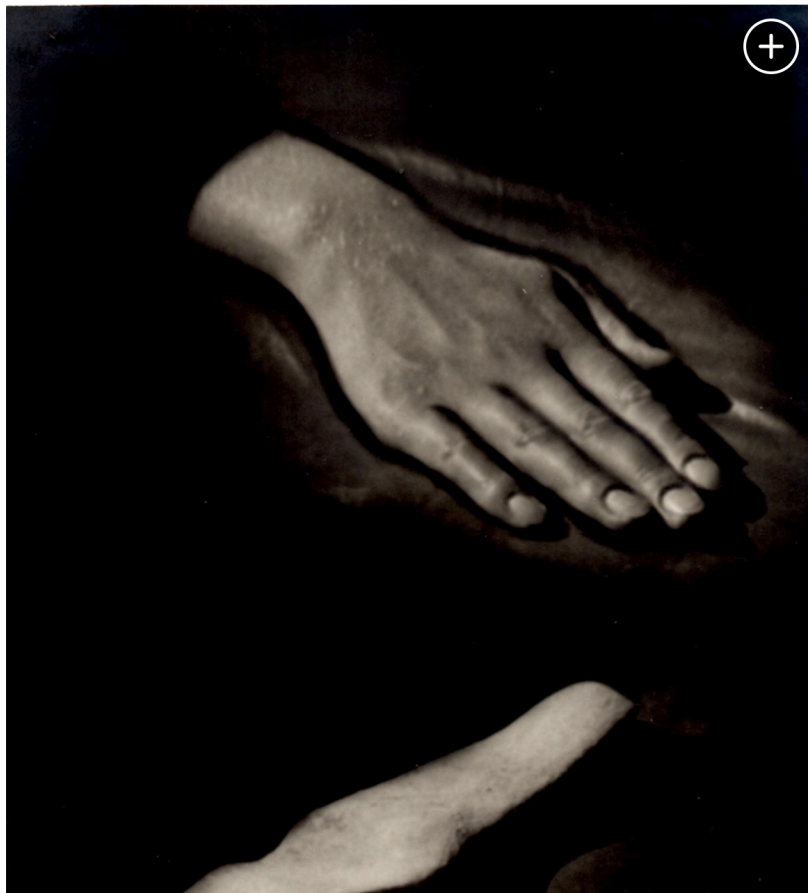
What's your advice for new collectors?

Photography is a great entry point for those wishing to start a collection. Prices are often more accessible, and can be from as little as €500 to €1,000. Beyond that, it's difficult to suggest that people should collect a particular type of work or artist. What you buy should, above all, be guided by emotion and personal taste. That's what makes a collection interesting — that sense that it is driven by a taste unlike anyone else's.



Helen Levitt, New York City, c. 1938. Gelatin silver print; printed c. 1938. Exhibitor: HOWARD GREENBERG

One of the reasons *Paris Photo* is so well regarded today is that it stands as a gauge of excellence and quality. Each of the works we show has been through a meticulous selection process by a committee that represents some of the most renowned international photographic galleries: Fraenkel, Howard Greenberg, Tim Jefferies, Yossi Milo, Françoise Paviot, Gallery Taik and Renos Xippas. We present artists who are established or young artists who have the potential to become so. These are photographers who we believe, from a creative point of view, show a great deal of quality.





Raoul Ubac, *Main et Pierre*, 1932. vintage gelatin silver print. Courtesy Gilles Peyroulet & Cie, Paris

Why does Paris remain such an important centre for photography?

Paris is where photography was born. It is also here that we witnessed the development of some of the most prominent movements to explore the medium, from Surrealism to Humanism. A number of the city's galleries celebrate this, dedicating a large part of their programmes to what we might refer to as the 'stars' of photography — I think of Lumière des Roses, Sophie Scheidecker and Gilles Peyroulet, for example.

Paris Photo has become a must-see event for anyone who loves photography, from amateurs to industry professionals. There are a number of fairs dedicated to photography worldwide, in London, notably, but Paris remains the real centre. In November, it becomes a great place to exchange ideas and discover new talent.



Martin Parr, *USA. Las Vegas*, 2000. Chromogenic color print, Janet Borden Inc. Exhibitor : JANET BORDEN

How are you celebrating this landmark year in the history of the fair?

We're releasing a publication in celebration of the fair's 20th edition — it seemed important to retrace the fair's history. The book features 89 contributions from photographers, curators and experts, as well as renowned artists such as Martin Parr and Sophie Calle. We found people were eager to contribute — to continue the conversation around photography, and around the fair.