



Eye for an Eye:
Photographs of
Modern Artists by
Modern Artists
from the Collection
of John W. Green

Shooting People

On a bright Parisian day in 1839, a man stood on the corner at Boulevard du Temple having his shoes shined. Although we'll never know who he was, his decision to stand still for ten minutes when all around him hurried by ensured that his image (and that of the shoeshiner) would be captured by a distant inventor and become the very first photograph of a person.

Since those heady early days when photography was all about how to do it rather than what to do with it, photographers have aimed their lenses at other people. In the late nineteenth century, when photographic technologies began to allow nearly instant images, the manner of composing a portrait experienced a sea change. Gone were the rigidity, the sternness, the artifice, and the soul-veiling formality of early photographic portraiture, which required subjects to remain motionless for many minutes. Instead, photography became a means to tease out the essence of a sitter by fixing in time the nuances of the self that are revealed unconsciously, in passing. All of this was concurrent with post-Impressionist and subsequent Modernist concerns among painters and sculptors who searched for ways to render thought, emotion, and the inner life in tangible, visual forms that were increasingly less tied to concrete realities.

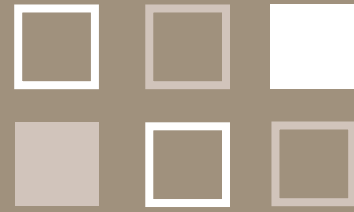


Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple, Paris, 3rd Arrondissement*, 1839, daguerreotype



Many of the artists who were part of this artistic revolution are the subjects of the photographs in John W. Green's collection. Many of the photographers were part of the revolution, too. Green's collection comprises work that is a curious convergence of subject and observer. Art meets art with an intensity that is part aesthetic revelry and part voyeurism. Here is the *People* magazine of artistic genius, the glance at faces that may be wholly unfamiliar, however much we may know their work. Here is the peek behind the scenes at the studio, the dining room, the frayed cuff, the hair out of place.

Here also is the conjunction between the person and his or her attributes—those indicators of a life's work that identify the person as surely as we identify notables throughout the course of art's history. The strategy of constructing images with embedded cues to the identity of a sitter is a venerable one. From the signs and symbols of identity and rank that appear in pharaohs' tombs to medieval manuscript illuminations depicting saints and royalty, artists have told us who we're observing by using code-like signifiers of a sitter's pursuits and achievements as much as (or more than) through likeness. Some foreknowledge is required, however, and the pleasure of deciphering the clues is absorbing.

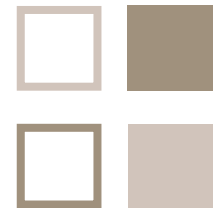




Robert Doisneau, *Legér dans ses oeuvres*, 1954

A photograph is not an invitation to know a person—that experience cannot be gleaned from an image—but it is an invitation to reflect on what it might have been like to know a person. In these portraits of artists, we see the artists in their art, sense their oneness with their work, and feel their utter absorption. We see them as people rather than the minor deities that celebrity made of some of them. Yet, we are struck by their intensity and their inseparability from the life's pursuit that made them renowned.

Take, for instance, the shot of Legér buried within the welter of his own imagery. His three-dimensional bulk has suddenly become as linear as his paintings. The triangle of his dark shirt and the slash of the cap across his forehead find echoes in the paintings around him. His scale vies with that of his figures. His gaze is frontal, like the stylized faces of his paintings. He is lost in the work even as he stands eye-to-eye with the viewer.



Or consider the photograph of Lichtenstein, his hair locked neatly in place, leaning into his work with the same studious intensity that his hard-edged paintings convey. Person and paintings seem to bear a genetic resemblance. Whether open or closed, the eyes in this photograph stream across the center of the image, as if the photograph were a metaphor for sight itself.

In Brassai's image of Pierre Bonnard, the privacy of this famously reclusive artist is preserved. We learn virtually nothing of Bonnard's appearance from this image, yet we take in something about his working method, his juggling act of working on several paintings at a time. Is it cold in his studio? Perhaps. The mood is quiet and intense. We feel as if we are eavesdropping on a private moment.

Ilse Bing merges the artist-photographer with the artist-subject by taking her own picture. On the right edge of the image, her "third eye" obscures part of her face. The camera is precisely contained within the contour of her head. The mirror image on the left reminds us that the photographer retires behind the apparatus. No matter how unsparingly the photographer reveals her subject, she reveals little of herself.



Ken Heyman, *Roy Lichtenstein*, 1964



Brassai (Gyula Halász), *Bonnard in His Studio*, 1946

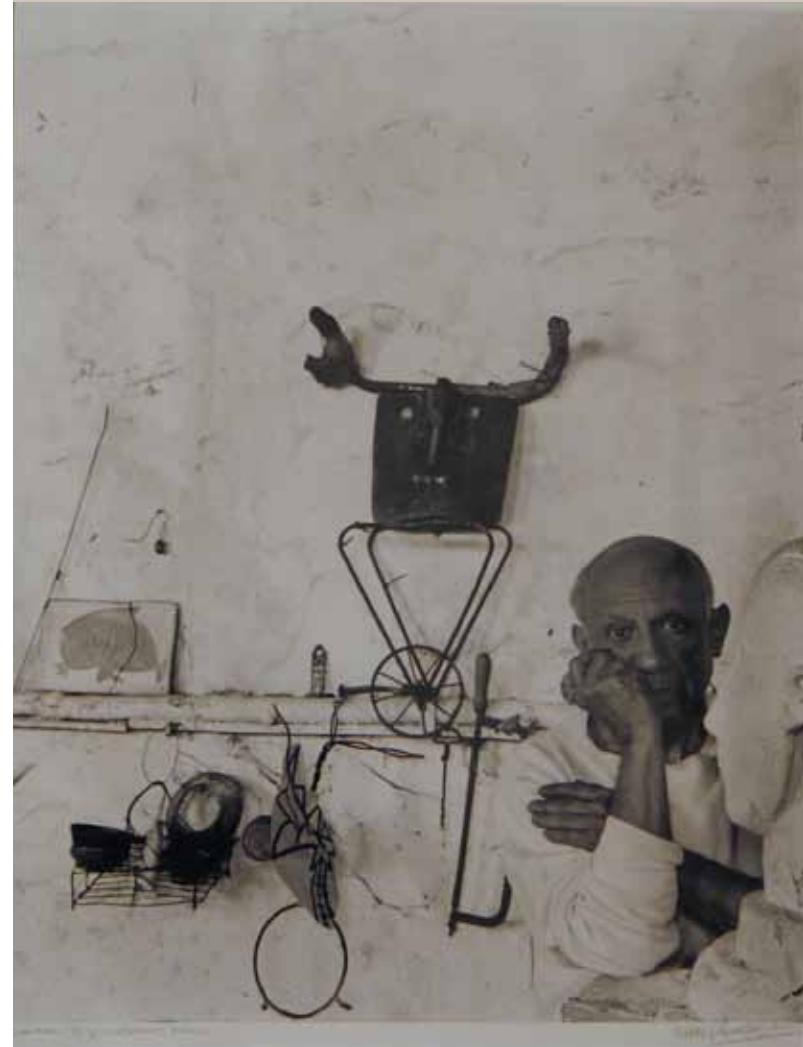


Ilse Bing, *Self-Portrait with Leica*, 1931

Pablo Picasso is, without doubt, the best known artist of the twentieth century. One could argue that his entire life was a work of performance art. Prolific, gutsy, self-confident, and a great fan of the limelight, he hid neither his views on art nor his working methods. Picasso posed for many photographs and was the subject of several films, but few show us the man separated from his work. Newman's portrait emphasizes Picasso's head and hands, placing them on a visual par with the objects alongside him. Again, the artist and his work merge.

Changing How to See

The works in this exhibition are from what could be termed a golden age of black-and-white photography: the early to mid-twentieth century. The medium's potential revealed itself rapidly. By 1900, though still a historically recent pursuit, photography had become sophisticated and explosively creative. (Still, a purist like Stieglitz could lament well into the twentieth century that among photographers there was too much art and not enough photography.) As the twentieth century unfolded, photographers became steadily more aware of the medium's unique aesthetic. Photography changed the very concept of time and opened a new dialogue contrasting "art" and "image." It democratized artistic pursuits and established new canons of subject matter. No other medium was as unabashedly *specific*; this quality, as well as photography's implicit claim to truthful recording, continue to exert a magnetic pull on the viewer.



Arnold Newman, *Pablo Picasso à Vallauris, France*, 1954

Photographer Richard Avedon stated, “There are two kinds of seeing. One is a sensitivity to what is, framing within a format ... The other, a manifestation of an idea, is the creation of something that was not physical. It start[s] with the imagination.” Ansel Adams called this second kind of seeing “pre-visualization.” It’s what prepared Henri Cartier-Bresson for the cyclist speeding by the staircases. It’s what primed Judy Dater to see the perfect pairing of age and youth regarding each other in her shot of Imogen Cunningham and Twinka Thiebaud.



Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Hyères, France, 1932*



Judy Dater, *Imogen and Twinka at Yosemite, 1974*

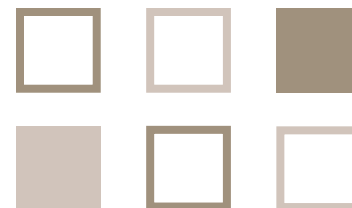


A Collector's Story

For John W. Green, photography has been a lifelong passion, including practicing photography himself. He discovered only fairly recently that he (that is, “an ordinary person”) could own these compelling and historic images that now form his growing collection. Today, his wife Carol notes that he owes his collection to a love of black-and-white photography, a love of art, and a lack of resistance to collecting.

Like many new collectors who see a universe opening up before them, he had the early problem of deciding what to acquire. However, it wasn't long before he settled on the theme of artists' images of other artists. It got his attention on several levels, not least being his interest in art in general. A goal of this sort gives purpose to a collector and focus to a collection. Still, few collectors can claim never to stray. It's the abstraction of the black-and-white image that appeals to him, and Green will occasionally acquire works outside the artist-snaps-artist theme when the affective impact or abstract qualities of a work get his attention. Cartier-Bresson is a favorite, so there are several works in the collection by this photographer that do not immortalize other artists. Conversely, the aesthetic appeal has to be there even if a photograph fits the theme. It is not enough just to have a portrait of an artist.

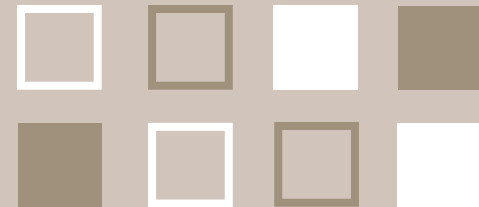
Green has a mental target list, which isn't too specific, although Irving Penn's renowned image of seven of the New York Abstract Expressionists is an as-yet elusive goal. His definition of “artist” is broad enough to give him great flexibility. Artists of every description are represented—painters, sculptors, photographers, writers, composers—even an art dealer.



Since photography's invention, there have been those who have bemoaned that photography renders painting obsolete. Green's collection reminds us of the historic fact that quite the opposite occurred. Through photography, we have a record of artists' strivings to expand the very definition of painting and sculpture, freed (perhaps in part by photography) from obligations to mimic concrete realities. The photographic aesthetic is based on the capabilities and demands of a medium that is wholly different from painting, drawing, or sculpting. The monochromatic image (technically necessary during the first few generations of photography's history and employed by the photographers whose work Green collects) required a studied emphasis on composition and image structure without regard to color. Interestingly enough, this was the same period when painting was moving away from the near-scientific coloristic explorations of the Impressionists. The mutual revelations shared among artists in all media demonstrate that the aesthetic discoveries of photography had much to give to painters. Post-Impressionism and Modernism drive home that there is more than meets the eye, even in photography. Paradoxically, the redefinition of "seeing" that the camera prompted assisting artists in capturing the unseen on canvas.

John Green's collection of Modernist and contemporary artists' portraits draws our attention to the shifting modes of seeing that characterized the twentieth century and that manifest in the work of painters, sculptors, *and* photographers. These artists changed the nature of art more than in any similar span of years in history. Though snapped in an instant, each of the images in this collection is the trace of a photographer who saw a new kind of enduring image before it existed ... and was ready.

Robyn G. Peterson
Executive Director
Yellowstone Art Museum



Works in the Green Collection

All works are gelatin silver prints on paper unless indicated otherwise.

Ansel Adams (1902-1984)

born San Francisco; died Carmel, California

Alfred Stieglitz at an American Place, 1944

Berenice Abbott (1898-1991)

born Springfield, Ohio; died Monson, Maine

Penn Station Interior, New York, 1936

Ruth Bernhard (1905-2006)

born Werder, Germany; died San Francisco

Classic Torso, 1952

Ilse Bing (1899-1998)

born Frankfurt, Germany; died New York City

Self-Portrait with Leica, 1931

Édouard Boubat (1923-1999)

born Paris; died Paris

Première neige du Luxembourg, Paris, 1955

Brassaï (Gyula Halász) (1899-1984)

born Hungary; died Beaulieu-sur-Mer, France

Bonnard in His Studio, 1946

Brassaï (Gyula Halász) (1899-1984)

born Hungary; died Beaulieu-sur-Mer, France

Miró in His Barcelona Studio, 1955

Brassaï (Gyula Halász) (1899-1984)

born Hungary; died Beaulieu-sur-Mer, France

Daniel Henri Kahnweiler in His Office, Rue Monceau, Paris, ca. 1962

Frédéric Brenner (1959 -)

born Paris

Just before Passover, Bukhara, Uzbekistan, USSR, 1985

Frédéric Brenner (1959 -)

born Paris

A Family in Their Mufredi, Salon, Beit Sinan, Arab, Yemen, 1986

Cornell Capa (1918-2008)

born Budapest; died New York City

Bolsboi Ballet, 1958

1930s



Ilse Bing, *Self-Portrait with Leica*

1940s



Ansel Adams, *Stieglitz at an American Place*



Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Matisse in His Studio*



Arnold Newman, *Piet Mondrian*

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
born Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; died Paris
Matisse, Vence, 1944

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
born Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; died Paris
Hyères, France, 1932

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
born Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; died Paris
Brie, France, 1968

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
born Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; died Paris
Siphnos, Greece, 1961

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
born Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; died Paris
Ireland, 1963

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
born Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; died Paris
Budapest, Hungary, 1931

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
born Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne, France; died Paris
Île de la Cité, Paris, 1952

Lucien Clergue (1934 -)
born Arles, France
Picasso, Mougins, 1965

Lucien Clergue (1934 -)
born Arles, France
Nude in the Quarries, 1975/1982

Chuck Close (1940 -)
born Monroe, Washington
Phil
Polaroid photograph

Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976)
born Portland, Oregon; died San Francisco
The Unmade Bed

Judy Dater (1941 -)
born Hollywood, California
Imogen and Twinka at Yosemite, 1974



Arnold Newman, *Jackson Pollock*



W. Eugene Smith, *Grandma Moses*

1950s



Brassai, *Miro in His Barcelona Studio*



Robert Doisneau, *Alberto Giacometti dans ses oeuvres*



Arnold Newman, *Pablo Picasso à Vallauris, France*

Judy Dater (1941 -)
born Hollywood, California
Minor White, 1975

Robert Doisneau (1912-1994)
born Gentilly, France; died Paris
Alberto Giacometti dans ses oeuvres, 1954

Robert Doisneau (1912-1994)
born Gentilly, France; died Paris
Georges Braque à Varengeville, 1953

Robert Doisneau (1912-1994)
born Gentilly, France; died Paris
Léger dans ses oeuvres, 1954

Robert Doisneau (1912-1994)
born Gentilly, France; died Paris
Saul Steinberg à la Baignoire, 1955

Alfred Eisenstaedt (1898-1995)
born Dirschau, West Prussia (Germany); died New York City
Albert Einstein and J. Robert Oppenheimer, 1947

Ken Heyman (1930 -)
born New York, New York
Roy Lichtenstein, 1964

Horst P. Horst (Horst Paul Albert Bohrmann) (1906-1999)
born Weissenfels-an-der-Saale, Germany; died Palm Beach Gardens, Florida
Self-Portrait with Gertrude Stein Being Sketched by Carl Erickson

Kenji Kanesaka (1930-1999)
born Japan
Andy at the Gallery in Milano, 1974

Kenji Kanesaka (1930-1999)
born Japan
Marcel Duchamp, New York #1, 1966

Yousuf Karsh (1908-2002)
born Armenia; died Boston
Marc Chagall, 1965

André Kertész (1894-1985)
born Budapest; died New York City
Clock, Paris, 1932

Margaretta K. Mitchell (1935 -)
Double (Portrait of Ruth Bernhard)

Hans Namuth (1915-1990)
born Essen, Germany; died East Hampton, New York
Four Portraits of Mark Rothko in His Studio, 1964

1950s
cont.



Robert Doisneau, *Georges Braque a Varengeville*

1960s



Lucien Clergue, *Picasso Mougins*



Kenji Kanesaka, *Marcel Duchamp New York*



Yousuf Karsh, *Marc Chagall*

Arnold Newman (1918-2006)
born New York City; died New York City
Jackson Pollock, 1949

Arnold Newman (1918-2006)
born New York City; died New York City
Pablo Picasso à Vallauris, France, 1954

Arnold Newman (1918-2006)
born New York City; died New York City
Piet Mondrian, New York City, 1942

Arnold Newman (1918-2006)
born New York City; died New York City
Marilyn Monroe and Carl Sandberg, Beverly Hills, California, 1962

Beaumont Newhall (1908-1993)
born Lynn, Massachusetts; died New York City
Portrait of Henri Cartier-Bresson, 1946

Gordon Parks (1913-2006)
born Fort Scott, Kansas; died New York City
Alexander Calder, 1952

Sebastiao Salgado (1944 -)
born Brazil
The Gold Mine, Serra Pelada, State of Para, Brasil, 1986

August Sander (1876-1964)
born Herdorf, Germany; died Cologne, Germany
Itinerant Basket Makers, 1929

Eugene W. Smith (1918-1978)
born Wichita, Kansas; died Tucson, Arizona
Portrait of Grandma Moses, 1948

Edward Steichen (1879-1973)
born Luxembourg; died West Redding, Connecticut
Helene Sardeau, 1930

Jerry Uelsmann (1934 -)
born Detroit, Michigan
Untitled, 1975

Claire Yaffa
Gordon Parks, 1992
From the series Master Photographers

1970s



Judy Dater, *Imogen and Twinka at Yosemite*



Margaretta Mitchell, *Double (portrait of Ruth Bernhard)*

1980s
through the
present



Chuck Close, *Phil*



Hans Namuth, *Four Portraits of Mark Rothko*

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