AUGUST 18, 2023

THE CLOSE-UP: ON JEFF WALL & HIS PICTURE FOR WOMEN

Tomorrow is World Photography Day, and to mark the occasion, we're exploring Jeff Wall's pioneering 1979 work, Picture for Women.



in recognition of the date in 1839 that the French government announced the invention of the daguerreotype, the first

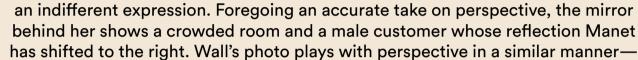
World Photography Day is celebrated every year on August 19,

publicly available photographic process. Tomorrow, people across the globe will reflect on the history and significance of this groundbreaking medium and share their best photos on social media tagged with #WorldPhotographyDay. We're paying tribute to the art form by taking a closer look at one of the most famous works by the internationally acclaimed Vancouver artist Jeff Wall (b.1946), known for his large-scale back-lit Cibachrome photographs. Created after his nearly decade-long hiatus from artmaking, *Picture for Women*, 1979, established Wall as a key figure in the field of conceptual photography. Mounted on a lightbox, the work's innovative method of display, large scale,

and incorporation of art historical references have cemented its reputation as an iconic composition in this country and abroad. In this newsletter, we delve into some of the driving forces behind Picture for Women, its place within Wall's practice, and its broader influence on the art world. Sara Angel Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

A RIFF ON MANET'S MASTERPIECE

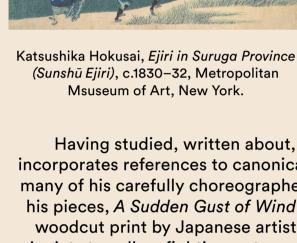




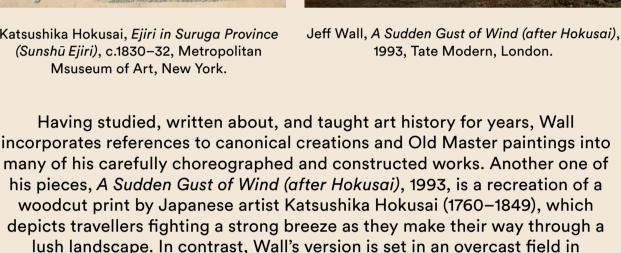


as well as the artist himself, caught in the act of taking the picture. **INSPIRED BY ART HISTORY**

the image is taken in a mirror that reveals the studio backdrop and the camera,



Vancouver, where the backdrop of Mount Fuji has been replaced with a



modern cityscape. Wall created the cinematic scene by digitally combining multiple photographs taken over a five-month period.

Share this newsletter with friends who love Canada's art, or invite them to sign up here for our weekly dispatch. "A LESSON ON THE **MECHANISMS OF THE EROTIC"**

Jeff Wall, Summer Afternoons, 2013, courtesy of Jeff Wall.

Wall once described Picture for Women as "a kind of classroom lesson on the mechanisms of the erotic," and the work displays his interest in the dynamics of the male gaze. He revisits this theme in Summer Afternoons, 2013, a diptych portraying a nude man and woman reclining in a technicolour room. While the



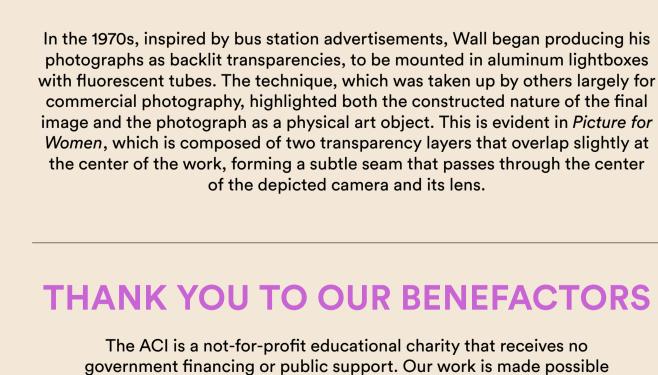


Rodney Graham, Vacuuming the Gallery 1949, 2018, courtesy of Lisson Gallery, London.

A major figure in the Vancouver art scene, Wall inspired a generation of local artists and contributed to art photography's shift from small-scale minimalist images to large-scale colour prints. Alongside Rodney Graham (1949–2022) who studied under Wall and the British-born artist Ian Wallace (b.1943)—Ken Lum (b.1956), and Stan Douglas (b.1960), Wall helped establish Vancouver as a major hub for photo-conceptualist practices. Graham's 2018 self-portrait, Vacuuming the Gallery 1949, reveals Wall's influence through its use of four lightboxes and its reliance on art historical references—such as the abstract paintings that surround the artist-as-janitor, which are based on those of Russian artist Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956).

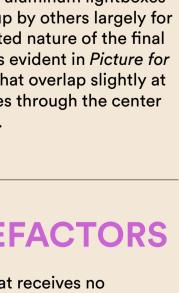
SHINING A LIGHT ON

TECHNICAL INNOVATION



Installation view of Picture for Women in the exhibition

Jeff Wall, 2007, Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Jeff Wall, Picture for Women (detail), 1979,

Centre Pompidou, Paris.

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Image Credits: [1] Jeff Wall, Picture for Women, 1979, Cibachrome transparency, fluorescent light, display case, 161.5 x 223.5 x 28.5 cm. Collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, Purchase, 1987 (AM 1987-1135). [2] Édouard Manet, A Bar at the Folies-Bergère, 1882, oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm. Collection of the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. [3] Katsushika Hokusai, Ejiri in Suruga Province (Sunshū Ejiri), c.1830–32, woodblock print; ink and colour on paper, 25.1 x 37.5 cm. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Henry L. Phillips Collection, Bequest of Henry L. Phillips, 1939 (JP2953). [4] Jeff Wall, A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai), 1993, transparency on lightbox, 250 x 397 x 34 cm. Collection of the Tate Modern, London, Purchased with assistance from the Patrons of New Art through the Tate Gallery Foundation and from the Art Fund 1995 (T06951). [5] Jeff Wall, Summer Afternoons, 2013, diptych, 2 colour photographs, man image: 183 x 212.4 cm, woman image: 200 x 251.5 cm. Courtesy of Jeff Wall. [6] Rodney Graham, Vacuuming the Gallery 1949, 2018, four painted aluminum lightboxes with transmounted chromogenic transparencies, 303.8 x 181.9 x 17.8 cm (each panel). Courtesy of Lisson Gallery, London. [7] Installation view of Picture for Women in the exhibition Jeff Wall, 2007, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art. [8] Jeff Wall, Picture for Women (detail), 1979, Cibachrome transparency, fluorescent light, display case, 161.5 x 223.5 x 28.5 cm. Collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, Purchase, 1987 (AM 1987-1135).