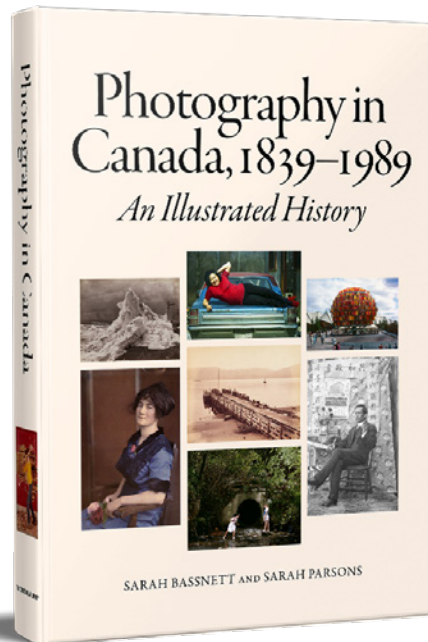


Seeing Photography in Canada Through a New Lens: Groundbreaking New Book Explores 150 Years of Camera-Based Creativity

Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History is the first-ever comprehensive work to consider how photography has revolutionized the way that we understand ourselves and our country.

A selection of press images is available through the link at the bottom of this release.



Left: Co-Author Sarah Bassnett. Centre: *Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History*. Right: Co-Author Sarah Parsons.

May 8, 2024, Toronto—The first comprehensive book to be published on the history of this art form in Canada, *Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History* is now available in a beautiful print edition published by the Art Canada Institute.

Written by art historians Sarah Bassnett and Sarah Parsons, the 495-page photo-rich volume tells the story of photography from its introduction in 1839—when it was considered a novelty—through to the cusp of the digital age in 1989. Celebrating the work of internationally renowned creators like William Notman, Jeff Thomas, and Suzy Lake, it also showcases the work of photographers who have been historically under-represented due to geographical region, gender, race, sexual orientation, or other factors.

“The long, complex, and fascinating history of photography in our country has been critically understudied, with key contributors overlooked—oversights we seek to address with this publication,” says Sara Angel, Founder and Executive Director of the Art Canada Institute. “Through meticulous research, authors Sarah Bassnett and Sarah Parsons highlight both renowned and overlooked photographers who have captured moments that both shape and reflect the country’s rich and complicated history. The result is a vivid tapestry that we hope will bring readers fresh insights and new appreciation for the art form.”

Snapshots in history

Photography in Canada takes readers into Canada's earliest studios, follows the adventures of geographic expeditions, traces the significance of cameras for soldiers in battle, reveals the importance of imagery in oppression and resistance, and captures poignant moments from everyday life. It examines photography's role in settler colonialism, Indigenous cultural revivals, mass media, state propaganda, and cultural diplomacy. It offers perspectives from photographers from coast to coast to coast, capturing precious moments on city streets, in portrait studios, at home, at construction sites, or in the wilderness.

With hundreds of previously unpublished images and a compendium of dozens of photographers, *Photography in Canada* is filled with a rich array of fascinating stories, uncovering fresh visual perspectives along the way.

Unsung talents

Among the under-recognized contributors to photography in Canada who are featured in these pages are:

- Chow Dong Hoy (1883–1973), one of the first photographers of Chinese descent to work in Canada. Hoy's photographs offer a rich visual document of the people in Quesnel, British Columbia, which was a predominantly Asian Canadian and Indigenous community at the turn of the century. Hoy created an extraordinary record of his multiracial community, with elegant and creatively staged portraits that provide a unique archive of frontier life that is quite different from government archives.
- Sunil Gupta (b.1953), who immigrated to Montreal in 1969 and began to photograph his friends and lovers as part of his process of coming out. His photographs convey his experiences building community during the gay liberation movement.
- Peter Pitseolak (1902–1973), the first to photograph traditional life in the Arctic from an Inuit perspective. Active in the 1940s and 1950s, Pitseolak used borrowed cameras and taught himself photography before acquiring his first camera. His work captures the people of his community in and around Cape Dorset (now Kinngait in Nunavut) during a period of immense change and government incursion.
- Claire Beaugrand-Champagne (b.1948), one of the few women to work as a press photographer in Quebec in the 1970s, she develops her projects over time and in dialogue with the communities and people featured in her work. Whether documenting everyday life in rural Quebec or the activities of new immigrants to Canada, Beaugrand-Champagne skillfully captures revealing details and a sense of personality in her subjects.
- Hayashi Studio (1911–1935), a photography studio run by Japanese Canadian photographers in Cumberland, B.C., on Vancouver Island. The studio's archive offers rare insights into an early Japanese Canadian community as well as glimpses of the Chinese and Black communities living in the area, the mining industry, and daily life in coastal British Columbia in the early twentieth century.

Weaving a new narrative

“Much of what's been written so far is dominated by studies of photographers who had privileged access to mainstream institutions,” says author Sarah Parsons. “We chose to also highlight the contributions of photographers from varied geographical regions and historically marginalized groups, including women, Black, Indigenous, and Asian photographers. Much of the work produced by these individuals has not been written about, exhibited, or woven into the narrative of history as thoroughly as that of their white male counterparts. Our hope is that this book will stimulate new studies in these under-researched areas, and that readers will delight in some new discoveries.”

A rich legacy

In writing this history, we are indebted to all the scholars, archivists, and curators who have contributed to the growing field of photography studies in Canada,” says author Sarah Bassnett. “But no book, no matter how long or authoritative, can be truly definitive, and we had to make difficult choices about which photographs and photographers to include and which stories to tell. We have tried to cover a wide geographical range of photographers and a variety of genres and techniques to best represent the rich legacy of Canadian photography.”

“I’ve always been fascinated by how photography shapes our relationships to each other and the world,” says author Sarah Bassnett. “In working on this book with Sarah Parsons, I was interested in bringing to light the way critical issues in the field relate to the Canadian context.”

Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History is available as an open-access online book [here](#), and the print edition can be ordered [here](#).

“We are excited to offer this print edition alongside the already available digital edition,” says Sara Angel, “because we know many art and photography lovers enjoy the visual appeal and immersive experience of holding a book in their hands, making fresh discoveries with each turn of the page.”

About the authors

Sarah Bassnett is a Professor of Art History at Western University, where she specializes in the history of photography and photo-based contemporary art. Her research focuses on the intersections of photography and social change, especially as they relate to issues of power and resistance. Her award-winning book, *Picturing Toronto: Photography and the Making of a Modern City* (2016), examines photography’s role in the liberal reform of the early twentieth century.

Sarah Parsons is an Associate Professor in Art History and Visual Culture at York University, where she specializes in the history of photography and modern and Canadian art and also teaches courses on art crime. Her publications on Canadian photography include *William Notman: Life & Work* (Art Canada Institute, 2014). Her current research project, “Feeling Exposed: Photography, Privacy, and Visibility in Nineteenth-Century North America” will culminate in a publication, online essays for the McCord Museum in Montreal, and an exhibition at The Image Centre at Toronto Metropolitan University (May 9–August 3, 2024).

For media requests please contact: media@aci-iac.ca.

About the Art Canada Institute

The Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive, multivocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, on a digital platform, and free of charge in both English and French, across Canada and internationally. To accomplish this, ACI works with Canada’s leading cultural institutions, art historians, curators, and visual culture experts, and is dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

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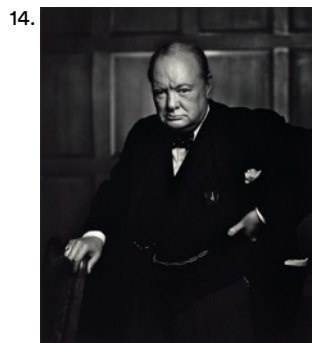


IMAGE CREDITS

1. Alexander Henderson, *Victoria Bridge. Abutment, Ice shove*, c.1887, albumen print, 15.3 x 20.2 cm. Collection of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (3248419). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.
2. Hugo Viewegar, *Hugo Viewegar's wife*, c.1913–14, autochrome photograph. Collection of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton (PR2000.1304.0005). Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta.
3. Shelley Niro, *The Rebel*, 1987, hand-tinted photograph, 35 x 41.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Shelley Niro.
4. Jeff Wall, *The Drain*, 1989, transparency in lightbox, 229 x 290 cm. Courtesy of the Jeff Wall Studio. © Jeff Wall.
5. View of the *People Tree* at Expo 67 in Montreal, 1967, photographer unknown, 35mm Kodachrome frame, 24 x 36 mm. Courtesy of Flickr / ElectroSpark.
6. C.D. Hoy, *Chinese man in Revolutionary background*, 1912. Collection of the Barkerville Historic Town Archives (P1687). Courtesy of the Barkerville Historic Town Archives.
7. Suzy Lake, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #6*, 1983–84, chromogenic print, oil paint, and lumber, 162.6 x 109.2 x 10.2 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Courtesy of Suzy Lake. © Suzy Lake.
8. Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, *Duyen, Thien's mother, learns French at the cofi (Orientation and Training Center for Immigrants)*, 1980, from the Thien & Hung series, 1980–95, gelatin silver print, 27.7 x 35.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Claire Beaugrand-Champagne.
9. Barbara Astman, *Untitled (The Red Series)*, 1981, Ektacolor mural, 122 x 122 cm. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist. © Barbara Astman.
10. William Arthur Scott Goss, *Bloor Street Viaduct, Deck Looking West*, July 18, 1917, gelatin silver print, 13 x 18 cm. Collection of the City of Toronto Archives (Fonds 200, Series 372, Subseries 10, Item 841). Courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives.
11. Robert Burley, *Riverdale Park*, 1983, chromogenic print (Ektacolor), 40.5 x 50.7 cm; image: 34.8 x 45.5 cm. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto. © Robert Burley.
12. Jimmy Manning, *Gathering/Spring Fishing*, 1999, colour photograph, 76 x 114 cm. Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa (03/4-0027). Courtesy of the Canada Council Art Bank. Reproduced with permission from Dorset Fine Arts. © Jimmy Manning. Photo credit: Brandon Clarida Image Services.
13. Sunil Gupta, *Sunil with Fakroon*, 1975, pigment print on archival paper, edition of five. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto. © Sunil Gupta / DACS London / CARCC Ottawa 2024.
14. Yousuf Karsh, *Winston Churchill*, December 30, 1941, printed before September 1988, gelatin silver print, 50.2 x 40.7 cm. Courtesy of the Estate of Yousuf Karsh. © Estate of Yousuf Karsh.
15. Edward Burtynsky, *Railcuts #8 (Red hill, C.N. train) C.N. Track, Thompson River, British Columbia*, 1985, chromogenic print, 48.3 x 59.7 cm. Courtesy of Edward Burtynsky / Nicholas Metivier Gallery, Toronto. © Edward Burtynsky.
16. Fred Herzog, *Black Man Pender*, 1958, archival pigment print, various sizes. Courtesy of Equinox Gallery, Vancouver. © Estate of Fred Herzog. (Note: No cropping, bleeding, retouching, or text overlay is permitted.)
17. Ken Lum, *Melly Shum Hates Her Job*, 1989, chromogenic print, vinyl lettering, 124 x 230.3 cm. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery and Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam. Courtesy of the artist. © Ken Lum.
18. Harold Mortimer-Lamb, *Emily Carr in her studio*, c.1939, black and white photograph, 35.7 x 27.8 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (1980.087.003). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.
19. Hannah Maynard, *Hannah Maynard in a tableau vivant composite photo*, c.1893–97, black and white collodion glass plate negative, 20 x 25 cm. Collection of BC Archives, Royal BC Museum, Victoria (F-02852). Courtesy of BC Archives, Royal BC Museum.
20. Sarah Bassnett, co-author of *Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History*.
21. Sarah Parsons, co-author of *Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History*.