

U3A

A History of Photography

Presenter: Bob Hay, 2008

This course of 18 hour-long sessions conducted over a 9-week period aims to outline the evolution of photography from the observations of Aristotle to the time when men not only went to the Moon but photographed Earth-rise over the lunar landscape. In doing this, the course examines the technological inventions which made possible photography as we know it today as well as the changing ways in which it has been regarded, especially the on-going dispute whether photography is a technology for recording objects and events or is also a "fine art". Wherever possible, the topics are illustrated with examples of notable photographs of their day. The history and technology of colour, cinema and digital photography are beyond the scope of the present course.

All programs are available in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format at

www.bobhay.net

Course Contents

- P01 A Pleasant Way to Study Nature** — *The fleeting world of the Camera Obscura*
- P02 A Subtle Matter Viscous and Quick** — *The search for image permanence*
- P03 A Picture as Good as I Could Wish** — *Heliography and the First Photograph*
- P04 The Immortal Plan of Mid-Century** — *Louis Daguerre and an Art for the People*
- P05 Painting a New World with Sunbeams** — *The Daguerreotype in America*
- P06 Letters Patent and Border Raiders** — *The Daguerreotype in Britain*
- P07 Dame Nature Becomes the Drawing Mistress** — *The invention of images on paper*
- P08 A Man of Very Obliging Disposition** — *Frederick Scott Archer and the Invention of Wet Collodion*
- P09 The Greenbacks of Civilization** — *Photographs as Social Currency*
- P10 Skylights into Infinity** — *The Some-time Art of Stereography*
- P11 Letting the Genie Out of the Lamp - Part I** — *Making Photos circa 1961*
- P12 Letting the Genie out of the Lamp - Part II** — *Making Photos circa 1961 (cont.)*
- P13 A Crowd of Hopes and Wingéd Lies** — *Photography Seeks to Become a "Fine Art"*
- P14 The Perfect Marriage of Art and Science** — *Photography at a Time of Transition*
- P15 Austere and Blazing Poetry of the Real** — *American Landscape Photography and the Exploration of the West*
- P16 Pictures Worth a Thousand Words** — *Magnum and the Hey-Day of Photo-journalism.*
- P17 Lifting the Mask We All Wear** — *The Art of Photographic Portraiture*
- P18 Stating the Actual in Oz** — *Modernising Photography in Australia*

This course was originally conceived as a 20-hour program but the final 2 hours could not be scheduled. Those omitted were **P19 A Matter of Style and Desire** — *Photography in the Service of Fashion and Advertising*; and **P20 Worlds Beyond Wonder** — *Photography in the Service of Science.*

Reading List and Main References

Gernsheim, Helmut: *The Origins of Photography*, Thames and Hudson, 1982

This is the main reference for the early part of the course up to the wet collodion era. Gernsheim is the leading historian of photography who amassed the huge Gernsheim Collection now in the University of Texas.

Buckland, Gail: *First Photographs: People, Places, & Phenomena as captures for the first time by the camera*, Robert Hale, 1974.

Adams, Ansel¹: *The Camera*, Little Brown and Company, 1980

Crawford, William: *The Keepers of Light - A history and working guide to early photographic processes*, Morgan & Morgan, 1979

Permutt, Cyril: *Collecting Old Cameras*, Da Capo, 1976.

Ennis, Helen²: *Photography 150 Years 1839–1989*, Australian National Gallery, 1989.

Brandt, Bill: *Perspective on Nudes*, The Bodley Head, 1961

Weiermair, Peter: *The Hidden Image, Photographs of the Male Nude in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*; The MIT Press, 1988 (Translated Claus Nielande).

Schaefer, John P: *How to use the Zone System for Fine B&W Photography*, HP Books, 1983

Doty, Robert (Ed): *Photography in America*, Ridge Press Book-Random House, 1974.

Photographs from the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Gilbert, George: *Photography: The Early Years. A Historical Guide for Collectors*; Harper and Rowe, 1980.

Editors of Time-Life Books: *The Camera*; Time-Life International (Nederland), NV, 1972

Newhall, Nancy (Ed): *Edward Weston - The Flame of Recognition*, Aperture Monograph, 1971.

Scharf, Aaron (compiler): *Pioneers of Photography – an album of pictures and words*, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1975

Willis, Anne-Marie: *Picturing Australia – A history of photography*, Angus and Robertson, 1988

Davies, Alan & Stanbury, Peter: *The Mechanical Eye in Australia – Photography 1841-1900*, Oxford University Press Melbourne, 1985

National Library of Australia: *Olive Cotton - Photographer*, (Introduction by Helen Ennis), NLA Canberra 2005.

Collections:

(1) *Fixed in Time: Photographs from Another Australia 1900–1939*, The Fairfax Library, 1985

(2) *The Family of Man - The greatest photographic exhibition of all time – 503 pictures from 68 countries – created by Edward Steichen for the Museum of Modern Art*, MOMA - Macro Magazine Corp., 1955.

¹ in collaboration with Robert Baker.

² with Kate Davidson and Kylie Scroope