



HOLD THE PHONE



When this photograph was conceived in the early 1960s, telephones and cameras were distinct devices, with phones literally immobilized by landlines. First attempts at mobile communication equipment were too hefty and clumsy to carry. But in 1983, Motorola introduced the DynaTAC 8000x, an ostensibly portable phone. The Gordon Gecko character in *Wall Street* (1987) used one. Even four years after its launch, the Motorola was still a rare enough consumer commodity that it made Gecko seem like a trendsetter.

Considering how indispensable phones have become to contemporary life, it's surprising to realize we've only been living with multimedia communication tools in a handheld unit, of which photo and video are increasingly utilized and verbal decreasingly important, for less than 20 years. Phones with cameras, for example, have only been available since 2002. It's been less than a generation, yet most of us now feel we cannot function without our phones for a single day. The physiological ramifications of this phenomenon are becoming apparent. New York Times technology writer Kevin Roose recently confessed that he was alarmed, not only by the amount of time he spent on his phone, but its impact on his ability to converse, read anything longer than a tweet or watch anything more than a video. As we wrestle with understanding the impact of this technology, some of us may be forced to incorporate digital detox coaching into a wellness routine or simply decide to rejoin the analog world.

Sources

"Do Not Disturb: How I Ditched My Phone and Unbroke My Brain" by Kevin Roose, *New York Times*, February 26, 2019.

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PHSC NEWS

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Pictured above: The Nokia 7650 was the first popular cell phone to have a built-in camera. It was released in 2002 with a 176x208 pixel colour display. The keypad slid out at the bottom of the phone which also exposed the camera lens on the back.

The camera had VGA resolution and produced a .3MP image that could be stored in the phone's 4MB of storage. It had no selfie capability, video, speaker or jacks, and offered no texting, email or browser. It retailed for \$866 CDN.

PHSC PRESENTS

Japanese Photography in the Edo and Meiji Eras



The recent explosion in interest in historical photography from Asia has revealed just how little is known about its photographic achievements outside the continent. The same can be said for the history of Japanese photography. Much of what we do know revolves around a handful of western photographers whose Yokohama-based practices catered mostly to other foreign residents. New research has uncovered stories of photographers previously unknown outside their territories to help us reinterpret the pragmatic and idealistic uses of photography in the rapidly industrializing Japanese visual economy.

Celio Barreto will discuss key points in the photographic development of Edo and Meiji Eras through images and objects he has studied in the rare book collections in the Bishop White Committee Library of East Asia, and The Royal Ontario Museum's Asian Photography collection. Join us for these rare and valuable insights into material and production practices during one of the most revolutionary periods in the Land of The Rising Sun.

Video Editing: From Blah to Brilliant with Mark Holtze

There's a lot to putting together a tight instructional video that will get people interested in your subject. Titles, perspectives, cutting and voice-over are only some of the concerns in a successful video and, if you watch enough YouTube, it's painfully apparent not everyone possesses the knack. Enter Mark Holtze. If you want an indication of what this guy can do, his piece on Vintage Camera/Lens Shopping is definitely worth a look. Highlighting Gary Perry's Camerama, Holtze makes shopping for second-hand camera equipment hip, informative and, above all, entertaining.

We were first introduced to Holtze when he shot one of our Camera Fairs at the Trident Hall location. He has since appeared on Global TV and currently has his own YouTube channel. An accomplished maverick vlogger, video tutor, vintage film enthusiast and camera aficionado, Holtze will reveal some of the secrets of contemporary video editing and be available for questions.



Join us at 7:45pm, main speaker at 8:00pm, on Wednesday, March 20 in the Burgundy Room of Memorial Hall in the basement of 5120 Yonge St, North York, Ontario for these informative presentations. Admission, as usual, is free and light refreshments are provided. Need info? www.phsc.ca

PHOTOBOOK 101

BY SONJA PUSHCHAK

The Scientific Blossoming of Blossfeldt



It's a bloody nightmare finding a place for Karl Blossfeldt in the canon of visual history. For one thing, the images in his book *Art Forms in Nature* [*Urformen der Kunst*] (1929) were produced via homemade camera adaptations to available technology. His work spawned a brief rash of imitators, likely achieving derivative results by virtue of other experiential equipment hacks. But Blossfeldt

wasn't exactly responsible for a revolution or a school, didn't start a trend and contributed no advances to consumer camera manufacture. The subject matter of his photographs presents its own difficulties. While the botanicals he captured are sensuous and architectural (his gallerist Karl Nierendorf attempted to pump architecture's relationship with nature more than once in the book's introduction), his focus on plants with asymmetric shoots and curvilinear fronds had little in common with the then-current Bauhaus-inspired fever for rectilinear (geometric) abstraction. If anything, Blossfeldt's choice of subject revealed a strong association with the sweeping curves of latter-century Art Nouveau, by then an outmoded stylistic movement. Canons might honour innovative outliers who animated the next generation, but never a practitioner who seemed to be focused on the rear-view mirror.

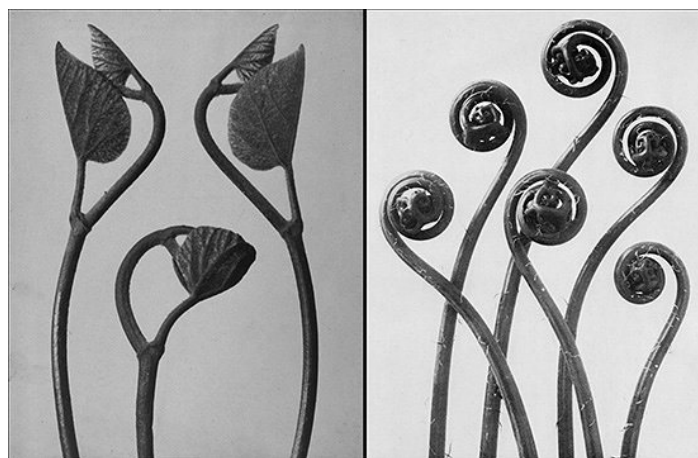
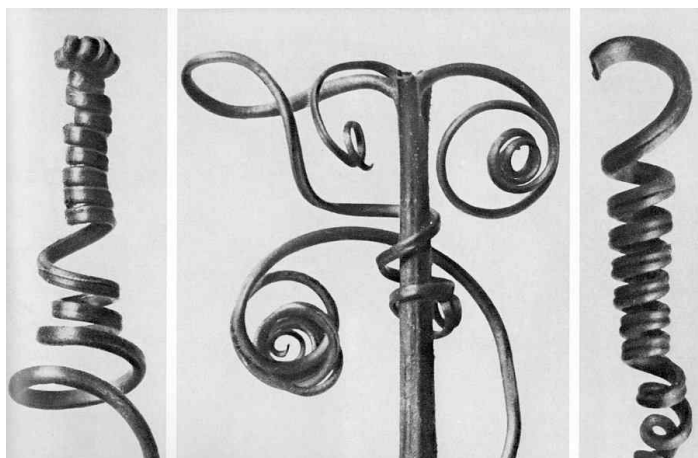


Be that as it may, I think canon guardians have ignored how new scientific theories emerging in the dawning century underpinned Blossfeldt's unusual work. We know Darwin's "tangled bank" metaphor for evolution, in which he evoked the many complex plants and animals co-existing with each other in the wild, all surviving and thriving by the natural selection of f a v o u r a b l e

characteristics, was the impetus for literature, painting and design in the nineteenth century. But by the twentieth, cultural theorist and science authority wannabe Henri Bergson was tweaking the theory with his hypothesis of evolution as life's creative impulse. The life force was personified by Bergson as a contemplative artist; a hands-on participant in the development of organic forms through experimental accidents rather than characteristics sexually selected by organisms themselves. His theory wowed the upper classes attending his lectures. Buds and tendrils, photographed in the act of becoming in ways even unique to their species, echoed the Bergsonian "vital principle" as evidence of life's creativity. Blossfeldt managed to encapsulate one of the most exciting though fanciful theories of his day in works of deceptive simplicity. Canon material? Definitely.

Sources

Creative Evolution by Henri Bergson (1911)



The Photographic Historical Society of Canada

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STUDIO CULTURE

BY SONJA PUSHCHAK

A Victorian Reincarnation in Modern Singapore



A young man walks into a photography studio in Singapore. He makes arrangements for a colour portrait with the woman behind the counter. She quotes him a price of \$19.50. He says he will send it home to his parents to help him find a bride. He is ushered into a space with painted backdrops and urns of artificial flowers. Some backgrounds are mist-veiled mountains reminiscent of Bob Ross; others are greenery-flanked staircases evoking country estates. The photographer gestures toward a small rack of men's apparel and the sitter chooses a checked shirt which he seems to feel will be more becoming. The photographer takes several shots and the client chooses one from the camera's viewing screen. He's told to return in 30 minutes when his portrait will be ready.

The twelve-minute video *Searching For Wives*, directed by Zuki Juno Tobgye and produced by Vigneswari Nagaraj, is a fascinating look at how photo services from the past have been reanimated for specific cultural needs in the contemporary world. The film centres on Shanmugavel Pathakarnan, called Patha, who has left his village in India to drive delivery trucks in bustling Singapore. Work in this distant city is lucrative and will grant him increased status back home, allowing him to make enough money for a house of his own. For rural South Asian men, far from their communities, marriages arranged by parents are common but require a full-length portrait that can be taken around to interest potential brides. And as Patha admits with some

discomfort, men have been turned down based on what the photos might inadvertently reveal.

The studio Patha does business with bears an uncanny resemblance to ones common in the Victorian, down to the backdrops, props and on-hand wardrobe for quick outfit updates. It becomes apparent that other clients like Patha have also chosen studio attire, to appear as other than blue-collar labourers. This harkens back to an earlier purpose for the portrait as a way to traverse class in a time of rigid social divisions. In the cartes-de-visite and cabinet cards churned out in the nineteenth century, housemaids and footmen saved up and sat for portrait photographs but never posed in uniform. They, like their modern counterparts, consistently opted for costuming that made their portraits indistinguishable from the aristocrats and gentry that paid their wages. But as the video reveals, transformational portraits taken for Patha's rural cohort are not always as convincing as might be wished. Rural women seem aware, not only of the artificiality of the image but of the possibility of better prospects that beckon from another kind of future. Director Tobgye hints at intriguing social change taking place in India, but between something other than the city and the countryside.

Sources

"Snap Matchmaking: India Expats Seek the Perfect Picture to Get a Wife Back Home" by Zuki Juno Tobgye, *AEON Magazine*, February, 2019. [aeon.co/videos/snap-matchmaking-indian-expats-seek-the-perfect-picture-to-get-a-wife-back-home](https://www.aeon.co/videos/snap-matchmaking-indian-expats-seek-the-perfect-picture-to-get-a-wife-back-home)

EQUIPMENT REVIEW BY DAVID BRIDGE

Flashes from the Past: the Frugal Accessory Roundup



For the retro flash crowd, nothing is more fun than finding just the right accessory to keep the old tubes firing. Feast on these nifty add-ons:

Braun Slip-on reflector card holder. Forget the fancy two-cents-worth-of plastic dome diffuser that will cost you \$90 for your NiCanon flash. This handy metal bracket slips on the trusty Braun 420, and lets you pick your own reflector - find an 8x10 piece of cardboard in your blue bin, and away you go. A great modifier/diffuser of light instead of your credit card. Probably adaptable for use with more modern flashes, if you insist on the complexities of "my flash, the computer."

Generic Safe Sync. A must-have for those who want to wire a vintage AmpereBlitz to their latest mirrorless wonder. Not to lecture, but many of the old flash units present way more than the handful of volts your cream-puff modern camera can safely stomach. This little add-on will slip onto your hot-shoe, and provide both a new shoe and a pc-cord outlet for connecting that old Vivitar

or Braun, without frying the innards of your kilo-dollar SLR. Can be had in various forms in stores and the internet - the one shown about \$25. For those who can live without brand-specific flash co-ordination.

"The Clapper" for flash. A sound trigger designed to fire the flash with an appropriately sudden or loud noise. Simply open the camera shutter (in a very dark room), make a sudden noise (burst a balloon, fire a gun) and the flash goes off, stopping the motion and recording it on your sensor. We have not tested this, but the box does proudly claim, "ideal for high speed, motion-stopping pictures such as firing a bullet or bursting a balloon." PHSC labs does not have firearms capable of bursting a balloon, nor do we recommend that our readers attempt this. Many of a certain age who bought cheap electronics in the 1960s will recognize the crystal microphone capsule on the front. To our surprise, a brand-new 1960s 9-volt battery was found, not leaking, inside. From now on we will only consider batteries like this one, adorned with the legendary "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval."



WEB LINKS

COMPILED BY LOUISE FREYBURGER

"The Fascinating Abandoned Island You've Never Heard of," By Luke Spencer - December 13, 2017

<https://www.messynessychic.com/2017/12/13/the-fascinating-abandoned-island-youve-never-heard-of/?fbclid=IwAR0QrcMXcVio-ouBkzrVfY81TckP6pj1hhKH038l1UGBMz7WXiyd-ZU1VLA>

"On a recent trip to Nova Scotia, Canada to investigate the cemetery where many of the victims of the Titanic were buried, a chance conversation in a bar in Halifax, brought up a fascinating island lying abandoned just in the harbour, called McNabs Island. I was told that this island was home to the some of the most enchanting collection of ruins you could wish for; a cove of shipwrecks, abandoned forts, the ghosts of old fairgrounds, the remnants of a soda factory, slowly decaying Victorian houses and their once grand gardens, potters fields filled with the victims of a cholera epidemic, and a place simply and beguilingly know as Hangman's Beach....Friends of McNabs Island Society at <http://mcnabsisland.ca/>.



"How Peter Jackson Made WWI Footage Seem Astonishingly New," By Mekado Murphy, New York Times - Dec. 16, 2018

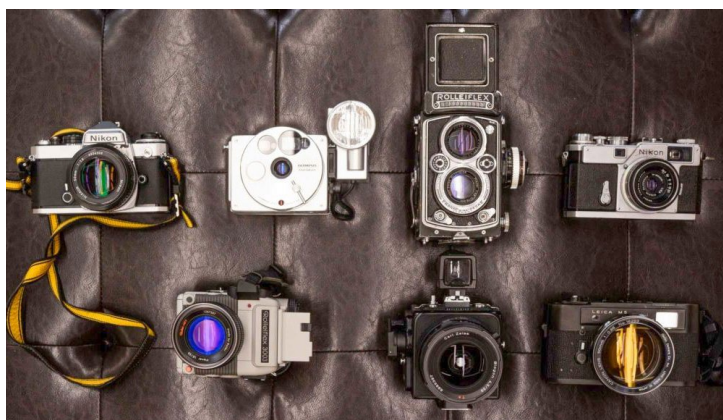
https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/16/movies/peter-jackson-son-war-movie.html?emc=edit_nn_p_20181217&nl=morning-briefing&nlid=66372353section%3DlongRead§ion=longRead&te=1&fbclid=IwAR1UTejP_f07eOB3_fm4g96UfaqUUFjQDWHXAOoSfc0gpcF_idKSIX_xW5k

"The documentary, which [...screened] nationwide Dec. 17 and Dec. 27, concentrates on the experiences of British soldiers as revealed in footage from the archives of the Imperial War Museum. Jackson and his team have digitally restored the footage, adjusted its frame rate, colorized it and converted it to 3-D. They chose not to add a host or title cards. Instead, veterans of the war "narrate" — that is, the filmmakers culled their commentary from hundreds of hours of BBC interviews recorded in the 1960s and '70s."

"Camera Rescue aims to save 100,000 analog cameras for future generations" DPReview, Published Feb 18, 2019, by Brittany Hillen

<https://www.dpreview.com/news/9008988907/camera-rescue-aims-to-save-100-000-analog-cameras-for-future-generations>

Finland-based organization Camera Rescue has rescued 46,000 analog cameras and it plans to more than double that number by 2020. Cameraville recently interviewed the organization's Juho Leppänen to discuss the mission, as well as the unique challenges they face.



PHSC PRESENTS

Our talks are free and open to the public on the third Wednesday of every month, from September to June, in the Burgundy Room of the Memorial Hall, in the basement of 5120 Yonge St, North York, Ontario. Guest speaker appears at 8:00 pm unless otherwise specified. Some of the presentations are tentative and subject to change.

SHOW AND TELL & SILENT AUCTION

December 19, 2018

The Xmas party for members and guests, along with the Show and Tell and Silent Auction. Everyone welcome.

SPECIAL EVENT:

KODAK CANADA: THE EARLY YEARS (1898-1938)

SPECIAL DATE & TIME - January 23, 2019, 6 to 8pm

SPECIAL LOCATION - RYERSON IMAGE CENTRE, 33 Gould St, Toronto, ON

Join us for the opening of the Masters Exhibition at the Ryerson Student Gallery, sponsored by the PHSC.

SNAKE CHARMER WITH A CAMEA

February 20, 2019

Erin Levitsky, winner of the 2018 Thesis Prize Award, will present selections from her research on twentieth-century fashion and advertising photographer Nina Leen.

JAPANESE PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO EDITING: FROM BLAH TO BRILLIANT

March 20, 2019

Japan has had a deep, dedicated and complex relationship with photography and its technology. Celio Barreto will

reveal some of its intriguing history and contributions in rarely seen images. Speaker Mark Holtze will also be in to discuss the ins and outs of creating a tight instructional video.

PHOTOGRAPH PRESERVATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

April 17, 2019

Chloe Lucas answers your questions.

TITLE TO BE ANNOUNCED

May 15, 2019

Louie Palu is a Canadian documentary photographer and filmmaker known for covering social-political issues, including war and human rights.

WORLD WAR ONE TRAINING IN PHOTOGRAPHS

June 19, 2019

Erin Gregory, an Assistant Curator at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, talks about the WWI photographic record.

PHSC PRESENTS IS ON VACATION FOR JULY AND AUGUST

PHSC EVENTS

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Sunday, March 17, 2019

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION #101

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Items accepted 8:30am to 10:00am

View Items 10:00 to 11:00 Auction starts at 11:00am

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Clint Hryhorijiw - Chairman

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SPRING FAIR

Sunday, May 26, 2019

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145 Evans Avenue, Toronto

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10:00am to 3:00pm

Admission \$7 / Students free / Free parking

Mark Singer - Chairman - fair@phsc.ca



VI TELLS DOT

About Einstein and the prostitutes of Paris. Really.

Vi: Have I ever told you the one about Einstein and the prostitutes of Paris?

Dot: Are you about to spill some cheap and tawdry scandal?

Vi: No, I'm about to spill some cheap and tawdry science and culture.

Dot: Why doesn't that surprise me?

Vi: The Victorian aristocracy had been supremely confident when it came to what they thought they knew about the world. They thought they were authorities on everything. World War I turned that on its head. The death toll, especially amongst the upper-classes and its intelligentsia, the segment of society that was supposed to be knowledgeable and in control, was incredibly high. Society began to feel that the leadership they had put their faith in did not possess any special ability or insight.

Dot: Ah, feet of clay time.

Vi: Exactly. So other heroes were sought out after WWI. Scientists to be precise. And the poster boy was Albert Einstein.

Dot: You're kidding me, right?

Vi: No. In 1916, Einstein published his paper on the General Theory of Relativity. He had previously published The Special Theory of Relativity in 1905. Yes, these papers were eye-

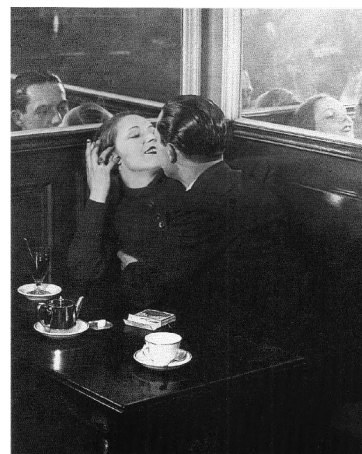
glazing reads for mathematicians and physicists but what lay society took away from them was that time and space were not absolutes but only relative to each other (only the speed of light was constant). As Einstein liked to explain it, "When you are courting a nice girl an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red hot cinder a second seems like an hour. That's relativity." Relativity seemed to say that there was no single position of authority from which the truth could be observed and ordinary people loved it.

Dot: So the old worldview or paradigm had been shaken by war and here was a smart, humble guy with a new theory of the universe; essentially, a new theory of everything. But what does that have to do with prostitutes in Paris?



Vi: Photographers of the time thought relativity was a hot idea. That photographic truths didn't need expensive studios but could be obtained by self-taught street photographers rooting out the right intersection of time and location was liberating. Gyula Hász, known as Brassai (1899-1984), exercised the concept to capture the moral relativity of the citizens of French nightlife in his series published as *Paris By Night* (1933). Johns, prostitutes, lovers; lonely people seeking companionship in bars and brothels were his subject.

Dot: I hope Albert got a copy.



Sources

Einstein & Relativity: The Big Idea by Paul Strathern (2009)
Paris by Night by Brassai (1933)

THE CLASSIFIEDS

Camera Shows

LONDON SPRING VINTAGE CAMERA SHOW

Sunday, April 14, 2019

10:00am to 3:00pm

Expect 50-70 dealer tables, jammed with the very best film photography equipment you'll ever see!

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Publications

GRAFLEX Journal

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT GRAFLEX AND THEIR CAMERAS

The latest Graflex Journal is available for download at journal.graflex.org. Plus ongoing calls for articles and for contemporary photography utilizing Graflex cameras. Contact Ken Metcalf at metcalf537@aol.com

Correction

Last month's source for the Vi & Dot column was incorrectly identified. It was *Photo Icons: The story behind the pictures* by Hans-Michael Koetzle (2005)

Exhibitions



PHOTOGRAPHY: FIRST WORLD WAR, 1914 - 1918 (PART II)

November 10, 2018 –

April 14, 2019

AGO, 317 Dundas St. W

Toronto, ON

Free Admission Wednesday 6-9pm.

ago.ca/exhibitions/photography-first-world-war-1914-1918-part-ii

The history of the First World War is often presented as a simplified story of winners and losers, one that diminishes a complex war and its diversity of experience. To mark the centenary of the end of the conflict, this exhibition invites visitors to explore the AGO's significant collection of photographic albums and objects from this period, donated in 2004 by a private collector.

Wanted



Got a story about Canadian photo history you're dying to share? Contact Bob Lansdale at info@phsc.ca.

Exhibitions



WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

December 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

Royal Ontario Museum

100 Queen's Park

Toronto, ON

www.rom.on.ca/en/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year-2018

A selection of the best wildlife photographs from across the globe in the Natural History Museum at the ROM. An entertaining and educational springtime experience for the whole family.

Seminar

THE EDUCATORS FIELD TRIP! by PhotoEd

Saturday,

May 4, 2019

401 Richmond

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www.photoed.ca/fieldtrip2019?utm_campaign=02c7cb19-9bf7-4199-8b97-eca821cee10c&utm_source=so

