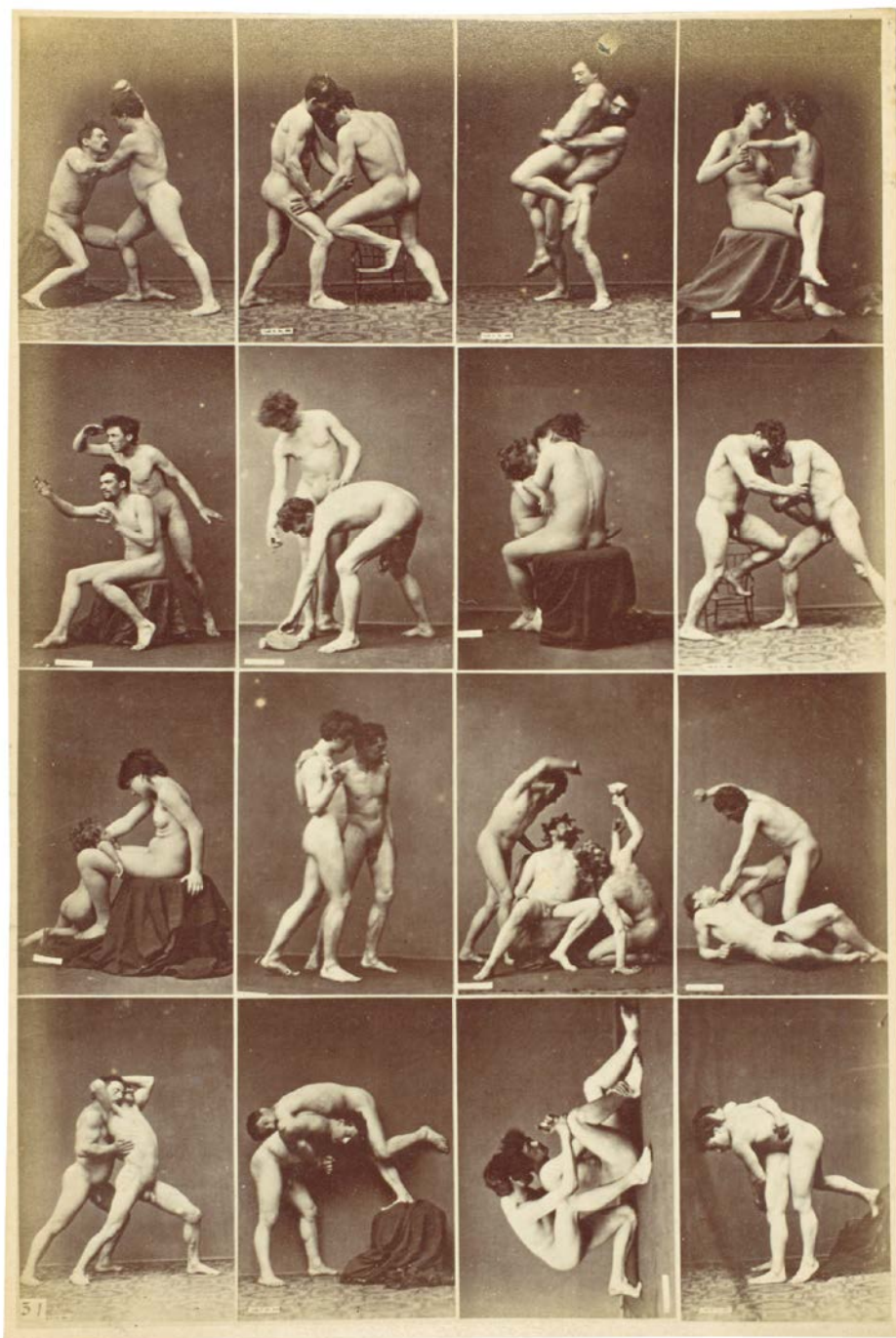


PHOTOGRAPHY AS A TOOL FOR ARTISTS

Louis-Jean-Baptiste Igout
(1837–1881), Plate 31
from *Album d'Études-Poses*,
c. 1875. Albumen silver
print from glass negative

SEE ALSO

1853
**FEMALE NUDE,
RECLINING, IN PROFILE**
JULIEN VALLOU DE
VILLENEUVE
P. 43



Photography has long served as a tool for artists. Realizing its potential to create detailed studies of poses and gestures, photographers would produce albums of such studies for artists to use as the basis of their work, reducing the need to hire models. This print of sixteen images, from

an album compiled by the French photographer Louis-Jean-Baptiste Igout, essentially acted as a catalogue, with artists able to buy larger prints of the poses they needed. Photographers also created albums of specific body parts, as well as animals and plants.

1915

WALL STREET, NEW YORK

PAUL STRAND

PUSHING PHOTOGRAPHY TOWARDS ABSTRACTION

Paul Strand's *Wall Street, New York* captures a group of anonymous workers on their morning commute, their elongated shadows falling alongside the granite façade of J. P. Morgan & Co.'s recently completed headquarters. With its focus on abstraction, Strand's work was instrumental in pushing photography towards modernism. However, while the American noted that he simply aimed to capture a sense of movement that was at once 'abstract and controlled', it is hard for the contemporary viewer not to read in this image a critique of the mechanisms of capitalism.⁵⁰

The shadows from the commuters oppose the vertical lines of the building, which is presented as a monolith of financial and political power that has no clear start or end; instead, it stretches on endlessly, the glass windows becoming solemn voids. Against this infinite backdrop, the commuters – faceless, nameless – are reduced to mere concepts.

TYPE	ART
PROCESS	PLATINUM PALLADIUM PRINT



Paul Strand (1890–1976), *Wall Street, New York*, 1915. Platinum palladium print, 27.9 × 35.2 cm (11 × 13 7/8 in.)

SEE ALSO
1907
THE STEERAGE
 ALFRED STIEGLITZ
 P. 113

1917

VORTOGRAPH

ALVIN LANGDON COBURN

CUBISM MEETS PHOTOGRAPHY

Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882–1966), *Vortograph*, 1917. Gelatin silver print, 28.1 × 21.2 cm (11 1/8 × 8 3/8 in.)

SEE ALSO
1923
RAYOGRAPH
 MAN RAY
 P. 133



Alvin Langdon Coburn's striking series of vortographs are regarded as the first examples of truly abstract photography. Up until then, photography had been seen as incompatible with abstraction, in need of an identifiable subject and capable only of accurately documenting the real world. With his vortographs, however, Coburn showed that photography could do more than simply reproduce reality.

After pursuing Pictorialism as a member of the Photo-Secession movement in the United States, Coburn had been introduced to the Vorticist group of artists by the British poet Ezra Pound in London in 1916. Inspired by the group's Cubist-influenced

abstract aesthetic, Coburn invented a kaleidoscope-like contraption that attached to his camera lens, clamping three mirrors into a triangle through which he then photographed a range of surfaces. The mirrors' reflections fractured the image, and the photographic subject was all but erased, reduced to elements of light and shadow that formed geometric patterns and crystalline structures.

On seeing the images, Pound dubbed them 'vortographs', in reference to the Vorticists. While the Vorticist movement was short-lived, Coburn's work remained influential, opening up new avenues for exploration in photography.

TYPE	ART
PROCESS	GELATIN SILVER PRINT

1946

SINGER, CAFÉ METROPOLE, NEW YORK CITY
LISETTE MODEL

TYPE	DOCUMENTARY
PROCESS	GELATIN SILVER PRINT



Lisette Model (1901–1983),
*Singer at the Café
Metropole, New York City*,
1946. Gelatin silver print,
49.3 × 39.9 cm (19 3/8 ×
15 3/4 in.)

SEE ALSO

1959

**LIFE COVER, MARILYN
MONROE**

PHILIPPE HALSMAN
P. 190

THE ART OF THE SPLIT-SECOND

Lisette Model used her lens to reveal the extremes lurking behind the façade of the ‘everyday’. Model, who indeed professed to have sought out ‘extreme’ subjects, believed that it was in fragmented, fleeting moments that the ‘truth’ of one’s character would appear.⁶¹ As she put it: ‘The art of the split second

is my means of exploring.’⁶² However, when Model’s notion of the ‘extreme’ frequently encompassed bodies that were obese, emaciated or marked by economic hardship, ethical questions arise. These concerns have likewise followed her student Diane Arbus, who arguably amplified this approach.

1969

FROM THE SERIES **ACCIDENT, PREMEDITATED
OR NOT**

DAIDO MORIYAMA

TYPE

ART

PROCESS

GELATIN SILVER PRINT



PHOTOGRAPHY AS VOYEURISM?

Daido Moriyama spent his youth haunted by two questions: 'What is photography?' and 'Why am I taking photographs?'⁶⁷ The *are bure boke* (grainy, blurry, out-of-focus) style he helped pioneer rejected the glossy techniques popular in Japan in the 1960s, with the fractured, grainy nature of his photographs an attempt to expose the similarly fragmented and chaotic nature of everyday life. Here, a photo of a car crash from a National Police Agency poster is transformed into an otherworldly scene steeped in moody glamour. Ambiguous photographs like this tap into the medium's affective nature, with Moriyama and his peers seeing image-making as a point of bodily contact, not only between photographer and subject but also between image and viewer.

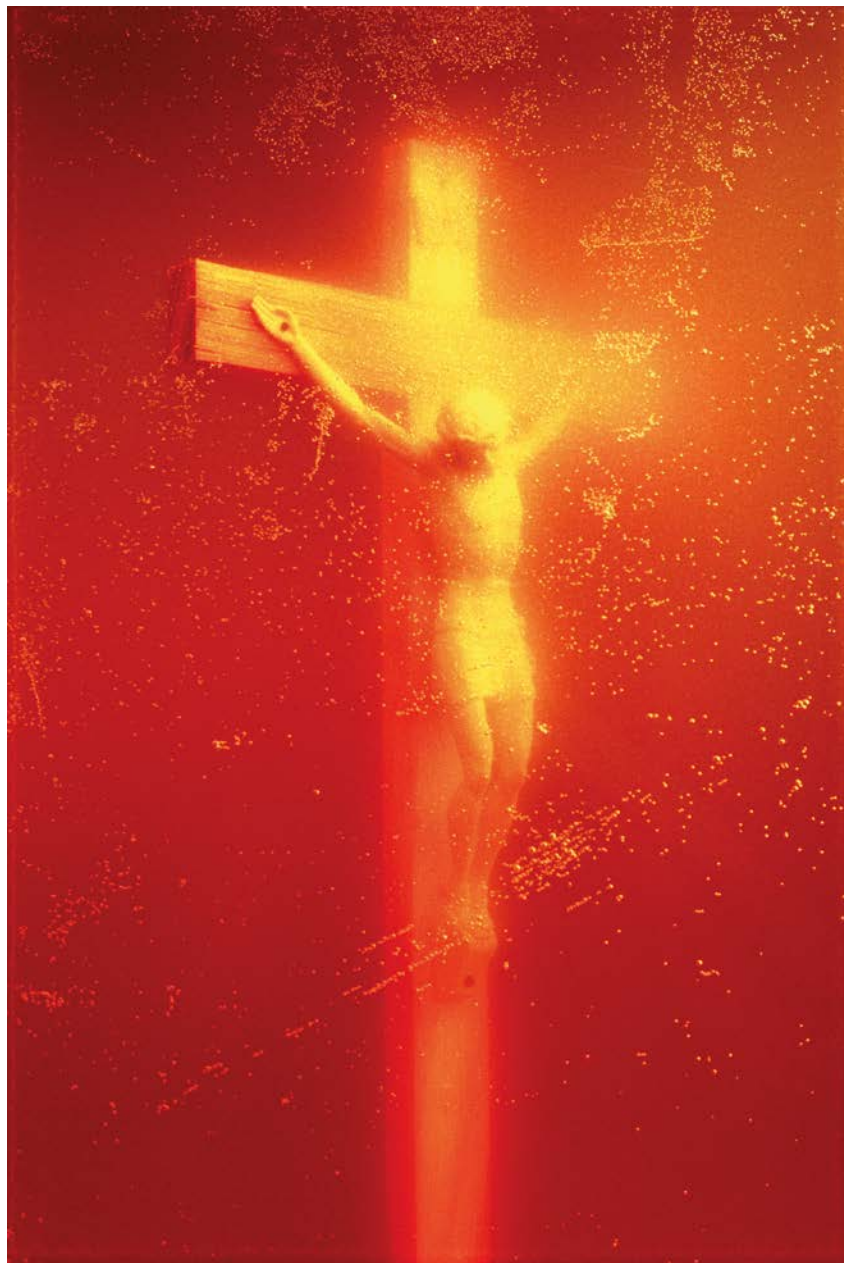
Daido Moriyama (b. 1938),
Midnight Accident, Tokyo,
1969. Gelatin silver print,
33.1 × 47.4 cm (13 ×
18 5/8 in.)

SEE ALSO

1962
BARAKEI #32
EIKOH HOSOE
P. 193

1987

PISS CHRIST ANDRES SERRANO



Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* is one of the most controversial photographs of the late twentieth century. The work depicts a small plastic crucifix submerged in a glass container filled with the artist's own urine. At first glance, it reads as a reverent, almost ethereal image. The title, however, forces the viewer to confront the uneasy collision of the sacred and the profane. Serrano, who was raised as a Catholic, has said the work is not an attack on faith but a meditation on how religious symbols circulate in a commodified world, and on the distancing between the physical act of crucifixion and its artistic portrayal.⁷⁸ The photograph became a flashpoint

in the battle between liberal and conservative values in 1980s America when politicians and religious groups condemned it as blasphemy, sparking debates about freedom of expression and public funding for the arts. Beyond its notoriety, *Piss Christ* embodies a key shift in late twentieth-century photography: away from 'straight' documentation towards staged, conceptually charged imagery. By combining the visual language of devotional art with shocking materials, Serrano pushed photography into the realm of provocation and critical discourse, proving that the medium could not only reflect the world but also challenge the values of its audience.

TYPE	CONCEPTUAL
PROCESS	CIBACHROME PRINT

CHALLENGING VALUES, PROVOKING DEBATE

Andres Serrano (b. 1950), *Piss Christ*, 1987. Cibachrome print, 152.4 x 101.6 cm (60 x 40 in.)

SEE ALSO

1995
STUDY OF PERSPECTIVE SERIES
AI WEIWEI
P. 246

1988

BIRTH OF THE SUPERMODELS PETER LINDBERGH

TYPE	FASHION
PROCESS	GELATIN SILVER PRINT

A NEW ERA OF FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

Peter Lindbergh was instrumental in transforming the role of the fashion model from wearer of desirable garments to cultural giant. While Lindbergh would call his January 1990 *Vogue* cover – featuring Linda Evangelista, Christy Turlington, Tatjana Patitz, Naomi Campbell and Cindy Crawford – the 'birth certificate' of the supermodel era, this 1988 image set the scene for its emergence.⁷⁹ Featuring Estelle Lefébure, Karen Alexander, Rachel Williams, Evangelista, Patitz and Turlington on a Santa Monica beach, Lindbergh's photograph aimed to present a more stripped-back version of femininity. In contrast to the polished imagery of his contemporaries, Lindbergh refused to retouch his images, instead trying to capture a sense of unfiltered emotion.

This stylistic direction aligned with Anna Wintour taking over from Grace Mirabella at the helm of *American Vogue*. Wintour and Lindbergh worked extensively together, with the photographer famously shooting Wintour's first cover for the magazine, which featured Israeli model Michaela Bercu in Christian Lacroix. The image was such a radical departure from *Vogue*'s previous style that the printer even questioned whether it was a mistake.⁸⁰



Peter Lindbergh (1944–2019), *'Estelle Lefébure, Karen Alexander, Rachel Williams, Linda Evangelista, Tatjana Patitz, Christy Turlington', Santa Monica, California, USA, 1988*. Gelatin silver print

SEE ALSO

1950
DOE EYE
ERWIN BLUMENFELD
P. 178

A MESMERIZING VISION OF THE MODERN WORLD

Andreas Gursky's *99 Cent* transforms a cluttered discount store in Los Angeles into a mesmerizing vision of consumer culture. Using a large-format camera, Gursky digitally manipulated the image to construct an overwhelming symmetry designed to reflect the suffocating and relentless nature of consumerism. The result is both seductive and unsettling: a world too perfect to be real. Gursky's digital manipulation reminds one of the important distinctions between fiction and non-fiction photography, a difference becoming even more crucial in the age of AI imagery.

Andreas Gursky (b. 1955),
99 Cent, 1999. C-print,
207 × 336.6 cm (81½ ×
132½ in.)

SEE ALSO
2010
ARCHITECTURE
OF DENSITY
MICHAEL WOLF
PP. 270–71



THE SYMMETRY AND COLOUR OF URBAN DENSITY

Michael Wolf has had a long-standing interest in capturing the dynamics of urban density. His *Architecture of Density* series focuses on the visually overwhelming structures he encountered in Hong Kong – the city to which he moved in 1994. With no beginning or end, his buildings appear to stretch on for ever. This claustrophobic potential is countered by Wolf's focus on symmetry and colour, creating an ambiguous image that is unnerving and yet visually satisfying.

Michael Wolf (1954–2019), *The Gorge*, from the series *Architecture of Density*, 2010. C-print

SEE ALSO

1956
STREET SCENE,
HONG KONG
FAN HO
P. 185

