

ART451/601-02: History of Photography Midterm Exam YOUR NAME:

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|----|---|-----|--|
| A. | Adam-Salomon: Self-portrait | AA. | Reekie: Burial Party |
| B. | Albright: Descending Vesuvius | BB. | Rehn: Family Group |
| C. | Alinari brothers: Portico of the Uffizi | CC. | Rejlander: Two ways of life |
| D. | Beato: Interior of Fort Taku | DD. | Robinson: Dawn and Sunset |
| E. | Cameron: Parting of Lancelot and Guinevere | EE. | Sarony: Sarah Bernhardt |
| F. | Clementina: Photographic study | FF. | Sarony: Adah Menken in Mazeppa |
| G. | Diamond: Mental Patient | GG. | Southworth & Hawes: Susan Brownell Anthony |
| H. | Fenton: Valley of the Shadow of Death | HH. | Southworth & Hawes: The Letter |
| I. | Frith: Remeseum, Thebes | II. | Southworth & Hawes: Rollin Heber Neal |
| J. | Gardner: Hanging of the Lincoln Conspirators | JJ. | Southworth & Hawes: Students from the Emerson School |
| K. | Gardner: Home of rebel sharpshooter | KK. | Southworth & Hawes: Harriet Beecher Stow |
| L. | Greene: Pyramid | LL. | Southworth & Hawes: Operating Room in Mass General |
| M. | Hill: Reverend Chalmers | MM. | Suck: Marketplace |
| N. | Hill: Fairy Tree | NN. | Talbot: Carpenters |
| O. | Howlett: Construction of the 'Great Eastern' | OO. | Talbot: Courtyard Scene |
| P. | Lady filmer: untitled scrapbook page | PP. | Talbot: Ancient Door |
| Q. | Lartigue: Elegant people on the Avenue of Acacias | QQ. | Talbot: Soliloquy of the Broom |
| R. | Le Gray: The Great Wave | RR. | Talbot: Pencil of nature |
| S. | Marey: Chronophotograph (untitled) | SS. | unknown: spirit photograph |
| T. | Muybridge: Galloping horse | TT. | unknown: Portrait of black woman with white child |
| U. | Muybridge: Panorama of San Francisco | UU. | unknown: Carpenter, blacksmith, etc. |
| V. | Nadar: Georges Sand | VV. | unknown: Post-mortem portrait |
| W. | O'Sullivan: Canyon de Chelle | WW. | unknown: Civil war socliders |
| X. | O'Sullivan: Harvest of Death | XX. | Watkins: Columbia River |
| Y. | Plumbe: Mrs. Shubrick | YY. | Whipple: Cornelius Felton with Hat and Coat |
| Z. | Plumbe: Mrs. Luqueer | ZZ. | Whipple: Ellen Harris Young |

Part 1. Identify the image and the type of image (1 pt ea = 20). Use the key below for image type:

DT = daguerreotype;

CT = calotype;

CP = combination print;

TT = tintype

CV = carte-de-visite;

WP = wet plate;

WB = Woodbury type;

MP = mammoth plate

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|-------|----|-------|----|
| 1. GG | dt | 6. V | wb |
| 2. EE | cv | 7. H | wp |
| 3. CC | cp | 8. K | wp |
| 4. QQ | ct | 9. U | mp |
| 5. WW | cv | 10. T | Wp |

Part 2: Circle the letter of the correct answer. (1 pt ea = 5)

11. Who invented the crystalotype?

A) Bayard B) Talbot C) Whipple D) Plumbe

12. The calotype was slower to achieve popularity than the daguerreotype. The best explanation is:

A) it required a longer exposure time

B) it defied the belief that photographs were factual

C) the inventor did not allow other people to change or modify the techniques

D) it was too difficult for the average person

13. Persistence of vision underlies the development of:

A) the portrait; B) the opera; C) the movie; D) horse-racing

14. Although not exclusively used for this, the daguerreotype was the medium of choice for which subject?

A) landscapes

B) post-mortem photographs

C) criminal evidence

15. Which photographer used a photograph to avoid conviction for murder?

A) Cameron; B) Brady; C) Marey; D) Muybridge E) Bayard

Part 3. There are 5 slides with comparison images on them. Choose three of the 5 comparisons for analysis (25 points ea.). In each one, identify the two images and use the images for a discussion of technique and its influence on what you see, changing subject matter and its relationship to technical changes, and the changing culture of photography. In other words, use the images to arrive at broader issues than simply the differences or similarities between the two images in the pair you choose. Each set raises a different thematic issue, so your comparisons will not all lead to the same end point.

A good comparison will clearly identify how two objects are alike and different (this can be done in a chart) and will then use those points to arrive at a discussion about the causes and/or meaning of the differences. If you spend 20 minutes on each comparison (and no more than 15 minutes on parts 1 and 2), you will finish on time. Write neatly (I need to be able to read it!) OR take notes and then write your answer on the computer and send it to me as an emailed attachment before you leave class. If you do this, you are on your honor not to refer to anything but the exam in front of you and your notes for the answer.

Basic criteria for a good answer:

- identification is correct
- identification and discussion of images includes reference to the technique and the influence of technique on what we see
- discussion relates the image pair to key debates in 19th century photography (for example, art versus science, amateur versus business professional, narrative versus fact)
- discussion of differences in the “look” of the two photos and how that relates to the technique
- best answers will also relate the images to what we know about the individual photographers or studios which made them
- best answers will include some context or historical background to explain the images

individual essay grades:

A = everything included;

B = not everything is included but the key ideas are correct and specific to the comparison;

C = focus remains on the visual comparison without discussion of technique, context, and issues OR focused too exclusively on technique without addressing the uniqueness of the two images for comparison

overall grade for part 3:

only one essay but well done: B

two essays of A and B quality: A or B

three essays of A, B and C quality: variable

Basic factual information for each photo-pair

Comparison 1: II and M (S & H; Hill)

- a daguerreotype and a calotype; both are portraits
- this essay should develop similar points to the original comparison we did in class:
- contrast and clarity versus massing and tonal variation;
- emphasis on facial details versus emphasis on mood and clues to occupation; person as focus versus overall ambience of photo;
- the “bigger” issue is the degree to which the photograph is used to communicate surface fact versus fact “about” the subject but both photographs are still largely in the realm of fact;
- a second issue is the role of the studio photograph: despite skill of S & H, there is a standardization of the portrait which is less apparent in Hill’s (although his is also a studio photo)

Comparison 2: Clementina and Diamond

- the differences in this set are more apparent; neither is a portrait: the Clementina is a “study” and in this case, a study of sentiment and psychology with feminine overtones;
- the Diamond is a scientific study of the physiognomy or phrenology of mental illness and although the subject appears to know that she is being photographed, it is not necessarily true;
- one might say that one photograph is a contrived or staged work of art with a narrative

- and the other is a “spontaneous” snapshot of a mental patient;
- whether we believe that or not, the images together raise the question of art versus science and art versus business, since Diamond’s purpose was not aesthetic

Landscape slides: Le Gray, Greene, O’Sullivan, Watkins

The pairs were different depending on whether you worked on your own computer or from the projected test. Basic facts for each photo in this group:

- Le Gray is a composite of combination landscape; noted for its romantic quality although an exemplar of technical prowess with its seamless conjunction of more than one negative
- wet plate technique
- Greene exemplifies the “traveling camera” choosing a tourist landmark; a factual photograph made for a book about travels to Egypt; preferred the calotype for its grainy quality and used one negative
- O’Sullivan’s photograph, although content is a landscape, is not technically a landscape photo since it was made for the geological survey; O’Sullivan’s focus on the rocks, deliberate blocking out of background, suggests his interest in using the camera to communicate in the same way that other members of the geological survey did; the photograph is complicated by the little village below the monumental rock face, a fact which leads to the possibility that there are some propaganda motives or messages included in the photograph, but without seeing the book and accompanying text, it is not clear
- Watkins’ photograph, unlike the second two but more like the first, is not made for a book or survey study; his mammoth plate photo emphasizes the glassy or crystalline surface of the lake and relates to the influence of R W Emerson and transcendentalism; both LeGray and Watkins are photographers who are influenced by the language of art as opposed to a language of either science (O’Sullivan) or business (Greene) and in both Le G and W, that aesthetic language is the romantic landscape painting

Last comparison: Schoolgirls (S & H) versus Robinson’s Dawn and Sunset

- necessary to note that one is a combination print and one is a daguerreotype; likewise one is presented as fact (group portrait) and one is presented as an allegory – the titles alone tell you that;
- despite these substantial differences, they are alike in that both are posed – S & H posed the girls in groups and create a variety of body positions and movement throughout the photograph; Robinson’s is overall more contrived as it is made from more than one negative and the figures are clearly enacting a narrative about life and aging; the art vs fact issue is most apparent in this pair despite the reality that both photographs use “staging” of some sort

Sarah Spencer

10-15-09

Midterm Essay Questions:

Southworth & Hawes: Rollin Herber Neal and Hill: Reverend Chalmers

The photographs of Rollin Herber Neal, a daguerreotype by Southworth and Hawes, and Reverend Chalmers, a calotype by Hill, both show very unique aspects of these types of prints. Southworth and Hawes were known for their portraits among a sea of daguerreotypists by the natural poses and use of light within the images that allowed the personality of the sitter to show— rather than the stiff and awkward posing shown within most of the other daguerreotypes taken at this time. They used the current technology at its best and operated a very successful commercial studio while taking pictures of Boston's elite. Hill's calotype of Reverend Chalmers also shows uniqueness as calotypes were rarely used for portraits. Hill and his partner, Adamson, were able to work on improvements to the calotype process because of their location in Scotland. Talbot was very strict on the use of his patented system in England – therefore there was not as much progress being made on the calotype system in England.

The difference in the look of these two portraits is directly related to the type of print. In the case of the daguerreotype by Southworth and Hawes, the image of Rollin Herber Neal is very crisp and sharp. The image shows a lot of detail from the wrinkles in the sleeve of his jacket to the individual strands of hair on his head. The sharpness and detail in the daguerreotype made it the most liked process for taking portraits. On the other hand, in the case of the image by Hill of Reverend Chalmers, which is a calotype, the portrait is taken with a process that was not popular for the portrait. Calotypes were most popular for taking pictures of buildings and things with mass – which the daguerreotype failed at. In this image, we can still see some detail but the image is not sharp and not all of the details

can be seen. In fact, the image is quite grainy. However, this image is still very successful in portraying the mood and character of its subject.

There is also the fact that the Southworth and Hawes daguerreotype was produced in America, where the daguerreotype portrait was extremely popular, and the calotype by Hill was produced in Europe where the calotype, which was considered more artsy, was popular. People mainly wanted photographs, especially portraits, to show every detail and reflect the absolute truth with zero room for manipulating the image. They also liked the fact that daguerreotypes were unique and treasure-like in their boxes. This made the daguerreotype more popular because the calotype, a two step process with the option to reprint the picture due to negatives, did not show as much detail, could possibly involve manipulation, and was less unique since it could be reprinted. However, later on with advances in the technology the calotype would lead to the main way that pictures were taken and printed, while the daguerreotype eventually lost popularity.

Southworth and Hawes: Students from the Emerson School and Robinson: Dawn and Sunset

By first glance, here we have two images with multiple people in them. The first being the group of women in “Students from the Emerson School” by Southworth and Hawes which is a daguerreotype. The second being a family grouping of child, mother, and elder by Robinson called “Dawn and Sunset,” which is an albumen combination print. The two images are examples of unique photography within its time period. Southworth and Hawes always seem to go beyond the daguerreotypes taken by other daguerreotypists, which took portraits of very stiff and sometimes unnerving sitters. They stretched the limits in this daguerreotype, capturing a whole room of women rather than one woman in front of a plain backdrop. Later on, in “Dawn and Sunset,” Robinson uses the combination print technology in order to place different images of people in the same room without all of them actually being there.

Both of these images create a narrative. The theme of the “Students from the Emerson School”

seemed to be to show how well rounded, proper, and educated the girls who attended the school were, while the theme of “Dawn and Sunset” shows us the cycle of life and death. The theme of the first image reflects the thinking related to photography at the time. It shows a believable image of something that actually is taking place – even though to us it looks very set up. You see the image for what it is and there is little thinking about what it actually means. However, “Dawn and Sunset” gives us an allegory. The baby shows birth which can be taken for “dawn” is being held by the mother (who could represent a middle between dawn and sunset) in the sunlight of the window. The older gentleman is nearing the end of his life, becoming “sunset” in the eyes of the viewer. The fact that this image was created by combination print directly conflicts with the way of thinking that was popular. Some people were disturbed by the fact that the photo, which was always seen as fact, was created by multiple images.

The issue of amateur versus professional also comes up. Southworth and Hawes were very professional as they took many pictures of Boston's elite who were quite wealthy. Daguerreotypes were the primary source of income. However, images like Robinson's “Dawn To Sunset” were created in a more amateur setting – allowing him to be more creative and take the scene into his own hands. For example, if someone were paying him for a family portrait he would have to answer to their desires and they would want a factual family portrait rather than a painting-like image.