

« **Pandora's Box**
Jan Dibbets on Another photography »
25 march – 17 July 2016



Meret Oppenheim (1913-1985), *Radiographie du crâne de M. O.*, 1964 (*Röntgenaufnahme des Schädels M. O.*), Collection particulière, courtesy : Peter Freeman, Inc.
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PRESS KIT

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Pandora's Box ***Jan Dibbets on Another photography***

25 March - 17 July 2016

Press preview: Thursday 24 March 11 am – 2 pm

Opening: Thursday 24 March 6 pm – 9 pm

"In the course of photography's brief history we can see how this diabolical, hybrid medium began to insist increasingly on its place in the arts, especially since the 1960s and the coming of Conceptualism." (Jan Dibbets)

The Musée d'Art Moderne has called on Jan Dibbets – whose own contribution to Conceptual art was decisive – for a reinterpretation of the history of photography from its invention up to the present day. Rejecting a conventional approach in what is his first venture into curating, Dibbets sets out to pursue the line he has been following since the 1960s, and which marked his exhibitions at the Musée d'Art Moderne in 1980, 1994 and 2010.

Jan Dibbets has addressed this project radically. For him the power of the photographic medium lies in its specific characteristics and technical possibilities, rather than in its content and subject matter. At odds with the ongoing institutionalisation of the documentary image, he quotes Duchamp's reply to a question from Stieglitz in 1922: "You know exactly what I think about photography. I would like to see it make people despise painting until something else will make photography unbearable." ("Can a Photograph Have the Significance of Art", *MSS*, no. 4, December 1922, New York).

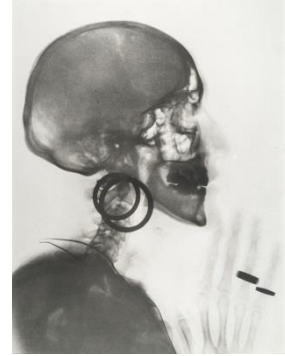
Breaking with the standard museum codes while adhering to a more or less chronological framework, the exhibition investigates the nature of the photograph in the digital age and photography's relationships with the visual arts. Although the discipline quickly became a competitor for painterly realism – think Ingres – it is the scientifically oriented photographers of the 19th century who emerge here as the true visionaries, paving the way for entire output of the 20th century. Nicéphore Niépce, Gustave Le Gray, Etienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge are on show here, alongside other photographers less well known – but for Dibbets just as crucial – including Wilson A. Bentley and Etienne Léopold Trouvelot. Their direct successors are Karl Blossfeldt, Man Ray, Alexander Rodchenko, Paul Strand and Berenice Abbot – in a line that continues on to Bruce Nauman.

As an apologia for photography's reproducibility, the "Pandora's Box" the discipline represents for Dibbets is a recipe for total freedom: side by side he shows two similar images, or a positive and its negative, or a copy of a famous work made by a later photographer.

The high point of the exhibition is a selection of photographs by contemporary artists – among them Thomas Ruff, James Welling, Wade Guyton, Seth Price ... – whose recourse to digital technology compels an extension of the concept of what Markus Kramer calls the "photographic object".

The generously illustrated catalogue includes contributions from Hubertus von Amelunxen, Jan Dibbets, Markus Kramer, François Michaud and Erik Verhagen.

With the support of



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Radiographie du crâne de M. O., 1964
(Röntgenaufnahme des Schädels M. O.)
Collection particulière, courtesy : Peter Freeman, Inc.
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Museum Director
Fabrice Hergott

Exhibition curators
Jan Dibbets
François Michaud

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#expoDibbets

Exhibition layout

Pandora's Box another photography by Jan Dibbets

The Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris has invited Jan Dibbets – whose own contribution to Conceptual art was crucial – to take a fresh look at the history of photography from its invention up to the present day. In this personal overview of what he calls “another photography” Dibbets sets out to convey his passion for a medium which, before becoming an art form, was primarily a matter of technique. The exhibition opens with a photographic reproduction of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres's *Portrait de la vicomtesse d'Haussonville*, painted between 1842 and 1845, just as the history of photography was beginning. By thus proclaiming Ingres the precursor of colour photography, Dibbets raises the question of realism and the writing of a new history of art. The point here is not to set up a polarity between photography and painting, but to show how the discoveries of such forerunners as Nicéphore Niépce, William Henry Fox Talbot, Anna Atkins, Gustave Le Gray, Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne Jules Marey have led directly to today's most recent artistic practices. Science has enabled photography to advance, but at the same time photography has constantly striven to push back its technical boundaries. The experimentation of the early twentieth century had less and less to do with science as such. As the work of Alvin Langdon Coburn, Anton Giulio Bragaglia, Alfred Stieglitz, Alexander Rodchenko and Man Ray testifies, photography was taking up central issues of the artistic avant-garde of its time. The format is not strictly chronological: alternating between the medium's beginnings and recent creative endeavours, the exhibition underscores the continuing echoes of the past. As far as possible we have tried to show original works, but at the same time Jan Dibbets is calling on us to rethink this concept: in urging an awareness of all the implications of photography's reproducibility, he shares the concerns of appropriationist artists like Sherrie Levine. Besides, the advent of the digital brought a further quantum leap in the medium's history, as illustrated by the work of Thomas Ruff who consistently expanded our traditional understanding of photography by creating a new form class of the technological image... Younger artists like Seth Price, Wade Guyton and Kelley Walker took these ideas further by developing an increasingly spatial approach.

Photographic objects

The works presented here reflect a very specific choice mainly based on the «photographic object» concept outlined by Markus Kramer in his analysis of the work of some of the artists on show. The rise of information technology has made possible purely digital images with no equivalent in the actual physical world. Also, new images have been obtained by using digital or analogue technology to produce transformations of existing source material. In contrast with traditional photography, the outcome may have only the most distant relationship with the original, since any object can be distorted to the point of becoming an abstract image. At the same time the process involved is still photography. Thomas Ruff's abstract images, for example, have the same technical characteristics as those he produces by blowing up an old photograph using contemporary procedures. Katharina Sieverding creates hallucinatory presences by technological manipulation of the original image, while James Welling chooses referents that enable him to achieve monochrome surfaces. On the other hand, whatever method Kelley Walker, Seth Price, Wade Guyton or Spiros Hadjidjanos use to generate three-dimensional structures out of two-dimensional images, the results are closer to sculpture. Even so, they can still be considered «photographic objects» in that the artists' approach and the processes used are only an extension of the field of technology. Each of these artists is seeking an extreme expression of the photographic principle; this is why they have been chosen for this exhibition.

Scientific photography

Photography was the outcome of the work of the physicist and chemist Nicéphore Niépce and his meeting with the painter and theatre set designer Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre. Daguerre was also the creator of the famous Diorama in Paris in 1822 – a synoptic painted representation of the city. Their collaboration led to the invention of the daguerreotype, officially announced to the French Academy of Science by François Arago in 1839. The daguerreotype, however, was a single, non-reproducible object. By 1844 photography was being used to record natural phenomena. William Henry Fox Talbot and Anna Atkins brought to their images of flowers an artistic quality echoed in the pictures later taken by Karl Blossfeldt but only revealed to the public in the 1920s. The new medium also made possible the reproducible capturing of what the human eye could not see, from the infinitely large to the infinitely small. Thus in 1845 it was being used for microphotography by Andreas Ritter von Ettingshausen or Auguste Adolphe Bertsch, and for astronomy. In the 1880s Jules Janssen and Paul and Prosper Henry were producing photographs of the solar system. It was at the same period that the invention of gelatin-silver bromide snapshots made taking photos easier, and the medium became a research tool for scientists. In 1882 Étienne Jules Marey and Georges Demenÿ pursued the work done by Eadweard Muybridge and developed chronophotography, the sequential analysis of movement. Thus photography gave access to the behaviour of living creatures, one example being Duchenne de Boulogne's documenting of his physiology experiments. Then the discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen in the last decade of the 19th century brought the rise of radiography. All these images formed an enormous repertoire which would be drawn on by the artistic avant-gardes of the early 20th century.

The exhibition catalog

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INTRODUCTION

The artist Jan Dibbets is well known to the Musée d'Art Moderne, where he has presented three solo exhibitions, in 1980, 1994 and 2010. An exceptional figure, who has demonstrated remarkable consistency, his works have always found their place quite naturally within the museum's monumental halls. Is this because, through light, framing, monumentality and movement, they highlight the games and traps generated by space? Is it because the questions they pose regarding the mechanisms of vision are eminently linked to museums? Is not an art museum a device destined to lead the gaze towards an awareness of its own abundance but also its snares? And is not modernity the desire to see, but in full knowledge of the facts? This concern is present throughout Dibbets' oeuvre. In his book on the artist's photographic work, Erik Verhagen wrote, "It is more accurate to consider him an artist of process art rather than Conceptual art". At a time when the issue of the artwork's process has once again become stimulating and topical, examining an artist whose major role is no longer in doubt seemed obvious to me. The influence of Dibbets' works, as substantial as it is understated, endures, and extends well beyond photography. These works have entered the intellectual heritage of art from the 1960s to the present day, to the point that I think it is no longer possible to look at the sea on the horizon, stroll through a gothic architectural structure, stare out a window or contemplate the reflections of the street in the bodywork of a car without reminding yourself that Dibbets has already passed that way. Of course, all these things and many others existed before him, but no one has ever drained reality to such an extent. The history of an art, because it is a history, is often seen as too broad, too cumbersome not to be treated by a specialist, a historian — consequently few historians dare to venture there for fear of being judged by their peers. In addition, it is often assumed that artists express themselves through their practice and any other activity would be a sort of unofficial, superficial occupation — a hobby. However, with Jan Dibbets, the two are linked. His visual work is firstly an interrogation of the gaze and hence an interrogation of photography and its hold on the gaze. Since the 1960s Dibbets has been consistent in literally contorting the use of photography to extract its contradictions and, somehow, its impurity. He cannot bear the kind of thinking wherein photography would self-evidently be a medium that shows things as they are and in which we can trust. For him, photography is a double-edged instrument, showing us something at the same time as preventing us from seeing it. During my first meeting with Jan Dibbets, I was struck by his impassioned knowledge of the history of photography. We met several times after that, and during a visit to Amsterdam a little over two years ago, I proposed the ambitious, slightly unreasonable project of curating a photography exhibition, from its origins up to the present day. It had been years since the last cross-disciplinary exhibition on the subject and to me numerous questions about photography seemed far from resolved. Isn't this is the only artistic field that is so heterogeneous? In photography, the best, and occasionally the unique, often coexist with the worst, without any process of discrimination, as if the mere fact of being a photograph already qualified it as art. A particularly enlightening observation when we know that photography is ubiquitous today, to the point of having supplanted writing. With the widespread use of smartphones, people no longer take notes or memorise: one takes a photograph instead. In less than two centuries, from daguerreotype to digital photography, the medium has undergone unprecedented changes; the effect on individual and social behavior is one of the most profound in history. All this without our yet seeming to have properly understood what photography is — a technique become an art, as if by magic. Jan Dibbets committed himself heart and soul to this project, which moved beyond just a personal choice of works, becoming a true reflection; this selection of photographs is designed to clarify his position and show what — in his view, with his subjectivity as an artist — introduces meaning. His is a critical, questioning gaze, particularly expert and informed, curious about what has been done as well as what is being done, the gaze of a discerning collector, eager to know what photography is and what it can become. Such an exhibition would not have been possible without the involvement of the artist Jan Dibbets. The museum will never be able to sufficiently demonstrate its gratitude to him for the determination and energy he has brought to this exceptional curatorship, and for the endless time that has gone into the preparation of the exhibition and its catalogue. His vision and knowledge of the subject sparked the interest and curiosity of all. We are also indebted to him for the respect he accorded each individual's work, and his humour that helped resolve every difficulty as though with the wave of a magic wand. I also owe sincere thanks for

their generous contributions to François Michaud, curator for the Musée d'Art Moderne, always adept in deploying considerable diplomatic skills, Hanna Boghanim, whose exacting and extraordinarily effective aid was equal to her herculean capacity for hard work, Olivia Gaultier, who helped the project's realization, and Hélène Studievic, the catalogue editor, who steered the course of a publication full of inventions and initiatives, with firmness, exactitude and generous good humour, within too tight a timeframe, as ever. I wish to express my special appreciation to Erik Verhagen, the discreet and elegant mediator between the Musée d'Art Moderne and the artist, as well as Kaayk Dibbets, whose presence alongside her husband Jan Dibbets is surely the cornerstone of this project. Lastly, I would like to thank the authors and many kind supporters who participated so generously towards the realization of this exciting undertaking. Nothing would have been possible without them.

Fabrice Hergott, Director at the Musée d'Art moderne of Paris

François Michaud, “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?”

(...) One of the concerns of this exhibition is to demonstrate that in photography the work of the forerunners — for whom technical experimentation was often a sufficient goal — fits fairly naturally with the issues that have surfaced over the last fifty years. When a painter ordered daguerreotypes of their paintings, it was mainly because they saw them as ancillaries that were more accurate and easier to obtain than an engraving. Printmaking has always called for a considerable technical skill that photographers were not immediately credited with: all the hand had to do, it was thought, was release the shutter, and the only calculations involved were those for focus, aperture and exposure time. Marcel Duchamp's interest in photography, whose workings he was able to observe in detail thanks to his friend Man Ray, was conditioned by this *disengagement* of the hand, which seemed to him to enable a short-circuit between the idea and the work, without the tediousness of a process that always called for some degree of virtuosity. Duchamp's affectation of disdain for all forms of artistic *production* would rebound to the benefit of the photograph by underscoring its character as a non-physical work — a pure mental projection. For the artists of the 1960s who accepted the rhetoric of the primacy of the concept over actual production, photography was an obvious ancillary and an objective ally: it allowed them to *document* a process and record an action without burdening the resultant trace with an artistic value, which was thought to exist only in the idea and not in its concrete manifestations. As these artists saw it, this did not make the photograph an artwork — and a fortiori did not endow it with any exchange value. And yet, as for any kind of object, an increase in value always follows an increase in rarity. (...)

(...) Use value of the photograph; exchange value of the vintage image

The art market has its own logic, which naturally enough consists in preferring an old print made by the artist themselves or under their direct supervision. The logic of the medium itself is different: it automatically entails duplication. Brassai, for example, made later prints of the images from *Paris by Night*, which had initially been reproduced using photogravure: in the book of the same name published in 1933 and, for some of them, in André Breton's *Mad Love* of 1937. The matter of the degree of originality of these different renderings of the same work can justifiably be raised here, from the point of view of both the artist and art historians; but most importantly it was this very multiplication, in different forms and different media, that made the series known and ensured its fame. That a *succès d'estime* should later trigger a quest for the original prints, or *faute de mieux* for the oldest possible ones, is of interest above all to collectors and curators; the public will continue to flock to the exhibitions and buy books or posters reproducing the same images. Should we take sides here? We would probably do better just to face facts: by virtue of the photograph's reproducibility there exist several *states* of the same image; they are much more numerous and varied than in the case of an etching and their respective *value* is distributed along a scale extending from *the highest exchange value to the greatest use value*. Museum policy is naturally to preserve and as far as possible exhibit the most original copies of a work. However, since the exhibitions *Hitchcock and Art: Fatal Coincidences* in 2001 and *The Movement of Images* in 2006, we have increasingly witnessed the practice of presenting movies in the form of video excerpts. This can probably be justified on technical grounds or the need to establish correlations between fixed and moving-image works whose presentation in full would be counter-productive. Having said this, we cannot help pondering the readiness with which we accept this kind of distortion of the original — a series of stills from a 35 mm

film, for example, in the case of the cinema — while misgivings seem to prevail in respect of “exhibition prints” where photography as such is concerned. And yet in photography the production of duplicates with long-term display in mind was being justified for pretty much the same reasons and in the same terms some decades ago, before the ease of video drove us to the over-representation of moving images. The conservation imperative then seemed to underlie all the migrations between media. Nor is it uncommon today to see negatives shown on a video screen, out of concern for conservation — or for reasons of sheer facility. (...)

(...) ***The Hundred and One Dalmatians***

The artist’s relationship with the original is always ambiguous. The collector’s veneration for the authenticity of a print, or for the untouchable integrity of an earlier master’s work, can be deliberately undermined by a living artist, precisely because they are “living” and still producing. Their oeuvre remains to be completed and the only constraints they face are those of the chosen medium, their own or their assistants’ technical skill, and thus the possibility at a *given moment* of making something or other. How can you argue with that? All the objections we can raise to this approach are external: they have to do not with artistic creation as such, but with what surrounds, and perhaps, contextualises it. The copy is an integral part of learning; so much so that in Asia it takes precedence over the idea of originality. The reproduction is often the indispensable passport to discovery of a work for those denied the opportunity of seeing the original. René Magritte, who had worked in advertising in the 1930s — as what we would now call a *graphic designer* — always loved to see his work reproduced on postcards and posters. It was him, at least as much as Daguerre, that Marcel Broodthaers had in mind when he titled a set of photographs of tomatoes, vegetables and fish *Daguerre’s Soup*. (...)

Jan Dibbets in conversation with Erik Verhagen “Stop Taking Photos!”

(...) ***A tree with its roots***

EV How did you go about constructing this exhibition? You’re neither a theorist nor a historian, and you’re emphatic that you’d never given photography much thought before this project came up.

JD No, I’d never thought about photography from this point of view. I don’t think artists should construct discourses or concepts out of what has gone before them — history, I mean; they should be thinking about what’s *still to come*. And when I was asked to mount this exhibition, I felt it was maybe time to start doing just that. If somebody had put the idea to me fifteen years ago, I would have said no. But at the venerable age of almost seventy-five, why not? In fact I really enjoyed coming to grips with photography in another way, applying “new” parameters, and the outcome was different from anything I could have imagined. In a way, I relearned everything. Because I didn’t actually know that much. I’d seen things here and there. But in the final analysis photography has never interested me in terms of its history or historiography. I’m drawn to art and to photography in an art context, but not to photography as such. We supposedly Conceptual artists never talked about photography perse.

EV Isn’t that surprising for a self-styled photoconceptualist? I’m also thinking here of the fact that you were never big on theory.

JD You know that remark of Barnett Newman’s about art history, that to him it’s what ornithology is to birds? What point is there for an artist in relying on some theoretical system? Between artists we talked art, not theory. Conceptual art didn’t exist back then. The label came along much later, and as so often happens, by the time the label comes along, the thing itself has vanished. 1973 was the end of Conceptual art. And that wasn’t such a bad thing either. You know, ultimately Conceptual art got up my nose. It was pushed by fellow artists who made fun of me for using colour photography around 1970. For them only black and white was worthy of any interest. To come back to your question, all I can say is that when you set to work, theory’s no help at all, because what you’re embarking on doesn’t exist yet. Theory can only get in the way. (...)

(...) **The what and the how**

EV Why does your exhibition open with a photograph of Ingres's *Comtesse d'Haussonville*?

JD The exhibition opens and closes with colour photographs. And for me, Ingres is both an artist and — this is a completely subjective judgement — the greatgrandfather of colour photography.

EV You say your exhibition is structured around the photographic *how* and not the *what*. Could you elaborate on that?

JD In documentary photography the emphasis is solely on the *what* — on what's being photographed. Everything's tied to this *what*. *What, what, what*. This, as I see it, is the most problematic aspect of photography. Let's say that in artistic terms, it's the least decisive aspect. The *how* — I'm talking about the creative, not the technical *how* — is much more important. The *how* that is often pushed aside, not to say eliminated. The deepest content is to be found in the *how*. True, a photograph of the assassination of a queen, even one taken accidentally by a threeyear- old, can be very interesting. It can end up being chosen Photo of the Year. But that moment has no significance for art. When Cézanne paints "from life", is the subject the most important thing? Of course not. The documentary photographer is always in search of what's happening, of *what's happened* — of something "interesting". And once again the photographer's stress is almost unfailingly on the *what*, whereas, at least in an artistic context, the opposite should be the case. And when you ask them about the *how*, the great majority of photographers are lost for words. They have no idea. (...)

(...) **Intuitions**

EV Could you tell me some more about your choices as a curator; or to put it another way, is an exhibition organized by an artist different from one organized by a historian of art or photography?

JD With an artist there's no dodging the subjective, intuitive aspect. No avoiding the personal dimension. There's no doubt about that. The historian has a responsibility to history. I don't feel that.

EV And it doesn't interest you?

JD Not in the least. I lack the skills for playing that role. If I had them, I'd study art history.

EV We can take it for granted that you're going to draw fire for your choices and the resultant omissions. But an artist can allow themselves this kind of clear-cut point of view.

JD Right. Once again, I got a real kick out of devising this exhibition. But any curator specializing in photography knows more about all this than I do. that knowledge into an exhibition.

EV Your initial list of photographers was very different from the one you ended up with. Can you tell me something about the elimination process?

JD I started out with what I know — what I found interesting. And gradually I came across new things, new slants. As time passes the list takes shape and you get a clearer view of things. Then you see what needs to be eliminated and what could be added. Once again, it's not an exact science. My choices are intuitive — you can't prove anything. And something you just might be able to prove can vanish overnight. I'd like to be able to call the shots — to be really specific about what I'm trying to do — but that's not possible in the photographic domain.

EV There were still some documentary photographers on your initial list.

JD Right, but after chewing it over, I only kept Richard Long and Robert Smithson. It's true that they produced documentary images, but these referenced concrete, ephemeral reality states that were replaced by images. In the case of these two artists, the works I chose exist only as documentary traces.

EV What's your opinion of today's hyperinflation of photography, of the way we're being colonized by photos? Of the mobile phone revolution and so on?

JD My watchword is, “Stop taking photos!”² We should institute a ten-year moratorium. Ban all photography. Ten years with no Internet, no Facebook. Nothing. I’m not talking here about some kind of romantic return to the past. I know that’s impossible. But right now we’ve come to a point of incredible superficiality. Depth is dead. We have no time to think anymore. Right now we have all the potential for thinking more clearly than we used to, but actual reflectiveness is being held hostage, smothered, made impossible.

EV You couldn’t go back to analogue?

JD No, it would be as if I’d gone back to black and white in 1971 on the grounds that it was more artistic. That would be nonsensical. Today is digital. Either you stop completely or you climb aboard. It’s one or the other.

EV But isn’t it scary to have to always bow down to the latest technology?

JD Not at all, it’s just great! You think you’re on the right track and suddenly it all falls apart before your very eyes. Photography’s used to this kind of upset. Theoretically that could never happen to you with painting, but think again: if it was 1951 and as a European artist you’d been invited for a drink with Barnett Newman in his studio in New York, and all of a sudden there you were, looking at his blue painting with two zips, how do you think you would have reacted? That’s far worse than discovering digital photography.

EV What I was trying to say — we’ve already talked about this — is that one of the advantages of painting is that it’s never been *too* subject to repeated technical disruptions. Apart from two or three major revolutions — the coming of the fresco, the invention of oils, etc. — painting had been able to evolve in total “freedom”. This seems to be more of an issue for photography. (...)

Hubertus von Amelunxen, “La Soupe de Daguerre or How the Ends Touch the Beginnings”

(...) Yet a photograph, no matter how changed, processed, distorted or “artistic”, is still a photograph. As Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe wrote, this in no way means that photography cannot be an art, but it definitely says, “that its entrance into that domain, if it takes place in one way or another, means that we can no longer think that domain, as it were, as that of art”.³ In the early 1850s Gustave Le Gray made a fervent plea for the distinctiveness of the photographic image to be acknowledged, and to be protected from industrialization and commercialization for the benefit of art. Photographs, he said, should be exhibited like paintings in museums, and people should be educated for the new gaze, for photography’s new way of seeing.

Charles Baudelaire, by contrast, in his famous critique of photography of 1859, denied photography any proximity to art and expelled the “photography industry”, as a modest servant (“the very humble servant”), to the realms of the sciences, archives, copies and travelogues. “But if it be allowed to encroach on the domain of the impalpable and the imaginary, upon anything whose value depends solely upon the addition of something of a man’s soul, then it will be so much for worse for us!” Baudelaire surely suspected that this misfortune had already happened, that Pandora’s vase had already been spilt. He also realized the decisive importance photography would have for art: “It will soon have supplanted or corrupted it altogether”, viewers will regard the products of photography, of the “material science”, as beautiful, and after a while it will have “diminished the faculty of judging and of feeling what are among the most ethereal and immaterial aspects of creation”.⁵ Dibbets’ exhibition is not directly about Baudelaire: we cannot ask whether it would be possible — with reference to Lacoue-Labarthe — to conceive of Baudelaire as a photographer, and whether he who allegorically made seeing the scenario of the poem would recognize in a photograph the present alienated in an image, which was also at the origin of his poetics of modernism. Gustave Le Gray and Charles Baudelaire both welcomed photography, the one as a possibility of art, the other as a radical caesura in every form of producing and perceiving art.

More than a century later, as if it were a matter of affirming history once again, the photographer and artist Marcel Broodthaers made the picture *La Soupe de Daguerre* (1974): a kind of photographic camouflage consisting of twelve colour photographs arranged in three perpendicular rows, one beside the other, with a label like the one on a school copybook or a bottling jar placed in the centre, below the lowest row and bearing the title of the work written by hand — a written image. The two upper horizontal rows show different quantities of lovely round red tomatoes, in the third row there is a head of salad, some carrots and some scallions, all presented quite neutrally on different coloured backgrounds and arranged as if for a textbook on cooking, as teaching material for school or as ingredients in a cookery book. On the bottom row are two reproductions of drawings of fish, which differ only in the photographic exposure, and finally a reproduction of a single fish as if rising up for the fishhook that would drag it to its fate of ending up in *La Soupe de Daguerre*. The viewer in front of this chart could think that this *Soupe de Daguerre* was a fish soup with vegetables. In 1961, in his earliest essay on photography, Roland Barthes wrote that photography was of an “analogical plenitude”.⁷ Hence the difficulty of describing it, or let us say hence the complexity of a description that adds something to the image’s abundance. The denotation of the image is fulfilled by what it depicts, by an analogue abundance, so that every verbal addition involves a structural change in the meaning of what is shown. As an analogon, photography is a “message *without a code*”. Unlike the other mimetic arts, such as drawing, painting or film, that have a “*denoted* message”, the analogon, and also has a “*connoted* message”, the style, the “period rhetoric” or the social consensus, photography has no code, according to Barthes. He uses the term “photographic paradox” for the fact that in photography “the connoted (or coded) message” develops out of a “message without a code”. (...)

Practical information

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Bus : 32/42/63/72/80/92
Station Vélib' : 3 av. Montaigne or 2 rue Marceau
Station Autolib' : 24 av. d'Iéna, 33 av. Pierre 1^{er} de Serbie or 1 av. Marceau

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm (ticket desk closes at 5:15pm)
Late opening on Thursdays until 10pm only for special exhibitions (ticket desk closes at 9:15pm)
Closed on Mondays and during bank holidays
Open March 27th, May 5th, May 8th, May 15th 2016



The exhibition is accessible to people with motor and reduced mobility disabilities.

Admission

Full rate €9
Concessions €6

Ticket desk

No-queue tickets available on www.mam.paris.fr

The museum also presents

Pandora's Box, Another photography by Jan Dibbets at the ARC from March 25th to July 17th 2016
Paula Modersohn-Becker, An Intensely Artistic Eye, from April 8th to August 21th 2016
Sturtevant, *The House of Horrors* installation in the collection until April 30th 2016

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