THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

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PRINT SALES GALLERY

A GUIDE TO COLLECTING PHOTOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Photography is one of the most exciting, accessible and rapidly evolving of our contemporary art forms and offers a great opportunity to begin an art collection, whatever your price point or level of knowledge.

It's a particularly exciting time to start collecting, as the photographic image has gained a currency and cultural value as never before.

The Photographers' Gallery offers a professional and welcoming environment to learn about a range of photographers and works. Our expert team will guide you through the process of acquiring a print, whether you're a first timer or seasoned collector.

GETTING STARTED

Collecting is a genuinely rewarding pursuit and can bring a lifetime of enjoyment, enrichment and investment potential.

You should always aim to acquire work you genuinely like rather than for commercial reasons.

Take time to understand your own tastes and interests.

Consider whether your collection will have a theme of any kind. Are you interested in a particular subject matter, historical period or photographic genre? Is there a particular photographer whose work you want to collect?

Do your research.

Acquire knowledge of the photographer, the context for the work and the photographic concept.

Look for work that is compelling, thought-provoking and will continue to intrigue and engage.

Most importantly, follow your instinct and buy from the heart.

KNOWLEDGE IS EVERYTHING

"Getting reliable information is the core of connoisseurship. And connoisseurship, although a deeply unfashionable word, is precisely the blend of knowledge and taste that you want to acquire."

— Professor Frances Hodgson, academic, writer and photography critic

Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions and ask your gallerist for as much advice as you need. A good gallerist will both support and actively encourage curiosity so you can learn as much as possible about the work you collect and fully enjoy it.

Research the artists you are interested in, using various sources of information such the artists' gallery, the internet, magazines and auction houses for more established photographers.

It can be useful to look at a full body of work to contextualise a photograph that you are considering. Notice whether the artist is consistent and whether the quality of their work is sustained across all their work.

EDITIONS
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LIMITED EDITIONS
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PRICING

Although photography can theoretically be endlessly reproduced, artists often limit the number of prints that can be made from a single negative or image. Photographs can have editions in multiple sizes, so it is important you find out the total number of prints available. The size of an edition and the number of prints remaining has a direct influence on the price of a photograph.

CHOOSE WISELY

AIM FOR:

- Signed works – these are more valuable than unsigned or estate prints.
- Limited editions – especially from photographers that have a proven editorial or exhibition history.
- Gallery limited editions – Not only do these provide a really accessible price point for work from established/ collectable photographers, but profits generally go towards supporting a public programme or emergent artists platform.
- Vintage photographs in good condition.
- If you are acquiring with investment as a factor, consider the signature images from a series rather than lesser images from the same series or by the same artist.

AVOID:

- Photographs in poor condition.
- Unsigned or unauthenticated photographs.
- Lesser images, even by well-known photographers.
- Mass-produced digital prints in large editions, even by well known photographers.
- Buying any photography just because you've been told they'll be the next big thing.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR PRINT

- Make sure the surface of your print stays flawless.
- Avoid handling your artwork, or seek advice about how to handle it and always wear gloves.
- Mount and frame with a reputable framer that uses acid free, museum standard materials.
- Purchase the best quality glazing that you can afford.
- Avoid hanging your artwork in direct sunlight, over heat sources or in humid environments. Extreme temperature changes are not ideal.
- Track the value of your works and insure them accordingly.
- Use specific cleaning fluids on the glazing once the piece is framed.

ARTIST'S PROOF
A/Ps refer to prints that are made especially for the artist and they are not included in the regular limited edition print run but are of the same quality. Traditionally A/Ps were proofs that were used to check the quality of the print.

C PRINT
This is a generic term used for all colour photographs, analogue and digital.

CHROMOGENIC PRINT
This was the most common colour photographic process until recently. Chromogenic prints were printed in a darkroom using an analogue negative until approximately 2000 when the digital lab started to replace the analogue darkroom. Digital chromogenic prints are often called Lambda or Lightjet prints after the lab that was used to produce them. Analogue C-Type prints are still available and are often referred to as traditional C-Type prints.

DIGITAL PRINT
This is a generic term used for a photograph made with a digital negative.

INKJET PRINT
(can also be referred to as a Giclée print or an Iris print) Since 2010 inkjet printing has slowly been replacing chromogenic prints. An inkjet print is made from a digital negative or file using fine droplets of water-based ink. A distinction is often made between inkjet dyes and inkjet pigment inks. The pigment inks are typically used by professional printers as they are considered more stable.

EDITION / LIMITED EDITION
A maximum number of prints produced of an image in a certain size or with a certain printing method. The prints are numbered with the chronological number of the

print followed by the size of the edition. For example, 2/20 signifies print number two from an edition limited to 20.

MODERN / LATER PRINT
A print produced some time after the photograph was taken. For example, a photograph printed in 1998 from a negative made in 1939 would be considered a modern print. These are sometimes also called later prints. (See Vintage print, below).

POSTHUMOUS PRINT / ESTATE PRINT
A print produced posthumously, ie after the photographer has died, from the original negative. Estate prints are usually authenticated by a family member.

SIGNATURE LABEL / CERTIFICATE
If a print is mounted to aluminium or another substrate on the reverse, the artist's signature may be obscured. Your gallerist should offer you a signature certificate or label that will work in the same way as a signature on the print itself. This is a form of authentication that is important to keep safe along with your print.

SIGNED VERSO / RECTO
A signature on the back of the print is denoted verso, and on the front recto.

SILVER GELATIN PRINT
A traditional black and white photograph produced in a darkroom on paper with a light sensitive silver compound adhered with a gelatin glue.

VINTAGE PRINT
A print made at the same time that the negative was made. In practice, this usually means within one or two years of the negative date. For example, a photograph taken in 1951 and printed in 1952 would be considered a vintage print.

16–18 Ramillies Street
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Monday–Saturday 10.00–18.00
Thursday 10.00–20.00
Sunday 11.30–18.00

Cover image:
© Jacques-Henri Lartigue,
Renée Ciboure, August 1930

Captions:
I © Julie Cockburn, *Lagoon*, 2013
II © Pentti Sammallahti, *Mount Etjo, Namibia*, 2005
III © Luke Stephenson, *Java Sparrow #1*, 2009
IV © Tamas Dezso, *The Flooded Village of Geamana*, Romania, 2011

CONTACT US TO RECEIVE:

- A 10% discount on your first photograph*
- Invitations to our Private Views
- Early notification about Gallery Editions
- To book a personalised consultation

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* This discount applies to the majority of our photographers' works