

Image and Enterprise: The Photographs of Adolphe Braun, February 4, 2000-April 22, 2000

Adolphe Braun (1812-1877) was an entrepreneur who recognized the possibilities of the new process of photography. Trained to provide designs for textile manufacture in the city of Mulhouse in eastern France, he launched a second career in the 1850s as a photographer. Over the following decades, Braun's enterprise was fueled by ambition, business sense, and skillful use of technical developments.

His company became a leader in creating photographs for a wide audience. Braun and his team of photographers produced works for both a popular and a fine-arts market. Their images embody the deepest historical trends of the time in commerce, industry, culture, and politics. They also reveal the way in which an emerging medium offered an international public new ways of understanding their rapidly changing world.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877

Le Staubbach, Vallée de Lauterbrunnen, ca. 1866

Albumen print

Walter H. Kimball, Mary B. Jackson and The Jerome and Phyllis

Littman Corwin Photo Funds 1999.59.2

The photographs of Staubbach Falls in a variety of sizes and formats offer a compelling example of both the quality and significance of the Braun firm's work during these years. The dark radiance of the image captures the sublime nature of the Alpine landscape as no other. This composition was widely known and became the chief model for images of the Falls.

American

Untitled, 1800s

Daguerreotype; hand coloring

Gift of Mrs. Truman B. Pierce 17.118

Invented by Frenchman Louis Daguerre in 1837, daguerreotype was the first photographic process. Within a camera, a chemically treated copper plate with a silver coating was exposed to light. When developed, a positive image was created on the copper plate itself. There was no negative; only the single representation on the plate. This was the limitation of the process. There was no easy way to



RISD MUSEUM

reproduce the image. These two daguerreotypes are typical of the form's usual purpose, subject, and style: to capture a posed portrait.

Gustave de Beaucorps, French, 1825-1906
Algerian Street Scene, ca. 1858-1860
Waxed-paper negative
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1997.66

These three images are examples of various photographic processes that emerged during the mid-19th century. The calotype, invented by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1840, allowed for a negative to be made on paper treated with silver nitrate and other chemicals and then exposed to light. The salt print was a common method of creating a positive image from such a negative: here is seen Lady Eastlake, an artist and writer on photography. A salted piece of paper was exposed while in contact with the paper negative, fixing a positive image on the surface of the salted paper. This procedure enabled the making of unlimited prints from a single negative, although the quality of the prints gradually degraded as the print number increased. The Woodburytype process, invented in 1866 by Woodbury, was a variation on what was known as the carbon process. An image made in gelatin would be impressed on a sheet of lead under great pressure, creating a mold into which ink or colored gelatin could be poured and then used to make multiple, high quality images. This technique could be mechanized and became part of the Braun company's later practice.



RISD MUSEUM

David Octavius Hill, Scottish, 1802-1870
Robert Adamson, Scottish, 1821-1848
Elizabeth Rigby (Lady Eastlake), ca. 1845
Salt print from paper negative
Jesse Metcalf Fund 77.049



John Thomson, Scottish, 1837-1921
Street Doctor, Street Life in London, 1877
Woodburytype
Walter H. Kimball Fund 75.069



Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877
Fruit Tree Blossoms, from Photographs of Flowers (Fleurs Photographiées), ca. 1854
Albumen silver print
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1997.20



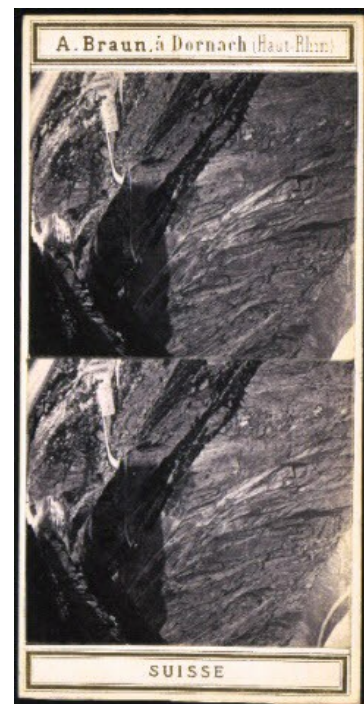
Flower painting arrived in France from the Netherlands at the beginning of the 18th century and was directly connected to the increased interest in horticulture of the time. The art was taught at the Musée Nationale d'Histoire Naturelle beginning in the late 18th century as a means of documenting botanic specimens with precision. Flower painters were employed to supply designs for porcelain factories such as those at Sèvres and other industrial

RISD MUSEUM

centers. Braun's photographs with their lower cost and great accuracy, opened a new chapter in what was already a long history in the visual representation of nature.

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877
Fifty-one Stereoscopic Views, ca. 1875
Albumen silver prints on stereoscopic mount
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1993.036.6

The St. Gotthard Pass leads southward through the Alps, connecting Central Switzerland with Italy, and has been the main passage for such travel since the 13th century. Braun's firm extensively photographed the creation of the railroad tunnel that largely replaced the old overland route. The spanning of the deep Schollenen Gorge by this famous medieval bridge had been the first step in opening the route to travel. The bridge became a battle site during the French Revolution and was the subject of a watercolor by British artists Joseph M. W. Turner (1775- 1851).



French
Cup and saucer, 1800s
Porcelain
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.298

French
Demitasse cup and saucer, 1800s
Porcelain
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.299

RISD MUSEUM

American
Untitled, 1800s
Daguerreotype
Gift of Mrs. Truman B. Pierce 17.121

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877
Man with Ox, ca. 1862-1864
Albumen print
Walter H. Kimball, Mary B. Jackson and The Jerome and Phyllis
Littman Corwin Photo Funds 1999.59.1

American
Folio cabinet, ca. 1880
Ebonized cherry with incised gilt decoration
Gift of Alice G. taft, Marianna F. Taft, Hope Smith and Brockholst M.
Smith 45.118

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877
Cascade inferieure de Barbarine, Fifty-one Stereoscopic Views, 1860s
Albumen silver prints on stereoscopic mount
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1993.036.16

The waterfalls of Switzerland and other countries proved an irresistible subject for a variety of images, including this one at a popular Swiss hiking site. Fleeting effects of the luminous mist



RISD MUSEUM

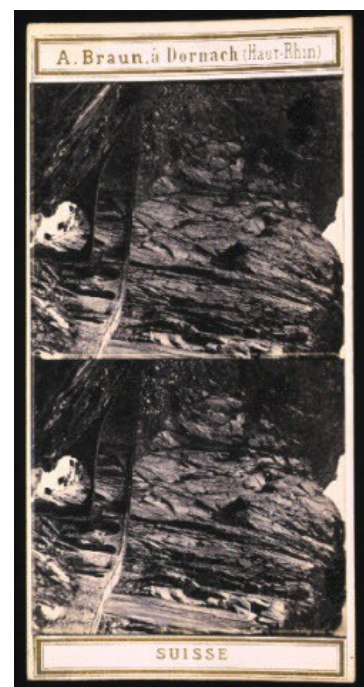
produced by falling water could be captured beautifully through photography to create appealing images.

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877

St. Gotthard Route. The Schoellenen Gorge (Route du St.-Gotthardt. Gorge de Schoellenen) No. 3077, Fifty-one Stereoscopic Views, 1860 - 1870

Albumen silver prints on stereoscopic mount

Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1993.036.7



Jean-Baptiste Gamichon, French, fl. 1790-1805

Wine sideboard, ca. 1785

Mahogany and veneer

Gift of Jack Linsky 57.265

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877

Canton of Uri. Hospenthal (Canton d' Uri. Hospenthal) No. 4729, Fifty-one Stereoscopic Views, 1860 - 1870

Albumen silver prints on stereoscopic mount

Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1993.036.11



RISD MUSEUM

Charles Émile Jacque, 1813 - 1894
Sheep at Rest, 1800s
Oil on panel
Bequest of Austin H. King 21.448



Zuber & Company, French
Wallpaper border, late 1700s-early 1800s
Anonymous gift through Howard Chapin 21.271



Claude-Hilaire-Alphonse Chamouin, French
Rue Chamouin
Collection de 26 vues de Paris prises au daguerreotype, ca. 1852
Engravings after daguerreotypes
Gift of Ada M. C. Hartzell 47.152

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877
Zermatt-Schwarzsee Region: Gorner and Breithorn Glacier, ca. 1875
Carbon print from glass negative
Gift of Christian Kempf 1997.15



RISD MUSEUM

Raffaello Morghen, Italian, 1761-1833

Raphael, Italian, 1483-1520

Niccolo Pagni & Giuseppe Bardi

La Madonna della Sedia, 1793

Engraving

Gift of Alice G. Taft, Marianna Taft, Hope Smith and Brockholst M.
Smith 45.113.155

Adolphe Braun, French, 1812-1877

Alpine Lake, ca. 1858-1866

Albumen silver print

Jesse Metcalf Fund 77.021

