



62. Venice. The Grand Canal. Palazzo Loredan dell'Ambasciatore, by John Ruskin and Le Cavalier Iller. c.1846–49. Half-plate daguerreotype. (Penrith collection).

the majority taken under his close supervision. They probably emerged from the chaotic 1931 sale at Brantwood, Ruskin's former home at Coniston, when they may have been a lot offered at six shillings. We are not told who bought them then, nor who consigned them to the Penrith sale.

Building on the research of many scholars, whom the Jacobsons scrupulously acknowledge, they discuss their collection in the context of the few others, primarily that of the Ruskin Foundation at Lancaster University which has 125 of Ruskin's daguerreotypes purchased by John Howard Whitehouse soon after the Brantwood sale. The Jacobsons succeed in providing a complete catalogue of all 325 of Ruskin's known daguerreotypes. All are reproduced here. There is also a list of 64 'missing' daguerreotypes that are known to have been made but have not been located.

Daguerre's invention was announced in Paris in 1839. In the following year Ruskin, then at Oxford, was given two daguerreotypes from Paris. But it was not till 1845, when travelling on the Continent for the first time without his parents, that he purchased examples. Following research in contemporary newspapers by Gabriella Bologna, the Jacobsons suggest, convincingly, that these were made by a French operator working in Florence and Venice – Le Cavalier Iller. Iller may well have worked under Ruskin's direction for these 1845 daguerreotypes include a view of the radical remodelling of the Ca' d'Oro on the Grand Canal, which caused Ruskin anguish. He started to make his own daguerreotypes in the Alps with his valet John Hobbs in May 1849 and he continued to make them, with his new valet Frederick Crawley, until 1858 in Bellinzona, by which time the process had been largely superseded by salt prints.

Whereas the daguerreotype was commonly used for portraits, Ruskin used it to record Gothic architecture and sculpture, with important forays into the Alps to record mountains, rocks and waterfalls, and to the sites of some of Turner's works. He used daguerreotypes, alongside his own drawings, for information, 'as precious historical documents'. The bulk was made in Venice between 1849 and 1852 (Fig.62), the years that led to the three-volume *Stones of Venice*, with an accompanying plate

volume, in which his daguerreotypes were used for mezzotint reproductions. The shots are mainly of details from St Mark's and the Doge's Palace but there are also views, particularly of Gothic windows, from buildings throughout Venice, often taken under difficult conditions and in a sombre atmosphere, for the city was suffering from its failed revolt against Austrian occupation.

Ruskin delighted in his 'gem-like' daguerreotypes because of their clarity of detail within a small, usually 3 by 4 inches, format and their colours – silver, greys and browns. Daguerreotypes have to be held in the hand and slanted to catch the best light. They are fragile and they are difficult to make. Each one is unique for there is no negative. It is uncertain as to whether Ruskin ever completed any by himself for he always worked with collaborators, and the chemical processes were difficult and even dangerous. But there is no doubt that he decided what to record and he chose the viewpoint and the time of day to do it. His wife described him standing under a black cloth with a camera in the Piazza.

Following in Ruskin's footsteps, the Jacobsons visited the sites of all his daguerreotypes, and investigated their contemporary reception. Most interesting is their discussion of the open-minded Graphic Society in London, of which Ruskin was a keen member, where he showed daguerreotypes alongside Turner's sketches.

The nail-biting preface to this book, describing the Brantwood and Penrith sales, gives way to ten carefully researched chapters covering Ruskin's daguerreotyping, not only in Venice, but in the Alps, Swiss mountain towns and French cathedrals. Each chapter has full notes. There is then a catalogue raisonné of all his known plates and of the 'missing' ones. Appendices give a glossary of nineteenth-century photographic processes, a chronology of Ruskin's travels with his various collaborators, his manuscript list of his daguerreotypes and an essay on the conservation of the 'Penrith' collection by Angels Arribas. There is a full bibliography and index. Reproductions are placed carefully in conjunction with the relevant text. All is beautifully presented in this superb landscape format book, designed by Bryan Harper and Lindsey Stewart, printed by Titus Wilson of Kendal.

Ruskin's feelings about photographs changed over the years. In 1845, when he first bought daguerreotypes, he wrote to his father that he was 'very much delighted with them [. . .] It is a most noble invention'. He thought it had come 'just in time to save some evidence from the wreckers'. But he wrote to Julia Margaret Cameron in 1868 that there was no 'human *Imagination*' in photographs. They were the product of machines; there was no love. He was wrong, for there is clearly much love in his daguerreotypes.

We are left with two major questions. What is to happen to the Jacobsons' 'Penrith' collection? And looming behind this: What is to happen to Venice, facing the insuperable foes of mass tourism, industrial pollution and climate change?

Foreign Artists and Communities in Modern Paris, 1870–1914: Strangers in Paradise. Edited by Karen L. Carter and Susan Waller. 266 pp. incl. 55 b. & w. ill. (Ashgate, Farnham, 2015), £65. ISBN 978-1-4724-4354-0.

Reviewed by ALEXANDRA PARIGORIS

THIS IS A very uneven collection of conference papers revisiting the extremely well-trodden topic of foreign artists in Paris, which began to receive academic attention after André Kaspi's and Antoine Marès's important conference in the late 1980s, *Le Paris des étrangers depuis un siècle*.¹ That the field is far from exhausted is demonstrated here by the better essays, which recover the histories of now-forgotten individuals or foreign communities in Paris or reappraise the biographies of well-known artists or events in the period. Awareness of the cultural dynamics involved in Paris in this period varies significantly among the contributors and is concomitant with the quality of the papers. Among the most interesting is Emily C. Burns's 'Revising Bohemia: The American Artist Colony in Paris, 1880–1914', which discusses a group of American philanthropists who set up associations and clubs (the American Art Association of Paris and the American Girls' Club) to provide safe-havens for their young compatriots travelling to Paris to study, and protect them from the dangers of lax morality and, even worse, the poor 'work ethic' perceived to be rife in the Latin Quarter.

Paul Fisher's 'The Lost Ambassador: Henrietta Reubell and the Transnational Queer Spaces in the Paris Arts World, 1876–1903' is a lively account of the little-known Franco-American heiress and her Parisian salon, which welcomed Henry James, Whistler and Sargent. In spite of some debatable usage of the French terms *salonnard* and *salonnière*,² Fisher draws a compelling picture of Reubell's milieu based on the surviving correspondence with James and a close reading of his novels. Readers will struggle, however, to see in the rather charming watercolour that Sargent made of her, hints 'to long-observed transnational and queer dynamics in the late nineteenth-century Parisian arts world', as Fisher claims (p.200). Juliet Bellow gives a well-researched and nuanced account of the reception of the Ballets Russes in the period. Maite van Dijk re-examines Edvard Munch's reception in Paris revealing the artist to be much more knowing and cool-headed than recent appraisals would have us believe. Sharon Hecker's 'Everywhere and Nowhere: Medardo Rosso and the Cultural Cosmopolitan in Fin-de-siècle Paris' impressively demonstrates that it is possible, with a good grasp of the issues involved, to use published sources and re-cast a traditional narrative. Here she makes a case for the importance of Paris and the towering presence of Rodin as a catalyst to Rosso's artistic drive. The volume includes some useful

accounts of Eastern European exchanges with Paris, such as Ewa Bobrowska's 'Polish Artists in Paris, 1890–1914', which makes an effort to situate the artistic exchanges within the precarious nature of a partitioned Poland. This adds to the work of Janine Ponty on Polish migration to France in the period.³ Nicholas Sawicki's very informative 'Between Montparnasse and Prague: Circulating Cubism in Left Bank Paris' could have offered a little more political and cultural contextualisation of Prague before the First World War, as it was then still firmly integrated in the multinational Austro-Hungarian empire – especially as the artists that he discusses opted to live in France after the establishment of the independent state of Czechoslovakia in 1919.

In their introduction, the editors attempt to map what is today a vast field of research, evidenced by their eighty-six footnotes. But their reliance on data and attempts at establishing what they designate as taxonomies – not to mention their quaint reliance on OED definitions – delivers lists, but ultimately fails to show how the various disciplines come together in this field. They acknowledge their use of Georg Simmel's essay 'The Stranger', which inspired the subtitle to this volume, *Strangers in Paradise*, but do not seem to realise that measurable data – the number of foreigners exhibiting in Paris Salons or the formation and running of institutions – cannot alone provide an explanation for what is essentially an existential problem: whether seen through the eyes of those witnessing the influx of 'the other', or the eyes of those experiencing 'being the other'. And we are left to imagine what they mean by the term 'Paradise' in this context. What is lacking is a sense of historical discourse, an awareness of how the field has emerged using different disciplines, not only sociology but politics, psychology and literature. And it must be said that in the period from 1870 to 1914 wealth and class were still the dominant driving forces. The same international elite owned, controlled and enjoyed every aspect of culture, which is why an impoverished Rosso or a Chagall aspired to enter their environment, and why a Sargent and a James could circulate and create – relatively unconstrained – in the safe enclaves provided by their wealthy patrons. As Pheng Cheah continually reminds us, 'cosmopolitanism precedes the nation state and nationalism in the history of ideas'.⁴

¹ A. Kaspi and A. Marès, eds.: *Le Paris des étrangers depuis un siècle*, Paris 1989.

² *Salonnier* and its rarely seen feminine, *salonnière*, were rather colloquial terms used to describe the critics writing about the annual Salons. Used as an adjective it was rather derogatory, 'une intelligence salonnière' denoting superficiality – at odds with the tone of Sargent's portrait of Reubell.

³ J. Ponty: 'Visite du Paris des Polonais', in Kaspi and Marès, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.45.

⁴ P. Cheah: 'Given Culture: Rethinking Cosmopolitan Freedom in Transnationalism', in *idem* and B. Robbins, eds.: *Cosmopolitanism: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, Minneapolis and London 1998, p.22.

Louis Michel Eilshemius: Peer of Poet Painters. By Stefan Banz. 768 pp. incl. 476 col. pls. + 53 b. & w. ills. (JRP/Ringier, Zürich, 2015), €80. ISBN 978–3–03764–435–5.

Louis M. Eilshemius (1864–1941): Die Entdeckung der Performativen Malerei/The discovery of performative painting. By Katharina Neuburger. 72 pp. incl. 24 col. pls. + 2 b. & w. ills. (Kunsthalle Göppingen, 2015), €20. ISBN 978–3–927791–88–6.

Reviewed by MERLIN JAMES

THE WORK OF the American painter Louis Michel Eilshemius (1864–1941) has enjoyed periodic revivals of attention since he was 'discovered' by Marcel Duchamp in 1917. He had by then endured three decades or more of neglect, even of growing ridicule. He had begun as a quite conventional gentleman-artist, producing competent touristic watercolours and characterful Corot-cum-Courbet landscapes. Around the turn of the twentieth century he had gone slightly, then spectacularly, off-piste, creating bizarre conversation pieces; quirky *fêtes champêtres*; piquant or melodramatic narrative pictures; outlandish novelty subjects; classical, tropical or orientalist fantasies (Fig.63); moody city- and seascapes; imagined military scenes; goofy vaudeville vignettes; plangent nocturnes. Most typically he contrived groups of cavorting and contorted – and often apparently levitating – nude bathers. His increasingly clumsy-seeming figuration could be summoned amid wild flurries of brushwork, often dashed off on cigar box lids, pieces of millboard, pages of sheet music or magazine covers. All this, plus the artist's increasing personal eccentricity, had utterly disconcerted his audience. He found himself excluded from commercial galleries and official American salons. His almost wilfully gauche efforts at self-advertisement – streams of indignant and opinionated letters to the newspapers, and self-published books, flyers and pamphlets – seemed only to add to his ignominy. He became infamous in New York as the embodiment of quixotic artistic failure.

The more bitter than sweet story of his reputation's redemption is often (and sometimes unreliably) re-told: how the jury-less Society of Independent Artists, based in New York, allows Eilshemius a chink of exposure in 1917; how Duchamp – head of the hanging committee – singles him out for praise; an article on him by Mina Loy follows, in the same edition of the *The Blind Man* that features Duchamp's *Fountain*. Then come two solo shows in the early 1920s at the Société Anonyme Gallery, run by Duchamp and Katherine Dreier. Avant-garde artists in New York adopt Eilshemius as a cause, rather as bohemian Paris had championed Henri Rousseau. He becomes a cult figure, exhibiting at progressive galleries. Perversely, he then announces his retirement from painting,

thereafter producing only ink drawings on his letterhead writing paper – quaint and cartoonish compositions in elaborate cartouche frames bearing cryptic mottos. With his paintings entering museums and prestigious collections across the United States, he devotes his final two decades simply to 'being Eilshemius'. Exhibitions proliferate, including one in Paris, where artists such as Matisse, Picasso and Balthus are said to admire his work. Having been hit by a taxi cab, he is confined to a wheelchair and housebound. He receives admirers, Miss Haversham style, at his mouldering family brownstone on 57th Street, and unscrupulous dealers make off with armfuls of works for derisory sums or on dubious sale-or-return agreements. A minor industry of Eilshemius forgery gets underway. A biography is published in 1937. As he watches his prices rise, Eilshemius himself descends into bankruptcy and dies in 1941 in a pauper's ward of Bellevue Hospital.

Eilshemius's work and career are considered afresh in Katharina Neuburger's essay, centred partly around the artist's pamphlets, notably *Some New Discoveries! In SCIENCE and ART* (1932). Neuburger takes Eilshemius's self-publishing as something more than a deluded diversion, suggesting almost that it is a proto-conceptual dimension of his creative activity. In *Some New Discoveries* he had offered 'directions' for creating paintings, with authorial intention apparently suspended and replaced by process. Certainly Neuburger takes seriously Duchamp's interest in Eilshemius, as more than the perverse or mischievous pose it has often been supposed. She re-examines the whole Eilshemius 'case', exploring his uneasy fit with American late Romanticism and Modernism (Whistler, Ryder, Blakelock, Davies), his individualism and resistance to stylistic consistency or alliance to movements and his half-conscious cultivation of an eccentric artistic persona.

Stefan Banz's expansive monograph goes much further. First of all, he persuasively identifies the broad affinities and many coincidences (even significant contrasts) that can be seen to relate Duchamp to Eilshemius. Banz points out numerous factors that must have interested Duchamp about the American painter, not least Eilshemius's oddly sexualised and proto-Surrealist idylls that anticipate, sometimes closely, the weird eroticism of Duchamp's *Etant donnés*. Eilshemius juxtaposes waterfalls with female nudes repeatedly, presaging Duchamp's use of an image of the Forestay waterfall in Switzerland in the background of *Etant Donnés*. (The site was probably known to Eilshemius, Banz feels, given the artist's Swiss origins and familiarity with the country.) Banz evokes Courbet as a clear source for both artists in the treatment of sexuality through landscape and the unsettling exploration of archetypes of femininity and nature. Other factors such as Eilshemius's distinctive use of a framing device – a window or view-finder effect around many of his motifs – chime strongly with Duchamp's fascination with voyeurism and peep holes.