

## News Release

Friday 16 February 2018

### THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE SELECTS VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS FOR NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY EXHIBITION TRAIL

*Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography*

*Lewis Carroll, Julia Margaret Cameron, Oscar Rejlander and Clementina Hawarden*

*Spring Season Sponsor Herbert Smith Freehills LLP*



**Purify my heart** by Oscar Rejlander, 1863-9 © National Portrait Gallery, London; **HRH The Duchess of Cambridge** at the National Portrait Gallery by Noah Goodrich, 2017 © Noah Goodrich;

The Duchess of Cambridge is to select photographs from the National Portrait Gallery's forthcoming exhibition ***Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography*** as part of a Patron's trail, it was announced today, Friday 16 February 2018. The Duchess will visit the exhibition on the evening of Wednesday 28 February, prior to its opening on Thursday 1 March.

As Patron of the National Portrait Gallery since 2012 and an enthusiastic, amateur photographer, The Duchess has written a foreword to the exhibition catalogue in which she discusses her interest in nineteenth-century photography, the subject of her undergraduate thesis while an art history student at the University of St Andrews. She also explains that photographs of children, which feature predominantly within the exhibition, are of particular interest to her. This is the first exhibition at the Gallery to include a Patron's trail in which The Duchess will select a number of portraits, which will be displayed with additional information labels that will be written by Her Royal Highness.

The Duchess also points out that Queen Victoria and especially Prince Albert, became enthusiastic patrons of the new art form following its invention in 1839. One of the exhibition's four featured photography pioneers, Oscar

Rejlander, undertook commissions for the Royal Family and works by him have been borrowed for the exhibition from the Royal Collection at Windsor.



**Julia Jackson** by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1867 © Wilson Centre for Photography, **Photographic Study (Clementina and Isabella Grace Maude)** by Clementina Hawarden, 1863–4 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

***Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography*** (1 March – 20 May 2018), will show together for the first time portraits by Oscar Rejlander (1813–75), Lewis Carroll (1832–98), Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–79) and Lady Clementina Hawarden (1822–65).

The four created an unlikely alliance. Rejlander was a Swedish émigré with a mysterious past; Cameron was a middle-aged expatriate from colonial Ceylon (now Sri Lanka); Carroll was an Oxford academic and writer of fantasy literature; and Lady Clementina was a member of the landed gentry, the child of a Scottish naval hero and a Spanish beauty, 26 years younger. Yet, all three briefly studied under Rejlander, and maintained lasting associations, exchanging ideas about portraiture and narrative. Influenced by historical painting and frequently associated with the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, they formed a bridge between the art of the past and the art of the future, standing as true giants in Victorian photography. Their radical attitudes towards photography have informed artistic practice ever since.

The exhibition will be the first to examine the relationship between the four ground-breaking artists. Drawn from public and private collections around the world, it will feature some of the most breath-taking images in photographic history, including many that have not been seen in Britain since they were made.

***Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography*** will feature the work of Swedish-born ‘Father of Photoshop’ Oscar Rejlander and will include the finest surviving print of his famous picture *Two Ways of Life* (1856-7), an example of his pioneering technique of combining several negatives to create a single final image. Constructed from over thirty separate negatives, *Two Ways of Life* was so large that it had to be printed on two sheets of paper joined together.



**Hallam Tennyson** by Lewis Carroll, 1857 © National Portrait Gallery, London; **Unidentified young woman** by Oscar Rejlander, 1863-9 © National Portrait Gallery, London

An album of photographs by Rejlander purchased by the National Portrait Gallery following an export ban in 2015 will also go on display together with other treasures from the Gallery's world-famous holdings of Rejlander, Cameron and Carroll, which for conservation reasons are rarely on view. The exhibition will also include works by Clementina Hawarden, a closely associated photographer; the first major showing of her work since the exhibition *Lady Hawarden* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in 1990.

Lewis Carroll's photographs of Alice Liddell, his muse for *Alice in Wonderland*, are among the most beloved photographs of the National Portrait Gallery's Collection. Less well known are the photographs made of Alice years later, showing her as an adult. The exhibition will bring together these works for the first time.

Visitors will be able to see how each photographer approached the same subject; both Cameron and Rejlander photographed the poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson and the scientist Charles Darwin, and Carroll and Cameron photographed the actress, Ellen Terry. The exhibition will also include the famous studies of human emotion that Rejlander made for Darwin, on loan from the Darwin Archive at Cambridge University Library.

Lenders to the exhibition include the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin; the Hulton Archive, Getty Images; the Moderna Museet, Stockholm; the Munich Stadtmuseum; the Royal Collection; Tate; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Wilson Centre for Photography.

**Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography** will include portraits of sitters such as Charles Darwin, Alice Liddell, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Thomas Carlyle, George Frederick Watts, Ellen Terry and Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, says: 'The National Portrait Gallery has one of the finest holdings of Victorian photographs in the world. We are delighted that our Patron, HRH The Duchess of Cambridge, has supported this exhibition in such a direct and personal manner, given her longstanding interest in this material. As always, it is privilege to collaborate with her. As well as some of the Gallery's rarely seen treasures, such as the original negative of one of Lewis Carroll's portraits of Alice Liddell and images of Alice and her siblings being displayed for the first time, this exhibition will be a rare opportunity to see the works of all four of these highly innovative and influential artists.'

Phillip Prodger, Head of Photographs, National Portrait Gallery, London, and curator of **Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography**, says: 'When people think of Victorian photography, they sometimes think of stiff, fusty portraits of women in crinoline dresses, and men in bowler hats. *Victorian Giants* is anything but. Here visitors can see the birth

of an idea – raw, edgy, experimental — the Victorian avant-garde, not just in photography, but in art writ large. The works of Cameron, Carroll, Hawarden and Rejlander forever changed thinking about photography and its expressive power. These are pictures that inspire and delight. And this is a show that lays bare the unrivalled creative energy, and optimism, that came with the birth of new ways of seeing.’

**Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography** is curated by Phillip Prodger, Head of Photographs at the National Portrait Gallery, London. He is author and editor of eighteen books and catalogues, including the acclaimed *William Eggleston Portraits* (2016). A recognised expert in Victorian photography, he is the author of the award-winning *Time Stands Still: Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Movement* (2003) and *Darwin’s Camera: Art and Photography in the Theory of Evolution* (2009), named by *New York Times* as one of the best art books of the year.

#### **VICTORIAN GIANTS: THE BIRTH OF ART PHOTOGRAPHY**

1 March –20 May 2018, at the National Portrait Gallery, London [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk)

Tickets with donation: Full price £12 / Concessions £10.50

Tickets without donation Full price £10 / Concessions £8.50 (Free for Members and Patrons)

[www.npg.org.uk/victoriangiants](http://www.npg.org.uk/victoriangiants) or 020 7321 6600 #VictorianGiants

**Press View: Wednesday 28 February 2018** 10.00 – 12.00 (with a curator’s tour at 10.30).

#### **PUBLICATION**

The exhibition is accompanied by a full-colour illustrated book by curator Phillip Prodger which will be available to purchase from the National Portrait Gallery shops and all good book shops priced £29.95 from 1 March (hardback)

#### **TOUR**

The exhibition will tour to Millennium Gallery, Sheffield June 30 – Sept 23 2018

**For further Press information, please contact:** Neil Evans, Media Relations Manager, National Portrait Gallery: Tel. 020 7 312 2452 (not for publication) / Email [nevans@npg.org.uk](mailto:nevans@npg.org.uk)

**To download press releases and images,** please go to: [www.npg.org.uk/press](http://www.npg.org.uk/press)

**National Portrait Gallery, St Martin’s Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10.00 – 18.00 (Gallery closure commences at 17.50) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10.00 – 21.00 (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **Website** [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk)