



Exhibition
Vertical No Limit. Mountain Photography
25.01 - 30.04.2017

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The exhibition *Vertical No Limit. Mountain Photography*, the first of its kind, is based on the premise that photography invented the mountain landscape by revealing it to the eyes of the world. Photography is heir to a certain idea of the mountains and of the sublime, closely linked to romanticism. Until the 19th century, the mountain was considered to be "God's Country", a cursed and surreal place, inaccessible to man. The pioneers of mountain photography made it possible to discover summits that had not yet been conquered and to transform the mountain into landscapes.

Spotlight on the museum's collections

With almost 300 prints on view, three quarters of which are from the Musée de l'Elysée's collections, the museum gives pride of place to images from every period, including many contemporary works. Among the works exhibited here, there are works by Gabriel Lippmann, Francis Frith, Adolphe Braun, Jules Beck, William Donkin, Emile Gos and René Burri, as well as by contemporary photographers such as Peter Knapp, Balthasar Burkhard, Matthieu Gafsou, Pierre Vallet, Jacques Pugin, Maurice Schobinger and Iris Hutegger.

Photographic explorations

The exhibition is organized around four approaches on the theme of mountain photography:

- Scientific photography with its many prints of glaciers and that made the study of rocks and the visual documentation of geology possible;
- Travel photography, which facilitated the sale of hundreds of prints to tourists as of the 1860s;
- Mountaineering photography, revealing inaccessible mountain landscapes, and finally;
- Fine-art photography.

These four approaches come together as the visitor moves through the exhibition: "*The farther we are removed from the circumstances in which a photograph was taken, the more differently we interpret it*", explains Daniel Girardin.

Formal strategies and techniques used

The exhibition illustrates the formal strategies used by photographers to present the mountain: frontality, verticality, horizontality, aerial views and distance. It shows the forms imposed by the mountain such as the cone, as well as the details of the matter of which it is composed. It also highlights the technical processes used by photographers: the large formats of the 19th century, panoramas and the very big digital formats used today.

Curator

Daniel Girardin, with the assistance of Emilie Delcambre Hirsch and Maéva Besse

This exhibition has received the precious support of PKB Privatbank, Preferred Partner of the Musée de l'Elysée.



List of the 96 photographers

- BAGARRY Aurore (1982)
BARRETT Howard (actif vers 1880-1890)
BASELGIA Guido (1953)
BAUER Heinrich (1883-1960)
BECK Jules (1825-1904)
BERINGER & PAMPALUCHI (actifs vers 1940-1950)
BINET Hélène (1959)
BISSON Louis-Auguste (1814-1876) et Auguste-Rosalie (1826-1900)
BOISSONNAS Fred (1858-1946)
BOSSHARD Jakob (actif vers 1920-1930)
BOUVIER Thomas (1962)
BRAUN Adolphe (1812-1877)
BRUN Hans (1874-1946)
BUEHLER-RIST Friedrich (actif vers 1920-1930)
BURKHARD Balthasar (1944-2010)
BURNIER Marion (1982)
BURRI René (1933-2014)
BUSSET Emile (1861-1931)
CECCAROLI Alain (1945)
CHARNAUX Charles (1852-1937), Auguste (1862-1930), Georges (1864-1939) et Marie (1854-1932)
CHESSEX Luc (1936)
CHRISTINAT Olivier (1963)
CRISPINI Nicolas (1961)
CUISSSET Thibaut (1958)
DALAIN Yvan (1927-2007)
DARDEL Gustave (1824-1899)
DE JONGH Gaston (1888-1973)
DIAZ Marie-Jésus (1944)
DONKIN William Frederick (1845-1888)
DÜBI-MÜLLER Gertrud (1888-1980)
ECCLES James (1838-1915)
ECKENSTEIN Oscar (1858-1921)
ENGLAND William (1830-1896)
FABRIZIO Leo (1976)
FLECHTNER Thomas (1961)
FONTANA Franco (1933)
FRITH Francis (1822-1898)
GABLER Arthur (?-1899)
GAFSOU Mathieu (1981)
GARCIN Auguste (1816-1879)
GAY-COUTTET Roland (1925-2002)
GIEGEL Philippe (1927-1997)
GIRAULT DE PRANGEY Joseph-Philibert (1804-1892)
GOS Emile (1888-1969)
GROSS Yann (1981)
HAWKINS-WITSHED Elisabeth (1860-1934)
HEINIGER Ernst A. (1909-1993)
HELD L. (actif vers 1890-1900)
HENRY René (1905-2000)
HUTEGGER Iris (1964)
HÜTTE Axel (1951)
IMSAND Jean-Pascal (1960-1994)
IMSAND Marcel (1929)
JASIENSKI Stefan (1899-1990)
JULLIEN John (1818-1887)
KERN Charles (1905-1986)
KNAPP Peter (1931)
KURZ Louis (1854-1942)
LIPPMANN Gabriel (1845-1921)
LOPPÉ Gabriel (1825-1913)
LUGEON Maurice (1870-1953)
LÜSCHER Emile (actif vers 1928-1942)
MARTENS Von Friedrich (1806-1885)
MECHAIN François (1948)
MISCHOL Domenic (1873-1934)
NEURDEIN Etienne (1832-1918) and Louis-Antonin (1846-1914)
NICOLA-KARLEN Emil (1840-1898)
ODDOUX Gustave (actif vers 1900-1910)
OTTH Jean (1940-2013)
OULIANOFF Nicolas (1881-1977)
PEDRETT Andreas (1892-1977)
PERRET James (1877-1959)
PUGIN Jacques (1954)
P.Z. (Photoglob Zurich)
ROCH André (1906-2002)
SCHAER François (1967)
SCHLEMMER Rodolphe (1878-1972)
SCHOBINGER Maurice (1960)
SCHROEDER & Co
SELLA Vittorio (1859-1943)
SÉMÉNIAKO Michel (1944)
SENN Ruedi (1939)
SOULIER Charles (1840-1876)
STEINER Albert (1877-1965)
STRBA Annelies (1947)
STEINER Hans (1907-1962)
STEINMANN Marga (active vers 1930-1947)
SUMMONS H. Y. (actif vers 1920-1930)
TAIRRAZ Georges I (1868-1924)
TAIRRAZ Georges II (1900-1975)
VALLET Pierre (1953)
VIONNET Paul (1830-1914)
VIONNET Corinne (1969)
WEHRLI Bruno (1867-1927), Harry (1869-1906) and Arthur (1876-1915)
WINTERLIN Anton (1805-1894)
WÜRGLER Eugène (1880-1945)

Publications and Digital library

Collection – Musée de l'Elysée n° 4

The book presents 150 photographs mainly taken from the museum's collections, illustrating the directions in which mountain photography has developed (science, tourism, mountaineering, art), as well as the formal aspects used by photographers from 1840 to the present (frontality, verticality and low-angle shots, for example). The book includes an essay by Daniel Girardin and an interview with the photographer Maurice Schobinger.

Excerpt from the book

"Photography has been especially innovative in its representation of the mountains, from its origins until the present. Contemporaneous with the discovery and conquest of high altitudes, it became a major role player in a field that was hitherto unexploited, allowing it to invent the different forms of mountain landscapes that are now part of Western culture".

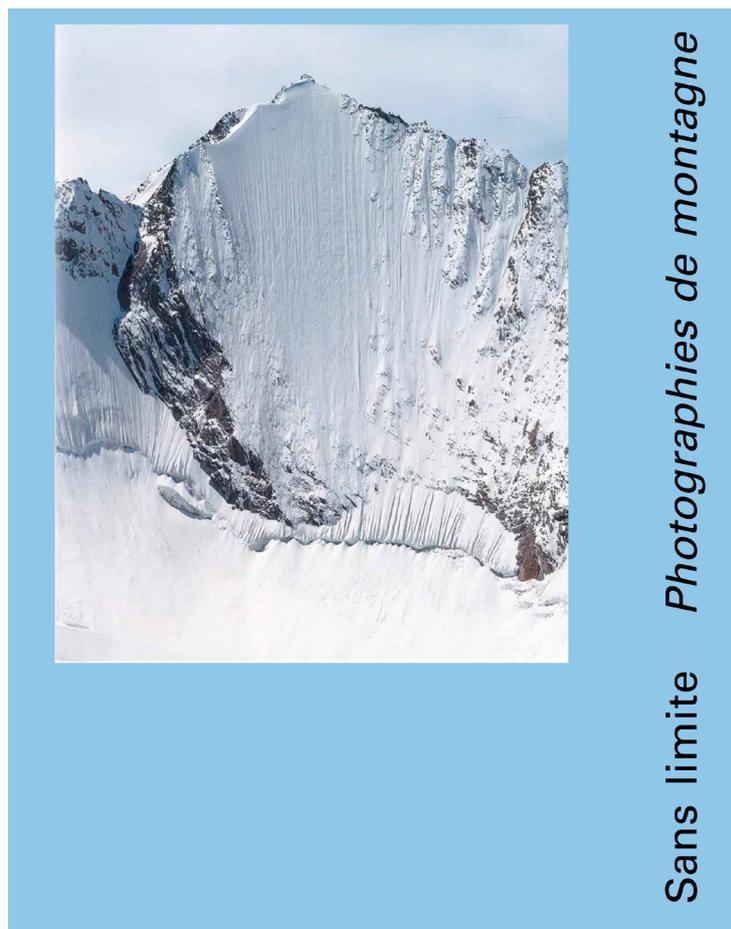
Daniel Girardin

In coedition with the Editions Noir sur Blanc

January 2017

21 x 27,2 cm, bound book, 250 pages, 150 images, French/English

Price : CHF 50.-



PhotobooksElysee.ch

Two years ago, the Musée de l'Elysée launched an ambitious project to digitize its library. Out of 20,000 photography books, 2,000 of them have already been digitized, page by page, and indexed. Carried out in partnership with the Digital Humanities Laboratory of the EPFL (Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne), the digital library project has reached a new milestone and is now available online. Using the bêta version of the platform, it is now possible to consult the archive, do text searches within the books, and to leaf through them online. By applying Big Data logic to photography books, the Musée de l'Elysée thus intends to create new prospects for research and accessibility. The platform will be presented in the exhibition next to books chosen on the theme of the mountains.



Interview with Daniel Girardin, chief curator of the museum and curator of the exhibition

According to your research, when did the interest in the mountains first appear?

The interest in the mountain—its invention—took place in stages during the Age of Enlightenment and at the beginning of the 19th century. The first expressions were literary. Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777) wrote *Die Alpen* in 1729, a highly successful epic poem, considering that thirty editions were printed during the author's lifetime alone. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* that he published in 1761, formalized the elements that constitute a “beautiful landscape” in a pre-Romantic vision of medium-altitude mountains and the idealized way of life of their inhabitants. He initiated an “Alpine” trend that continued to develop with tourism, a term that first appeared in 1841, followed by the practice of “alpinism”, a concept that did not appear until 1876.

In the 19th century, what were the difficulties for the pioneers to photograph the mountain?

From the very beginning, photographing the mountains represented a major artistic and esthetic challenge, in addition to the enormous technical difficulties involved in taking pictures. The equipment was heavy and fragile, and the light extremely intense for the very long exposure times, a phenomenon exacerbated by the snow. In the 1850s, photographers who used the wet collodion process had to bring their mobile laboratories with them in order to develop their images on the spot. Auguste Rosalie Bisson was reported to have carried some 250 kilos of equipment with him! These were real expeditions that required a high degree of organization and that were necessarily very expensive.

More than three-quarters of the prints on view come from the collections of the Musée de l'Elysée. How did you create such a body of work over the years?

We do indeed have an impressive collection of mountain photographs almost 4,000 prints. Part of them belonged to the Iconographic Collection of the Canton of Vaud, which was entrusted to the Musée de l'Elysée upon its creation as a photography museum in 1985. As of 1986, we began to purchase major collections, notably all of the original prints that Francis Frith made in Switzerland between 1865 and 1875 a total of some 600 prints. Our collections also include all of the works commissioned by the museum for the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation in 1991, representing several hundred prints and including works by Jean Otth, Michel Semeniako, Alain Ceccaroli, Luc Chessex and Nicolas Faure. Likewise, the revival of mountain photography with the advent of digital technology led us to buy contemporary works, which are very present in the exhibition, as witnessed by the highly unique creations of Jacques Pugin, Maurice Schobinger, Annelies Strba, Thomas Bouvier, Aurore Bagarry, Matthieu Gafsou, Léo Fabrizio and Pierre Vallet, among others.



What is the specificity of contemporary mountain photography compared to the past?

Today's photographers are more concerned with an artistic point of view, that is, a particularly esthetic vision. There is always a clear intention to give meaning to images, either in relation to the history of photography itself, or by taking advantage of all of the creative possibilities offered by digital photography, particularly in the printing of images. To a large extent, contemporary creation has much in common with the concerns of the first photographers, concerns that can be easily bypassed today.

Cultural program

Double guided tours

Within the framework of the exhibition, the Musée de l'Elysée is proposing tours led by two guides so that visitors can share the experience of the mountains and their representation with both a museum guide and a mountain guide.

For 1½ hours, visitors can thus not only take in the images thanks to a historical and esthetic approach but can also take advantage of the personal experiences and anecdotes of the mountain guide.

Information upon request at inscription@elysee.ch



Guided tours of the exhibition

Find out the program of the visits proposed for families, for teachers or during lunch break on elysee.ch

Thu 26.01, 23.02, 30.03, 27.04
6pm-8pm
Museum at night – afterwork
The last Thursday of the month the museum and the Café Elise are open until 8pm.

16.02-30.04
Musée d'art de Pully
Photography, elsewhere
Exhibition *Evidences du réel/ La photographie face à ses lacunes* by Pauline Martin, curator at the Musée de l'Elysée.
musedartdepully.ch

Tue 28.02
6pm
Guided tour for the museum's Friends
Visit of the exhibition with the curator Daniel Girardin.
Online registration, elysee.ch

Sa 18.03
Su 19.03
Bookstore's Sale
A selection of book from the bookstore at a reduced price.

Tue 28.03
5.30pm
Backstage tour of the museum
Reserved for the museum's Friends.
Online registration, elysee.ch (limited places)

Fri 31.03
10am-12am
Portfolios Lecture
Open to all photographers.
Online registration, elysee.ch

Thu 20.04
6.30pm
Meeting with Fabiana de Barros
On the occasion of the publication of *Sobras de Geraldo de Barros*, meeting with his daughter, Fabiana de Barros, and the publishers of Chose Commune.
Online registration, elysee.ch

Every Wednesday
2pm-6pm
Free workshops NEW « Create your postcard »
From the age of 6 to 12.
Registration not required.
Detailed program online, elysee.ch

Every day
« Les P'tits explorateurs »
Brochure at the reception (only in French). Free.
From the age of 6 to 12.
Registration not required.

The following images are available for the press.

Their use is exclusively limited to the promotion of the exhibition *Vertical No Limit. Mountain Photography* and cannot be reformatted or modified. Please use the captions as they are presented below.

Press contact

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John Jullien, *Crossing the Sea of Ice*, circa 1880 © Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne



Roland Gay-Couttet, *Mont-Blanc massif: alpinism*, circa 1960-1970 © Hubert Gay-Couttet and Samuel Gay-Couttet/Municipal Archives of Chamonix Mont-Blanc, historical photographic library, Fonds Gay-Couttet



Corinne Vionnet, *Matterhorn*, from the series *Photo Opportunities*, 2006 © Corinne Vionnet, Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



Jacques Pugin, #001 *Glaciers*, *Rhonegletscher*, 46°34'48" N 8°23'12" E, 2015 © Jacques Pugin, Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



Balthasar Burkhard, *White Mountain*, 1993 © Balthasar Burkhard Estate. Reproduction: © Valais Museum of Art, Sion. Michel Martinez



Roland Gay-Couttet, *The Aiguille d'Argentière: mountain climbing*, circa 1960-1970 © Hubert Gay-Couttet and Samuel Gay-Couttet/ Municipal Archives of Chamonix Mont-Blanc, historical photographic library, Fonds Gay-Couttet

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Aurore Bagarry, *Tour glacier*, taken from the *Albert 1^{er} refuge* © Aurore Bagarry, courtesy of Galerie Sit Down, Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



Philipp Giegel, *Melchsee, Obwald*, 1964 © Federal Office of Culture, Bern, Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



Charles Charnaux, *The Matterhorn*, 1910-1920 © Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



Maurice Schobinger, *Face to Face/Lenzspitze*, 2015 © Maurice Schobinger, Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



François Schaer, *Arolla*, from the series *White Days*, 2012 © François Schaer



René Burri, *The Swiss Alps seen from an airplane*, 1981 © René Burri, Magnum Photos, Foundation René Burri, Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée

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Luc Chessex, *Susten massif*, 1986 © Luc Chessex,
Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



Gabriel Lippmann, *The Matterhorn*, 1891-1899 © Musée de l'Elysée,
Collection of the Musée de l'Elysée



Yann Gross, *Avalanche 4*, 2006 © Yann Gross

Partners

The Musée de l'Elysée thanks its precious partners for their support in 2017

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Useful Information

Exhibition Dates

Vertical No Limit. Mountain Photography
January 25 - April 30, 2017

Press Conference

Tuesday January 24, 2017 at 10am

Exhibition Preview

Tuesday January 24, 2017 at 6pm

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Opening Hours

Tuesday-Sunday, 11am – 6pm

Closed on Mondays (except bank holidays)

