

The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans

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**GETTY MUSEUM EXHIBITS PHOTOGRAPHS BY FREDRICK H. EVANS THAT REVEAL A
SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL SIDE OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Center
February 2–June 6, 2010

LOS ANGELES—Through a deep understanding of his subject and a delicate handling of light, mass, and volume, Frederick H. Evans (British, 1853–1943) created photographs of medieval cathedrals that capture the innate spirituality of each stone building. On view at the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Center, February 2–June 6, 2010, ***A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans*** explores the artist's images of medieval cathedrals in England and France, rarely seen landscapes of the English countryside, and intimate portraits of Evans's family and friends. This exhibition will run concurrently with *Urban Panoramas: Opie, Liao, Kim*.

Evans began photographing cathedrals in the mid-1880s. He was able to create magnificent examples of light and shadow through the interior views of historic sites such as Ely Cathedral, York Minster, and Westminster Abbey. More than simply recording their physical features, Evans sought an emotional connection with the spaces he photographed, aiming for a "record of an emotion" rather than a piece of topography. His interiors are often dramatic renderings, paying homage to the inner sanctity of the site while also exploiting the architectonic elements.

He described the cathedral photographs as studies since he approached each building in a methodical, measured way. In documenting these sites, Evans stayed for several weeks studying them from early morning to dusk, pacing around naves and cloisters and recording—first as notations in a notebook and later as photographic images on paper—the changing effects of light as it illuminated dimly lit interiors at various times of day. Choosing to work in

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platinum for its tonal range, Evans was a purist who did not believe in manipulating the negatives. He advocated, "Photography is photography; and in its purity and innocence is far too uniquely valuable and beautiful to be spoiled by making it imitate something else." His expert craftsmanship extended to the presentation of the actual prints, which were carefully mounted onto different colored paper supports or featured a series of applied borders.

One of the many highlights of Evans's architectural photographs is a small selection of prints documenting Kelmscott Manor, home of William Morris, the leader of the Arts and Crafts Movement in England. These photographs, central to the Getty holdings, are arguably among Evans's finest pieces. Although similar to the grand cathedrals in evoking a kind of reverence, the images are much more intimate and reflective. Starting with distant views of the house from the river, Evans leads the viewer across the site, into the house itself, and through the various chambers. He studied the location and considered the architectural space in a series of views that sought to capture the soul of the place, culminating in photographs of the light-filled attic.

Other highlights include *A Sea of Steps*, one of his most recognizable and appreciated photographs of Wells Cathedral. Evans made several attempts over a number of years to successfully capture the wave-like motion of the worn, stone steps. Today this particular image is among the most renowned architectural renderings in the history of photography.

Although lauded for his architectural photographs, Evans was also accomplished in the areas of portraiture, landscape, and photomicrography (photography using a microscope), and he brought to each subject the same intensity that characterizes his cathedral images. A small selection of his photomicrographs will be included in a rare display of the glass lantern slides (photographic images on glass) that Evans used for his public lectures.

From 1890 to 1898, Evans ran a bookshop in London. During this time he came into contact with various literary figures, and over the years many of them sat in front of his camera. Included in the exhibition are portraits of the playwright George Bernard Shaw, who shared with Evans an enthusiasm for the pianola (automatic player piano), and the young Aubrey Beardsley, whose graphic talents Evans is credited with having discovered. In his portraits Evans attempted to evoke the sitter's personality. Using a Dallmeyer-Bergheim lens, because it afforded a greater degree of softness in rendering facial features, he tended to isolate the sitter with little background detail or props to convey their psychological presence.

Also on display in the exhibition are photographs by Evans that capture the beautiful landscapes of the English countryside. Evans began making landscapes in the early 1880s

when he was seeking respite from health problems and found himself traveling often to the Lake District in the north of England. His numerous trips to local woodland areas in Surrey resulted in photographs of majestic trees that recalled the soaring columns of cathedrals.

"For Evans the work was clearly an emotional enjoyment that is revealed in this exhibition of his life and work," says Anne Lyden, associate curator of photographs and curator of the exhibition. "He attempted to capture what he called 'a record of an emotion,' by invoking the potent symbolism of these awe-inspiring spaces."

After premiering at the Getty this winter, *A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans* will be on view at the National Media Museum in Bradford, England, from September 24, 2010–February 20, 2011.

Note to editors: Images available upon request.

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RELATED EXHIBITION

Urban Panoramas: Opie, Liao, Kim

February 2–June 6, 2010

This exhibition highlights work by three contemporary photographers, each of whom implemented a panoramic viewpoint to examine a specific urban environment. Catherine Opie (American, born 1961) created inkjet prints from scans of 7x17-inch negatives of the mini-malls that characterize Los Angeles's automobile culture. Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao (Taiwanese, born 1977) digitally combined color film negatives into seamless inkjet prints for his *Habitat 7* project, which traces the route of the New York subway from Queens to Manhattan. By layering hand-cut chromogenic prints made in Reykjavik at midnight during the summer solstice, Soo Kim (American, born South Korea, 1969) achieved the three-dimensional effect of a semitransparent city.

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