

# CANADIANART COLLECTING GUIDE:



Michel Campeau *Graflex Super-Speed Graphic*, Rochester, NY, United States (1959–70) (from the series *Splendeur et fétichisme industriels*) 2013  
Ink-jet print 99 x 74 cm © MICHEL CAMPEAU/SODRAC (2016) COLLECTION OF BRUCE ANDERSON

# ON PHOTOGRAPHY



Negatives, contact prints and associated ephemera in the Berenice Abbott Archive, Ryerson Image Centre

As a comparatively new medium, photography offers an accessible, dynamic art form for new collectors.



*Any good art collection should have photography. It's the most accessible art form for starting a collection, not only because we're all image-takers and can access photography in different ways, but also from a price-point perspective. Photographs can be editioned, which allows us to purchase high-quality works at a lower price point.*

— Kim Spencer-Nairn  
CAPTURE PHOTOGRAPHY FESTIVAL



*It's an exciting time to be buying photography now. It's really gratifying to see the market in Canada starting to emerge and embrace photography as a worthwhile medium for collecting. And if you're buying from a reputable auction house, it's akin to buying from a reputable dealer.*

— Stephen Ranger  
WADDINGTON'S AUCTIONEERS AND APPRAISERS



*I was recently looking at some photographs with a client, and they asked if they were available in different sizes—and quite often photographs are. That's the beauty of photography for some people: it gives them options.*

— Christine Klassen  
CHRISTINE KLASSEN GALLERY



*Photography mirrors the world we live in, inasmuch as we try to bridge technology and the natural world in everything we do. Photography was one of the first mediums that really seemed to solidify those two worlds by trying to make sense of what was in front of us by translating it into something else.*

— Stephen Bulger  
STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

# Canada has a long and internationally acclaimed relationship with photography.

## Studio Portraiture

There were plenty of photographers in Canada during the 19th century, but none achieved the fame or commercial success that William Notman's studios managed. Born in Scotland, Notman opened his first studio in 1856. He pushed portraiture into experimental realms, developed the composite photograph and, at the height of his career, had 20 studios.

Today, the largest holdings of Notman's photographs can be found at the McCord Museum in Montreal. Notman studio images can be frequently found on the secondary market, with individual images available for less than \$1,000, depending on rarity and condition.



1 **William Notman**  
Mrs. William MacKenzie in  
Allan's conservatory, Montreal,  
QC, 1871-1871 Silver salts  
on glass © MCCORD MUSEUM I-63833

2 **Fred Herzog Family**  
1967 Archival pigment print  
COURTESY EQUINOX GALLERY

## The Vancouver School

Photography flourished in the 1970s and '80s, when contemporary works entered galleries and museums with gravity, and writers like Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes asked philosophical questions about the nature of the image, including its circulation and production.

Vancouver photoconceptualism helped propel this shift. Artists like Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace and Stan Douglas made photographs about the way we read images. Working within the legacy of Conceptual art, their work drew on the omnipresence of advertising and visual culture to create works that are by turns humorous, clever and mournful.



*There are individuals of great interest to me who may not be part of larger movements. Around the world, there are artists of enormous importance who don't fit into a particular strategy of that region.*

*In Toronto there's a great example: Geoffrey James. He has a wide body of work that is significant on many different levels, but is he specific to an artistic or photographic tradition that comes out of Toronto? Probably not. But there's no doubt that he's important and interesting.*

— Andy Sylvester / EQUINOX GALLERY

## Street Photography

Though far from a formalized movement or school, individual Canadian photographers have made significant contributions to the realm of street photography. Working in the 1950s and '60s, artists like Fred Herzog, Gabor Szilasi and Lutz Dille emerged alongside a wave of international street photographers such as Garry Winogrand.

Beyond capturing the vernacular of their surroundings, Canada's street photographers have left an indelible mark on later generations.



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# Photography has adapted to the 21st century in exciting ways.

## Using the Digital

More and more artists are testing the relationship between the Internet and photography. For *The Nine Eyes of Google Street View* series, Montreal artist Jon Rafman trawled through Google Maps to find bizarre and sublime images that, visually, contain all the markers of traditional photography. But they're produced unconventionally: without using a camera, framing a shot or processing a negative.

Rafman's *New Age Demanded* series similarly plays with approaches to the photographic documentation of art, but the images are entirely digitally created.



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## Photojournalism

For some time, the artworld has relegated photojournalism to a different category than photography, but this is beginning to change. In particular, collaborations between groups of visual artists and photojournalists, such as the Boreal Collective, are bridging the gaps between these fields.

And while contemporary photojournalism usually circulates outside of the traditional gallery system (although there are some notable exceptions to this rule), it can offer a rewarding avenue to find striking images for your collection.



*The medium is continuing to change, and you need to be open to that. There are photography collectors who can't get their heads around photos that may be digital or manipulated. But the medium's digital nature is relevant. Art needs to be relevant to the time it's produced within.*

— Tien Huang / BAU-XI PHOTO

## Process-Based Images

In an age where photographs are taken and shared with ubiquity, particularly online, why bother making more? This question informs a group of photographers who emphasize the materialization of images. To this end, they often combine the medium with sculpture, or foreground photography's basic elements, such as the exposure process or a photograph's frame.

New York-based Canadian artist Alison Rossiter takes a cameraless approach, processing old, expired photographic papers to highlight the medium in and of itself, rather than using it as a window that offers a view out and onto the world.



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1 **Jon Rafman** *New Age Demanded* (*The heart was a place made fast*) 2013 COURTESY GALERIE ANTOINE ERTASKIRAN

2 **Alison Rossiter** *Darko* (*Sears Roebuck*), expired in May 1928 2011 COURTESY STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY/YOSSI MILO GALLERY, NEW YORK

# Purchasing photography requires special attention.

The golden rules of buying photography are the same as those for collecting. Do your research. Treat every purchase as an important decision. Think about each work's contribution to the collection as a whole. Outside of these suggestions, there are some tips that only apply to photography:

## An edition is just a number. Sort of.

First, determine what your gallerist means by "edition." Some photographs will be printed at a range of sizes, where each size is considered its own edition. Be sure you understand what the "edition" means.

There is no hard-and-fast number for an appropriate edition amount. The value of editioned photographs is driven by supply versus demand versus exclusivity. "If you are an artist with an image that is so popular that you've made 500 prints, the collectability of that image is actually much better because what you have is something that's a proven commodity," says Toronto gallerist Stephen Bulger, who notes that photography is closer to the rare-book market than the contemporary-art market. "Contemporary art is usually propelled by exclusivity more than rarity, which propels photography. And exclusivity and rarity are not the same thing."



*The question of the edition used to be a concern for collectors, since a photograph, due to negatives and, now, digital files, could be printed almost endlessly. But photographers now usually build a small edition for each photograph, and their dealers keep a close eye on this aspect. After all, it's their long-term reputation that we are talking about.*

— François Babineau / GALERIE SIMON BLAIS



## Documentation is crucial.

When it comes to buying photography, the motto is: get it in writing. "If it's not on the invoice, or if the dealer says they don't feel comfortable putting it on paper, that could be an indication that the dealer is lying," says Bulger.

Once you have everything on paper, store it properly. Keep two copies of the invoice: put the original in a file drawer (ideally filed alphabetically by artist name). Place the second copy into an envelope and attach it to the back of the frame that the photograph is contained in. This way, no matter what happens, all the relevant information is still there.

## Treasures can be found in surprising places.

Don't be afraid to go off the beaten path and embrace images by unknown artists (as renowned collectors Thomas Walther and Ydessa Hendeles have done).

1 Unknown photographer  
*Untitled* 1943 Gelatin silver print  
 10.5 x 6.1 cm GIFT OF THOMAS  
 WALTHER COURTESY THE MUSEUM OF  
 MODERN ART, NEW YORK

## CARING FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

All art should be carefully stored and maintained, but photography has particular concerns. Conservator Katharine Whitman of the Art Gallery of Ontario and preservationist Charlene Heath of the Ryerson Image Centre provide their best advice on keeping photographs pristine.

### DO

1. Store your collection where you live, ideally on the main floor in a room like the living room. Do not store it in the basement or attic, where temperatures and humidity levels are in flux.
2. Look out for small brown dots, or foxing, and silver fingerprints on photographs when purchasing—these are almost impossible to repair.
3. Ask if the printer is pigment-based or dye-based if you're buying digital prints—pigments are much more stable than dyes.

### DON'T

1. Be afraid of purchasing work with visible damage like tears—often, a conservator can easily repair these and make them almost invisible.
2. Expose the photograph to direct sunlight.
3. Try to wipe off liquid if there's been a spill. Contact a conservator and follow their advice—don't try to fix it yourself.

Looking for further reading?



*Bertrand Lavédrine's Photographs of the Past: Process and Preservation is the bible for preserving historic photographs. The Library of Congress website is also an amazing resource on the care, handling and storage of photographs. And, for finding a conservator, the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators' website is helpful.*

— Charlene Heath / RYERSON IMAGE CENTRE

# Meet the collectors, and their art.



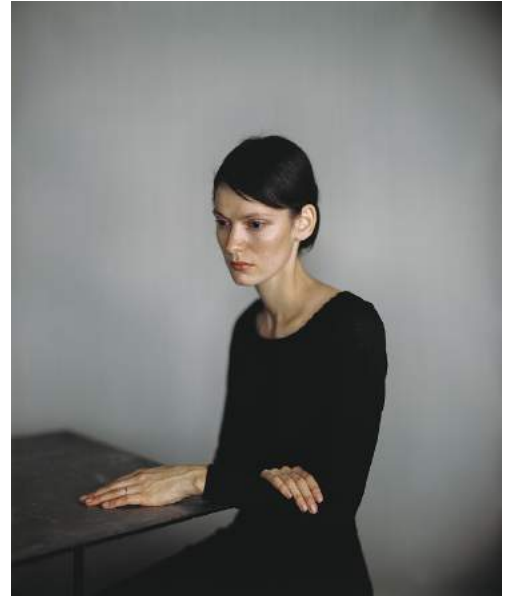
1

## Dr. Kenneth Montague, Toronto

Dawit L. Petros's *Sign* references a famous, iconic image from the Western canon—Albrecht Dürer's self-portrait. There are a range of ways to read Petros's work, depending on the codes the image pulls up in the viewer's mind about what a young black man dressed like that holding his hands means to them. I love the ambiguity of it.

It's a centrepiece not only of the exhibition I curated, "Position As Desired," but, in a broad way, the kind of collection I have.

It's a Canadian work, by a black artist, with a black subject. Ambiguity is a big part of it, and it relates to the tropes of migration, immigration, youth and beauty, as well as subjects like music and fashion.



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## Claudia Beck, Vancouver

The picture of Olya is large. Her seated figure is bigger than life size; made with a specially built camera obscura. This is almost a black-and-white image but her skin has a translucence, as if light is shining from within, like it does with alabaster slabs. The scale, the focal plane, the muted, almost unreal light, the skin of face and hands—all emphasize the gaze of Olya. Her eyes do not return my look; hers are focused elsewhere, not on anything in the picture frame. For me, Olya is an image of women's solitude, our interior moments not needing voice. Sometimes I walk by Olya and see a wisp of melancholy in her gaze. Her portrait has created for me a place to ponder the profundity of solitude. She holds stillness as a monumental gesture.



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1 **Dawit L. Petros** *Sign*  
2003 © DAWIT L. PETROS AND  
DR. KENNETH MONTAGUE /  
THE WEDGE COLLECTION

2 **Richard Learoyd** *Olya*  
*Square Mirror* 2010  
© RICHARD LEAROYD COURTESY  
FRAENKEL GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO  
COLLECTION OF CLAUDIA BECK  
AND ANDREW GRUFFT

3 **Gabor Szilasi** *Nun at*  
*Dorval Airport, Montreal,*  
*August 1959* 1959  
COURTESY ART45

4 **Gail Albert Halaban**  
*Out My Window, Chelsea,*  
*Manhattan, Costume*  
*Shop* 2008 © GAIL ALBERT  
HALABAN COURTESY EDWYNN HOUK  
GALLERY, NEW YORK/ZURICH

## Adam Steinberg, Montreal

Gail Albert Halaban did a show called "Out My Window" that was photographs out of different windows in New York City, and I have *Out My Window, Chelsea, Manhattan, Costume Shop*. The photo was taken out of her back window, looking into what seems to be a sweatshop.

You have the perception that you're peering into someone else's window, but because there are other buildings, and the depth perception of the buildings is slightly skewed, it's hard to tell which building is in front of the other one. It messes with your perception, which I like a lot.

I buy art because I like the piece. This comes from my father, who was a big art collector. You know what you like, and that's what you buy.

## Denton Creighton and Kristine Vikmanis, Toronto

We were drawn initially to the geometry of this work—the contrast between the dark and the light triangles. The nun and the barriers at first look forbidding, but then we realized they represent comfort and safety. Szilasi came to Canada after surviving the horrors of the Nazis and the brutality of the Soviets. The plane represents his immigration. As with so many works in our collection, knowing the artist and discussing the work with him makes our appreciation that much deeper.

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# Photographers use a range of technologies, from flashlights to 3-D printers.



Chris Curreri

A recent photographic work of mine, *Untitled (Clay Portfolio)*, focuses on the material of clay as it shifts between states of form and states of formlessness. Some of the prints have a subtle solarization effect: a phenomenon in darkroom photography in which the image is wholly or partially reversed in tone by exposing the print to light during the development process. This process underscores a correspondence between the photographic darkroom and the pottery studio, by emphasizing the brief moment where the latent image is still malleable and has not yet been fixed to the photographic paper.



Diana Thorneycroft

I use an archaic process called “painting with light.” I call it archaic because it epitomizes the opposite of “advanced technology.” When my camera is ready to photograph a staged tableau, I turn off the lights, lock the shutter open, and, in total darkness, illuminate the set with a flashlight.

The inconsistent light source creates a photographic image that is dreamlike and ethereal.



Robert Bean

The macro lens facilitates imaging options that are inspiring and unpredictable. With landscape photography, a photographer establishes a necessary distance from the subject. The macro lens offers an inverse opportunity. It implies a close proximity to the subject and provides an optical enhancement to the limits of human vision. I find these spaces and places enticing and revealing.



Isabelle Hayeur

I use a watertight tank that allows me to photograph underwater environments of all kinds. I dive into troubled waters of dubious, uncertain origin. I photograph them from an unfamiliar vantage point, eschewing capture from shoulder height. These views from the inside create a relation of closeness between the onlooker and the site being documented. They take us closer to these environments by plunging us in their midst, as it were.



Benoit Aquin

I am a perfectionist all the way, but the printing is critical. I have been using the same printer, Louis Lussier, for nine years. I print ink-jet, and I find it precise. I make tests and try the size, and if that doesn't work, I change the size of the artwork. If it's not good enough, I scrap the prints. That's a crucial part of the process for me.



Edward Burtynsky

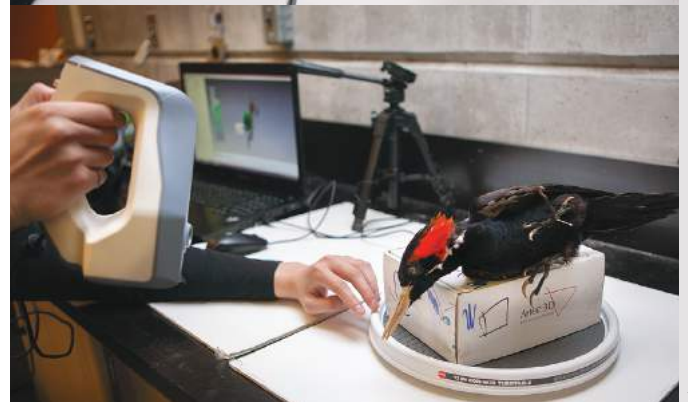
I have described 3-D printing as “photography 3.0”—indicating the evolution of photography from analog to digital and now to the three-dimensional.

Capturing objects in 3-D with complete texture and colour data, and then printing the file in full colour at the size (or modified size) that works within the range of the printer, moves the photographic process more toward sculpture than a traditional single-point perspective photograph.

This is something new with photography at its core.



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1 Burtynsky and David Didur's Think2Thing atelier prepares a bird specimen for 3-D scanning  
PHOTO SARA ANGELUCCI

2 3-D scanning a bird specimen at the Royal Ontario Museum's ornithology department  
PHOTO SARA ANGELUCCI

3 Sara Angelucci Sightings (Ivorybilled Woodpecker) (detail of 3-D printed bird element) 2011  
PHOTO TOM BLANCHARD

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# There are notable institutions dedicated to photography across Canada.



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*Fundraisers for charitable organizations, such as Gallery 44's Salon 44, the SNAP! auction and Gallery TPW's Photorama, offer an accessible opportunity for both new and more established collectors to grow their collections, while supporting great artists and organizations. They are also an important way to support contemporary photography in Canada.*

— Noa Bronstein / GALLERY 44

**One of the best ways to learn about collecting photography is to look at examples of private collections that have been donated to public galleries.**

The collection of Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft at the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 The Malcolmson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario  
 Uno Langmann Collection at the UBC Library Collections  
 The donation of Lorraine Monk, longtime head of National Film Board of Canada Stills Division, to the Carleton University Art Gallery

1 Installation view of "Ways of Seeing: Building the RIC Collection" at the Ryerson Image Centre, 2016  
 PHOTO CLIFTON LI

2 Installation view of Roberto Pellegrinuzzi's *Mémoires* at Parisian Laundry, 2015  
 PHOTO GUY L'HEUREUX

3 **Alfred Stieglitz** *The Ferry Boat* 1911 Photomechanical process, photogravure 21 x 16.3 cm GIFT OF HARRY AND ANN MALCOLMSON IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A PRIVATE DONOR, 2014 MALCOLMSON COLLECTION, ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

## The West and Prairies

Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver  
 Gallery 295, Vancouver  
 PLATFORM Centre, Winnipeg

## Ontario

Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto  
 Canadian Institute of Photography at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa  
 Gallery TPW, Toronto  
 Gallery 44, Toronto

## Quebec

VU Photo, Quebec City  
 DAÏMÓN, Gatineau  
 Espace F, Matane  
 Occurrence, espace d'art et d'essai contemporains, Montreal

## Eastern Canada

ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax

## Photography Festivals

Capture Photography Festival, Vancouver  
 Exposure Photography Festival, Edmonton  
 Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival, Toronto  
 Spark Photo Festival, Peterborough  
 Mois de la Photo, Montreal  
 Photopolis, Halifax



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# Directory



Mark Ruwedel *Hope* 2010 Ink-jet print mounted to 61 x 76 cm archival board 41 x 51 cm COURTESY ART45

## Auction Houses, Financers and Services

Armstrong Moving and Storage  
shipfineart.com

Art Lease Canada  
artleasecanada.ca

Colourgenics  
colourgenics.com

museumpros art services inc.  
museumpros.com

PACART  
pacart.ca

Waddington's Auctioneers  
and Appraisers  
waddingtons.ca

## Schools and Non-Profit Spaces

Art Gallery of Windsor  
agw.ca

Art Museum, University of Toronto  
artmuseum.utoronto.ca

Capture Photography Festival  
capturephotofest.com

Haliburton School of the Arts  
flamingcollege.ca/school/haliburton-  
school-of-art-and-design

McMaster Museum of Art  
museum.mcmaster.ca

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts  
mbam.qc.ca

Platform Centre for Photographic  
and Digital Arts  
platformgallery.org

Ryerson Image Centre  
ryerson.ca/ric

Toronto School of Art  
tsa-art.com

ViewPoint Gallery  
viewpointgallery.ca

## Commercial Galleries and Artists

Art45  
art45.ca

Art Mûr  
artmur.com

Bau-Xi Photo  
bau-xiphoto.com

Circuit Gallery  
circuitgallery.com

Christine Klassen Gallery  
christineklassengallery.com

Elaine Waisglass  
elainewaisglass.com

Galerie Simon Blais  
galeriesimonblais.com

Gallery 260  
gallery260.com

Otino Corsano  
oceancoursefilms.com

Scott Gallery  
scottgallery.com

Stephen Bulger Gallery  
bulgergallery.com

Struck Contemporary  
struckcontemporary.com

Zwicker's Art Gallery  
zwickersgallery.ca