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**Impressed by Light:
British Photographs
from Paper Negatives,
1840–1860**Introduction and Press
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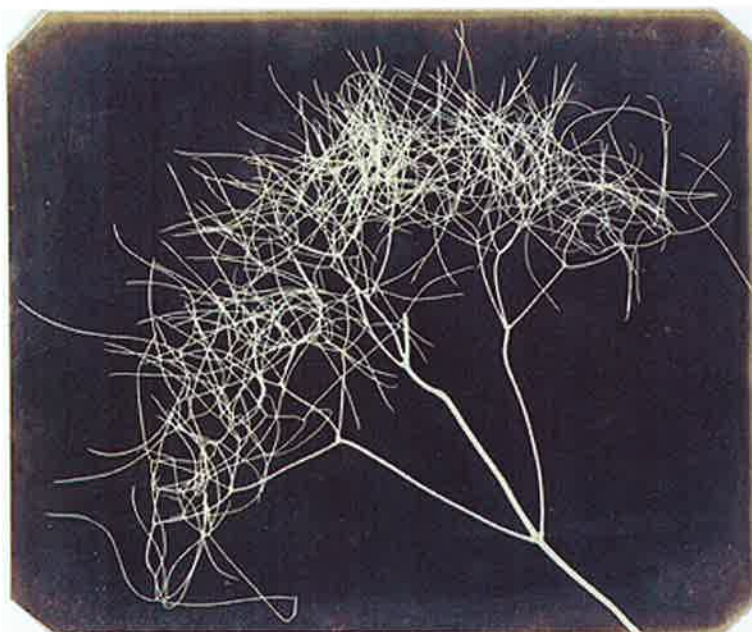
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**PHOTOGRAPHY'S EARLY HISTORY TO BE
REVEALED AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
FEBRUARY 3 THROUGH MAY 4, 2008**

William Henry Fox Talbot

British, 1800–1877

Wild Fennel, 1841–1842

salted paper print, 18.7 x 22.7 cm (7 3/8 x 8 15/16 in.)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, Purchase, Mr. and Mrs.

Andrew W. Saul Gift

Washington, DC – The first exhibition to explore photographs made from paper negatives—calotypes—in Great Britain in the 1840s and 1850s, **Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840–1860**, will be on view from February 3 through May 4, 2008, in the West Building photography galleries. The exhibition features 120 calotypes, many of which have never before been exhibited or published in the United States, made by about

forty artists. Included are works by such masters as the process' inventor, William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), Roger Fenton (1819–1869), and David Octavius Hill (1802–1870) and Robert Adamson (1821–1848), as well as by dozens of previously unknown photographers. The calotype process introduced the ability to make multiple copies of a photograph, as compared to its initial competition, the one-of-a-kind daguerreotype.

"This exhibition entirely revises our understanding of the art of early photography," says Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "Before now, history has told us that Talbot's process—the calotype—was rendered obsolete in 1851 when a sharper method of making negatives—collodion on glass—was invented. But this exhibition vividly and eloquently demonstrates that many people continued to use the calotype because they preferred its aesthetic qualities."

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in association with the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. The National Gallery of Art is the second venue for this exhibition, which premiered at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, September 24 through December 31, 2007. The exhibition travels to the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, May 26 through September 14, 2008.

Exhibition Support

The exhibition is made possible by the generous support of the Trellis Fund, The Hite Foundation, and The Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation.

The Exhibition

The exhibition is presented in four parts:

The Formative Years, 1839–1851 covers the early, experimental period just after Talbot made his process available to the world. During this time the use of the calotype was primarily confined to a small circle of people close to Talbot, as well as a few other devoted practitioners, mainly in Scotland. Among the photographs on view will be Talbot's stark *Wild Fennel* (1841–1842) and dreamlike *Ugbrook Park* (1842), and beautiful calotypes from Hill and Adamson

featuring the Scottish countryside, such as *Colinton Manse and Weir* (late 1846).

The Calotype Finds Its Place reveals that the calotype flourished in Great Britain following the large display of photography at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. The process became popular with Victorian men and women of leisure, who had the freedom to take on photography as a hobby. Their desire to leave behind the complexities of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain is apparent in these images of rural life and landscapes, including *Tree with Tangled Roots* (1853) and the snowy *Queen Street, Bristol* (1853) by Hugh Owen (1808–1897).

Echoes of the Grand Tour presents photographs taken in France, Spain, Italy, and Greece by intrepid tourists who wanted to record their travels. These photographers made calotypes because it required less cumbersome equipment than other processes. On view are calotypes of historic sites, including Calvert Richard Jones' (1802–1877) images of ruins, *House of Sallust, Vesuvius behind, Pompeii* (spring 1846), Alfred Backhouse's (1810–1857) Pots and Pans at Nice (1855), and a broad view of *Carrera de San Jerónimo, Madrid* (1853) by Charles Clifford (1819–1863).

Under an Indian Sky offers images of the exotic 19th-century British colonies of India and Burma. In their time, calotypes such as the stark *Children's Graves, India* (1848) by Alfred Huish (b. 1811–unknown), and John Murray's (1809–1898) panoramic *The Taj Mahal from the Gateway* (January–March 1864) brought the first photographic scenes from the far reaches of the British Empire to the West.

Curators and Related Activities

The exhibition was organized by guest curator Roger Taylor, professor of photographic history at De Montfort University, Leicester; Sarah Greenough, senior curator of photographs at the National Gallery of Art, Washington; and Malcolm Daniel, curator, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

On Sunday, February 3, at 2 p.m. in the East Building Auditorium, Sarah Greenough will present the lecture "Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840–1860."

Gallery tours of the exhibition are scheduled for March 24, 25, and 27; and April 28, 29, and 30. Tours will meet at 2 p.m. in the West Building Rotunda.

All programs are free and open to the public unless noted otherwise. For more information, call (202) 737-4215.

Exhibition Catalogue

The exhibition catalogue, *Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840-1860* was written by Roger Taylor and published by Yale University Press. It is the first book-length publication to present the full story of the calotype in Great Britain. The 452-page publication includes 118 plates and 113 photographs, in addition to 124 in an illustrated biographical dictionary of more than 500 British calotypists by Larry Schaaf, senior research fellow and honorary professor, University of the Arts, London. It is currently available from the National Gallery of Art by phone at (202) 842-6002 or (800) 697-9350 (\$75.00 hardcover).

The catalogue is made possible by Howard Stein, with additional support from the Mary C. and James W. Fosburgh Publications Fund and the Roswell L. Gilpatric Publications Fund at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is published with the assistance of The Getty Foundation.

General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each

entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 x 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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