



**Muybridge**  
in Kingston

# Moving Muybridge: Transatlantic Dialogues

International Conference  
Event Program

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> &  
Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023

Town House, Penrhyn Road,  
Kingston University London

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This international conference showcases the latest research on Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904), whose multi-faceted work continues to have significance across moving-image cultures, photography, digital animation and the visual arts globally. Centring on the transatlantic movements of Muybridge, his work and ideas, and the diverse Muybridge collections in the US and the UK, the conference brings together leading scholars, curators, filmmakers and artists to share knowledge about the overall significance of Muybridge holdings in both countries and to reflect on the future of Muybridge studies.

Held in Kingston-upon-Thames – the birthplace of Muybridge in 1830 and where he returned for the last decade of his life until his death in 1904 – the conference marks the recent relocation of Kingston Museum’s Muybridge Collection to a purpose-built archive at the university’s award-winning building Town House.

The conference is organised by Kingston University’s Visual and Material Culture Research Centre in partnership with Kingston Museum and Stanley Picker Gallery, and is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

### Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

\* 3.00–4.00pm **Tour of Kingston Museum’s Muybridge Gallery** and the exhibition *In Motion: Your Stories* by Muybridge Curator Seoyoung Kim

\* 5–6.00pm **Registration & Drinks Reception at Town House, Penrhyn Road**

\* 6–8.00pm ***Exposing Muybridge* Film Screening & Q&A with Marc Shaffer at Town House, Courtyard Space**

*Exposing Muybridge*, written and directed by Marc Shaffer, is the first feature documentary to tell the fascinating story of the legendary Eadweard Muybridge, a tale filled with ambition, betrayal, deception, and even murder. Muybridge’s motion images opened our eyes to invisible worlds, but they also harbour secrets that provoke an enduring question: Can we believe what we see in a photograph?

*Exposing Muybridge* received the Writers Guild of America Award for outstanding documentary screenplay.

### Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 Town House

\* 9.45–10.00am Welcome: **Fran Lloyd**, Professor of Art History and Co-Director of Visual & Material Culture Research Centre, **Seoyoung Kim**, Muybridge Curator, Kingston Museum and **David Falkner**, Director of the Stanley Picker Gallery

\* 10.00–10.30am **Marta Braun** Emerita Professor in the School of Image Arts, Toronto Metropolitan (formerly Ryerson) University and Director of its graduate program in Film+Photography Preservation and Collections Management, Toronto, Canada

#### • ***Shifts & Sequences***

Muybridge’s *Animal Locomotion* played a critical role in the demise of high modernist art. Minimalists took its sequential arrangements as a model for their repetitive, mechanistic grid systems of the 1960’s, while 1970s conceptual artists focussed on the spatio-temporal structure of Muybridge’s moving subjects and how we perceive them. At the same time, *Animal Locomotion* was used by artists using cameras to question the very nature of the photograph and the role of the viewer in generating the meaning of any work of art. This paper offers an analysis of the why and how of *Animal Locomotion*’s importance to the art of the 60s and 70s.

\* 10.30–11.00am **Maggie Dethloff** Assistant Curator of Photography and New Media, Cantor Arts Center, California

#### • ***Muybridge at Stanford: Influences and Moving Images***

In 1872, former California governor Leland Stanford hired Eadweard Muybridge to photograph a horse in motion, changing the course of the photographer’s career and setting the stage for some of the most important advances in the history

of photography and the advent of moving images. Over the next eleven years, the collaboration between Muybridge and Stanford reached new heights of achievement before ending in a contentious split. Shortly after, in 1884 Stanford's son Leland Jr.—a budding scholar and collector—died before his sixteenth birthday and Stanford Sr. and his wife Jane set about founding a university and an art museum (now named the Cantor Arts Center) in his memory. Eadweard Muybridge's innovative motion study photography, largely begun on the Palo Alto Stock Farm that is now the grounds of Stanford University, comprises a core collection within the Cantor Art Center's holdings of photography and continues to inform the Cantor's collecting in photography and time-based media.

This presentation, part introduction to the Cantor's Muybridge collection and part speculative history, will revisit the ways the Stanford family influenced the course of Muybridge's career and consider the photographer's influence on the family and the university in turn. The talk will emphasize Muybridge's relationship to the development of cinema and time-based media and the impact of his legacy on the field today, as well as on the Cantor Arts Center's nascent efforts in collecting new media.

\* 11.00–11.15am Coffee in room

\* 11.15–11.45am **Byron Wolfe** Professor and Art Department Chair, Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

• ***Eadweard Muybridge and the Accidental Archive: Animal Locomotion Remnants, Alternates, and Outcasts including Experiments with Systems of Display, Datasets, and AI generations***

*Accidental Archive* examines 482 glass plate interpositives made by Muybridge during the production of his eleven volume *Animal Locomotion* series. 141 of the surviving transparencies were never published offering insight into some of his editing decisions. The interpositives were once held in the now-defunct Philadelphia History Museum. For nearly a century and a half they were largely forgotten while time, temperature, and humidity transformed many of them in unpredictable and visually-

arresting ways; a silver patina emerged on the glass, and some of the transparencies now display a rainbow of reflected colors depending upon how they're viewed. A single image depicting a galloping horse, for example, might dramatically change as light shines through it, or bounces off its front or back surfaces. Scuffs, scratches, and fingerprints add a layer of ghostly marks. Originally created to fix visual movement into distinct fractions-of-a-second intervals, the images have since transfigured into unique artifacts that contain multitudes and collectively embody the ravages of time that span generations.

*Accidental Archive* examines the mesmerizing materiality of these objects and the recursive effect of time on original studies of time. It also considers the images in relation to the published volumes by using the newly derived variations as source material to explore the limits and constraints of Muybridge's use of measuring grids and the assembled image sequence as ways to construct meaning.

With a total of 19,386 published exposures, *Animal Locomotion* is among the first large-scale photographic projects that can be considered as a defined dataset which can be examined, mined and interpreted apart from the content of the pictures. *Accidental Archive* includes visualizations that map and interpret language and quantitative information derived primarily from Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion Prospectus and Catalog*. This historic data has also been the primary source material for entirely new AI-generated output. The results are at turns beautiful, whimsical, haunting, and disturbing – similar to Muybridge's original work. These new constructions offer insight into biases and patterns embedded within two revolutionary image making technologies, one historic and one contemporary, that profoundly impact perception and understanding of what is seen and unseen.

\* 11.45–12.15pm **Miriam Hiebert** Post-Doctoral Fellow, Smithsonian Institution Museum Conservation Institute, Washington

• ***Analysis of Glass Photographic Plates from Eadweard Muybridge's Animal Locomotion Series in the Smithsonian's Photographic History Collection***

The Photographic History collection at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History houses nearly 600 of the interpositive glass photographic plates from Eadweard Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion* series. These large composite image plates represent an important editorial step in the creation of Muybridge's famous images. As part of a larger effort to conserve each of these plates, a complete survey of their condition was conducted along with simultaneous analysis of the materials used, as well as assessment of their degradation. These analyses revealed new information about the photographic processes used in the production of these plates and provided significant insights into the various degradation mechanisms affecting the stability of this collection.

\* 12.15–12.45pm **Seoyoung Kim** Curator of Muybridge Collection, Kingston Museum

• ***Famous Lecturer: Muybridge's Projection Lectures and The Kingston Museum Bequest***

Since the first public demonstration of his invention, the Zoopraxiscope, on 4 May 1880 at the San Francisco Art Association, Eadweard Muybridge performed hundreds of lectures to a range of audiences in the UK, America and Europe for over 15 years. He gained an international reputation for his famous lectures, showcasing his pioneering photographs of animals and humans in motion and moving image projection with the Zoopraxiscope. However, while many studies have been carried out on Muybridge's published photographic work, most notably *Animal Locomotion* (1887), his lectures are often overlooked, and their details have not been thoroughly studied.

Illustrated with many unique items bequeathed to Kingston Museum by Muybridge himself, such as lantern slides and the Zoopraxiscope discs, this paper presents the details of Muybridge's projection lectures, including their set-up, contents and the arrangements of lantern slides. The implications of Muybridge's lecture tours are also discussed. Ultimately, this paper aims to contribute to raising the profile of Kingston Museum's Muybridge collection, which distinctively represents Muybridge's lecturing career.

\* 12.45–2.00pm Lunch

\* 2.00–2.30pm **Dr Claudy Op den Kamp**, Principal Academic in Film, Faculty Member Centre for Intellectual Property Policy & Management (CIPPM) Bournemouth University, UK

• ***The Shadow Land: Serial Photography & the Legal Invention of Motion Pictures***

In the 1890s, both Eadweard Muybridge and W.K.L. Dickson registered work for copyright with Librarian of Congress, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, who also acted as the *de facto* Register of Copyrights. Muybridge's serial photography is generally seen as the end of *chrono-photography*, while Dickson's work is seen as the beginning of *cinematography*.

Based on my recent Kluge Fellowship at the Library of Congress, during which I was able to identify new primary source material, we now have a clear picture of what those initial Dickson registrations were. It is, however, unclear how Dickson's initial procedure of registering motion pictures - as a serial photograph - was decided, as no contemporaneous circular or compendium makes any mention of this procedure. Due to the striking resemblance in both form and content between Dickson's and Muybridge's work, this presentation proposes that the legislative process, particularly before the U.S. Copyright Office was founded in 1897, was more collaborative than we might have assumed thus far. It will rethink the relation between Muybridge and Dickson, with Spofford as the 'middleman', in what I propose to call the 'legal invention' of motion pictures - the changes over time between what was deposited, what those deposits were supposed to represent, and to what end.

\* 2.30–3.00pm **John Ott** Professor of Art History, James Madison University, Virginia

• ***Capturing the Black Equestrian from Muybridge to 'Nope'***

Filmmaker Jordan Peale may have fudged some details about the two-second, animated sequence of photographs by Eadweard Muybridge of a Black man on a horse that opens *Nope*, but his movie offers us an invaluable glimpse of African Americans' undisputed but often forgotten contributions

to the histories of horse-breeding and horse-racing. But the anonymous jockey captured on camera faced much more sinister dangers (spoilers!) than malevolent visitors from another planet. This talk draws on research from my book *Muybridge and Mobility* on the portrayal and social mobility of Black athletes during the Jim Crow era. Close examination of his portrayal of these African American models within *Animal Locomotion* (1887) and the physical and cultural contexts of Gilded Age Philadelphia provides rare insight into the complex relationships between its black and white residents.

While to some extent *Animal Locomotion* manifests and naturalizes prevailing racial beliefs, it also provides an unusual vantage from which to observe the limited agency and social mobility of African Americans athletes as they moved between and amidst the spaces of Anglo Philadelphia. Successful athletes achieved a measure of respect, celebrity, and even fortune attainable by few other African Americans. At the same time, their profession required punishing training regimens and constantly risked serious physical injury. And for many Anglo contemporaries, the performance of African American athletes only confirmed long-standing stereotypes about inherent black physicality. And yet, the inherently collaborative nature of photography helps us to consider these athletes as dynamic agents in their own right, carefully attuned to the promise and perils of publicity.

\* 3.00–3.30pm **Dr Sarah Gordon** Museum Specialist, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington

• **“Subjects Unknown:” Feminist Responses to Eadweard Muybridge’s *Animal Locomotion Photographs***

When artists, art historians, photography aficionados and film buffs think of Eadweard Muybridge, we generally think of his serial motion studies, both horse and human. The most immediate and enduring responses to Muybridge’s motion studies tend to focus on his pioneering photographic technique and presentation. Indeed, the material and technical innovations that allowed Muybridge to capture human and animal bodies in motion swiftly and irrevocably changed photographic and artistic practice and were a crucial precursor to the film era.

It is no surprise that conceptual artists in the 1960s were drawn to the qualities of Muybridge’s work that result from these technical aspects: the seriality, gridded arrangement, and apparent objectivity of the pictures. However, some more complicated responses to Muybridge’s work have concentrated instead on the unprecedented exposure of human bodies, especially female ones, that his pictures allowed. This presentation will examine several photo-based artworks that, inspired by Muybridge’s pictures, provide insightful and powerful commentaries on the female body.

Sol LeWitt’s *Muybridge II* (1964) combines the conceptual and minimalist interest in seriality with a critique of modern modes of viewing the female body. Its peep-show-like viewpoint invites comparisons to pornography and incited controversy at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 1991. Eleanor Antin’s *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (1972) likewise reenacts the successive measurement of the female body initiated by Muybridge, in a critique of female beauty standards. More recently, artists have done away with the seriality of Muybridge’s photographs altogether, to focus instead on single frames and their simultaneous revelation and erasure of the female body. A discussion of the work of Kathy Grove, Michal Heiman, and Taras Polataiko will highlight not only the consistent relevance of Muybridge’s pictures, but their foundational position in an unflinching photographic investigation of the female body that continues today.

\* 3.30–4.00pm Refreshments

\* 4.00–4.15pm **Becky Beasley: Artist Presentation** - Introduced by David Falkner

Award-winning artist Becky Beasley will for the first time convey the research and development of her live performance work, 13 pieces, 17 feet, which finds its point of departure in photographer Eadweard Muybridge’s extraordinary 360°, folding panorama of San Francisco of 1878. The third panel of this photograph portrays the house of railroad millionaire Charles Crocker, and the infamous Spite Fence he built around the house of his neighbour,

Nicolas Yung, a German Undertaker, when he was unable to persuade him to sell his land. A monologue in thirteen parts and multiple voices, this performance for one actor follows an alternating structure, between historical fictions and abstract texts, and incorporates exquisite details of archival photographs, to produce an event which spirals slowly into the black hole at the centre of an extraordinary object.

- \* 4.15–5.30pm Roundtable Discussion: Fran Lloyd with invited guests

Rebecca Gowers, acclaimed author of *The Scoundrel Harry Larkyns and his Pitiless Killing by the Photographer Eadweard Muybridge*

Seoyoung Kim, Marc Shaffer & Byron Wolfe

- \* 5.30pm Closing Remarks & Drinks

### Speaker Biographies

- ◇ **Becky Beasley** (b. 1975, UK) is a Paul Hamlyn Artist Award recipient (2018) who has participated in numerous international exhibitions. She is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London and is represented internationally by Galeria Plan B, Berlin and Francesca Minini Gallery, Milan.
- ◇ **Marta Braun** an international scholar of chronophotography, is Emeritus Professor and director of Toronto Metropolitan University's Film+Photography Preservation and Collections Management graduate program. She is the author of landmark monographs including *Picturing Time: The Work of E. J. Marey 1830–1904* (1992) and *Eadweard Muybridge* (2010) as well as catalogue essays, book chapters, journal articles, and a children's book on Muybridge. She serves on the board of major journals in Europe and North America, has worked as a guest curator at the George Eastman Museum and the Smithsonian Institution, held one of the first fellowships at the Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie (IKKM), in Weimar, Germany, was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques (France), and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. She is currently working on chronophotography and Italian Futurist film.
- ◇ **Maggie Dethloff** oversees the Cantor Arts Center's collection of photography and new media. With a focus on 20th and 21st century photography, Maggie prioritizes interdisciplinary research into the potential, and potential limits, of photographic and digital processes to reflect, shape, and respond to urgent issues of the contemporary moment. Most recently, Maggie curated the exhibitions *A Change of Scenery: Photographs of Leisure in the Landscape* and *At Home/On Stage: Asian American Representation in Photography and Film* at the Cantor. Prior to joining the Cantor Arts Center in 2019, Maggie worked as a curatorial researcher at the Langson Institute and Museum for California Art. She has also held curatorial fellowship and acting curator positions at the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College. Maggie holds a PhD in Visual Studies from University of California, Irvine and is the author of the exhibition catalogue *PHOTOdocument: Twentieth-Century American Photography and Found Text*.
- ◇ **David Falkner** Following a decade as a practicing artist, trained at Chelsea College of Arts (University of the Arts London), David Falkner dedicated himself to interdisciplinary curatorial work in public-sector venues in the UK. He became Director of Kingston University's Stanley Picker Gallery in 2004, developing its renowned Stanley Picker Fellowships in Art & Design and securing Arts Council England National Portfolio status since 2012. He is also Director of Kingston University's Dorich House Museum since 2015 and has played a key role initiating and developing the Muybridge in Kingston partnership between Kingston University and the Royal Borough of Kingston.
- ◇ **Sarah Gordon** is a Museum Specialist at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. She has curated exhibitions of photography and contemporary art at the Art Museum of the Americas, American University Museum, National Gallery of Art, and DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; consulted on public and private collections

- in the US and abroad; and taught art history and museum studies at Smith College, American University, and George Washington University. Gordon's book, *Indecent Exposures: Eadweard Muybridge's Animal Locomotion Nudes*, was published by Yale Press in 2015. She has also recently published on New Deal murals in federal buildings. Gordon has administered contemporary public art projects and continues to research historic public art. She received her PhD in art history from Northwestern University in 2006.
- ◇ **Rebecca Gowers** has written two novels, *When to Walk* and *The Twisted Heart*, both longlisted for the Orange Prize (now the Women's Prize for Fiction). In 2014 she became the fourth editor to revise *Plain Words*, the classic English usage guide by her great-grandfather Sir Ernest Gowers, after which, in 2016, she wrote her own satirical companion volume, *Horrible Words*, both published by Penguin. She has also written two works of biographical non-fiction inspired by family archive materials, each a cultural unpicking of a Victorian murder case that happened to involve one of her forebears. The first, *The Swamp of Death*, was shortlisted in 2004 for a Crime Writers' Association Golden Dagger award and was serialised on Radio 4; the second, *The Scoundrel Harry Larkyns and his Pitiless Killing by the Photographer Eadweard Muybridge*, was shortlisted in 2020 for a Historical Writers' Association Golden Crown award. She recently appeared in the feature documentary *Exposing Muybridge* directed by Marc Shaffer, and she is an Associate of the Oxford Centre for Life Writing founded by Hermione Lee at Wolfson College, Oxford.
  - ◇ **Miriam Hiebert** received her Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering in 2019 from the University of Maryland. She worked as a post-doctoral Fellow at the Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute where she carried out analysis of Eadweard Muybridge's glass plate images from the Photographic History collection at the National Museum of American History. She currently serves as the scientific resource for the National Museum Natural History on the development and execution of a Smithsonian pan-institutional glass condition survey.
  - ◇ **Seoyoung Kim** is a curator at Kingston Museum, which holds one of the most significant Muybridge collections. Seoyoung has developed an in-depth understanding of Muybridge's work for over eight years. She has undertaken various Muybridge projects at Kingston Museum, including the Muybridge Week festivals (2017–2019), a contemporary art exhibition, 'My Muybridge' (2018) and a community-led exhibition, 'In Motion: Your Stories' (2022). She is currently undertaking a PhD at Kingston University on 'Eadweard Muybridge: An evaluation of his work and the collection bequeathed to Kingston Museum'. Centring on the Kingston collection, she investigates Muybridge's work from a collection-focused perspective. Previously, Seoyoung was an accredited conservator and worked for the Wallace Collection, Glasgow Museums and the St. Louis Art Museum (USA). She has published and presented many articles and papers on various museum issues, including collections care, conservation and audience engagement.
  - ◇ **Fran Lloyd** is Professor of Art History and Co-Director of the Visual and Material Culture Research Centre at Kingston School of Art, Kingston University London. She has published widely on modern and contemporary art and visual culture, including émigré artists in Britain, transnational encounters, sculpture, and the art school. As part of the Muybridge in Kingston partnership she has collaborated on the AHRC-funded web resource on Muybridge collections world wide and international conferences funded by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Terra American Art Foundation.
  - ◇ **Claudy Op den Kamp** is Principal Academic in Film, and faculty member at the Centre for Intellectual Property Policy & Management (CIPPM) at Bournemouth University, UK. With an international professional background in film restoration, and now working between the fields of film and intellectual property, her teaching and research centres on access to archival (film) collections and the creative re-use of those materials. She is the author of *The Greatest Films Never Seen* (AUP, 2018), co-editor of *A History of Intellectual Property in 50 Objects* (CUP, 2019), and director of *The Shadow Line* (2022).

- ◇ **John Ott**, Professor of Art History at James Madison University, researches artwork by and portrayals of African Americans, particularly during the second quarter of the twentieth century, as well as art markets and collecting in the United States. He is author of *Manufacturing the Modern Patron in Victorian California: Cultural Philanthropy, Industrial Capital, and Social Authority* (Ashgate, 2014) and (with Tim Cresswell) *Muybridge and Mobility* (California, 2022); Ott's half of the volume examines the representation and social mobility of Black athletes in the Gilded Age. His current book project is *Mixed Media: The Visual Cultures of Racial Integration, 1931–1954*.
- ◇ **Marc Shaffer** is an award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker. He developed, directed, wrote, and produced *Exposing Muybridge*. Shaffer's many documentaries have covered a range of pressing issues, including the Enron debacle, hidden problems at the Boeing corporation, failed U.S. immigration policies, the interrogation of Saddam Hussein, SUV safety problems, the medical marijuana industry, and American healthcare, among others. Shaffer lives in Oakland, California with his wife.
- ◇ **Byron Wolfe** uses photography and other visualization tools to tell stories that reflect on broader notions of culture and the constructions of landscape, perception, and time. He has authored or co-authored seven books including two about Eadweard Muybridge's photography: *Phantom Skies and Shifting Ground* (Radius Books, 2017) and the upcoming *Accidental Archive: Animal Locomotion Remnants, Alternates, and Outcasts* (Radius Books, 2024). His collaborative projects have appeared in publications such as *Harpers Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Orion magazine*, and

others. He is a Guggenheim Fellow and his photographs are held in numerous permanent collections including The George Eastman Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. Wolfe is the Chair of the Art Department at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

### Kingston Museum

A selection of the Muybridge materials is on view at the Museum (free entry).

### Muybridge Archive

All items stored at the Archives require a research appointment to view. Please contact Kingston Museum for more details ([www.kingstonheritage.org.uk](http://www.kingstonheritage.org.uk)).

### Conference website:

<https://www.stanleypickergallery.org/events/main-events/moving-muybridge-transatlantic-dialogues/>

