

News Release FROM THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

MICHIGAN AVENUE AT ADAMS STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 60603, U. S. A.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An exhibition of PHOTOGRAPHS BY EUGÈNE ATGET will open at The Art Institute of Chicago in Galleries 108 and 109 on May 2, and continue through June 14. The exhibition is comprised of 118 photographs which were assembled by John Szarkowski, the Director of The Museum of Modern Art's Department of Photography. They present Atget's vision of Paris, especially his views of the people, churches, parks, shops and the Seine.

Atget (1857-1927) was born in Libourne, near Bordeaux, and was raised by an uncle after his parents died. He first became a sailor, and then turned to acting and worked as a comedian until 1898 when he became interested in photography. He used simple photographic equipment: a large camera with a rapid rectilinear lens, glass plates and a tripod. He printed his pictures on albumen or gelatino-chloride printing-out paper, and toned them with gold chloride which gave them their characteristic sepia color. This emphasized the details, texture and light.

All of the photographs in the exhibition are original prints, which

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were acquired by The Museum of Modern Art in New York from the large collection of Bernice Abbott in 1968. Miss Abbott, who was an apprentice in Man Ray's studio and a prominent photographer in her own right, was a friend of Atget's in his later years. She collected his photographs, and after his death, purchased all of the prints and negatives remaining in his studio.

In commenting on the exhibition, Hugh Edwards, the Art Institute's Curator of Photography, stated that: "More than any other photographer of the past, Atget fulfills what is expected of the great artist. He belongs in that company of rare individuals for which France will always be famous. He has taken his place with Flaubert, Zola, Maupassant, Boudin, Franck, Monet, Debussy and Proust. For those who do not know the large scope of his work, this exhibition will be a revelation; for others, familiar with it, John Szarkowski's selection, made with rich understanding and appreciation of such a great range of values, will increase Atget's stature and reveal unsuspected reflections of his genius."

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Photographs available after May 1, 1970.