



William Henry Fox Talbot (Phaidon 55's)

Geoffery Batchen

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William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-77) is widely considered to be the father of modern photography, having developed the process by which photographic images could be reproduced. However, he has yet to be sufficiently appreciated as a photographer in his own right. Over the course of his photographic career, he has made more than 5,000 images that include fascinating pictures of his home, Lacock Abbey, portraits of family and friends, and still lifes of botanical specimens, cloth, and household objects. A key intellectual figure of the nineteenth century in science, mathematics, astronomy, politics, and archaeology, Talbot is arguably the most important figure in the invention of photography. His practice established many of the medium's most familiar genres. Talbot was devoted to the advancement of photography, publishing the first photographically illustrated book, *The Pencil of Nature* (1844-46), which revealed the potential of the medium to a wider audience.

This new monograph features many of Talbot's best-known landscapes made around Lacock Abbey and some of the first negatives ever made. It also includes lesser-known and previously unpublished work that reveals the extraordinarily diverse scope of his work. His photographs reflect and embody the social and cultural issues of the time, but they are also fascinating, often beautiful images that are still as engaging today as they were nearly 200 years ago.



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