



Untitled, plate 582 from the series "Animal Locomotion"

Date

c. 1884-87 (published 1887)

Primary Maker

Eadweard Muybridge

Medium

Collotype on paper, mounted on board

Description

In 1872, the photographer Eadweard Muybridge launched his photographic investigations into movement, which “surprised the world by challenging all received conceptions of animal motion.” His photographs, shot consecutively at regular increments (some as small as one five-thousandth of a second), revealed the awkward moments within what the human eye saw as a graceful continuum of movement. Muybridge used his camera to capture details beyond the limits of what individuals could perceive, lending power to the nascent field of photography, in which art and science served a common purpose. Muybridge’s eleven-volume publication *Animal Locomotion* includes 781 collotype plates, which he began making in 1883 under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania. Each plate contains twelve to thirty-six frames showing the gaits of a variety of animals as well as men, women, and children executing everyday actions. Ninety-five of the plates, such as the one shown opposite (plate 582), focused on horses. The interdisciplinary nature of the project is indicated by the range of subscribers to *Animal Locomotion*: colleges and universities; veterinary, anatomical, and physiological programs; archaeological institutes; art museums; and schools of industrial design. When presenting his research, Muybridge often contrasted his photographs with prehistoric and ancient works of art depicting animals in motion, revealing the flaws of those examples; his most famous counterexample was the equestrian statue of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius in the Campidoglio, Rome. Many artists subsequently studied Muybridge’s plates to make the anatomical aspects of their works more realistic. As a student, William E. Williams, Class of 1973, who gave this plate to the College, had been encouraged to pursue photography by Silvia Saunders (see cat. nos. 71–73). In addition to his career as an artist (see cat. nos. 108, 122), he is currently the Audrey A. and John L. Dusseau Professor in the Humanities at Haverford College. Williams curated a number of exhibitions at the Emerson Gallery, in addition to exhibiting his own work there. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, *INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS*, 2017)

Dimensions

Image: 7 9/16 × 15 9/16 in. (19.2 × 39.5 cm) Composition: 13 11/16 × 19 7/16 in. (34.8 × 49.4 cm) Sheet: 18 3/4 × 23 3/4 in. (47.6 × 60.3 cm)