

Art and Photography: Forerunners and Influences: Selected Essays by Heinrich Schwarz, University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London, 1987

Introduction by William E. Parker:

Heinrich Schwarz (1894 - 1974), "Museum Curator and Educator," as he typically and all-too-modestly identified his professional activities, was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia. During 1913-14 he studied history of art, classical archeology and philosophy at the University of Vienna. In 1918, following military service, he engaged advanced studies in art history at the University of Vienna, concentrating on 18th-, 19th- and 20th-century painting and sculpture, receiving his doctorate in 1921. His doctoral thesis concerning the beginnings of lithography in Vienna initiated his lifelong, internationally recognized art historical and curatorial contributions, particularly those contributions concerning the field of the graphic arts.

During the early 1920s in Vienna, Heinrich Schwarz began his curatorial career in the Print Room of the Albertina Museum. From 1923 to 1938, at Vienna's Austrian State Gallery in the Belvedere Palace, he was appointed to major curatorial positions, participating in the establishment of the Baroque Museum, the Gallery of the 19th Century, and the Modern Gallery. In 1929 at the Modern Gallery, pursuing his evolved research interests in early photography, Dr. Schwarz organized an exhibition of 180 calotype photographs from the 1840s by the Scottish painter, D.O. Hill with recognition of Hill's collaborator, the Edinburgh photographer Robert Adamson, as technical aid. Through further research and extension of his initial catalogue commentary for the exhibition, Heinrich Schwarz became the first art historian to write a scholarly monograph on a photographer, emphasizing what he believed to be "artistically remarkable documents of a strange union between a mechanically operating apparatus and the creative and organizing will of the human spirit directing the machine." His *David Octavius Hill, Der Meister der Photographie* (Liepzig, 1931), which was, shortly after its initial publication, enlarged, translated and published in London and New York, remains a continuously influential assessment of the Hill and Adamson calotypes and a major contribution to the history of photography.

Heinrich Schwarz arrived in the United States in 1940 and was soon appointed Research Scholar and Resident Assistant at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York. From 1943 to 1953, he served as Curator of Paintings, Drawings and Prints at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art (Providence). In 1954 he was appointed Curator of the Davison Art Center Collection and Professor of History of Art at Wesleyan University (Middletown, Connecticut), serving there until his retirement in 1972.

Excerpts from two of the privately published Eulogies delivered at the funeral service for Heinrich Schwarz on September 23, 1974, especially identify the character of his professional interests and contributions. Richard S. Field, at the time Curator, Davison Art Center, and now Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, Yale University Art Gallery, wrote:

Heinrich Schwarz...personified the ideals of quality so inextricably associated with the discipline of art history and the profession of curator....As a scholar trained in the tradition of European humanism, Heinrich embraced the entire gamut of art history from the late Middle Ages down to the early decades of our own Century. His research and publications ranged from exhaustive and meticulous investigations of Renaissance iconology to the first stylistic assessment of photography....His knowledge, files, and publications of the development of nineteenth-century lithography, based upon fifty years of research, produced dozens of indispensable contributions which today are encountered in every younger scholar's work. His knowledge of the last 300 years of Austrian art—the area in which he took his Ph.D. in 1921— never diminished despite the fact that the last 34 years of his life were passed in the United States.... To be sure, Heinrich was an intellectual and curatorial elitist, but future students, scholars, and viewers will be the richer for it....He was one of that phalanx of exiled scholars who established the discipline of art history in America and profoundly altered our understanding of and our very relationship to the past.

In his personal tribute, Alan Shestack, Director, Yale University Art Gallery, stated:

Heinrich will, of course, be remembered not only by the fortunate few who were his students at Wesleyan, but also by the scholarly world. His interests were extremely wide-ranging and his scholarly writings covered a broad spectrum. He was equally at home writing about Renaissance drawings, early lithography, Baroque Art, 19th and 20th century Austrian art, and about photography. His interests and knowledge were so broad, in fact, that they extended far beyond the limits of standard art history. His understanding of certain aspects of technology, optics for example, led to some of his most fascinating art historical discoveries. Although his training was deeply rooted in the best traditional art history (he had studied with Schlosser and Dvorak), he was an incredibly courageous scholar, willing to wade into uncharted waters. He wrote about photography as an art form, not only at a time when he was, in fact, the only scholar in the world approaching photography from an art historical point of view, writing about the relationship between art and photography and taking photographers seriously as artists. By virtue of his perceptions and intuitions he anticipated what eventually became a major concern in our field. He was really *the* pioneer in this realm of the history of art.

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