

Paris Photo 2012
filled the Grand Palais
once again this year

with a spectacular array of
international galleries, as well as
more than a few stars of the
photographic world. David
Lynch, as guest of honour, chose
his favourite photographs, the
selection to be published by

Steidl as [*Paris Photo Seen by*](#)

[*David Lynch*](#). Former director of Magnum Photos Paris, Julien Frydman, has directed Paris Photo since 2011. He initiated *Seen By* for the 2012 show, with Lynch the first of a series of invited guests. Among the many celebrity guests were photographers Elliott Erwitt, William Klein and Duane Michals. Martin Parr and Jane Evelyn Atwood were available for book signing at Editions Xavier Barral, Karl Lagerfeld at Steidl and Sarah Moon at Camera Obscura. Discussion panels, organized by MoMA's photography curator Roxana Marcoci, included such luminaries as Hilla Becher and Thomas Ruff from Germany and Taryn Simon from the UK.

The Grand Palais, itself adding to the spectacle of the event, was originally constructed as a venue for contemporary art for the Paris World Exposition of 1900, and after extensive



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renovations in the 2000s,
continues its original role. Under
its vast and gorgeous Belle
Epoque glass and iron roof, 128
galleries and 23 publishers from
22 countries assembled to show a
panorama of international
photography, both contemporary
and vintage.

Ballarat International Foto Biennale Director, Jeff Moorfoot, was in Paris for the event and shared his thoughts on the show. "It's a fantastic venue, but an overwhelming experience

trying to make an objective assessment of the works on the walls of so many different galleries. The highlight for me was all the vintage works, with most of my favourite artists represented across the show floor.” Moorfoot feels that, as Director of BIFB, he gains enormous benefits from “connecting with fellow photographers, gallerists and other industry personnel, met at various other festivals and events around the world.” These meetings, he emphasises, always lead to introductions that expand networks. He adds that, “Events like Paris Photo also show home just how far behind the Australian audience is, in its appreciation of the art form.”

Shock value was far less evident among this year’s exhibitors. Perhaps in response to current and ongoing economic distress, a return to classical values and subject matter was evident in many works. Lyrical landscapes and cityscapes, portraits as lit by Rembrandt or Vermeer, all take us to a time where aesthetics dominated concepts. Or, perhaps, to a newer version of the old dichotomy: a happy co-existence for both.

Landscapes, like this one by Axel Hütte (right), former student of guest speaker, Hilla Becher, incorporate the modernist values of the Dusseldorf School, and draw inspiration, at the same time, from the German Romantic painters of the 18th and 19th centuries. Becher, with husband Bernd, numbered among their students at the Dusseldorf School of Photography, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer and Thomas Ruff.



Unterer Truchseßweiher, 2004
Galerie Nikolaus Ruzicska/Axel Hütte



Pine Tree, 1992-2007 Bae Bien-U
 Courtesy the artist, Aando Fine Art and Galerie
 RX

This luminous image (left), grand in scale, invites us to walk into its depths, while maintaining a rigorous adherence to a precise interpretation of the scene. Korean artist Bae Bien-U has been photographing pine trees for many years and, as a former painter himself, is inspired by that art form. He has been compared with Andreas Gursky and Hiroshi Sugimoto in his approach to the Korean landscape. He sees his photographs as the diary of his life. The title of the series exhibited in Paris is *Windscape*, the name evoking a concept of landscape as something ethereal, best expressed by mists and the movement of leaves.

At the opposite end of the scale spectrum are the tiny images of [Masao Yamamoto](#) at Yancey Richardson Gallery. Measuring around 4 or 5 by 3 inches, they resemble miniature treasures,

that examine our interactions with time and memory.

Poetry and truth and hints of the portrait paintings of earlier centuries characterise the work of Jitka Hanzlovà, a Czech artist who defected in 1982 to settle in West Germany. Through portraiture, Hanzlovà examines issues of identity and the search for a sense of place.

Connecting portraiture with street photography, Michael Wolf looks at the individual's place within the urban landscape.



Untitled (Sophie), 2011 Jitka Hanzlovà
 Courtesy the artist and Yancey Richardson
 Gallery, NY

A dreamlike, painterly quality pervades these authentically modern images of strangers on a Tokyo subway. As audience we are drawn into an experience of the subject's private reverie.



Street photography becomes theatre in the work of US artist, Julie Blackmon. It seems that the apparently spontaneous sequences of events that seem very unlikely to coincide have not, in fact, coincided. They are carefully engineered to give a stage like quality to a genre whose values are the complete antithesis of manipulation. The characters are frozen in a moment that has some of qualities of the decisive, but others of the artfully arranged tableau of earlier periods in photographic history.

Tokyo Compression #92, Michael Wolf



Olive and Market Street, 2012 Julie Blackmon
Courtesy the artist and Robert Mann Gallery

View all the exhibitors at Paris Photo 2012 [here](#)

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