

Electronic Media – 1999

CAMERA OBSCURED: *Photographic Documentation and Public Museum*

CBC Radio

The Early Edition

Interview with Vid Ingelvics

January 6th, 7 am

Arts Report with Paul Grant

Interview with Vid Ingelvics.

January 14th, midday. Interview repeated.

CBC – *Radio Canada* (French)

Interview with Vid Ingelvics

January 13th, 6:30 pm

TV5, Montreal

The Arts and the Other with Lisandre Martin

Coverage of *Camera Obscured*

JANUARY 7-14 1999

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Camera Obscured is an historical photo record of museum workers in action — and in hindsight, their work looks suspect

MICHAEL SCOTT
SUN VISUAL ARTS CRITIC

What obedient sons and daughters of empire we have been, clinging happily for more than a century to the belief that western civilization was ordained to organize and placate the world's dark and chaotic bits.

We cultivated colonies for the edification and betterment of our coloured cousins, rather like we cultivated cutting gardens. We invented new ways of living in the world, including residential schools for aboriginal children in Canada and the institutionalized racism of apartheid in South Africa.

We were only doing what was right and proper, of course, and had the institutions to prove it: museums of natural and human history where we could store and catalogue the wonders of the world we were taming; museums of (western European) art in which to record our own high intellectual ground.

Whatever excesses of zeal might occur in the process of stocking them, our museums were institutions of heady objectivity. If colonization vanquished the culture of a tribe of bushman, we at least had their gourds and their penis sheaths safely preserved in a glass case. The passenger pigeon gone? Good thing we saved so many extraordinary stuffed specimens.

The same impulse that led us to categorize certain societies as "primitive" or "Stone Age" and others (like our own) as benchmarks of civilization permitted us to think of the museum as an invariable reference point, a place of unchanging, rock-solid truth.

Which is a pretty idea, but pure poppycock, as Toronto educator and curator Vid Ingelevics observes in *Cam-*

era Obscured, a tantalizing look behind the scenes at some of western Europe's and North America's most important museums. Exploring a little-known backwater of curatorial practice — the in-house photograph — Ingelevics traces more than a century of museum history. These photographs provide evidence of the museum's own view of itself as it has changed over time.

Camera Obscured is an astonishing record of cupidity, woolly thinking, materialist obsession and good intentions gone awry. The 80 photographs collected here make a good case for the idea that the only unchanging thing about museums is their pretense to objectivity.

Some of the oddest photographs are pictures of museum curators and preparators — invariably wearing lab coats since theirs was of course a scientific endeavour — standing in the midst of half-finished dioramas. That the North American mind prefers a simulation to the unmediated real thing is not new — consider our love affair with theme parks. What catches the fancy here are images that show us in the midst of creating our plaster and taxidermy versions of nature: a sea lion rookery in suburban Chicago, or a stretch of African savannah steps from Central Park in Manhattan.

We forget that the collection of an object says as much about the collector as it does about the artifact in question.

The best example of this is not documented directly in *Camera Obscured*, but bears telling anyway. When, in 1812, it looked as if the modern Greeks were unable to appreciate their most precious cultural artifacts — the marble friezes of the Parthenon — Lord Elgin "bought" them from a corrupt Turkish regime that had no rightful claim to them,

then carried them back to England where they were eventually deposited in a magnificent new wing of the British Museum. Almost immediately, the Parthenon marbles became one of Britain's most precious cultural artifacts. Rule Britannia. Two centuries later, the Greeks are still told whenever they ask for the return of their treasure — which the Brits prefer to call the Elgin Marbles — that the carvings are much safer in the British Museum than in Athens.

This overlooks the fact that when the sculptures arrived in England they were inconveniently dirty. The ancient Greeks, it seems, believed in painting their marble sculpture vivid colours. Tsk, tsk. Obviously they didn't know that according to the reigning expert on Greek sculpture — a Dresden antiquarian named Johann Winckelmann who had never been to Greece and whose knowledge came mostly through the study of plaster casts — Hellenistic carvings had to be unsullied white. No matter. The British Museum, under the august 19th-century directorship of Lord Duveen, deliberately sanded the polychrome surface off the Parthenon's marble frieze, so that we might all enjoy the tranquil purity of the unpainted marble.

"Until relatively recently, public museums, rooted in the rational philosophies that attended their early 19th-century births, were considered to be neutral entities," Ingelevics explains. "They saw themselves as engaged in the creation of the objective, value-free presentation of ideas, illustrated through the display of collected objects. Such beliefs implied that the museum could be seen as a ... reference point, a timeless place of ... truth."

Other examples here of collections betraying the intent of the collector include a woeful 1898 view of the entrance hall of the zoology collection



of the Field Museum — with taxidermy moose and elks flanking the door like heraldic devices; and an early view of the Comparative Anatomy Gallery at France's *Muséum National de Histoire Naturelle* which shows a human figure, flayed, leading a roomful of animal skeletons as if it were a victorious army.

Ingelevics' photographic survey makes it clear that museums are institutions in an almost constant state

of flux. Their brick-and-mortar exoskeletons come and go, architectural styles change, lighting and display techniques evolve, the content of exhibits change in response to new discoveries, and marketing and politics affect the way shows are conceived and executed.

A series of disconcerting images concerns the *Deutsches Museum* in Munich. In 1937 the museum held an exhibition entitled *Der Ewing Jude*, or



The Eternal Jew. It was a racist slur in institutional form that brought the full weight of a major international museum to bear on "the Jewish problem." The poster image was a caricature of a rapacious Jewish moneylender. Ingelevics found a long view of the opening ceremonies, rife with uniformed Nazis, many of them in the process of giving the fascist salute. A second image, late in the war, shows a hagiographic exhibition on the topic

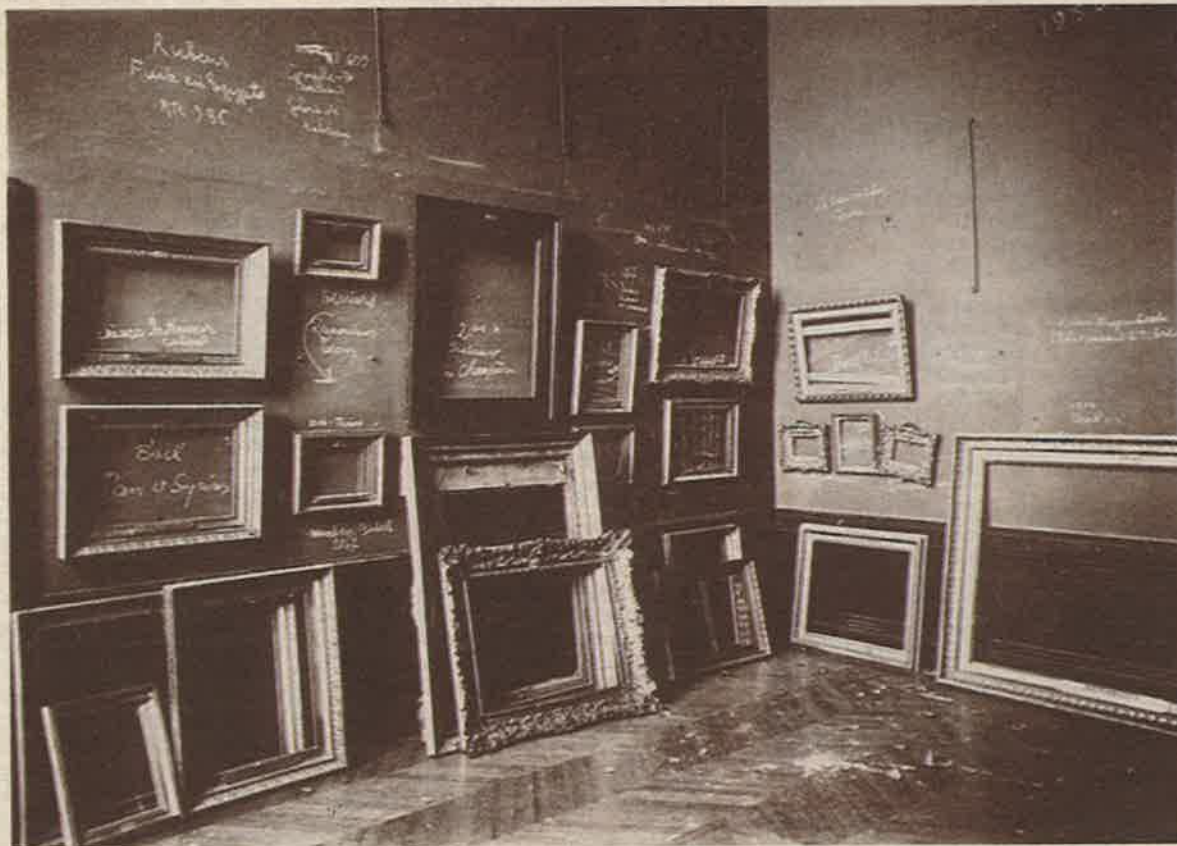


Photo: C. Carpenter/Field Museum

of how Hitler built the autobahn system. The final shot is of the rubble left after the museum was bombed in the summer of 1944. Sunlight filters through a collapsed roof, the gallery an utter ruin.

War and its depredations are a sub-theme of this show, with other poignant views of the South Court of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, pressed into service as a vast RAF canteen; of the Egyptian sculpture gallery at the British Museum, sandbagged during the First World War; of a wall in the Musée du Louvre (shown above), hung with

empty frames where canvases had been removed in 1939 — the names of the missing paintings written in chalk on the bare plaster; and the upper saloon of the British Museum after a bomb hit it during the dark summer of 1941, a monumental bronze buddha seated amidst the burnt-out rubble.

Camera Obscured also examines the sticks-and-stones fabric of museums themselves, with images of museums under construction (including the ill-starred Deutsches Museum in 1929), the Reading Room of the British Museum in 1855, when it was just a pile

GREAT MOMENTS IN THE MUSEUM: (far left) Workers at the Louvre in Paris prepare the museum for the Second World War in 1939; (above) paintings at the Louvre were removed from frames as the war advanced; (left) an artist works on Neolithic Sun Worship Diorama figure in 1930 at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, Ill.

of mortar and a cage of steel girders, and of galleries during renovation, including the astonishingly soigné Egyptian Sculpture Gallery at the British Museum draped in haute-couture black and white during a facelift in the early 1960s.

The exhibition traces the joint history of photography and museums. The British Museum appointed its first staff photographer — the first in the world — in 1853, only 14 years after the invention of the photographic process. Five years later, the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A) established an in-house photographic studio to record not only the collections, but also activities related to the running of a museum, such as exhibition preparation and artifact transport. The show includes the beginning of post-modernist self-reference: photos of photographers taking photographs.

Ingelevics includes many American examples too, among them a wonderful series of diorama pictures. In-

cluded here is a great shot of the Wild Turkey Habitat at the American Museum of Natural History, a convincing woodland scene that peters out at an inlaid tile floor. The information desk in the Great Hall of the Metropolitan Museum in New York looks much the same today as it did in 1921, with the same idling, middle-class patrons perusing the same racks of picture postcards.

We see the rise of the white cube, with the Allerton Wing of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1939 and its featureless plaster walls and pale parquetry floor. And an artist putting finishing touches to a neolithic Sun Worshipper at the Field Museum in the 1930s.

Ingelevics maintains that it makes perfect sense that the birth of photography and the rise of museums in the 19th century happened simultaneously.

"Photography in its conceptual similarity to the museum," he says, "fell perfectly into the logic of collection."

The logical positivism of the 19th century held that truth was the realm of science — anything that could be seen, could also be named, described and therefore known.

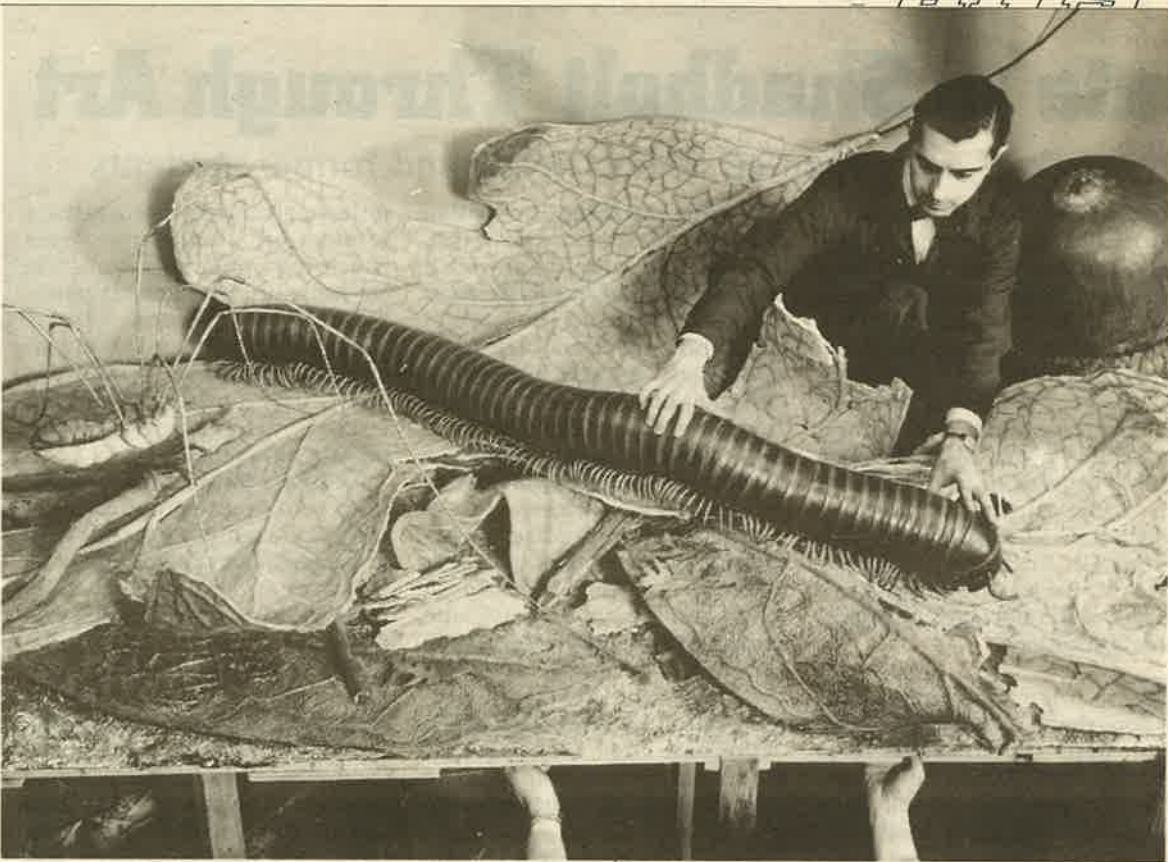
One luminous and haunting image in *Camera Obscured* reflects this well: A trio of blind children at the American Museum of Natural History in 1914, two little boys in short pants and a girl in a pinafore, studying the life-sized model of a hippopotamus with their hands, their faces frozen in intense concentration and wonderment.

In the end, Ingelevics invokes the French philosopher Michel Foucault to explore the nebulous relationship between words and visual images.

"Neither can be reduced to the other's terms," Foucault proposes in *The Order of Things*. "It is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say. And it is in vain that we attempt to show, by the use of images, metaphors, or similes, what we are saying."

The advice, hidden here, is perfectly true. Never trust the simulacra offered by critics. Go see for yourself.

Camera Obscured continues at Presentation House Gallery in North Vancouver until Feb. 21. The curator, Vid Ingelevics will give an informal talk on the show this Saturday at 2 p.m. Call 986-1351 for more information.



American Museum of Natural History employee Ray de Lucia manipulates a large-scale model of a millipede in one of the 89 often-strange and occasionally tongue-in-cheek archival photos that make up *Camera Obscured*.

Capturing a Surreal Past

Camera Obscured takes a behind-the-scenes look at museums

VISUAL ARTS

Camera Obscured

At Presentation House Gallery until February 21

• By PAULA GUSTAFSON

In one of my parallel lives (in this case, as a researcher of Pacific Northwest Coast history), I've had the privilege of being invited behind the scenes at some of the world's great museums. One backstage highlight was a September afternoon in 1990 at the British Museum's Greenwich repository, where I was allowed to examine the artifacts collected by Captain James Cook at Nootka Sound in 1778. With the exception of the whalebone and stone clubs, the items—fishing gear, carved wooden masks and bird rattles, a conical hat, a spruce-root basket, and several woven cedar-bark "cloaks"—are considered either too fragile or too precious to go on display. The only way the general public will ever see these 18th-century specimens is in photographs, which is where the museum staff photographer comes into the picture.

Camera Obscured: Photographic Documentation and the Public Museum presents 89 archival photographs taken between 1856 and 1965 by in-house photographers at 11 venerable museums, including the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Natural History Museum in London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History in New York; the Field Museum in Chicago; and the Louvre Museum and the National Museum of Natural History in Paris.

Objects in museum collections are, however, only incidentally the focus of the photographs in *Camera Obscured*. Instead, Toronto curator Vid Ingelevics has put together a photo-documentary exhibition about the hidden life of museums. For example, there is a 1930 photo of Field Museum artist Frederick Blaschke touching up the paint on the chest of a male sculpture installed in the museum's Neolithic Sun Worship diorama. The naked caveman figure, heavier and taller than the real man, seems strangely more human than Blaschke, with his poised brush and antiseptic white coat.

Another photo, taken in 1958, shows a museum employee positioning a large model of a milli-

pede on a six-foot-long oak leaf in the overscaled Forest Floor diorama at the American Museum of Natural History. As Cambridge scholar Georgina Born notes in her essay about *Camera Obscured* in the *Journal of Material Culture*, "the effortful artifice behind the museum's public illusions becomes a vaudeville of bizarre scales and incongruous juxtapositions."

You don't have to look far to find a kind of banal surrealism in these photos. A portrait of four men mopping the floor at the American Museum of Natural History could be an illustration of a day on the job. But only one of the men is wearing coveralls. Two are suited and the other is dressed in the sort of military-looking uniform worn by doormen. It's also interesting that these fellows are cleaning a sculpture gallery where busts of learned, important men are displayed. The photo caption offers a clue: "Wringer for mops with group of unidentified men." There's no subtext or hidden meaning in this 1918 photo. It was simply taken to show off the acquisition of the museum's new hand-cranked wringer.

By contrast, a 1921 photo is intentionally theatrical. The view is from the end of a mile-long queue of hundreds of top-hatted gentlemen marching toward the heroic architecture of the Field Museum. In the middle of acres of flat land, unreachable except through orderly perseverance, the newly built edifice looming on the far horizon represents the American museum as cultural icon. (To my mind, the photo also speaks grimly of the endurance of Chicagoans.)

Although there are a few shots of fine-art objects, such as a 1939 photograph of Louvre staffers using a block and tackle to move the Nike of Samothrace to a safer site in anticipation of the Second World War, most of the photos Ingelevics has selected are from natural-history museums. This type of museum became popular throughout Europe and North America during the first half of the 19th century, approximately the same time that photography was in its infancy.

"Photography, in its conceptual similarity to the museum, fell perfectly into the logic of collection. Central to nineteenth-century

positivism was the notion that truth was distillable only through the empirically based sciences. All that could be seen could potentially be named, described and, therefore, known. What could be seen could, by extension, also be photographed," Ingelevics writes in the exhibition's catalogue. If there's any doubt that museums saw themselves as sites of cultural authority, G. Brown Goode, a speaker at an 1897 American Historical Association conference, confirmed that "an efficient educational museum may be described as a collection of instructive labels each illustrated by a well selected specimen."

A gruesome 1880 photo of the Galleries of Comparative Anatomy at the natural-history museum in Paris shows a sunlit room crammed to the ceiling with skeletons in glass cases and on armatures. A sculpture of a flayed male stands front and centre, illustrating human musculature. Of course, no anatomist thought such a scene was gruesome in 1880, just as in 1931 few people would have been offended by the rows and rows of African animal trophy heads mounted on the wall above the dignitaries in the photograph of the jubilee ceremony at London's Natural History Museum.

Ingelevics's 1996 photograph of a photograph pasted to a page in one of the British Museum's hundreds of "guard books"—14-by-17-inch bound volumes that preserve photos taken in the 1850s by Roger Fenton, the first staff cameraman to be employed by a public museum—adds another layer of (re)presentation to *Camera Obscured*. I can't help but wonder if the image Ingelevics chose to rephotograph—Fenton's 1857 photo depicting side-by-side skeletons of a man and a male gorilla—isn't his sly reference to museology's hierarchical mindset, still apparent 80 years later in the Neolithic Sun Worship diorama.

There's one other photo I'm convinced is a tongue-in-cheek curatorial selection. Like the Neolithic stage set, this one is dated 1930, and it portrays seven museum guards at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Guns drawn, standing in a row, these brilliantined "Winners of the Shooting Team" have the stalwart righteousness of J. Edgar Hoover's G-men. ■

this week

NORTH SHORE NEWS ENTERTAINMENT & STYLE GUIDE

CALENDAR

galleries

Dundarave Cafe: *Ritua A. Peironi*. Watercolours, oils and pastels. Jan. 9-29. Opening reception Jan. 13, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Ferry Building Gallery: *Reverence for Nature*. Oils, photography and mixed media by K. Crawford Burns, Tom Omid, Lee Parks, David Smith and Peter Tucker. To Jan. 24. Gallery hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed Mondays. Information: 925-7266.

The Gallery, Artisan Square, Bowen Island: Closed to Jan. 15. *Cherish the Past — Hope for the Future*, murals created by the residents of Camp C. mes runs Jan. 15-Feb. 7.

North Vancouver District Hall: *Messages, Masks, Mementos*, the pottery of Heather Cairns and *Journey of Colour*, the acrylic paintings of Charlotte Woolley Berry. To Jan. 27. Exhibits are a program of the N.V. Community Arts Council and is open Mon-Fri, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

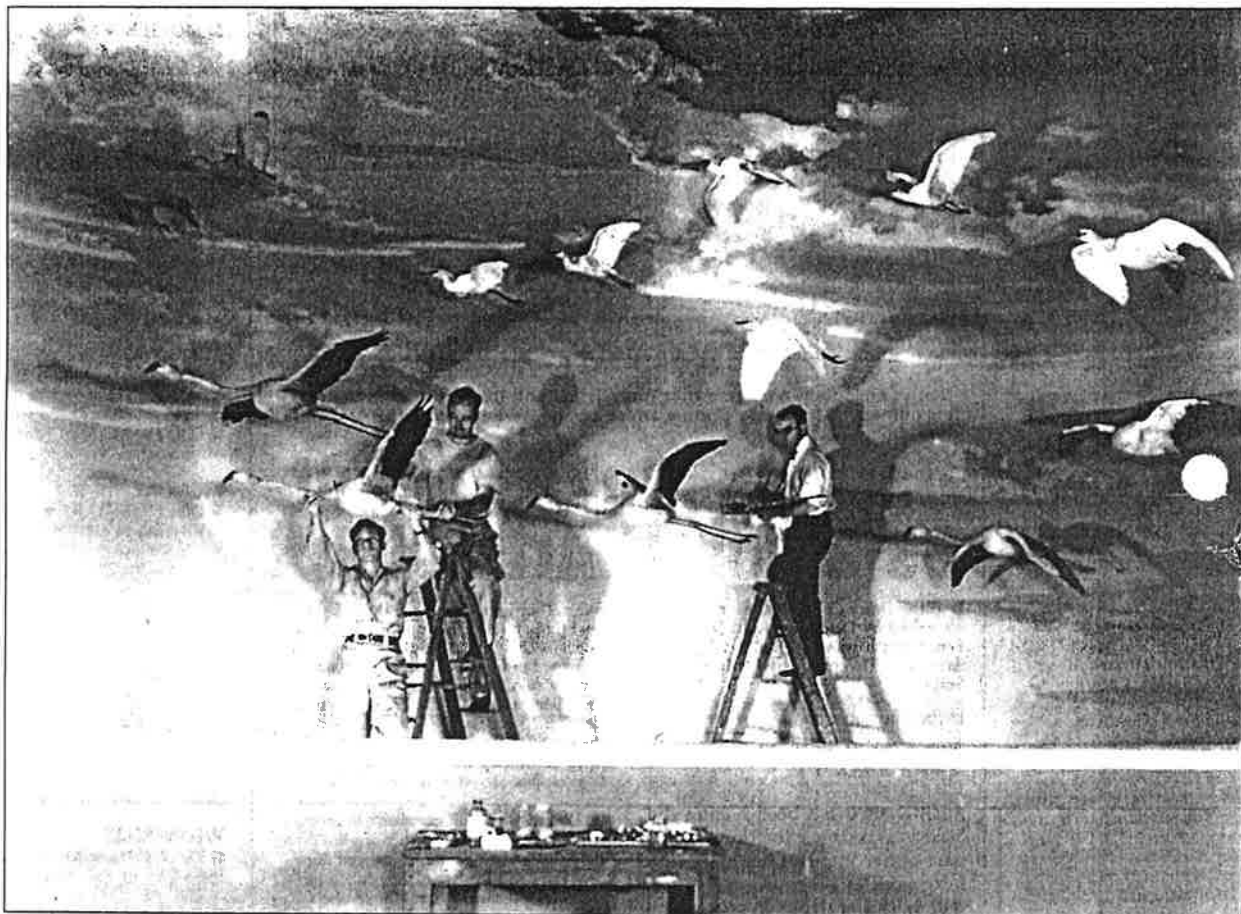
North Vancouver Museum and Archives: *Towing The Coast: Seaspau and its Predecessors, 1898-1988*. The story of Seaspau highlighting stories of deep sea towing and salvage and the development of the self-dumping barge. Wed.-Sun., noon-5 p.m. Free. *Prince George Eventually*. Len Norris cartoons. To Jan. 31. *Early Sports*. Photographs and text trace the early development of soccer, baseball and lacrosse. To March 28. Museum open Tues.-Sun. noon to 5 p.m. Museum is closed Jan. 1.

PGE Railway Station: *Shipyard Snapshots*. The colorful and dramatic covers c. Wallace Shipbuilder. Builard Drydock's employees publication during the Second World War. Weds.-Sun. noon to 4 p.m. Foot of Lonsdale. Presentation House Gallery: *Camera Obscured*.

Photographic Documentation and the Public Museum. A look at the intersection of history, the public museum/gallery and the use of photography as document. Exhibition curator Vid Ingelevics will give a talk prior to the opening reception Jan. 9 at 2 p.m. Weds.-Sun., 12-5 p.m. Thursday to 9 p.m.

Admission: pay what you can. Ron Andrews RecCentre: *Pastels and Woodcarvings*. Exhibits by Deep Cove residents Lorene and Barry Pikechly.

Seymour Art Gallery: *Transitions*. A solo exhibition of work by artist Lawrence Kristmanson. Watercolours, traditional print making and



STAFF at The American Museum of Natural History work on a group of flying birds in the Sanford Hall in 1947. The photo is one of the many startling images on display at Presentation House, Jan. 9 to Feb. 21.

Photo Alex Rota

Museum cameras unveil

Michael Becker

News Editor
michael@nsnews.com

THE truth of museums, as chronicled by archival sleuth Vid Ingelevics, is revealed to be carefully constructed fiction.

Much contained in *Camera Obscured*, an exhibit of 89 photographs plucked from the archives of public museums in Europe and North America, is unexpectedly surrealistic, courtesy of the photographers' behind-the-scenes point of view.

The Toronto curator's showing runs at North Vancouver's Presentation House Gallery from Jan. 9 to Feb. 21.

The many evocative images often surprise with fantastical juxtapositions.

Irrational incongruity reigns when observing the manufacturing of objectivity.

We see serious-looking men in coats hard at it in the role of God's assistants, busily assembling the natural world piece by detailed piece.

In one shot it is a pride of lions being assembled. Another photograph shows a life-sized model elephant drawn by horse and cart through a city street.

There are numerous unintentionally bizarre subjects set within the formal environment of museums.

A moment caught by the camera in 1930 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (*Museum guards winning shooting team*) shows seven men standing in a row. The central figure stands at a podium with a trophy. He is flanked by six surly men in uniform, revolvers symmetrically in hand.

A 1914 shot from The American Museum of Natural History (*Blind children studying a hippopotamus*) features two boys caressing a life-sized hippo while a young



Photo Alex Rota

RAY de Lucia installs models in The American Museum of Natural History in 1958.

girl sits on a stool nearby, holding a miniature hippo on her lap.

Ingelevics had a vast resource to choose from during his six-year search.

Millions of documentary photos exist throughout the world's public museums. The majority have never been seen in public. The institutional photo archive of The Metropolitan Museum of Art holds approximately 750,000 negatives alone. Between 1856 and 1960 the standard tool used by staff photographers in museum photographic studios was the large-format camera.

Negative sizes ranged from 4" X 5" up to 11" X 14", some even larger in earlier decades. Many of the larger format black and white photographs are amazingly rich in clarity.

Said Presentation House Gallery director and curator Karen Love, "The large-format cameras produce these exquisitely detailed images that give us a wealth of information that is not generally available through a 35 mm camera."

Many of us perceive public museums to be warehouses of history. Implicit is the notion of objective presentation. We assume artifacts to be shown without the imprint of contemporary cultural value stamped upon them.

A 1945 photo from The Deutsches Museum graphically tells us otherwise. *Exhibition on the construction of Germany's autobahns* shows the museum as an agent of public indoctrination — an arm of a political public relations machine.

Said Love, "One of the things that is revealed in this exhibition, is that what is presented to us in the museum over time, does change."

"You do see, by looking at the photographs, different ways of presenting cultural material to the public. It's very interesting to look at that."

Ingelevics first showed *Camera Obscured* in 1997 at The Photographers' Gallery in London. He will be at Presentation House in person tomorrow at 2 p.m. to give a tour and talk on the project.

See Calendar page 14

11:14 MUSIC:15 CINEMA:15 ALL-STARS:16 DANCE:19 DINING:20

ARTS

A L I V E

Volume IV Number 6

January/February 1999

The Camera Obscured: Photographic Documentation and the Public Museum

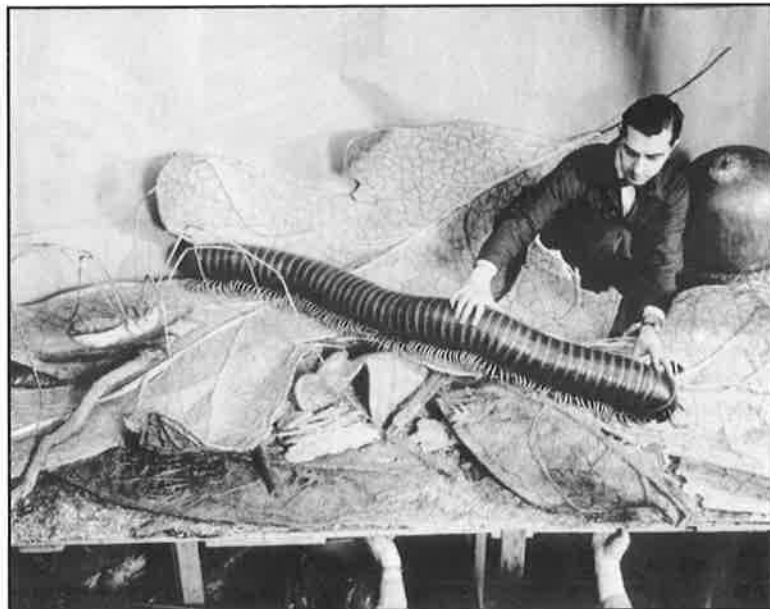
In May 1997, an extraordinary exhibit opened at the Photographer's Gallery in London, England. Ironically, *Camera Obscured: Photographic Documentation and the Public Museum* showed at a gallery only a stone's throw from the British Museum where Roger Fenton, the world's first museum staff photographer, took his first museum photographs in 1852. In those 145 years, photography's history had been thoroughly defined by public museums, but never in that time had the camera's view of the museum been considered. Until then. And now North Shore residents too can share in this fascinating exhibit when it comes to the Presentation House Gallery in January.

On November 29, 1995, I landed at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris. I was ready to begin what I knew would be my last search for an elusive set of photographs taken by Marc Vaux of the Musée du Louvre's war-time evacuation of artworks. My first discovery was, instead, a city paralyzed, in the early throes of one of those massive public service strikes that seem to erupt in France every few years. Jet-lagged, I managed to get on what must have been the last bus into Paris after a four-hour wait at the airport. The bus deposited a weary and haggard-looking group of travellers at the Arc de Triomphe, only for us to find the Métro shut down and the streets filled with honking cars cemented together in severe gridlock. Facing reality and an ever-increasing sleep deficit, I picked up my bags and began a three-hour walk across Paris to my rented apartment. Then, when at last I had arrived at the apartment building and had figured out the combination of keys and security codes, I faced what felt like the biggest challenge of that agonizing day—a six-floor walkup to the apartment.

So started another phase of the project that had begun four years earlier in October 1991, on another day in Paris when I unintentionally found myself in the archives of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle. That day, I had gone to the museum to see what I had remem-

bered from a photograph—a vast sky-lit atrium populated by vast crowds of stuffed and mounted animals. The guard let me in on the secret that the main museum buildings had been closed for renovations since the mid-1960s and counselled me to go instead to the museum's archive, which remained open, and look at photographs of the atrium. I did as he suggested. Soon I was handed a binder of institutional photographs of the museum going back to a selection taken by Parisian photographer Pierre Petit in 1880.

I was unprepared for the stunning nature of the images placed in front of me—legions of animal skeletons led by a skinless and penis-less man on a plinth, a museum guard sleeping under the skeleton of a dinosaur, a display cabinet with the skeletons of the King of Sweden and his favourite dwarf; a typology of two-headed human fetuses; rooms filled with dozens of grimacing human skeletons—all images very different from what we see when we visit a natural history museum today. I wondered why, in my own research on muse-



ums, images like these were so rarely seen. I realized that these photographs, and surely many others in the world's public museums, would offer us the museum's past from a visual point of view. The photographs showed me that, far from the popular belief that museums are timeless mausoleums, they have in fact been continuously changing. What I discovered that day was that the institutional photography archive of each museum is really a museum of the museum.

Inspired by this realization, I began to visit the archives of public museums at every opportunity offered by my travels, looking at thousands upon thousands of photographs. My search took me from the attics of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre in Paris to the basement vaults of the London's British Museum. At the Victoria and Albert Museum alone, I spent two weeks going page by page through a crumbling set of large books, into which every photograph ever taken by the museum's photo studio had been

Ray de Lucia
installing models
for the Forest
Floor diorama in
the Hall of
Forests at the
American
Museum of
Natural History,
New York, 1958

Photo by
Alex J. Rota
Photograph
courtesy of
The American
Museum of
Natural History,
New York



Artist Frederick Blaschke putting finishing touches on Neolithic Sun Worship diorama figure at The Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 1930

Photo by Charles Carpenter

Photograph courtesy of The Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

pasted, going back to 1856. It was in these books that I found dozens of completely forgotten

photographs by one of photography's earliest and most famous pioneers, Roger Fenton. Ironically, many of the same photographs were also upstairs in the museum's art

photography collection, where they were kept in acid-free mattes under strict temperature and humidity-controlled conditions. This was just one more of the many surprising contradictions that emerged as I dug deeper

into the relationship between public museums and photography.

The finding of the Fenton photographs brought me to a second important realization about museums: that they are often quite unaware of what has accumulated in their own archives. Attention is lavished on their collections, while material relevant to their own histories seems often to be neglected, to the point where actual damage occurs to these fragile records. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of the world's wealthiest and most celebrated museums, knowingly allowed hundreds of irreplaceable institutional negatives to disintegrate for several decades before recently beginning construction of a proper storage facility.

And, yes, I did eventually find Marc Vaux's stunning 1939 photographs of the Louvre as it faced the dawn of WW II. The negatives for those photographs were inexplicably stored in the archives of the

Musée de l'Art Moderne at the Centre Georges Pompidou, only a half-hour walk from where I was staying.

Camera Obscured shows at the Presentation House Gallery from January 9 to February 21. Vid Ingelevics will give a talk on the project on Saturday, January 9, at 2 pm; this event is free and open to the public. Other public events are planned as well; call (604) 986-1351 for information. ♦

Vid Ingelevics is an artist and independent curator living in Vancouver. His artwork *Axis: A Tale of Two Stories*, which examines the circulation of the images of acclaimed 19th-century British photographer Roger Fenton in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is included in an exhibit currently touring Europe.



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生活副刊

展覽背後 Camera Obscured



照片的作用是捕捉千鈞一髮，剎那間所發生的事情。

“Camera Obscured”從大疊的黑白記錄照片中，將各地公眾博物館、藝術館等的幕後景象呈現出來。這次展覽裏面所包括的八十九張照片，乃是在北美洲與歐洲多個主要公眾博物館，好像美國的The Art Institute of Chicago、加拿大The Royal Ontario Museum、英國The British Museum與德國The Deutsches Museum等所蒐集回來的。

這批照片當中，有不少是在一八五六年到一九六五年之間所拍攝的。這段日子博物館還是採用大型的照相機，拍攝的照片內容盡是有趣場面，例如博物館工程進行中、展覽前吊掛藝術品、被拆卸一地的畫框及閱讀室一角等，都是些一般

人進到藝術館或博物館看展覽時，鮮會見到的場面。

一八五三年，The British Museum首先引進了攝影機，並聘用了首個攝影師，那年剛好是發明攝影機第十四年。五年後，當時的South Kensington Museum也設立了攝影部，不但是把展覽的藝術作品拍下作檔案記錄，同時也把館內外發生的事用圖片記載下來。

Camera Obscured是一個相當特別的展覽。原本在英國倫敦展出，現在正於北美洲巡迴展覽。

Camera Obscured
展出地點：Presentation House Gallery
333 Chesterfield Avenue,
North Vancouver
展出日期：直至2月21日
查詢電話：986-1351



文化廊

An Evening of Gospel Son
古典音樂

地點：West Vancouver
United Church

日期：1月17日

票價：\$10 - \$15

查詢：926-3690

Dangerous Obsession 話劇

地點：Metro Theatre

日期：1月23日-2月20日

票價：\$12 - \$15

查詢：266-7191

Romeo & Juliette 歌劇

地點：Queen Elizabeth
Theatre

日期：1月30日及2月2/4/6/8日

查詢：280-3311

Wang Dang Doodle 音樂喜劇

地點：Arts Club Theatre

日期：直至2月6日

票價：\$12.50 - \$32.50

查詢：280-3311

Kiss Project 舞蹈藝術節

地點：Performance Work

日期：1月17日-2月14日

票價：\$7 - \$20

查詢：280-3311

撰文：陳慧心