

Baudelaire and Photography: Finding the Painter of Modern Life (Research Monographs in French Studies)

Timothy Raser



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While Baudelaire's 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne' is often cited as the first expression of our theory of modernism, his choice of Constantin Guys as that painter has caused consternation from the moment of the essay's publication in 1863. Worse still, in his 'Salon de 1859', Baudelaire had also chosen to condemn photography in terms that echo to this day. Why did the excellent critic choose a mere reporter and illustrator as the painter of modern life? How could he have overlooked photography as the painting of modern life? In this study of modernity and photography in Baudelaire's writing, Timothy Raser, who has written on the art criticism of Baudelaire, Proust, Claudel and Sartre, shows how these two aberrations of critical judgment are related, and how they underlie current discussions of both photography and modernism. Timothy Raser is Professor of French at the University of Georgia (USA).

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