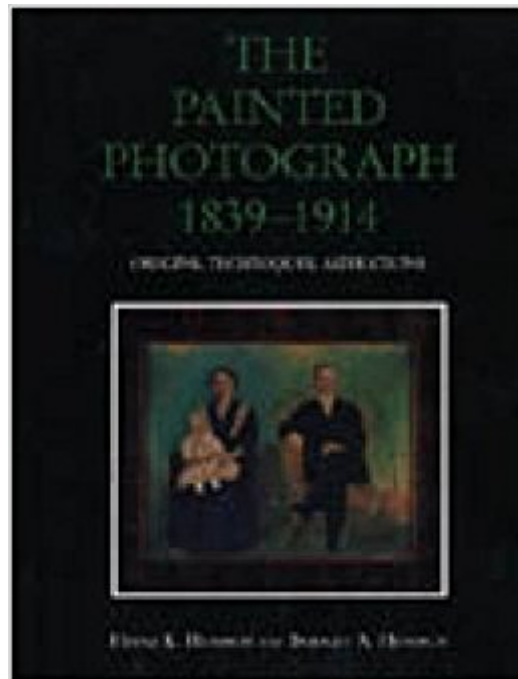




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# The Painted Photograph, 1839-1914: Origins, Techniques, Aspirations



## Synopsis

As photography grew more popular following its invention in 1839, its admirers did not understand how a medium that rendered shapes and textures in exquisite detail could fail to render them in realistic color. Also disappointing was the tendency of the captured images to fade over time. Photographers, ever eager to please their public, began "painting" their photographs with substances ranging from water colors and oil to chalk and crayon. Images were enlarged, enhanced, and framed, to simulate the splendors of the traditional portrait. With its rich variety of illustrations in color and duotone, *The Painted Photograph* is the first comprehensive history of overpainting, from its origins to World War I. The 131 illustrations featured draw upon original nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sources, most from America and Britain, but also representing Japan, Turkey, Austria, Germany, Poland, Canada, Bohemia, India, Australia, Norway, Holland, and Russia. In describing a multitude of early techniques, the authors survey overpainting on various types of photographs, including daguerreotypes, tintypes, and imprinted porcelain, milk glass, enamel, magic lantern slides, and textiles. Particularly fascinating are discussions of overpainted death portraits, most commonly those of children, and the origins of popular "picture postcards" featuring overpainted landscape scenes. The Henisches address also the eager acceptance of the painted photograph throughout the world, despite the hostility of the art-critical establishment. *The Painted Photograph* will appeal to a wide public interested in photography, history, sociology, social anthropology, folk art, popular fashion, and antiques.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1839, when Daguerre's backer, François Arago, announced Daguerre's invention to the Academie des Sciences, he quickly noted that the invention "produces drawings and not pictures in color." Faced with both the monochromy and the early medium's tendency to fade, it became popular to rouge a cheek, emphasize a line or, in more sophisticated hands, like those of the Canadian William Notman's studio, color whole crowd scenes. More than half of this book consists of verbatim quotations from various and idiosyncratic publications of the years in question. But so many embedded references jar the flow of reading--footnotes would have worked better. The authors also tend to be either rather snide about their sources (on the subject of the color gray, "Wall gives us only two brief insights, both strikingly profound: that it is 'most nearly related to black,' and that it is 'associated with shadow.' ") or emphasizing inconsequential points ("the editor... makes his views perfectly clear, adopting the royal We in the process.") Maybe the Henishes (The Photographic Experience, 1839--1914) are trying to be funny, but their humor is dubious; witness this passage on the "reliability" of pigments: "Nobody wrote to the editor to suggest a thin Mazda for the sky, a fine stipple of Honda for grass and a delicate dab of Toyota for a rose." The strong point of this volume is the photographs. Many of the 131 illustrations (92 in color) here are in private collections. Readers interested in Americana at its most intimate must thank the authors for their conscientious digging into the country's dusty attics and periodicals sections. Copyright 1996 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Since the invention of photography in 1839, still images have been carefully colored or tinted utilizing a variety of techniques. This stunning example of social and cultural history traces the history of the painted photograph from daguerreotypes and tintypes to the advent of color photography. Distinguished photohistorians with an eye for detail, the Henischs write knowledgeably yet in an engaging style brightened with a touch of humor. Lavishly illustrated with 131 historical photographs, most of them striking portraits, this large-format book is beautifully designed and printed on heavy-coated stock. The result is absolutely gorgeous. Destined to become a definitive work in the history of photography, this book will be welcomed enthusiastically by scholars, yet the subject is presented in such a pleasant, engaging manner that the book may be expected to appeal to broad audiences as well. Highly recommended for all libraries. Raymond Bial, Parkland Coll. Lib., Champaign, Ill. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Very little information about the practice of painting (as opposed to tinting; there is a difference)

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