
Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs: The Limited-Edition Portfolio and the Market for Photographic Prints in the United States

Audrey Sands

“I have no prints. There is nothing,” declared photographer Lisette Model in the summer of 1975. She was sitting at the café in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, across the table from Gerd Sander, established professional printer and grandson of German photographer August Sander. Having recently moved to the United States to open an art gallery in Washington, DC, Gerd Sander had just told Model of his hopes to open his gallery with a monographic exhibition of her work, which would be her first solo gallery exhibition of works for sale. Model was keen but insisted, “there is no work.”¹

The problem was not that she truly lacked prints. Rather, what she did have was more akin to artifacts—the remnants of a process whose end goal was photomechanical reproduction on magazine pages or custom sizes for temporary display at places such as public libraries, camera clubs, photography-equipment stores, or didactic and advertising spaces like Eastman Kodak Company’s Colorama display on the eastern balcony inside New York City’s Grand Central Terminal. In Model’s possession, by contrast, were eight-by-ten-inch proof prints made in the 1930s–1950s, which she considered unfit for exhibition, and even less fit for sale; these were things she kept bundled in boxes under her bed or stuffed in the closets of her modest West Village basement apartment. The prints were not aligned with 1970s standards for objects of fine art.

Like many photographers, Model’s assignment work dwindled in the 1950s with the decline of illustrated magazines in the US such as *Life* and *Look*, so she ceased making commercial work and paid her rent through teaching. Between 1951 and her death in 1983, Model was on staff at the New School for Social Research and taught privately. Although she maintained an active artistic practice during this time, producing her extensive jazz series and photographs of Italy and Venezuela, very little of the work from this period was published or sold.² Model was a household name in the photography scene, an iconic figure; she was a former member of the Photo League,

a frequent exhibitor at MoMA, and the erstwhile private teacher and confidante of the recently deceased photographer Diane Arbus. Model's work was included in photography trade journals and museum surveys, and her perspective was invited at convenings and symposia.³ She was, by any measure, one of the great photographic artists of her time. And yet, as a magazine photographer turned teacher who had grown her career at a time when there was no defined market for photographs, the notion that she might have some reserve of collectible prints was not in keeping with contemporary practices in which prints were made for magazine reproduction or exhibition.

Model's predicament was typical of that of many magazine photographers, or any photographer who had worked for hire but was now being promoted to the inchoate art market for photography in the 1970s. For Model in particular, the print had never been precious; through the 1960s, prints rarely sold, and when they did, prices were usually not more than \$15 to \$50—a minimal gain from the labor and expense of printing.⁴

Following their meeting, Model delivered negatives to Sander, who, from his home darkroom, printed them to her precise specifications. In September 1976, Sander Gallery opened with a show of thirty of Model's photographs, priced between \$300 and \$400 apiece for sixteen-by-twenty-inch prints (figs. 1, 2). According to an unsigned review in *Aperture*, with the exhibition, "Lisette Model reemerged from legend to the visibility of the gallery wall and the scrutiny of the public eye."⁵ The review commends the fact that, finally, "Model's work is being printed, exhibited, and published. The old negatives . . . came out of storage and Sander carried them to Washington. There he began to print as Model directed, 'strong and closed.'" Model's satisfied response to Sander's work is quoted: "The prints are so much myself. They were a miraculous kind of thing."⁶



FIG. 1. — Gerd Sander at the opening of *Lisette Model Photographs* (25 September–30 October 1976), Sander Gallery, Washington, DC, September 1976. Photographer unknown. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

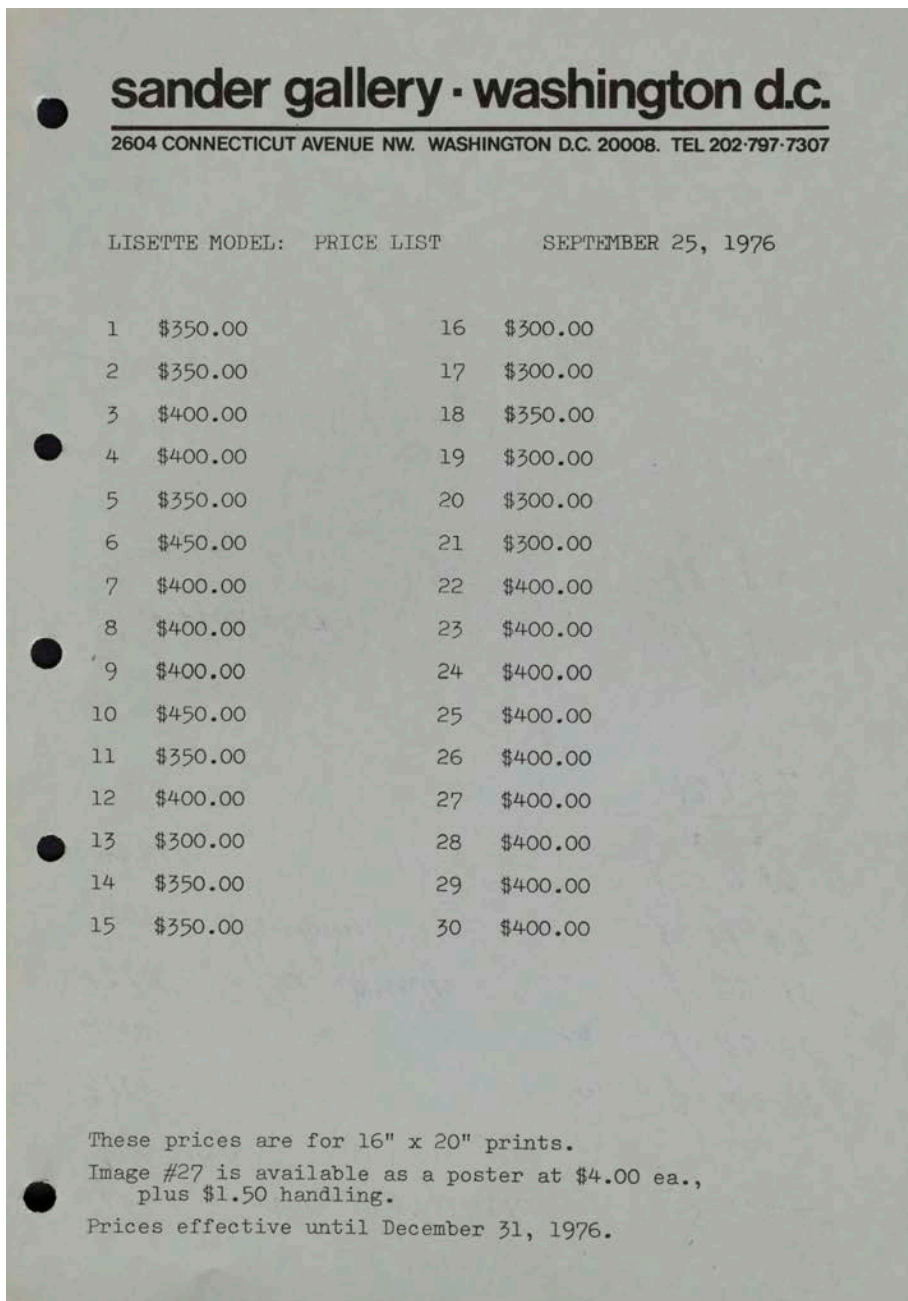


FIG. 2. — Price list for works in the exhibition *Lisette Model Photographs*, Sander Gallery, Washington, DC, 25 September 1976. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung.

Despite broad publicity and positive reviews from art critics, only one work sold.⁷ It was an image of *Running Legs* (a series she had begun in the 1940s), which artist Allan Kaprow and his wife, photographer Rachel Vaughan, ordered in a larger, twenty-by-twenty-four-inch size for the price of \$500. The print-to-order and price-to-size sales model had been standard for several decades, and while prices had risen considerably

since the 1950s, the days of \$25 prints, the general marketing structure remained the same, with exhibitions and catalogs like menus from which buyers might order any number of items for custom printing.

After the show closed at Sander Gallery, fellow Washington, DC-based photography dealer Harry Lunn approached Sander for help with another project to print Model's work.⁸ Lunn was a former CIA agent turned dealer of fine-art prints and photography. In 1968, Lunn had opened a graphic arts gallery in the Capitol Hill area of DC that dealt in nineteenth- and twentieth-century prints and drawings. But in January 1971, after seeing the work of Ansel Adams, he began selling photographs marked by an inaugural exhibition of Adams's *Portfolio V*.⁹ Quickly establishing himself as a groundbreaking photography dealer whose impact on the market is still felt today, Lunn made \$10,000 in sales from this first show alone. In the early 1970s, he purchased inventories of thousands of prints from the archives of Lewis Hine, Walker Evans, Adams, and Robert Frank; he co-acquired, with Marlborough Gallery, the entire set of prints Berenice Abbott had made from Eugène Atget's negatives, as well as Abbott's own work; and he came to exclusively represent Brassai and the estate of Arbus.¹⁰ Lunn's proposed project was a limited-edition, collectible boxed-set portfolio of works by Arbus's friend and teacher, Lisette Model.

Custom-printed for this purpose, the portfolio, titled simply *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, contained a selection of signed images that Model had made in the 1930s and 1940s, printed uniformly at sixteen by twenty inches.¹¹ Master printer Richard Benson, who had printed for Paul Strand, Evans, and others, started production, but Model was unhappy with the prints, so Lunn asked Sander to take over.¹² The portfolio was presented loose in a custom-designed, silk-covered case and issued in a limited edition of seventy-five identical sets, plus fifteen artist proofs, each numbered (fig. 3). Fixing or "limiting" the edition meant that, after the portfolio, no further prints would be created from those negatives. This was a significant break from the order-fulfillment model. The portfolio, Lunn projected, would produce a new kind of collectability for Model.

The challenge for Lunn was how to position a magazine photographer without salable prints as a collectible artist. In 1956, pioneering photography dealer Helen Gee had sold a nineteen-by-fifteen-inch print of Model's photograph *Woman with Veil, San Francisco*, of 1949, printed sometime between 1949 and 1956, for \$25.75 at Limelight Gallery to US American arts patron and women's rights advocate Dorothy Meigs Eidlitz (fig. 4).¹³ In 2007, by contrast, a print of that same photograph, described as vintage, sold at auction at Christie's London for £31,200 (\$61,818)—more than three times the estimate, surpassing any previous price for a print by Model.¹⁴ The vintage print, whose lower contrast and slighter dimensions Model advocated moving away from in the 1970s, would become prized by collectors. Model's work gained exponential value as the twentieth-century art market evolved.

In the following pages, I argue that the invention of the limited-edition portfolio played a fundamental role in the marketability of Model's photography and, more



FIG. 3. — *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs* (Washington, DC: Graphics International, 1976). Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2002.152.9–20. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Ruttenberg, courtesy of the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation. © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

broadly, the rise of the photographic art market in the United States. Using Model as a case study to address the question of how a market was created for photographs, I will review some early attempts to market photography in the United States prior to the 1970s, when the print-to-order model dominated; discuss the production and circulation of photographs in magazine and museum contexts in this period; and consider theoretical models on the nature of the commodity that link notions of collectability and desire to the perception of scarcity. Two fundamental and concurrent interventions, modeled by Sander and Lunn respectively, transformed the US photography market, helping it to effloresce ahead of markets in Europe and other locations: first, modern printing—that is, later printing from original negatives for the express purpose of sale; and second, the creation of rarity, or the limitation of what flowed into the market. In what follows, I present the distinct roles Sander and Lunn played in reshaping Model as a salable artist as well as their broader impacts on the photography market, particularly the rise of the limited-edition portfolio. Ultimately, and ironically, although the production and sale of portfolios was intended to build a market for photographic prints—which it did—what came to be known as “vintage prints,” those that had been produced for noncollecting purposes and showed signs of age and wear, became the most sought-after, costly items; these were the very same objects that Model had considered unfit for exhibition.

The astronomical ascent of photography as a collectible art form in museums and private collections in the last fifty years, reflected in the climbing prices achieved at auction, is a subject of increasing scholarly interest. Today, the so-called photo boom of the 1970s is a dense and growing area of literature in the field, yet the history of limited-edition photography portfolios has yet to be situated in its broader impact on the market. As the market for photographs dramatically expanded, pioneering



FIG. 4. — Lisette Model (US American, b. Austria, 1901–83). *Woman with Veil, San Francisco*, 1949, gelatin silver print, 34.9 × 27 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XM.153.13. © Estate of Lisette Model, courtesy Baudoin Lebon / Keitelman.

photography critic A. D. Coleman, whose column *Latent Image* in the *Village Voice* was published beginning in 1968, offered leading analysis on developments in photography. His writings from this period trace themes and trends such as public funding for the arts, the fugitivity of Polaroids as a problem for their collectability, the reception of color photography by art critics, the hybridization of photography and performance art, and the role of pornography in our understanding and valuation of photography.¹⁵ Coleman only delves occasionally into themes such as editioning; his texts focus on broad cultural

trends without isolating limited-edition portfolios as a subject of inquiry. Art critic Andy Grundberg employs a similarly holistic approach to historicizing the photograph in his book *How Photography Became Contemporary Art: Inside an Artistic Revolution from Pop to the Digital Age* (2021).¹⁶ His broader overview of postwar artistic developments situates the broader acceptance of photography and its shifting artistic status with respect to its increasing presence in and integration as a core component in conceptual and performance practices from the 1970s onward; this focus prioritizes the incorporation of photography into other art forms over practices within historic photographic modes. Alternate perspectives on the photography market have come from other sources. A notable recent overview of its efflorescence and an economic analysis of the photo boom has come from auction-house expert Juliet Hacking, who was a longtime head of the Department of Photographs at Sotheby's in London. Her book *Photography and the Art Market* of 2018 takes up the economics of the art market for photographs from an art-business perspective. While the book addresses editioning and the difference between vintage and modern prints, it doesn't historicize these distinctions.¹⁷ Similarly, Denise Bethel, former chairperson of photographs at Sotheby's, continues to speak and write broadly in this developing area of scholarship.¹⁸

Most recently, Molly Kalkstein completed her unpublished doctoral dissertation "The Discerning Eye: Creating Value in the 1970s American Market for Photographs," which charts several developments in the US and England between 1969 and 1980 that solidified the status of the photograph within the art and museum worlds. Kalkstein's is the first major study to assess, from an art historical perspective, mechanisms such as editioning and the notion of the "vintage print" in the historic valuation of photographs.¹⁹ Still, with the exception of unpublished writings, there remains a lacuna in the understanding of the crucial role played by portfolios across this period.²⁰ In this essay, to bridge that gap, I situate and historicize the short-lived heyday of the limited-edition portfolio, the figures behind its careful positioning as a market tool, and the crafting of rarity that underpins the rise, fall, and impact of this briefly dominant trend that pervaded the photography market in the 1970s.

Photography without an Object

Since the invention of photography in the 1830s, practitioners and enthusiasts alike had to fight for the medium to be recognized as art. Yet it was not until the market boom of the 1970s that a solid collector base was finally secured for photography as fine art in the United States. Dealers have been lauded as visionary promoters of the aesthetic value of photographs, yet studies are lacking that describe the precise alchemy by which aesthetic value was translated into market value with economic returns; this was an alchemy that in turn shifted and, in many ways, flattened the at once multiple and overlapping "discursive spaces" of photography that Rosalind Krauss famously theorized.²¹

In the first half of the twentieth century, some prescient art dealers recognized and advocated for the value of photographs. Notable examples were Alfred Stieglitz, Julien Levy, and Gee, each of whom exhibited photographs in their New York City galleries.²² Although each project brought greater critical attention to the medium, none succeeded in garnering a discrete collector base. In 1905, Stieglitz, famed pioneer and promoter of Pictorialist photography and leader of the Photo-Secession, opened the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession at 291 Fifth Avenue in New York. More commonly known as “291,” it introduced the work of photographers alongside modernist paintings and sculptures by international artists Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Auguste Rodin. The fact that photographs failed to sell did not deter Stieglitz, who remained committed to his cause, and from 1925 to 1929 he ran the Intimate Gallery, dedicated exclusively to the promotion of US American art. Finally, in late 1929 he opened a third gallery devoted to US modernism, called An American Place, at 509 Madison Avenue, where he presented monographic shows of work by Paul Strand, Adams, Eliot Porter, and others, again without sales, until his death in 1946.

In the 1930s, Levy, having spent time in Paris among the avant-garde, returned to New York determined to promote surrealism to an American audience.²³ He believed in photography as a central medium of modernism, and when he opened the Julien Levy Gallery in 1931 at 602 Madison Avenue, he showed photographic work by Man Ray, Henri Cartier Bresson, Abbott, and Marcel Duchamp. It was only when this work did not sell that he began to focus broadly on other media, including painting, sculpture, and collage, showing surrealist works by Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, and Joseph Cornell with great success. When his gallery closed in 1949, Levy had amassed a spectacular private collection of photographs that was eventually acquired for the Art Institute of Chicago by photography curator David Travis in 1976.²⁴

In 1954, Gee, a former student of Model's, opened Limelight, the first gallery dedicated exclusively to the exhibition and sale of photography in New York.²⁵ Located in the happening Greenwich Village neighborhood, Limelight was a coffee house and diner with a devoted gallery section in the back. In its six and a half years, Limelight mounted sixty-one exhibitions of photographic work, featuring Abbott's prints from Atget's negatives, the work of Brassai, Julia Margaret Cameron, László Moholy-Nagy, Stieglitz, Edward Weston, and much more. The financial survival of Limelight, however, was carried by food sales from the café. The photographs, priced between \$25 and \$75, rarely sold. Although it provided an important exhibition and gathering space for photographers, the project was not viable financially, and Gee ultimately closed the gallery in 1961.

Even at MoMA, the first major institution to collect photographs, museum leaders tried to cultivate enthusiasm for private collecting. In 1951, a decade after the founding of its Photography Department, *A Christmas Sale of Photographs* was staged at MoMA “as an experiment to stimulate interest in the collecting of original photographic prints.”²⁶ Works by Weston, Aaron Siskind, Lotte Jacobi, Frank, and Model were priced at \$10 to

\$25 each. The organizers of the museum sale promised that works would be custom-printed according to demand. Unfortunately, the sale produced few buyers.

In spite of the increasing recognition by museums, the notion of the photographic print as a privately collectible art form had yet to catch on. Collectors did not perceive photography as an aesthetic or financial investment, for it was entrenched in utilitarian purposes such as advertising and journalism, and its seemingly limitless reproducibility made it appear too easily accessible.²⁷ Never was that reproducibility more embedded in the photograph's identity than in the mid-twentieth century, a moment when photography's discursive field was driven by the domain of the magazine page; it was rare to find sustainable income as a photographer anywhere else.

The great image engines of New York—*Life*, *Look*, *Fortune*, *Vogue*, and *Harper's Bazaar*—churned out new issues weekly, biweekly, or monthly. The specific process by which a single photograph or set would end up in the hands of millions of readers around the country might vary slightly from periodical to periodical, but in general, a photographer would shoot a subject, develop the film, produce a contact sheet and sample prints, and deliver these to the magazine. An editor would select what they considered to be the best images for a story or spread. These were sent to retouchers, then to a design team for layout, montaging, and integration with text before being shot for transfer to offset lithography plates. Original prints were usually not returned, and if they were, they often had cropping marks, touch-ups, editorial commentary, and stamps all over them.²⁸ It is easy to understand how prints from this period were stashed away in boxes or lost to the cutting-room floor.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, MoMA employed an in-house photographer to document exhibition installations and to make custom prints for those exhibitions using on-site darkroom facilities.²⁹ Particularly under the stewardship of former magazine photographer Edward Steichen, who served as director of the Department of Photography at MoMA from 1947–61, photographs were exhibited more for their design and image qualities than for their value as objects, exemplified perhaps most dramatically by the exhibition *Family of Man*.³⁰ Original negatives or photographers' prints were sent out with orders for poster-size enlargements from Manhattan-based printing companies including Compo-Photocolor and Modern Age, and it was those enlargements that would be installed on gallery walls. In such a print-to-order system, standard for museums at this time, it was difficult to identify a single collectible object.

Theories of Collecting in the Postwar Period

By the late 1960s, at the same moment that the first major photography galleries to anticipate lasting success began to open in New York and Washington, DC, scholars Jean Baudrillard and Timothy Brock were publishing works in the fields of sociology and psychology on the ways in which people value objects. Baudrillard's and Brock's ideas about the nature and status of commodities offer a useful lens for interpreting the actions of gallerists. In his book of 1968, *Le système des objets* (*The System of Objects*), French

sociologist and cultural theorist Baudrillard, who was incidentally also a photographer, argued that collected objects are distinct from ordinary objects based on the nature of their relationship to an owner.³¹ When individuals relate to an object through its function, he explains, its status is simply that of a used thing. By contrast, an object can only be regarded as “possessed” once it has been “abstracted from its function and thus brought into relationship with the subject.”³² In a section titled “The Non-Functional System, or Subjective Discourse,” in which he devotes a subsection to what he terms “a marginal system: collecting,” Baudrillard gives the following example:

If I use a refrigerator to refrigerate, it is a practical mediation: it is not an object by a refrigerator. And in that sense I do not possess it. A *utensil* is never possessed, because a utensil refers one to the world; what is possessed is always an object *abstracted from its function and thus brought into relationship with the subject*.³³

When considered in relation to photography, Baudrillard’s thesis would imply that for the medium to be perceived as collectible, it would first need to be disentangled from its scientific, editorial, and advertising functions. Photographs had to be redefined, essentially, as useless—as things whose sole purpose is to be owned. In other words, the photograph needed to be converted from a functional image into a functionless object.

Working at the same moment as Baudrillard, Brock, a psychologist, published his formulation of commodity theory in 1968.³⁴ Brock was interested in psychological responses to scarcity, and in particular how scarcity impacts perceptions of commodity value. His fundamental argument was that scarcity enhances the perceived value, or desirability, of anything that can be possessed. In other words, the more restricted or limited the availability of a good, the more people want it and will be willing to pay for it. A century earlier, economist Adam Smith had articulated a similar observation, writing simply: “The merit of an object, which is in any degree either useful or beautiful, is greatly enhanced by its scarcity.”³⁵ Following Baudrillard, such merit would only be enhanced if an object was both beautiful and useless. Brock’s commodity theory adds the implication that by modulating scarcity you could influence behavior. Photography’s status as infinitely reproducible was precisely what lay in the way of its desirability as a commodity. In order to redefine the photograph as collectible, it needed to be divested from its function, made scarce, and perceived as rare.

Gerd Sander, Master Printer

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the onus was on the dealers to prove that photography could be a stand-alone object—a print. For many living photographers, particularly those who had primarily worked for magazines, they had no prints to sell. A sudden need for quality prints led in turn to the rise of the master printer.

Gerd Sander was born in 1940 in Cologne, Germany, to a family of photographers. At the age of six, he received his first photography lessons from his grandfather, August Sander, the great German photographer known for his lifelong portraiture project

Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts (*People of the 20th Century*), which documented, indexed, and classified the German population.³⁶ The family business was darkroom printing. Initially an engine to support August's work, printing operations were run by August's middle child and Gerd's father, Gunther Sander. Gunther eventually established his own commercial darkroom, printing for publicity and advertising companies and making oversize enlargements for trade fairs and film sets. In 1957, at the age of seventeen, Gerd left school to work full time in the darkroom, where he learned how to print to the specifications of varied and demanding clients. After August's death in 1964, Gunther and Gerd continued printing from August's negatives for a variety of purposes, and these posthumous prints can now be found in many museums around the world.³⁷

When he moved to Washington, DC, in 1975, Gerd Sander's reputation as a serious printer led him to several printing jobs.³⁸ He got his first job that year, working with Hungarian émigré photographer André Kertész, then living in New York, who needed help restoring damaged negatives from his series *Distortions* of 1933. Sander meticulously cleaned them and, using Kodak SO-15 direct reversal film, made duplicate negatives from which to print Kertész's book *Distortions* (1976). For a second job, the National Archives in Washington, DC, hired him for a large-scale project to produce quality exhibition prints from their large collection of negatives. And in 1975–76, Sander was hired by Cohn Gallery to make portfolio prints of snapshots by German painter George Grosz taken when he arrived on US shores as an immigrant in 1932.³⁹ The artist had been deceased for nearly two decades, and all that were left were 35 mm contact sheets. Sander rephotographed these with an eight-by-ten view camera to make new copy negatives and print the editioned set of gelatin silver prints.

The production of modern prints by patient and precise darkroom printers was on the rise, to the great benefit of artists who established continuing relationships with many of them as their dedicated printers. The practice of artists contracting with master printers became so ubiquitous that an entire series of books could be devoted to documenting it. For example, Sid Kaplan became Frank's printer; Lucien Treillard printed for Man Ray; George Tice for Steichen; Benson for Evans; Gus Kayafas for Harold Edgerton; and Alex Jamison for Fredrick Sommer. The Arbus estate gave exclusive printing rights to Neil Selkirk. When Sander approached Model in 1975 about showing her work, he was not expecting to take over her printing too, but it was not an altogether surprising proposition.

Marketable prints for Model would be distinct from prints of her earlier work; for one thing, they would be larger. As early as 1964, Model had already started to reinterpret her own works, updating her approach to printing. That year, she delivered to MoMA a box of six newly made sixteen-by-twenty-inch prints—all larger and more attentively printed duplicates of works the museum had acquired for exhibition during the time when photographs were prized more for their design elements than for their material features. She explained that these were “replacement prints,” and asked that they be kept and used instead of the older standard eleven-by-fourteen-inch press prints, which the museum had purchased in the early 1940s for \$10–15 apiece (figs. 5,

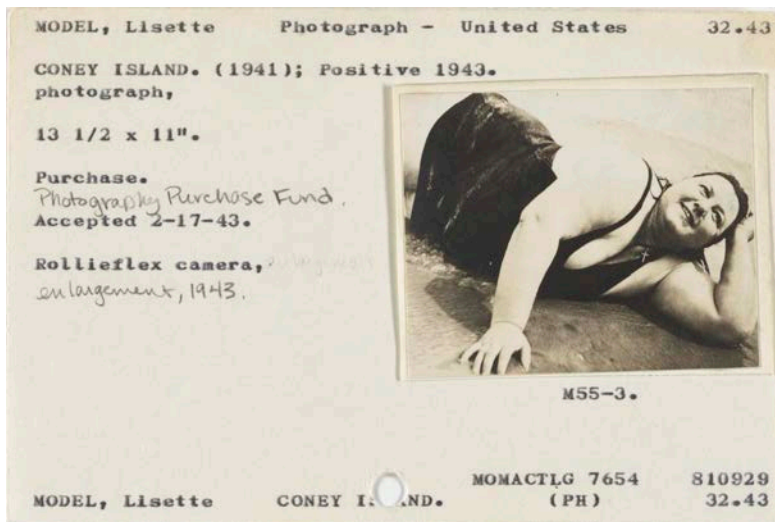


FIG. 5. — Cataloging card for the eleven-by-fourteen-inch print of Lisette Model's *Coney Island* (1941) acquired in 1943 by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 32.1943. Department of Photography files, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Digital Image © 2024 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

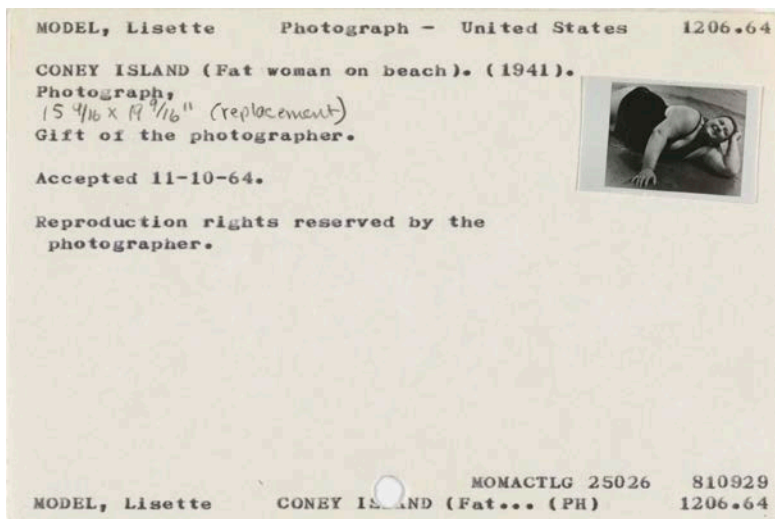


FIG. 6. — Cataloging card for the sixteen-by-twenty-inch replacement print of Lisette Model's *Coney Island* (1941) produced by the artist in 1964 for the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1206.1964. Department of Photography files, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Digital Image © 2024 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

6).⁴⁰ The replacements from 1964 had clean edges and sharp, precise, ninety-degree corners that suggest the use of a cropping easel.

The core belief that a fine-art print should be distinct from those made originally for other contexts informed the specifications of the prints Model wanted from Sander. In addition to setting the sixteen-by-twenty-inch sheet as her new minimum size,

Model wanted her new prints to have grit and weight. Unlike the flattened, dull tones required for magazine reproduction (a process that enhanced contrast through the multiple states of reprinting), “she wanted her [new] prints to have solidity, like a sculpture,” Sander said.⁴¹ Model was a photographer of people, and the weight and solidity of their bodies had to be translated into the printing, which meant that contrast was important. Rather than an emphasis on middle-gray tones, Model wanted bright white highlights to emphasize the forms, and deep, dark blacks to help model and distinguish figures from the space around them. Accordingly, Sander used 250-watt photoflood bulbs, which produce intense white light, to render extremely sharp detail and heightened contrast. “You saw every dot on it. Every grain of the negative.”⁴² This produced the punch and character that Model sought.⁴³ In addition, she wanted an extra-shiny effect, so Sander printed on Agfa Brovira glossy paper, advertised for its sparkling highlights, which he then air-dried, dry mounted on archival board, and sandwiched under Plexiglas to be hung on the wall (fig. 7).⁴⁴

Photography collector Pierre Apraxine, who in the 1970s to 1990s amassed over eight thousand photographs for the Gilman Paper Company Collection, once explained that a pristine print, framed and hung on the wall, “raises them [photographs] to the dignity of desirable and collectible objects.”⁴⁵ But there were limits to the sustainability or success of a system in which photographers and printers were fulfilling orders from private collectors, dealers, or museums for only a couple of hundred dollars apiece. Even the most beautiful prints, made with care and precision, were not enough to sell on their



FIG. 7. — Lisette Model’s work printed by Gerd Sander in 1976, installed in the exhibition *Lisette Model Photographs* (25 September–30 October 1976), Sander Gallery, Washington, DC, 1976. Photographer unknown. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

own. Despite the hundreds of catalogs sent out by Sander Gallery, and the positive press garnered for them, only one print sold.⁴⁶

“The Creation of Rarity”: Harry Lunn and Strategies in the Photography

Market

As Sander perfected the art of modern printing, Harry H. Lunn Jr., who held a degree in economics, came to the business of selling prints with an eye toward financial systems. In the 1960s, while living in Paris, Lunn had become interested in graphic prints and drawings, and had started collecting and selling them. In 1971, a few years after opening Lunn Gallery in Washington, DC, he championed the work of Adams and devoted his business primarily to photography, quickly distinguishing himself as one of the most influential photography dealers in the United States.

In October 1978, photography dealers and curators gathered at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, for a symposium that would plant the seed for the founding of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD) and its annual art fair. AIPAD was the first-ever professional organization for photography dealers and is still active today. The title of the weekend symposium in 1978 was *Photographic Collecting, Past and Present*.⁴⁷ On the last day, Lunn gave a talk candidly titled “The Creation of Rarity,” in which he laid out a strategy of how photography dealers could control market pricing. He began with a story of a stamp dealer, who, “having acquired two identical stamps worth one million dollars each, burned one in order to charge three million [dollars] for the other.”⁴⁸ Lunn then urged that similar actions be taken in the photography market, given what he called the “relative thinness of the market and the failure of photography to attract a significantly wider group of collectors in recent years.”⁴⁹ For Lunn, if dealers wanted to elevate demand and prices, they ought to cease the limitless availability of the print-to-order system in favor of extreme limitation.

Lunn, of course, never set fire to any art, but achieved his creation of rarity in a number of ways. He acquired exclusive rights to facilitate the sale or printing of work by photographers including Arbus, Frank, Evans, and Abbott, and had the foresight to acquire their work inexpensively and then construct greater market value for it. He acquired whole estates and trickled prints onto the market sparingly, only a few a year. He set limited-term pricing and warned of price jumps after a certain deadline, guaranteeing immediate sales at the lower prices and setting precedent for annual inflation rates.

According to photography scholar Michelle Bogle, in 1974, Lunn “practically cornered the market on Adams, purchasing 1,000 prints for around \$300 each. Shortly thereafter, Adams stopped making prints for private sale. Anyone wanting an original had to deal with Lunn, and the prices skyrocketed.”⁵⁰ In 1979, a print of Adams’s iconic *Moonrise, Hernandez* (1941) that Lunn had purchased for \$300 sold at auction for \$15,000; Lunn later remarked that “the Ansel Adams phenomenon would not have occurred

had he continued to print individual orders without restriction. Despite Adams [sic] perfectionism which makes his prints individual hand made works, the collectors would have continued to regard his prints as readily available and without particular rarity.”⁵¹ “Harry gave photography a totally new reputation,” said the dealer Howard Read. “In the early seventies, a picture was something you kept in a drawer or in the attic. Harry changed that into something you could trade, buy and sell. He created a market.”⁵²

The other way Lunn manufactured rarity was through the publication of limited-edition photographic portfolios, each a precious, collectible art object with a fixed limit imposed on its quantity. Portfolios, particularly collections of prints, hold a long history in the traditional graphic arts. But prior to the 1970s, it was a relatively uncommon format in photography, with notable self-published exceptions by Adams, Weston, and Strand, many of which were targeted to book buyers.⁵³ In 1968 Tice self-published *The Amish Portfolio*, a selection of twelve mounted prints in an edition of fifty, which sold for \$75 each. Shortly thereafter, Arbus first conceived of her own self-published portfolio, *A box of ten photographs*, of which four editions were completed by the time of her death in 1971.⁵⁴ In 1970, Richard Avedon’s *Minneapolis Portfolio*, designed by Marvin Israel, was issued in tandem with Avedon’s retrospective at the Minneapolis Institute of Art that year. Also, in 1971 Evans published *Fourteen Photographs* in an edition of one hundred with Ives-Sillman, in New Haven, Connecticut. Seeing this trend and its salability to museums inspired photography dealers to begin producing portfolios for the artists that they represented.⁵⁵ For Lunn, it was likely that his background as a print specialist enabled him to recognize the portfolio as a familiar and rich marketing opportunity—he referred to portfolio production as a means of creating “the maximum investment return.”⁵⁶

Photography dealer Lee Witkin, whose eponymous New York photography gallery also embraced portfolio production at this time, describes its benefit in this way:

Usually presented in a box and accompanied by a foreword, introduction, or similar text, a portfolio generally offers collectors a mini-retrospective of a photographer’s career or a selection of images on a theme for which the individual is well known. . . . Most portfolios are initially sold at a price lower than the sum total of the individual prints if they were to be purchased separately. This saving, plus the attractiveness of a “package,” makes portfolios appealing to many collectors. Once purchased, portfolios can be split up for display, for single-print sales, or for the sake of joint owners.⁵⁷

In 1974, published under his subsidiary company Graphics International, Lunn released his first portfolio: *James Van Der Zee: Eighteen Photographs*, printed by Benson under the photographer’s supervision from a combination of original negatives and copied vintage prints.⁵⁸ Issued in an edition of seventy-five plus fifteen “presentation copies,” the portfolio was priced at \$2,000; the negatives were permanently retired after its completion. After the Van Der Zee portfolio, whose copies nearly all sold, Lunn had

proof of concept, and in the following five years alone he began work on no fewer than eight photographic portfolios.

Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs, 1976

Lunn met Model in 1974, introduced by their mutual friend Gee (fig. 8). It is possible that when Lunn proposed the portfolio to Model, Lunn hoped to represent her exclusively—an ambition that would have been complicated by Sander's connection to the artist around that same time. Nevertheless, the resulting collaboration between Lunn, Sander, and Model would benefit all three parties and transform Model's absence in the market into a place of prominence.



FIG. 8. — Harry Lunn (left) with Lisette Model (center), ca. 1975, gelatin silver print. Photographer unknown. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung.

The stunning result of nearly four years of collaboration between these key figures, *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs* is a deluxe, modern object (fig. 9). Encased in a hard, translucent, black Plexiglas slipcover, it can be slid vertically into a large bookshelf for storage and display or, more ostentatiously, laid flat as a singular object and housed horizontally on a deep shelf or table. Out of the slipcover, it is luxurious and minimal. Bound entirely in rich, knotted, black raw-silk cloth, it is clean and monolithic, with only a silvery-white silkscreened line slicing down the center of the front cover at a subtle slant.

The diagonal line confronts the viewer as a direct aesthetic proposition—entirely divested from the magazine origins of the photographs contained within the case. Reminiscent of artist Barnett Newman's signature vertical band of color, the "zip," the

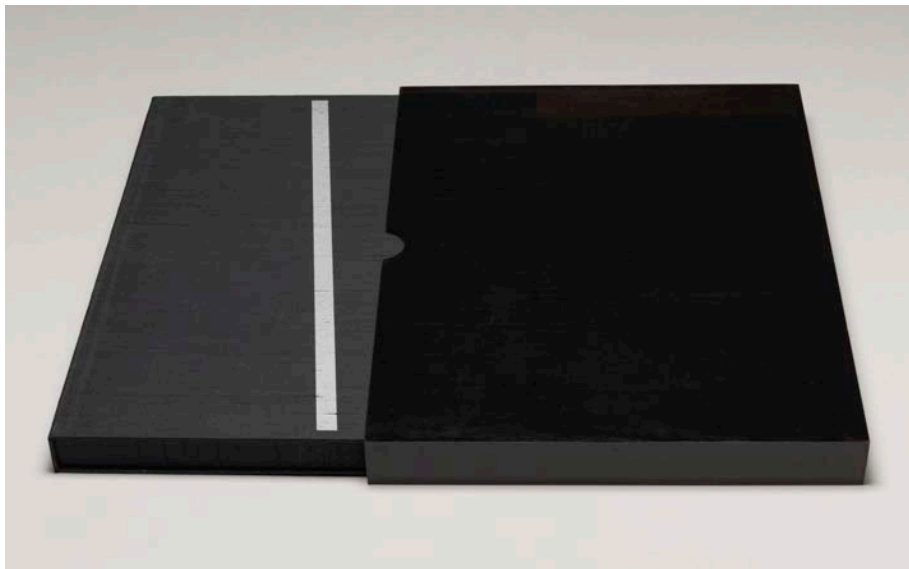


FIG. 9. — Lisette Model: *Twelve Photographs* (Washington, DC: Graphics International, 1976). Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2002.152.9–20. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Ruttenberg, courtesy of the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation. © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

single bisecting line aligns Model with the legacies of abstract expressionism and minimalism in the United States (fig. 10). In it, one might also recognize the diagonal line from her photograph of 1933–38, *Blind Man Walking, Paris*, a version of which was not selected for *Twelve Photographs*—perhaps suggesting that, like the blind man’s cane, her photographs, too, aid the unseeing to perceive the world (fig. 11). A third possibility is that Model’s inspiration came from a design painted by her husband, Evsa, for the cover of a book containing painter and critic Michel Seuphor’s lectures on abstraction, published in 1928, the year Lisette and Evsa met in Paris (fig. 12). The single slanted line might be an adaptation or version of Evsa’s work.⁵⁹ He died in October of 1976, just as the portfolio design was being finalized.

Inside the box, a colophon insert specifies that the edition includes “75 examples . . . with an additional 15 proof examples,” and, without listing either Benson or Sander, emphasizes the authenticity of the prints through the statement that they “have been printed under the supervision of the artist . . . and are signed on the verso in pencil.” The signature further reifies the aura of collectability and reinforces the nonutilitarian nature of the objects. To further establish its rarity, in the colophon it is also noted that “no further photographs will be made for sale from the negatives.”⁶⁰

Finally, on its own sheet before the prints, following the colophon, a short essay by Abbott is included. Her words sound a triumphant declaration of a battle hard won:

It is not often that a new form of expression comes along. Niepce’s invention ushered in a baffling and deceptive medium. To project the eye through a boxed-in lens was considered a “mechanical” process. But if a camera, mindless and



FIG. 10. — Hans Namuth (US American, 1915–90). *Untitled* (Barnett Newman), 1951. © 1991 Hans Namuth Estate, Courtesy Center for Creative Photography.



FIG. 11. — Lisette Model (US American, b. Austria, 1901–83). *Blind Man Walking, Paris*, 1933–38, gelatin silver print on newspaper mount, 30.4 × 25.2 cm (mount). Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2016.109.1. Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund. © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

heartless of itself, is a “machine,” certainly a piano and violin are likewise, as well as the simpler brush and pen. There can be as much magic in a photograph as there is in a sonata.⁶¹

These words exemplify Abbott’s lifelong advocacy of the medium. Underneath Abbott’s contribution lay the prints. In an ultimate move to reclaim authorial control

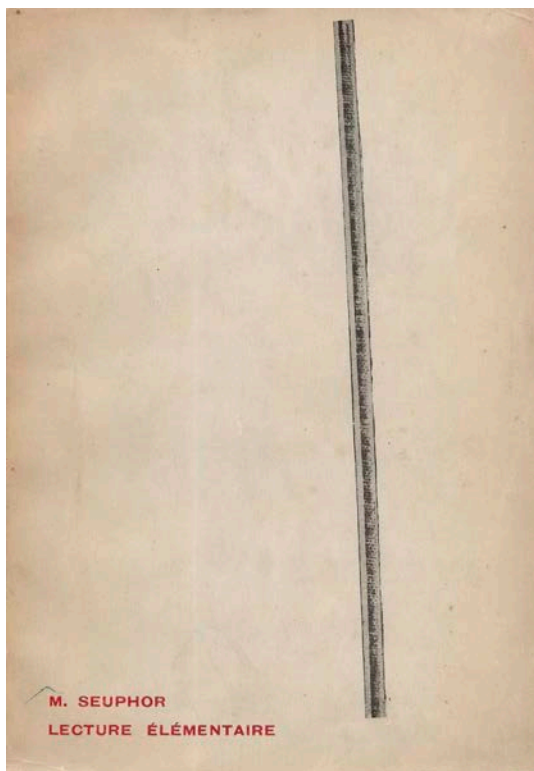


FIG. 12. — Cover of Michel Seuphor, *Lecture élémentaire: Algèbre des facilités et tout le roman des lettres* (Paris: Les Écrivains Réunis, 1928). Based on a painting by Evsa Model (US American, b. Russia, 1899–1976).

over her identity as an artist, Model selected the photographs that most aligned with her personal vision rather than those produced on assignment. These twelve images have gone on to become Model's most canonical, most reproduced, and most familiar works.⁶²

The portfolio, bearing a publication date of 1976, was originally priced at \$2,400 at issuance in early 1977, and by the spring of that year, Lunn had spiked its cost. The price sheet from late 1977, which lists the works in the order they appear in the portfolio, showed how the edition offered collectors a deal (fig. 13). For \$3,000, they could have twelve prints whose value, based on individual pricing, exceeded that price by 50 percent, at \$4,750.⁶³ With prices bumped up each year, and with each portfolio bringing with it the potential to be split and earn profit through resale, it is easy to imagine the photography market chugging like a giant steam engine, growing stronger and moving faster with each turn of the axle. Today, only a few unsold copies remain in the inventories of the Sander and Lunn families, and it seems likely that they may keep them, for they have now become extremely rare.⁶⁴

Which brings me to one final achievement of the portfolios more broadly: getting photography into museum collections. Most of Model's intact portfolios remain in museums today. The prepackaged portfolio was attractive to smaller museums with

GRAPHICS INTERNATIONAL LTD. 3243 P STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, D. C. 20007 (202) 338-5792			
Lisette Model	<u>Twelve Photographs</u> , 1977	Retail	\$ 3,000.00
Woman with veil, San Francisco			350.00
Woman with shawl, New York City			400.00
Woman in flowered dress, Promenade des Anglais, Riviera			450.00
French Gambler, Promenade, Riviera			450.00
Famous Gambler, Monte Carlo			450.00
Fashion show, Hotel Pierre, New York City			400.00
Newspaper salesman, Paris			350.00
Woman at Coney Island, New York			450.00
Blind Man, Paris			400.00
Singer at the Cafe Metropole, New York City			350.00
Little Man, Lower East Side, New York City			350.00
Window reflections, Fifth Avenue, New York City			350.00

FIG. 13. — Price sheet for *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs* (1976), issued by Graphics International, Washington, DC, late 1977. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Harry Lunn papers, 2004.M.17.

modest budgets for photography; for a reasonable price, they could have all the greatest images by a single photographer—enough to make up an entire one-room exhibition or to seed a larger collection. Today, the portfolio remains one of the primary means by which Model’s pictures are represented in collections across the United States, including the New York Public Library, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), the Library of Congress, the Spencer Art Museum at the University of Kansas, the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, the Center for Creative Photography in Arizona, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. In the 1970s, portfolios were also promoted as a tax incentive to investors, who would buy a boxed set at a deeply discounted price and in turn donate it to a museum, where they could claim a large tax write-off for the full market value.⁶⁵ This questionable system is no longer practiced, but it had two outcomes: One, it served to place artists like Model into museums that might not have otherwise had the resources to invest in their work. Two, as Lunn himself once said, “Whenever a photograph or anything else passes into a museum that’s it. It’s off the market.”⁶⁶ The transmission of portfolios into museums gave the market yet another spike, augmenting rarity by limiting what was available to private buyers, thus making the remaining portfolios even more valuable.

The portfolio trend was by no means thanks to Lunn's initiative alone.⁶⁷ Indeed, it swept through the entire photography market. In and around the 1970s, several hundred photography portfolios were published by galleries, museums, photographers, and printers around the country. Most prolifically, Witkin, with his partner, collector Dan Berley, published more than thirty portfolios under the imprint Witkin-Berley of work by Abbott, Brassai, Francis Bruguière, Judy Dater, Frederick Evans, Jacques-Henri Lartigue, W. Eugene Smith, and others. Other portfolios were made and sold by Galerie Wilde, Time-Life Books, Life Gallery, Lustrum Press, Double Elephant Press, Vision Gallery, and Sonnabend Editions, among others. Sander, too—having made portfolio prints for Horacio Coppola, Grosz, Model, and Umbo (Otto Umbehr)—eventually got involved in the practice of editioning and published Sander Gallery portfolios of Marcel Broodthaers, William Christenbery, Walter Peterhans, and ringl + pit.

As museums came into possession of artists' negatives, they too began to publish and sell portfolios. Celebrated examples include the Metropolitan Museum of Art's release of *Stephen Shore: Twelve Photographs* to coincide with its solo exhibition of the artist's color work in 1974; and *A Portfolio of Sixteen Photographs by Alvin Langdon Coburn* by George Eastman House, posthumously produced in 1963 following Coburn's bequest of twenty thousand negatives, along with cameras and correspondence.

The 1970s simultaneously saw the solidification of the art market for photography—what came to be known as the photo boom, during which dedicated photography galleries met with success, auction sales hit record numbers, major private and public collections emerged, and photography was adopted into the programs of modern art gallery powerhouses. The legendary Castelli Gallery, which included in its program blue-chip artists such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, and Cy Twombly, was an early proponent of minimalist artists, and it championed not only work by artists who incorporated photography into their work (for example, Ed Ruscha and Bruce Nauman) but also work by photographers Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Ralph Gibson, and John Gossage.⁶⁸ Dealer Larry Gagosian also expanded his program to include photography in 1976, opening his Los Angeles space with a show by Gibson. In the mid 1970s, Marlborough Gallery also expanded its reach to exhibit photography. Between 1975 and 1977, Marlborough installed more than ten photography shows featuring work by Abbott, Avedon, Bill Brandt, Brassai, Louis Faurer, Frank, and Irving Penn.⁶⁹ According to Grundberg, "In terms of impact on photography's artistic status, however, the gallery that most made its mark is Sonnabend," the extraordinarily influential contemporary art gallery founded by Ileana Sonnabend.⁷⁰ Among the photographers on its roster were Bernd and Hilla Becher, Jan Groover, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. The validation that these major international art dealers bestowed on photography expanded its audience and reception to coveted art critics and collectors, giving an unprecedented platform in the art world to living photographers. Not only did photography enter the art market during this time, but it fundamentally changed it.⁷¹ As the photography market reached full stride by the late 1980s, the production of portfolios would begin to decelerate.

Rarity as a Source of Decline: The Lisette Model Portfolio Today

In December 1975, New York's free weekly newspaper, *The Village Voice*, devoted a special section to the photography scene titled "The Photography Generation Takes Over." In it, Norman Schreiber, a columnist for the paper, surveyed a number of artists, photographers, curators, historians and critics on the question, "Whom or What is the Major Influence on Photography?"⁷² Andy Warhol answered in two simple words: "Art dealers."⁷³

The 1970s brought change not just for Model but for photography writ large. Across the United States, photographs began consistently selling for hundreds and often thousands of dollars, at auction and privately, to individual collectors and public institutions. The ascent of photography as an art form, in the end, was not achieved in isolation. It was ultimately a merging of museum endorsement; experimental aesthetic approaches to the medium, including the adoption of its use in conceptual artistic practices; and, crucially, portfolio production, which, combined with the critical market strategies of art dealers, transformed reproducible, prevalent photography into something exceptionally limited.

As it turns out, the very feature that photographic portfolios were designed to create—rarity—was the source of their decline in value. The singular original print, made by an artist shortly after the creation of the negative, was irrefutably rarer than an edition of, say, seventy-five. On a recent visit to the National Gallery of Art, I requested to see all the works by Model in the collection. Senior curator of photographs Sarah Greenough obliged my request with the caveat that they "don't have a lot of Model prints and many [of them] are 70s [prints]."⁷⁴ Upon my visit, the collections manager brought out twelve sixteen-by-twenty-inch prints followed by the black silk-covered box in which they had once been stored. It was a complete portfolio set, numbered fifteen of seventy-five and donated to the museum in 2002.⁷⁵ Quick to bypass these, she then directed my attention to something "really special," and pulled out a small, hastily trimmed vintage print by Model of a blind man walking in Paris—one of very few prints that exist of this subject—likely printed when she was still living in France in the late 1930s and mounted soon after on a piece of a US newspaper (see fig. 11). Once the dismissed refuse that Model had kept stored away, the print was sold in 2016 at auction in New York for \$15,000 before being acquired later that same year by the museum.⁷⁶ And, just a decade prior, when the sale of a print of Model's *Woman with Veil*, *San Francisco*, had set a record price for the artist at £31,200 (\$61,764), it was featured in the catalog for the sale with a description of the rarity of the type: "Large-format vintage prints of Model's work, such as the present lot, are exceedingly rare."⁷⁷ While there still remains a market for modern prints, vintage prints—the most rare objects—are now privileged above all else.

"Over the years," writes Richard Blodgett in his book *Photographs: A Collector's Guide* of 1979, "photographers have typically made prints only in direct response to demand, and for that reason vintage prints of most photographers' work are scarce. . . . This is one of the great ironies of the photography market: that a process which is theoretically

limitless actually has resulted in works of considerable rarity.”⁷⁸ Both Sander and Lunn eventually agreed. “After Lisette died,” Gerd recounts, “I had access to the vintage prints and that was what the market asked for.”⁷⁹ In the late 1980s, Lunn expressed a similar sentiment: “Vintage is sacred. . . . the finest vintage examples of an artist’s work have increased in price by a significant degree [more] than later prints of the same image.”⁸⁰ Perhaps it was finally fair to say that photography had been accepted by the market as art, with rarity as its North Star.

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Notes

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1. Gerd Sander, interview with the author, Normandy, France, 25–29 July 2017; and Gerd Sander, email to the author, 6 February 2018.

2. For more on Model’s jazz series produced in the 1950s, see Audrey Sands, *Lisette Model: The Jazz Pictures* (New York, Eakins Press, 2024).

3. Model was included as a leading voice for the medium at the MoMA symposium of 1951, “What is Modern Photography,” moderated by Edward Steichen. Transcriptions and discussions from the event were published in Walter

Rosenblum, “What is Modern Photography?,” *American Photography* 45, no. 3 (March 1951): 153; and Lisette Model, “Picture as Art: Instructor Defines Creative Photography as Scientific Eye that Captures Life,” *New York Times*, 9 December 1951, n.p. Earlier that year, Model’s pivot to teaching photography was publicized broadly; see “Lisette Model to Teach,” *New York Times*, 28 January 1951, n.p. In 1952, Model’s photograph *Sammy’s Bar*, *New York* (1940) was reproduced in an essay by Minor White in the first issue of

Aperture that was broadly inspired by Model's course on photographing with the miniature camera at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. Minor White, "Exploratory Camera: A Rationale for the Miniature Camera," *Aperture*, no. 1 (April 1952): 4.

4. On the paucity of photography sales in the 1950s and early 1960s, see price sheets and sales records from Limelight Gallery, held at the Center for Creative Photography (CCP), AG 74. For Limelight and the broader market for photography prior to the 1970s, see Helen Gee, *Limelight: A Greenwich Village Photography Gallery and Coffeehouse in the Fifties: A Memoir* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997). According to Gee, the Lee Witkin Gallery, which opened in 1969 in New York, was "the first photography gallery able to sustain itself financially, independent of all other means." Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective* (Tucson, AZ: Center for Creative Photography, 1980), 16.

5. "Lisette Model: Re-emergence from Legend," *Aperture*, no. 78 (Winter 1977): 4.

6. "Lisette Model: Re-emergence from Legend," 4.

7. Sander, interview with the author, 25–29 July 2017. See Mary Ann Tighe, "Lisette Model at Sander," *Art in America* 65, no. 1 (January–February 1977): 132; and "Lisette Model: Re-emergence from Legend," 4.

8. For more on Lunn, see the Harry Lunn papers, 1855–1999, Getty Research Institute (GRI), Los Angeles, 2004.M.17.

9. In 1969, the Lunn Gallery moved to Georgetown. Following the Adams exhibition, a subsequent photography exhibition in 1971 showed work by Man Ray. According to an unnamed reviewer for *The Photographic Collector*, "There has hardly been an article written about the art photography market in America that hasn't included Lunn's name. Lunn's leadership began almost the very day he opened his first exhibition of photographs in his Washington gallery in 1971. This was a show of 'Portfolio V' by Ansel Adams, the photographer whose work first turned Lunn's imagination to the possibilities of the market for photographs." "Harry Lunn," *The Photographic Collector* 4, no. 2 (Autumn 1981): 151.

10. Finding aid for the Lunn papers, GRI, 2004.M.17, <https://www.getty.edu/research/collections/collection/113Y6C>.

11. *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, with an introductory essay by Berenice Abbott (Washington, DC: Graphics International, 1976), printed from the original negatives under the

artist's supervision by Richard Benson and Gerd Sander, unmounted, each photograph numbered and signed on the verso. The price at issuance was \$2,400; its value in late 1977 was \$3,000.

12. The publication date of the portfolio is 1976, but printing of the full edition continued well into 1977. According to photography curator and historian Ann Thomas, Model initially became dissatisfied with Benson's contribution due to the inconvenient distance of travel required to reach his studio from New York City, where Model's husband, Evsa, was ailing. Thomas also cites a second reason: "In December of 1975, Model wrote to Lunn that she would not accept the prints by Richard Benson that she had initially received quite positively. In January 1977 Sander took over the printing, and by the summer the project was completed. She had instructed Sander to print 'closed and dark' resulting in prints that are 16 × 20 inches (40.4 × 50.6 cm) in format, grainy, and with much more contrast than the vintage prints she herself had been responsible for printing." Ann Thomas, *Lisette Model*, exh. cat. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1990), 161.

13. Limelight Gallery 1956 sales record, Helen Gee / Limelight Gallery Archive, CCP, AG 74. The print was donated by Eidlitz to the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, in 1968 with a large gift of US American paintings and photographs.

14. Christies London, live auction 7393, Photographs, 31 May 2007, lot 00015, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4912698>.

15. Most of these writings are compiled in A. D. Coleman, *Light Readings: A Photography Critic's Writings, 1968–1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and A. D. Coleman, *Tarnished Silver: After the Photo Boom* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1996).

16. Andy Grundberg, *How Photography Became Contemporary Art: Inside an Artistic Revolution from Pop to the Digital Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021).

17. Juliet Hacking, *Photography and the Art Market* (London: Lund Humphries, 2018).

18. See, in particular, Bethel's talk "From Book Object to Art Object: Some Observations on the Origins of the Photographs Market," 9 May 2015, delivered as part of the symposium Seen through the Collector's Lens: 150 Years of Photography, presented by the Center for the History of Collecting at the Frick Collection, New York, YouTube video, 39:35, <https://youtu.be/1VoLAvqYoHM?si=M63Xuike621xpbbyq>.

19. Molly Kalkstein, "The Discerning Eye: Creating Value in the 1970s American Market for

Photographs" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2022).

20. Two notable studies to date have considered the portfolio trend: Molly Kalkstein, "Inside the Box: Photography and the Portfolio Format" (MA thesis, Ryerson University, 2013), addresses the role of limited-edition portfolios in the mid-twentieth century, with an emphasis on those produced by artists themselves rather than by photography dealers. In 2005, curator Britt Salveson organized a small exhibition without a publication at the Center for Creative Photography, spotlighting the theme with objects from their collection: *Boxed Sets: Portfolios of the Seventies*, 11 March–29 May 2005, CCP, University of Arizona.

21. See Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal* 42, no. 4, *The Crisis in the Discipline*, ed. Hernri Zerner (Winter 1982): 311–19.

22. Throughout the twentieth century, several commercial galleries for photography emerged outside of New York City and outside of the United States. Many of these were short-lived and experimental in spirit, but several founded in the 1970s and 1980s remained in operation for decades and significantly shaped the international market.

23. See Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (New York: Putnam, 1977); and Peter Barberie and Katherine Ware, *Dreaming in Black and White: Photography at the Julien Levy Gallery* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006).

24. David Travis, *Photographs from the Julien Levy Collection Starting with Atget*, exh. cat. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1976).

25. Gee affixed to the gallery wall a small black label that read: "Limelight is dedicated to photography. Limelight exists primarily to show the work of those photographers, both known and unknown, who have made an outstanding contribution through their serious creative endeavor. We intend to present continuing shows, each running six weeks, including the work of American and European photographers. The public will have an opportunity of purchasing the photographs on display." Limelight Gallery statement, 1954, Helen Gee / Limelight Gallery Archive, CCP, AG 74. Briefly coexisting with Limelight was photographer Roy DeCarava's short-lived A Photographer's Gallery, which he operated from 1955 to 1957 out of his West 84th Street loft in Manhattan. There, he echoed the spirit of Limelight by offering "a place for serious photographers who produce and value creative

photography." DeCarava, through the exhibition, exposure, and sale in his space, sought to "encourage and stimulate the serious photographer towards a more productive and creative life, a life by which an eager and perceptive public cannot help but benefit." Roy DeCarava, "Photography, Photographers, and a Gallery," typewritten document, 1956, Helen Gee / Limelight Gallery Archive, CCP, AG 74.

26. "Photographic Prints to Be Sold at Museum for Christmas," 30 November 1951, press release, Museum of Modern Art, New York; "Christmas Photography Sale, Nov. 29, 1951–January 6, 1952: Checklist," The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and installation images of *Christmas Photographs*, MoMA website, <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3281>.

27. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," [1935], in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, 1968), 224, emphasizes the challenge the photograph poses to the "cult value" of the work of art.

28. See the press markings on the verso of Lisette Model's gelatin silver print, *They Honor Their Sons* (1935–42), Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019.31, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/818065>.

29. Throughout the 1950s, Rolf Petersen was identified as the printer in a number of object records in the MoMA collection.

30. *The Family of Man* ran from 24 January to 8 May 1955. See "Museum of Modern Art Plans International Photography Exhibition," 31 January 1954, press release, https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_325966.pdf. See also Gerd Hurm, Anke Reitz, and Shamoon Zamir, eds., *The Family of Man Revisited: Photography in a Global Age* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018); and Eric J. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

31. Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* [1968], 2nd ed., trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 2005).

32. Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 91.

33. Baudrillard, section B, *The Non-Functional System, or Subjective Discourse*, subsection II, "A Marginal System: Collecting," in *The System of Objects*, 91–113, 91 (quote). Emphasis in original.

34. Timothy C. Brock, "Implications of Commodity Theory for Value Change," in Thomas M. Ostrom, *Psychological Foundations of Attitudes*, ed. Anthony G. Greenwald and Timothy C. Brock (New York: Academic Press, 1968), 243–75.

35. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1776), 172.

36. Sander (1876–1964) first conceived of his magnum opus around 1922, a project intended to document the diversity of the German people. It was first presented as an exhibition in 1927, and a selection of images were later published as *Antlitz der Zeit* (1929, Face of our time), which was later confiscated and destroyed by Nazis. Over the course of five decades, Sander produced an archive of tens of thousands of negatives for the project, although the project remained incomplete at the time of his death in 1964. In 1963, Sander first became involved in printing his grandfather's work for a major August Sander exhibition, co-organized by Gunther and L. Fritz Gruber, curator and founder of the Photokina photography fair in Cologne. In 2002, Gerd Sander collaborated with the August Sander Archive (Cologne) and scholar Susanne Lange to edit and publish a seven-volume collection comprising all 619 of Sander's photographs. Susanne Lange, Gabriele Conrad-Scholl, and Gerd Sander, eds., *August Sander: People of the 20th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002).

37. In 2015 MoMA acquired the complete set of *People of the 20th Century*, printed from the artist's original glass-plate negatives by Gerd Sander and Jean-Luc Differdange between 1990 and 1999. "The Museum of Modern Art Acquires Complete Set of August Sander's Landmark Achievement *People of the Twentieth Century*, 1892–1954," 5 June 2015, press release, MoMA website, http://press.moma.org/wp-content/files_mf/sanderacquisitionpressreleasefinal.pdf.

38. Sander, interview with the author, 25–29 July 2017.

39. George Grosz, *Erste Landung*, New York, 1932 (New York: Kimmel/Cohn Gallery, 1977). Printed by Gerd Sander and Igor Bakht from the original negatives.

40. The following works by Model were purchased by MoMA from the artist in the 1940s: *Nice* (1938), 80.1941, \$10; *Reflections* (1941), 81.1941, \$10; *Coney Island* (1941), 32.1943, \$15; *Lower East Side* (1943), 33.1943, \$15; *World War II Rally*, *Lower East Side* (1942), 34.1943, \$15; *Gambler Type*, *French Riviera*, (1938), 35.1943, \$15; *Old Woman*, *Orchard Street* (1942), 36.1943, \$15; and *Sleeping on Montparnasse*, (1938), 37.1943, \$15. Cataloging sheets, Department of Photography Files, MoMA, New York.

41. Gerd Sander, interview with the author, Paris, France, 23 February 2018. Bracketed interpolation by the author.

42. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

43. "She knew what she wanted, but she could not do it herself." Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

44. Later, when he made the portfolio prints, Sander purchased a ferrotyping drum to reduce his labor and replicate the look of hand-treating the hundreds of prints. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

45. Pierre Apraxine, quoted in Mark Haworth-Booth, "Wheeling and Dealing at Rochester," *Aperture*, no. 82 (Spring 1979): 4. Bracketed interpolation by the author. The Gilman Paper Company Collection, containing more than 8,500 prints dating largely from the first century of the medium, was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2005. "Metropolitan Museum Acquires World-Renowned Collection of Photographs from The Howard Gilman Foundation," 16 March 2005, press release, <https://www.metmuseum.org/press/exhibitions/2005/metropolitan-museum-acquires-worldrenowned-collection-of-photographs-from-the-howard-gilman-foundation>.

46. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

47. Photographic Collecting, Past and Present in the United States, Canada and Europe, organized by Yong-Hee Last, International Museum of Photography/George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, 12–14 October 1978. Proceedings from the symposium are chronicled in Mark Haworth-Booth, "Wheeling and Dealing at Rochester," *Aperture*, no. 82 (Winter 1979): 2–7.

48. This story is the plot of "Night of the Piraeus," episode 19 from season 2 of the hit television show *Kojak*, 26 January 1975, directed by Jerry London.

49. Harry Lunn, "The Creation of Rarity," lecture given at the symposium of 12–14 October, 1978, George Eastman House, quoted in Dennis Longwell, "Creating Rarity: Dealers and the Photography Market," *American Art & Antiques*, May/June 1979, 85.

50. Michelle Bogre, "Harry Lunn," *American Photographer*, March 1987, 68.

51. Harry Lunn, untitled and undated note, Lunn papers, GRI. Very soon after this sale, in 1981, at G. Ray Hawkins Gallery in Los Angeles, a thirty-nine-by-fifty-five-inch print of *Moonrise*, *Hernandez* sold for \$71,500, the highest price ever paid for a black-and-white photograph at the time. Philip Gafter, "Why Photography Has Supersized Itself," *New York Times*, 18 April 2004.

52. Howard Read, quoted in "Harry Lunn: The Man Who Made Mapplethorpe," *Knack Weekend*, 1 April 1997, Lunn papers, GRI.

53. Ansel Adams produced several limited-edition portfolios between 1927 and his death in 1984. The first was *Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras* (San Francisco: Jean Chambers Moore, 1927), comprising eighteen gelatin silver prints in an edition of one hundred fifty. Between 1948 and 1976 Adams produced seven numbered portfolios, I-VII, reproduced in Ansel Adams, *The Portfolios of Ansel Adams* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977). The inclusion of Adams's *Portfolio V* (New York: Parasol, 1970), issued in an edition of 110, in Lunn's first photography exhibition likely sparked his inspiration to adopt a similar model for other photographers. See also this essay, note 9. Another notable early example was Paul Strand's *The Mexican Portfolio* (1940), offered in a limited subscription of two hundred fifty, which included photogravures produced under the photographer's supervision. See lot essay for lot 99 in the live auction 9324, Photographs from the 20th Century, Christie's, Los Angeles, 17 January 2001, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-1978781>.

54. See John P. Jacob, *Diane Arbus: A Box of Ten Photographs* (New York: Aperture, 2018).

55. Dealer Lee Witkin specifically mentioned Tice's portfolio as an inspiration. "I owe George a lot," Witkin said. "He was important in giving me an image of a portfolio, of what it could be." Quoted in Roberta Faul, "For the Collector of Photographs," *Museum News*, 1 February 1976, 25.

56. Harry Lunn, untitled and undated note, Lunn papers, GRI.

57. Lee D. Witkin and Barbara London, *The Photograph Collector's Guide* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979), 277.

58. *James Van Der Zee: Eighteen Photographs* (Washington, DC, and New York: Graphics International with James Van Der Zee Institute, 1974). Introduction and chronology by Eugenia A. Perry.

59. According to Sander, Model told him that her husband designed the portfolio cover. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

60. *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, colophon. In spite of claims that editions were fixed and finite, it remained a concern for would-be collectors and remains a complex issue today. See the case of William Eggleston's controversial consignment agreement with Christie's in 2012 to create and sell digital reprints of a formerly closed

edition: "Photographer William Eggleston Beats Claim by Collector for Creating New Prints outside of Edition," *CDAS Insights* (blog), 12 April 2013, <https://cdas.com/photographer-william-eggleston-beats-claim-by-collector-for-creating-new-prints-outside-of-edition-2/>.

61. Berenice Abbott, "Lisette Model," October 1975, in *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*.

62. In sequence, they are: *Woman with veil, San Francisco*; *Woman with shawl, New York City*; *Woman in flowered dress, Promenade des Anglais, Riviera*; *French gambler, Promenade des Anglais, Riviera*; *Famous gambler, Monte Carlo*; *Fashion show, Hotel Pierre, New York City*; *Newspaper salesman, Paris*; *Woman at Coney Island, New York*; *Blind man, Paris*; *Singer at the Café Metropole, New York City*; *Little man, Lower East Side, New York City*; and *Window reflections, Fifth Avenue, New York City*.

63. Price sheet for *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, issued by Graphics International, Washington, DC, late 1977, Lunn papers, GRI.

64. In 2021, the Lunn family disassembled one of their two remaining Lisette Model portfolios for the purpose of its sale. Artsy, sale posting for *Singer, Café Metropole, New York, 1946*, from *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/lisette-model-singer-cafe-metropole-new-york-1946>.

65. "Dealers like Lunn and Light Gallery . . . beckoned clients in search of tax shelters, organizing portfolios suitable for museum gifts at an attractive discount to the buyer." Belinda Rathbone, "The Photography Market: Image or Object?," *Print Collector's Newsletter* 20, no. 1 (March–April 1989): 7.

66. Harry Lunn, unpublished transcript of an interview for *The Wall Street Transcript*, 2 December 1982, 22, Lunn papers, GRI.

67. Some highlights of Lunn's many portfolios are Berenice Abbott, *Portraits in Palladium* (1989); William Eggleston, *Southern Suite* (1981); Josef Breitenbach, *Seven Portraits* (1976); Beaumont Newhall, *Beaumont Newhall Photographs* (1981); and perhaps most famously, Robert Mapplethorpe's X, Y, and Z portfolios (1978, 1978, and 1981, respectively), published jointly with New York dealer Robert Miller and London dealer Robert Self.

68. Grundberg, *How Photography Became Contemporary Art*, 93.

69. For Marlborough's photography years, see Audrey Sands, "Photography at Marlborough Gallery," in *Bill Brandt | Henry Moore*, ed. Martina Droth and Paul Messier (New Haven, CT: Yale Center for British Art, 2020), 114–17.

70. Grundberg, *How Photography Became Contemporary Art*, 93.

71. Grundberg expands significantly on this point in *How Photography Became Contemporary Art*, in which he historicizes the breakdown of distinctions between photography and art and their respective markets during the 1970s and 1980s.

72. Norman Schreiber, "Whom or What Is the Major Influence on Photography?—The Whats Have It; A Poll of People Who Know a Thing or Two about Photography, with Surprising Results," *The Village Voice*, 8 December 1975, special section, "The Photography Generation Takes Over," 89.

73. Other interviewees included Smith, Cornell Capa, Elliott Erwitt, Witkin, Beaumont Newhall, and Coleman.

74. Sarah Greenough, email to the author, 31 August 2017.

75. National Gallery of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Ruttenberg courtesy of the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation, 2002.152.9–20.

76. The print was sold as *Beggar, Paris*, 1937, in the sale Photographs from a Private East Coast Collection, Phillips, New York, 4 April 2016, lot 198, <https://www.phillips.com/detail/lisette-model/NYo40116/198>.

77. Live auction 7393, Photographs, Christie's London, 30 May 2007, lot 15, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4912698>.

78. Richard Blodgett, *Photographs: A Collector's Guide* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 26.

79. Sander, email to author, 3 February 2018.

80. Harry Lunn, quoted in Candelora Versace, "Harry Lunn Gives Lowdown on Photography Market Finances," *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, 20 November 1992, 53. Bracketed interpolation by the author.