

2008; *Shock and Awe*, 2010) and institutional critique (*The Saensbury Wing*, 1999–2000; *Untitled*, 2011).

The book does glance to the side, however, and some of those looks are exceptionally interesting—particularly, the huge efforts that Hamilton put into reconstructing Duchamp's *Large Glass* (along with organizing and translating Duchamp's associated notes) and conserving and relocating Kurt Schwitters' *MerzBarn*. Other sidebars, though, are less well-considered. Early on, for example, Hamilton describes being booted from the Royal Academy in part because of his irreverence toward Augustus John. Yet their respective autobiographies show that, in one way at least, Hamilton overestimates his difference from John: both married and started families young; both lost their first wives very early (John through illness, Hamilton through a horrifying car accident); and both recount these and subsequent relationships with disconcerting insouciance. In Hamilton's case, having briefly mentioned Terry O'Reilly's death and the subsequent generosity of his mother-in-law relocating to his house to help with his two young children, Hamilton quickly moves on to the first of a series of visits to Teeny and Marcel Duchamp in Spain—and that's the last acknowledgement we read of the considerable support Hamilton must have had to raise two children while deeply engaged in his career, including regularly traveling throughout Europe and North America.

Indeed, John's offhandedness is less surprising, since he never claimed to be anything but an incorrigible bounder.³ By contrast, Hamilton's efforts to sympathize with feminism exacerbate the situation. Discussing the negative response to his painting *Pin-up* (1961), he writes, "Hamilton thought of his painting as a demonstration of support for feminism but the feminists were not amused. Later, when discarding the bra became for

a while symbolic of the rejection of the macho view of women, the artist felt vindicated" (133). So much so, apparently, that in the last fifteen years of his life, young, naked women routinely populated his images aimed at institutional critique (*The Passage of the Bride*, 1998–1999; the afore-mentioned *Saensbury Wing*; *Chiara & chair*, 2004; *FlorVence*, 2004–2005; *Untitled*, 2011) while Hamilton continued to profess being at a loss regarding this negative reaction (as in a 2003 conversation with Carles Guerra).⁴

Title notwithstanding, that is to say, this book isn't especially introspective—or circumspect. With his writing as with his art, Hamilton wants to hold his audience at bay, to push us away, and so his prose displays the same "anti-style" style used by many other artists (particularly male artists) of his generation who also wrote prolifically, such as Dan Graham or—even more so—Donald Judd. But this impulse sits uneasily with the knot Hamilton twists himself into over his worship of Duchamp. How to be a follower of someone who detested having followers? Be an anti-follower. So, if Duchamp sought to produce art that denied the retina, then the most Duchampian of post-Duchampian gestures, the greatest homage to Duchamp would be to do the opposite: make art that appealed to the retina. However, that positions Hamilton as currying favour with his audience—the refusal of which is what he valued in Duchamp in the first place.

Hamilton's failure to resolve this issue, or to live fully in the paradoxes that he meticulously cultivated, means this book is not one of the more engaging artists' autobiographies that I've read (and I've read dozens). However, for those with the patience to work through it, *Introspective* reveals that Hamilton contributed to post-war modernism far more substantially than we tend to realize. I was particularly taken with his discussion of *Lux 50* (1979),

in which he collaborated with engineers at the Lux audio corporation to produce an image of one of their high-end amplifiers that also is a fully-functional amp—Joseph Kosuth redux, except that it goes far beyond anything that Kosuth imagined. And it nicely captures the animating spirit of Hamilton's art and writing: not especially interested in artists or art, except insofar as they promote the right of the most mundane objects—toasters, toilet paper, vacuum cleaners—to be seen. ¶

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1. "Photography and painting" (1969), rep. in *Richard Hamilton*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1973), 50.

2. "Notes on Photographs" (1967), rep. in *Richard Hamilton*, *ibid.*, 56.

3. I discuss this point in my review of *The Good Bohemian: the letters of Ida John*, *Life Writing* 17 no. 4 (Fall 2020): 613–616.

4. "Deleted Scenes: Richard Hamilton," 2003, <https://rwm.macba.cat/en/extra/richard-hamilton-deleted-scenes>, accessed February 1, 2021.

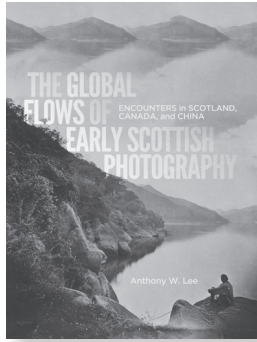
Anthony W. Lee
**The Global Flows of Early Scottish
Photography: Encounters in
Scotland, Canada, and China**
Montreal and Kingston: McGill-
Queen's University Press, 2019

344 pp. 193 colour illus.
\$ 55.00 (cloth) ISBN 9780773557130

Catherine Stuer

Anthony Lee's new book is a beautifully written, richly engaging account of three sets of early Scottish photographers and their relations to the globalizing forces of modernity and imperialism. His three chapters track these "global flows" as they transformed the lives of the photographers and the subjects they encountered on the Scottish coast just outside Edinburgh, in

and around Montreal, and at the edges of the British empire in Hong Kong and in South China. Covering a thirty-year period between 1843 and 1873 (the dates of the first and last project studied), the chapters address three case-studies that follow each other chronologically: the photo-albums emerging from the collaboration between David Octavius Hill (1802–1870) and Robert Adamson (1821–1848) in Scotland; two contemporary book projects by William Notman (1826–1891) and Alexander Henderson (1831–1913) in Canada; and two photo-books by John Thomson (1837–1921) published during and immediately after his stay in Hong Kong. As the driving force of his narrative and critical strength of the book, Lee homes in on these projects as moments in often lengthy photographic careers where the work reveals the effect of complex, open-ended encounters between the photographers and their subjects. He parses this effect as the “reverse pressure” of local people and sites touched by British-style imperialism on clichéd imaginations of Scottishness that would have variously infused the photographic projects of their makers. In other words, he reads these photo-books as moments where each photographer registers the presence of local people and sites in a way that pushes back against their appropriation as stereotyped figures of otherness seen through a Scottish pastoral lens. Arguing that this pushback helped to structure these photographers’ most innovative work, the author probes deeply into the desires and anxieties that animate photography as interface for the imagination of self and other. He does so with keen attention to rapid changes in photographic technology, to constraints and opportunities afforded each photographer, and to the socio-political, economic, and ideological landscapes in which each project was staged. In all, this comparative



study of photographic productions in book form expands on the considerable body of scholarship on these major photographers and takes discussions of the global enterprise of Scottish photography in a new direction.¹

The first chapter, “At the Shoreline of the Fisherfolk”, focuses on Hill and Adamson’s calotypes of men and women from the Newhaven fishing community near Edinburgh, originally planned for a book that would have been titled *The Fishermen and Women of the Firth of Forth*. From the 130 or so photos made for this unrealized project, thirty-eight were included in a first folio-sized photo-album, produced collaboratively in 1845, and nineteen in one produced fourteen years later by Hill after Adamson’s death. A comparative analysis of extant images from this group and their selection and presentation in each album anchors this chapter’s reading of their makers’ creative choices and discoveries. Framed in the context of Scotland’s modernizing and globalizing fishing industry, Hill and Adamson’s choices of subjects are shown to echo the nativist imagination of the Scottish Lowland bourgeoisie, as part of a nationalism that served their rapprochement with England and status in the British empire. In parallel with the stereotype of the Scottish Highlander, Lee documents how prephotographic texts and images had cast Newhaven’s fisherfolk as the naturalized, ancient

“other” of the modernizing port they were made to represent, offering a homogenous vision of a rural society untroubled by socio-economic change. Lee demonstrates that while Hill and Adamson’s photos were informed by this stereotypical approach to their subject and existing portraiture conventions, they also reveal new expressive possibilities discovered in the process of photographic encounter with their subjects. He points at gestures and settings that signal instances of interest in and receptiveness to the “community, social relationships, and a quality of uncontrived informality” (76) of the lived, modern environment to which their sitters belonged. Lee terms this reading “seismic” for its sensibility to the pressure put on photographic practice by the sitter. Inaugurating an interpretive strategy repeated in the following two chapters, Lee underlines the fleeting nature of this moment registered in the so-called Clarkson Stanfield Album by contrasting it with the selection and framing of photos from the same series in the James Wilson Album produced by Hill in 1859. He compellingly shows how, at the expense of photos suggesting their sitters’ sociability, Hill privileges images for their aesthetic effect and redefines their identity through descriptive captions presenting these men and women as generic figures and characters from Scottish literature.

Chapter Two, “A Wilderness of One’s Own,” traces a similar moment of discovery in the wet plate photography of local life and landscapes by the Scottish migrants William Notman and Alexander Henderson in and around Montreal between 1856 and 1867. Taking place against the fraught backdrop of debates about the formation of a Confederation under the British Crown, this narrative shows first how, even if their diasporic enterprises were shaped by starkly different social backgrounds and photographic interests, Notman

and Henderson both availed themselves of opportunities afforded by the explosive growth of a city economy dominated by Lowland Scottish immigrants, and the broader economic and political benefits of imperial affiliation. Yet these photographic moments temporarily disrupt what Lee calls the global trafficking of Scottish pastoralism and its cognates in the colony. Focusing on Notman's narrative series of eleven photographic tableaux titled *Caribou Hunting in Canada*, produced in 1866, and the handmade books of landscape photos self-published by Henderson in 1864 and titled *Canadian Views and Studies, Photographed from Nature, or Photographic Views and Studies of Canadian Scenery*, the author analyzes how they register unresolved, self-reflective explorations of their makers' Scottish identity in relation to Canada as place and polity. Like the idealized scenes of rural survival in Lower Canada that were circulating in contemporary painting, Lee reads the ostensible plot of Notman's tableaux, centered on the hunter, as a metaphor for colonial control of resources. While the staging of an Englishman in the role of the hunter, a French-Canadian studio assistant as his guide, and a Huron-Wendat family as their local companions fits squarely in this Canadian pastoral mold, Lee shows how image variants and scene sequences render the hunter's role in the central plot and his relation to his local counterparts unstable. Lee points in turn to how Henderson's photo-books disclose a corresponding moment of self-reflective "pause" in which the photographer takes stock of the repercussions of the colonial enterprise and his place in it. He argues that, plotting a movement outward from the city, Henderson's landscape series register this moment in their attention to the variability and mixture of foreground surfaces that delay perspectival vision, the juxtaposition of scenes of logging with undisturbed natural settings, and in

their interest in unidentified travelers in boats as potential figures for his own ambiguous presence in the landscape. Here too, Lee frames his reading of these early moments in contrast with the later work and careers of their makers. He does so most clearly in his analysis of Notman's later version of the *Caribou Hunting* series, where the hunter is now unambiguously staged as the anchor of focused scenes, and less clearly in the unspecified reference to Henderson's use of elements from his so-called signature style in *Canadian Views* during his later career as lead photographer for the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The final chapter, "Upriver and Down," explores the initiatives of a Scottish expatriate photographer seeking to develop his career in the colonial boomtown of Hong Kong. Focusing on two of John Thomson's early photo-books, *Views on the North River*, published in 1870 during his stay there, and *Foochow and the River Min*, produced the year after his return to London, Lee reads these projects through the lens of their author's complex encounter with Chinese competitors and local subjects. His richly investigated narrative highlights how Thomson followed on the heels of Britain's aggressive colonial expansion, fueled by the opium trade, to find himself in the intensely competitive market of this Crown colony at a comparative disadvantage with the locally connected, multi-media operation of thriving Chinese studios. Lee argues that competition with "something of the hybrid painting-photography production" (235) energizing the pictures of these studios motivated Thomson to claim an equally painterly Scottish pastoral aesthetic for his own brand. He reads the creative intent and structure of *North River's* fourteen photos, evoking a journey on a branch of the Pearl River immediately west of Canton into territory outside the bounds of colonial occupation, in relation to selections

from its letterpress text and from the author's contemporary and later accounts. As a one-way trip into rural hinterlands that avoids sites of commerce or industry in favor of idyllic, pastoral scenery, this photo book would serve not only to stage an exotic excursion for its foreign audience in Hong Kong, but also the expression of a particular Scottish aesthetic sensibility in an attempt to "put aside the Chinese view of things" (285). Lee contrasts this first book done in China with the nonlinear, zigzagging sequence and prominent presence of locals in the eighty photographs of his carbon-printed second book, featuring landscapes inland from the treaty port of Foochow up the coast northeast of Hong Kong. Lee shows how this time, Thomson followed closely in the footsteps of albums by the Lai Afong and Tung Hing studios, while occasionally adjusting their frames for content deemed undesirable or not understood. He reads Thomson's organization of this second book as an unresolved attempt to integrate both of his models at once by mixing their incompatible movements outward and inward from the treaty port. The inclusion of Chinese people in many of these scenes is seen to register a new and singular attitude that engages the "obstinate presence" of the region's inhabitants in a "continual exchange of gazes" (276–7). Echoing the analytical strategy of the previous chapters, Lee anchors this reading by drawing a contrast with Thomson's subsequent use of his photographs as pseudo-ethnological illustration of the unapologetically imperialist vision laid out in his grand narrative of travels through the Chinese empire. Undertaken a few months after the *Foochow* book, his massive, four-volume *Illustrations of China and Its People of 1873–4*, illustrated with 200 collotype images, thus serves as a foil to highlight how these earlier projects offered different, creative responses to a complex moment of encounter.

Throughout these case studies, Lee consistently grounds his approach in a close reading of the photographs as generative moments in which the fabric of the relations among makers, sitters, and medium is itself the subject of creative discovery. In so doing, his book offers a unique contribution to critical debates in photo studies about photography as process rather than product, as exemplified by the writings of Christopher Pinney and Ariella Azoulay, among others.² At the same time, by attending to the complex engagements of Scottish photographers working in different margins of the British empire, this study answers recent calls to rethink photography's relation to the global, by pushing back against the persistent narratives of expansion and dissemination driven by singular individuals to problematize questions of practice, identity, and difference between the imperial periphery and center.³ In light of these connections, it would have been useful to more explicitly unpack the conceptual relation of his notions of "reverse pressure," "pushback," and "pause" to related thinking in the field, such as Christopher's Pinney's notions of "exorbitance" and "disturbance," and Ariella Azoulay's "disruption."⁴ By the same token, while the challenge to parse nuanced power relations at play in the photographic scene makes their close scrutiny in this book critically important, questions emerge about the conceptual or evidential framework in which they are sometimes read. In the case of Henderson's landscape photos for example, the invocation of what appears to be single point perspective in both landscape painting and photography as "the design equivalent of control" (172) serves as uniform, reductive foil against which the symbolic charge of Henderson's interest in foreground textures is presented. In the case of Thomson's

North River album, one may wonder how alternative selections from its paratextual frame and from his related writings might tip the scale of interpretation in a different direction, and of his *Foochow* book, how a consideration of the role of collectors in the composition of the albums framing his comparison would affect the structural reading proposed here. The question also remains whether, in light of what is known about the interwoven planning stages of both books, the few months' difference between the publication of *Foochow* and *Illustrations* supports the shift in vision it is supposed to reinforce.⁵ Likewise, while the foregrounding of Thomson's competition with local Chinese studios introduces a critically fruitful perspective on his work there, the characterization of the work and position of local photographers and their relations to divergent forms of prephotographic image-making raise many questions, as do the contradistinctions drawn with Thomson's own practice.

On the other hand, the reader is occasionally left to ask if the parallel, interwoven narratives of global transmission of pastoral imagination, of various forms of Scottish accommodation with the British empire and its institutions, and of the encounter of Scottish photographers with their local sites and subjects effectively intersect. In the discussion of Notman's tableaux, for example, the presentation of the Canadian pastoral as a cognate of the Scottish remains forced insofar as it serves to integrate these photos with the narrative of global transmission of the imagination of the latter. Similar questions should be raised about the reading of Thomson's photos in Southern China and their association with Scottish identity and imagination as supported by his writings. These lingering questions notwithstanding, Lee's richly researched and deeply considered study offers a thought-provoking contribution to critical thinking on



the forefront of studies in photographic history and visual culture of the global nineteenth-century world. ¶

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1. Representative and recent monographs include Sara Stevenson, *Hill and Adamson's The Fishermen and Women of the Firth of Forth* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1991); Sara Stevenson and A.D. Morrison-Low, *Scottish Photography: The First Thirty Years* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2015); Hélène Samson and Suzanne Sauvage, eds., *Notman. A Visionary Photographer* (Paris; Montreal: Éditions Hazan and McCord Museum, 2016); Richard Ovenden, *John Thomson (1837–1921), Photographer* (Edinburgh: The Stationary Office, 1997); Joel Montague and Jim Mizerski, *John Thomson: The Early Years – In Search of the Orient* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co. Ltd., 2014).

2. On the processual character and dialogic space of photo-making, see Christopher Pinney, "Introduction: 'How the Other Half...,'" in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Peterson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 14; on a more expansive conception of the event of photography and the new relations between people it generates, Ariella Azoulay, "What is Photography?" in *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*, trans. Louise Bethlehem (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 11–27.

3. See Pinney, "Introduction: 'How the Other Half...,'" 1–14; Christopher Pinney, "Seven Theses on Photography," *Thesis Eleven* 131, no. 1 (2012), 141–156; Tanya Sheehan, "Introduction: Questions of Difference," in *Photography, History, Difference* (Hannover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2014), 1–10; Markus Ritter and Staci G. Scheiwiler, "Introduction: Early Photography in the Near and Middle East and the Notion of an 'Indigenous Lens,'" in *The Indigenous Lens? Early Photography in the Near and Middle East* (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 11–26.

4. Pinney, "Seven Theses," 143–153; Azoulay, "What is Photography?" 21.

5. See: Ovenden, *John Thomson*, 20, 29–34.