

vie et mort

to all of you
who over the years
helped and made
my work possible,
my heartfelt
thanks

Lever cler (ve

LUCIEN CLERGUE

vie et mort



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In fondly remember my first conversation with Lucien in 2013, which led to a visit in Arles. It was after being warmly welcomed into his home that my son Rafael and I were brought into his studio. Walking into his cluttered atelier was as if we had entered into a French cabinet of wonders. Clergue's intimate relationships with Pablo Picasso, Jacqueline Roque, and Jean Cocteau unfold in his photographs, almost like sacred memorabilia of 20th century France. Over the next couple of days, we selected a fine selection of images for an upcoming exhibition in May 2014, Lucien Clergue: La Lumière Transcrite, which would be a highlight of both his and my career. Upon his arrival to our gallery, Lucien himself exclaimed "c'est la plus belle exposition de ma vie." (This is the most beautiful exhibition of my life.)

During his visit to Toronto, we made time to attend Francis Bacon and Henry Moore: Terror and Beauty at the AGO. As we walked through the exhibition we could not help but feel an intense wave of vulnerability as we contemplated these scenes of mortality, where violence and beauty intertwined. It saddened me to hear Lucien whisper "J'ai peur de la mort" (I am afraid of death) as we sat on a nearby bench. I comforted him by saying that unlike us mere mortals, his legacy would live on through his work; a constant source of inspiration to future generations. Six months later, the disheartening news of his passing was felt not only by friends and family, but the art world at large.

Looking back on the exceptional life and art of Lucien Clergue, I am profoundly grateful for our friendship and wish to strengthen his presence to our Canadian and international clients. It is with great pleasure that I present our second retrospective of Lucien Clergue. My deepest gratitude to Yolande Clergue, Anne Clergue, and Maja Jerne whose gracious support was much appreciated in the organization of this exhibition.

Odon Wagner, Toronto, April 2018



Picasso with Yolande, Olivia, and Anne Clergue, Notre Dame de Vie, Mougins, silver gelatin print, ed. 2/30 PF, 12 x 16 in. / 30 x 40 cm

Local Clergue's first visit in the Spring of 2014 ushered in a fresh Canadian audience to experience and celebrate his art. It is exciting to see the work of my husband exhibited for the second time in Toronto, Canada at the Odon Wagner Gallery.

Lucien's mother played a crucial role in his future after she gifted him a tiny toy bakelite camera for his 13th birthday. The sudden intensity for this new passion emerged and created a need that led him to a successful career in fine art photography. As the camera lens became his preferred medium to express the inner world he inhabited, Lucien learned that he favoured working in sunlight and experimenting with different lighting techniques. His images transcend a myopic gaze: the play of shadows, sun, water, wind, earth, sand, landscape. His intuitive eye behind the camera triumphed as he incessantly explored new methods in this medium, constantly pushing the boundaries of photography.

Lucien was a frequent visitor to the immense deserts of America, continuing his research to satisfy his constant need for space. He returned several times to the antique myth of the Nude; his studies of light on flesh resulted in a number of infinitely dense images. Eventually, the Camargue and his origins in Provence inspired his work from the beginning and are the genesis of his abundant, varied and always astonishing work.

How did this vulnerable, young man succeed in spreading and promoting photography throughout the world? His love for poetry, film, painting, and music opened up his social network to the leading figures within the French art scene, including Pablo Picasso whom he had met in 1953. It was at the ringside of the corrida in Arles where this friendship began. Throughout his career, Picasso would be a guiding force in Lucien's artistic and personal development, inspiring him to exceed his creative potential.

Devoted strongly to his art, Lucien worked tirelessly to disseminate and uplift photography. As one of the principal figures in contemporary photography, he continues to have a presence in public and private collections.

Yolande Clergue, Arles, March 2018





vie et mort

Vie et Mort:

The aesthetic photography of Lucien Clergue

By Meghan O'Callaghan and Danielle Park Wiseman of Odon Wagner Gallery

"In every photographer there was a painter, a true artist, awaiting expression."

- Pablo Picasso

As crowds gather in Nîmes, France to the ancient Roman arena, the corrida, a majestic battle between man and beast unfolds, a theatrical conquest between life and death. This raw and equalizing bullfight paints the essence of the surreal epoch that defined the interwar period of the twentieth century; the struggle for life was omnipresent. In 1953, this stadium saw the convergence of Pablo Picasso, the unparalleled Spanish master with an impressionable nineteen year old French photographer, Lucien Clergue. Up until this meeting, Clergue's life was overshadowed by the pain of abandonment and destruction; the wreckage from World War II in his hometown Arles, coupled with his mother's passing the year prior dictated his obsession to capture this isolation photographically. Overcoming his fear to approach his idol unannounced, Clergue courageously offered Picasso his first photographic surimpressions of the local church of Saint-Honorat devastated by the war. Picasso saw the potential in Clergue's astute eye, and would demand that he return two years later with new material, driving this emerging talent to ambitiously meet Picasso's expectations. Clergue would later state that "from this day on I was a photographer."

While the main ambition of this artist's life was to firmly establish the importance of photography within the canons of art history, the oeuvre of Lucien Clerque remains liberated from the constraints of any established movement. Although rooted in the stylistic doctrines of Surrealism and Modernism, Clergue's continued experimentation sought to renew the power of photography through his thoughtful creations that captured his undying commitment to represent beauty. Progressively, Clergue would redefine the potential of this medium and what it could become by exposing its ability to exalt life. In particular, his rendering of the bullfight in Christian Nimeno II, Place les Banderilles (Page 8) presents a graceful dance between man and beast, powerfully emphasizing the tension that both disturbs and seduces the viewer. The elegantly curved profile of the valiant matador in flight is juxtaposed against the stocky weight of the bull, underscoring the photographer's attention to the elements of design; balance and harmony reverberate throughout this piece. Clergue's role is definitively active, the scene before him is staged perfectly in his mind, much like that of a filmmaker and rejects the unintentional quality of journalistic photography.

Being born in 1934 at the height of Surrealism, Clergue was not hesitant to adopt this visual language and immerse himself into the avantgarde circle introduced to him by Picasso. Artists turned to film and photography to explore new modes of expression, media that had been previously rejected in the fine arts. Individually these artists explored their own interpretations of essential surrealist themesnotably life and death, dream analysis and the

element of metamorphosis intrinsic to pagan mythology--motifs that would inspire Clergue's early oeuvre. The greatest influence of this surrealist philosophy can be seen in Clergue's first publication *Corps memorable* from 1956, with poetry written by Jean Cocteau and Paul Éluard, two key figures within the surreal realm. Death no longer became a point of fixation in his photographs, instead Clergue turned to the lyrical and fertile terrain of the female body illustrated in *Hymn to Aphrodite*.

Lacing mythology into these photographs, Clergue delves into the birth of Aphrodite (Venus), seen poignantly in Nu de la Mer, Camargue, 1969 (Page 16). Here Clergue has refashioned the iconic composition of the reclining nude by reducing her to a fragmented torso. Her modern identity has been removed as Clergue highlights her sensuous features, reinstating her repressed mythological presence and power. Classical examples of the birth of Venus, for example that of Sandro Botticelli, present the goddess floating modestly on a seashell distanced from both the sea and her birth. In contrast to this standard motif, Clergue reimagines this critical moment of conception and submerges his nudes in water, celebrating the fertility and sexual potency of life.

Throughout the series, Clergue continues to unveil our universal desires as he positions nudes on the beach of the Camargue alongside climactic images of torsos erupting from the sea. The surrealist mindset is clearly evident in his representation of both mythology and sexuality, however, these photographs reject the anti-aestheticism propounded by surrealists. One need not look further than Man Ray's *Le*

Violon d'Ingres where the female body shocks the viewer as she is marked with the iconic Tholes of a violin. Conversely, Clergue's intent in a photograph like Géantes de la Mer, Camargue (Page 24) is to rhapsodize the viewer through the compositional beauty of undulating bodies. The three figures are bathed in both the sea and afternoon light, demonstrating the aesthetic prowess of Clerque as he uses the repetition of buttocks and torsos to create a modern melody in this rhythmic photograph. As his career matures, Clergue leaves this pagan narrative behind to focus on the pure aesthetic possibilities of photography, resulting in one of his most celebrated series, Nu Zebra shaped during a trip to New York City, seen in Painting with Light.

An early milestone in Clergue's career was his exhibition in 1961 held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, alongside Bill Brandt and Yasuhiro Ishimoto, curated by photography icon Edward Steichen. During his first and subsequent visits to New York, Clergue was impacted by the American outlook on modern art crystallized by Clement Greenberg. In his 1961 essay *Modernist Painting*, Greenberg shockingly claims "Realistic, naturalistic art has dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art: Modernism used art to call attention to art." Abstraction was brought to the forefront to showcase a transcendental reality that sought to achieve its effect through colour, texture, and line.

Nu Zèbre, New York 2013 (Page 33) is a compelling example of Clergue's Nu Zebra

series, where his manipulation of light was at its most extreme and artful through the use of Venetian blinds. This series moves away from the narrative form inherent to Surrealism. rather achieving the immediacy of modern abstraction. As this close-up view removes the identity of Clergue's model, the viewer's focus is brought to the chiaroscuro rhythm of lines. Our eyes graze across the black and white pattern that is juxtaposed against the organic curves of the female body, creating an oscillating tension. The isolated torso is freed from definitive shapes and melts into the unknown; soft but defined lines of light command our attention, showcasing the mystic abilities of abstract art. Clergue is not interested in telling a "good story", rather he is interested in creating a good work of art. External criteria is erased, the images are unique and irreducible.

This sleepless city's general acceptance and celebration of photography as a form of high art would inspire Clergue to repatriate this ideology to France. Under the direction of Alfred Barr, MoMA was the first public art institution to establish a department dedicated to photography in 1940. A radical development in contrast to France where antiquated values of photography limited its recognition. especially in public institutions. In fact, the Académie des Beaux-Arts. Paris would not distinguish photography as an art form until 2006, with the induction of Clergue as their first photographer. Despite being pursued by esteemed fashion magazines throughout his career, Clergue would adamantly refuse wellpaid assignments. Nothing could divert his

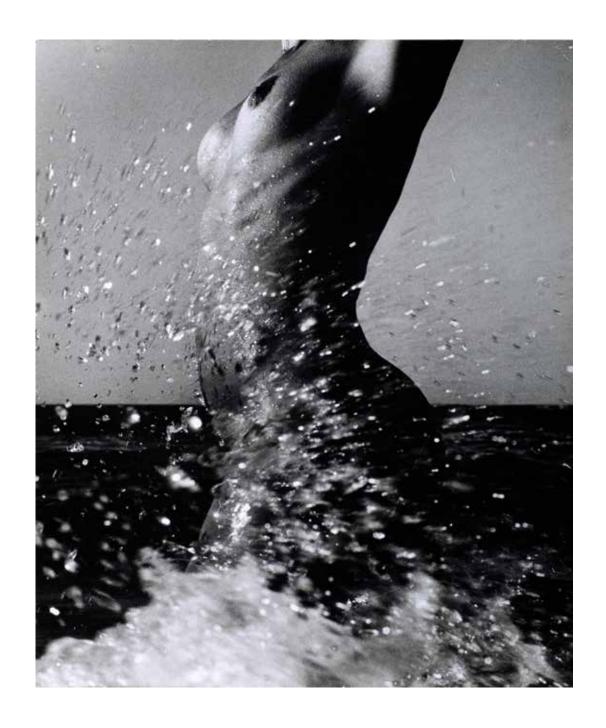
attention from his higher calling, artistically expressing himself through his lens.

This exhibition exposes the multi-layered directions of Clergue's practice; on one hand, the rigorous aestheticism of his fine art is balanced against an intimate and quasi journalistic rendering of his friendship with Picasso, as seen in The Centenary Portfolio (Pages 44-58). This series is comprised of fifteen images whose combination of Clergue's handwritten text and candid imagery provide exclusive glimpses into the day-to-day life of Picasso. We are welcomed into his enigmatic studio filled with iconic paintings casually stacked against the walls, as Clergue then ushers us to Picasso's dinner table to be seated amongst friends and family. In the end, this photographer imparts an honest and unstaged look into the life of his dear friend, "the maestro".

Paradoxical to his exhibited body of work, this documentary styled portfolio is diffused with sentimentality and acts as an attempt to preserve Picasso's life force and mentorship. Over the course of twenty-seven meetings between 1953 and 1971, six hundred blackand-white images were taken by Clergue as a photographic narrative of their relationship. Selected personally by the photographer, The Centenary Porfolio stands as a testament to Picasso and Clergue's photographic triumphs. Picasso's death in 1973 rocked not only Clergue's personal life, but also his creative ego. He described himself at the time as an "artistic orphan", for it was Picasso's paternal affirmation that demanded creative excellence of Clergue. The maestro's request was dutifully upheld as Clergue's art stands as a testament to modern photography, very much worthy of Picasso's praise.

"Sometimes, for fear of not measuring up, I hoped that Picasso would not make it to the appointment! And yet I would not, under any pretext, have missed one of those instants of eternity in his company. I needed, and I still need, his take on my work. I continue to look for him. 'What would Pablo say about it?' This question, which now goes unanswered, dwells constantly within me." -- Lucien Clergue, *The Intimate Picasso*, 1993

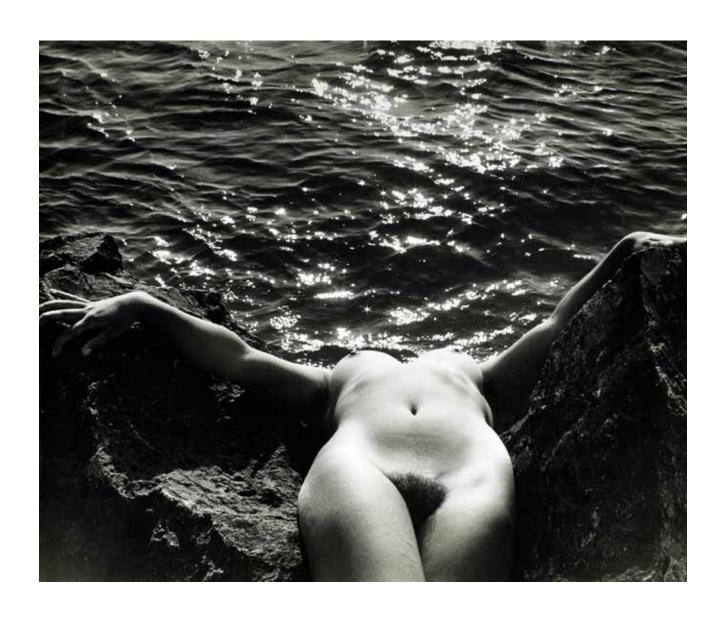
Never pigeonholed into a single aesthetic. Clergue continuously experimented with his practice, pushing boundaries to uncharted territories within the medium of photography. Heralded by the New York Times, his obituary would read "Master and Promoter of Art Photography", a fair assessment considering his establishment of the largest international photography festival Les Rencontres de la photographie d'Arles (founded in 1970). a wordless doctoral dissertation from the University of Provence (1979), and an Academy Award nomination for his short film Delta de Sel. Photography as an art form was uplifted and championed by Lucien Clergue, whose expressions in the medium will demand more from the next generation behind the lens.

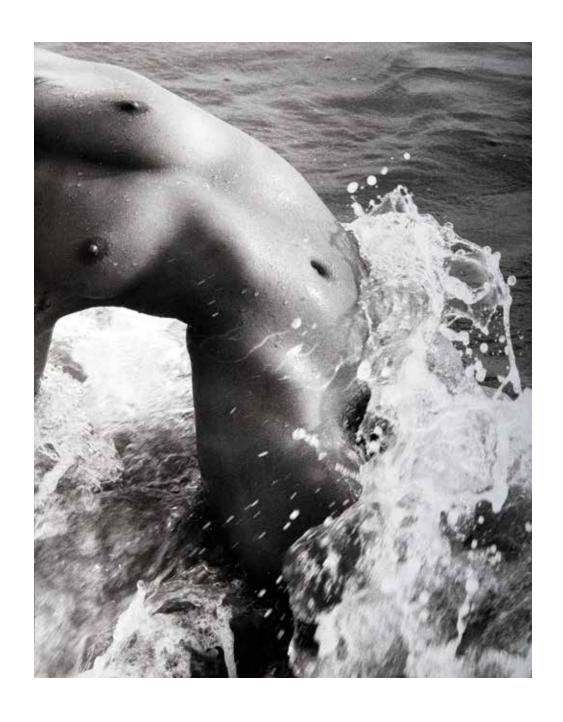


 $\it Nu~de~la~Mer$, Camargue 1967, vintage silver gelatin print, ed. 2/20, 24 x 20 in. / 61 x 51 cm

hymn to aphrodite







 $\it Nu~de~la~Mer$, Camargue 1972, vintage silver gelatin print, 20 x 16 in. $\it /$ 50 x 40 cm



 $\it Nu~de~la~Mer$, Camargue 1957, vintage silver gelatin print, 24 x 20 in. / 60 x 50 cm



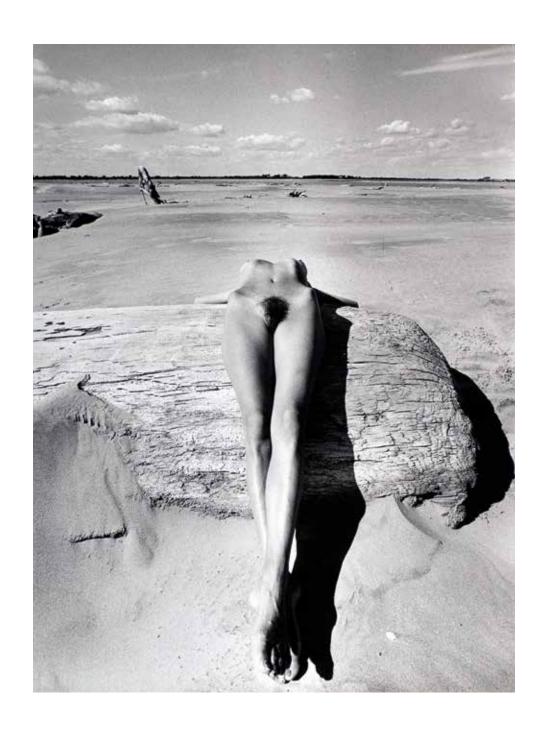
Nu de la Plage, Camargue 1971 vintage silver gelatin print ed. 2/20, 24 x 20 in. / 60 x 50 cm



Nu~de~la~Plage, Camargue 1972, vintage silver gelatin print, 20 x 16 in. / 50 x 40 cm



Nu~de~la~Plage, Camargue 1972, vintage silver gelatin print, ed. 2/100, 20 x 16 in. / 50 x 40 cm



Nu~de~la~Plage, Camargue 1971, vintage silver gelatin print, ed. 5/20, 20 x 16 in. / 50 x 40 cm





Géantes de la Mer, Camargue 1978 silver gelatin print, ed. Artist Proof, 12 x 18 in. / 30 x 45 cm



Nu Zèbre, New York 2007, silver gelatin print, ed. 19/30 PF, 12 x 16 in. / 30×40 cm

painting with light





Nu Zèbre, New York 2007 silver gelatin print, ed. 4/30 PF 12 x 17 in. / 30 x 43 cm

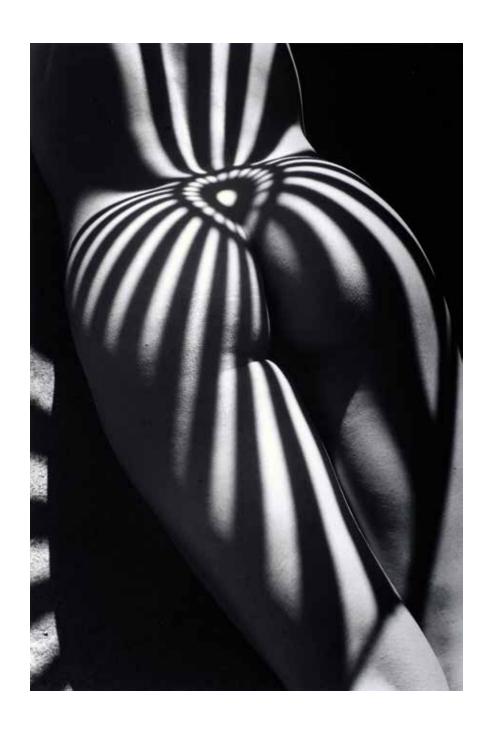
A true photographer is as rare as a true poet or a true painter.

- Jean Cocteau



Nu Zèbre, New York 2012 silver gelatin print, ed. 4/30 PF 12 x 16 in. / 30 x 40 cm



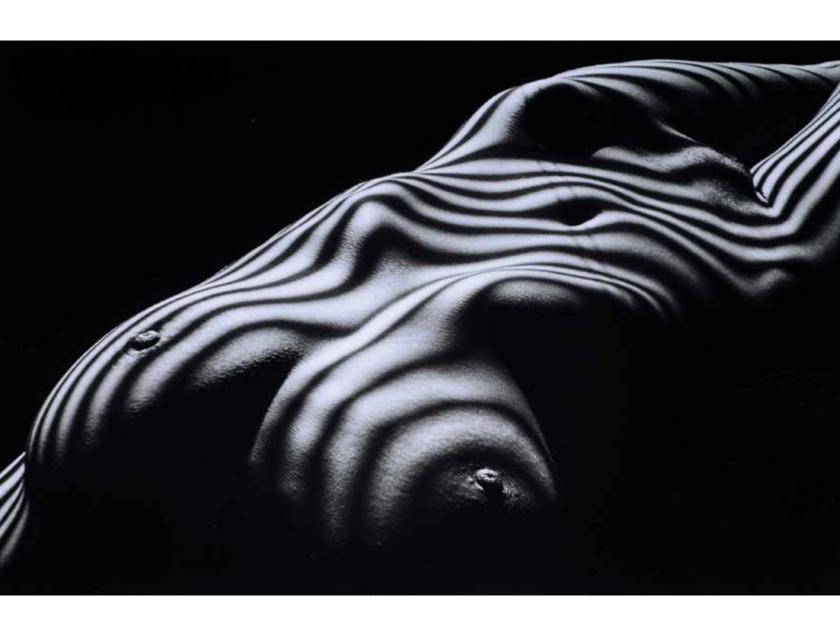


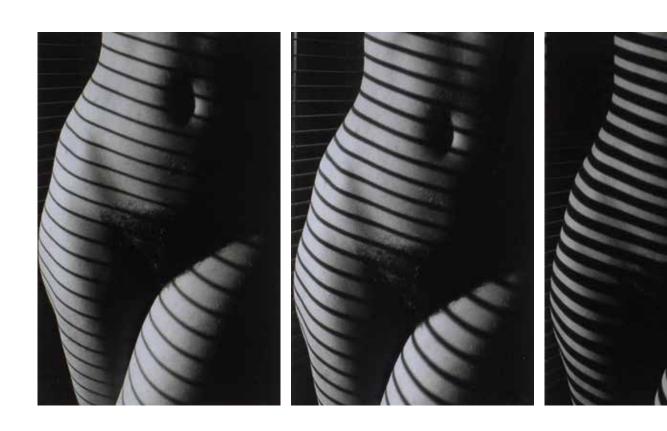
Californienne, Santa Barbara 2002, silver gelatin print, ed. 18/30 PF, 16 x 12 in. / 40 x 30 cm Nu Zèbre, New York 2013, silver gelatin print, ed. 1/30 PF, 16 x 12 in. / 40 x 30 cm

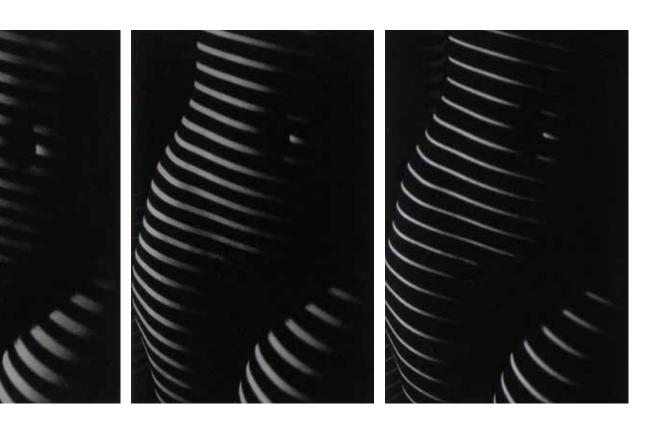
















portfolio vénitien

Portfolio vénitien is a collection of 12 photographs, 1979
10 silver gelatin prints, 9 1/2 x 14 inches
1 silver gelatin print, 6 x 8 1/2 inches
1 cibachrome print, 9 x 12 inches
Edition 2 of 25
Folio-sized silk brocade clamshell box

























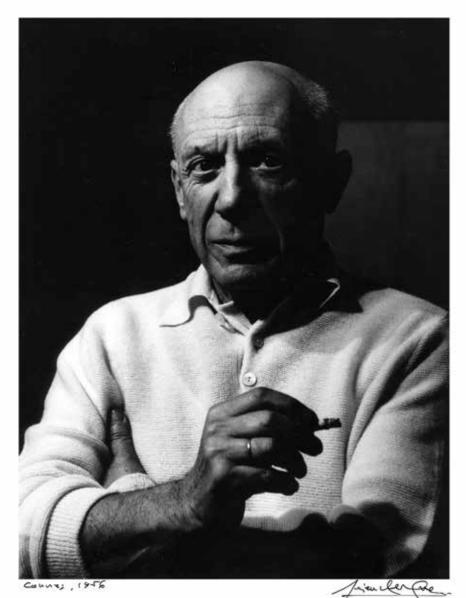
the maestro

Centenary Portfolio is a collection of 15 photographs, 1981
15 prints on Ilford Galerie paper, 9 1/2 x 12 inches
Each print includes handwritten text by Lucien Clergue
Edition 57 of 100
Folio-sized canvas box with "Picasso" debossed on cover



In 1957 Picasso welcomes me at his villa La Californie in Cannos Ou the left: "Manacres on Corée is behind the maestro the three head projector he used all his life.

To paint at night

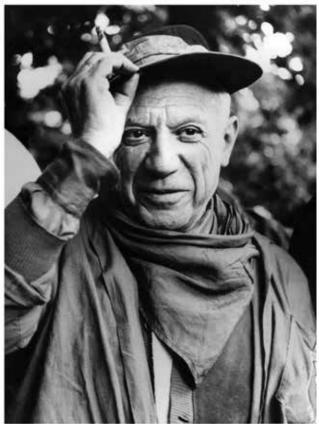


December 1906, in his studio of La Californie in Carmer, Pable Pickso welcomes me in his studio, main floor of his house

Picosso and the member of Matisse a New Cale derian a blect matisce gave to don Pablo Poris

Carres 1955





Ficusso drawed as a musician from the form there to far from Green Musicale Peter de lagrand a cuty not too far from Greenica. Names Mas 1878, before a bufficht.



Arley, beside the Armphetheatre and before a bullfight, Picago in a star for antiques.
Brying a mysical matrument, he will put into comman later. Meanwhile with two
friends they are deing a somake of his famous painting "the three mysicians".



To the fall of 1959, in the grames of les Bours de Provence year Ecteau made his last movie where Picusso is co-staring with him and friends. On the left town (no Wignel Domingum, and Jucquelme Picusso, on the right choreographer Serge lifer and Italian actives locia Bose

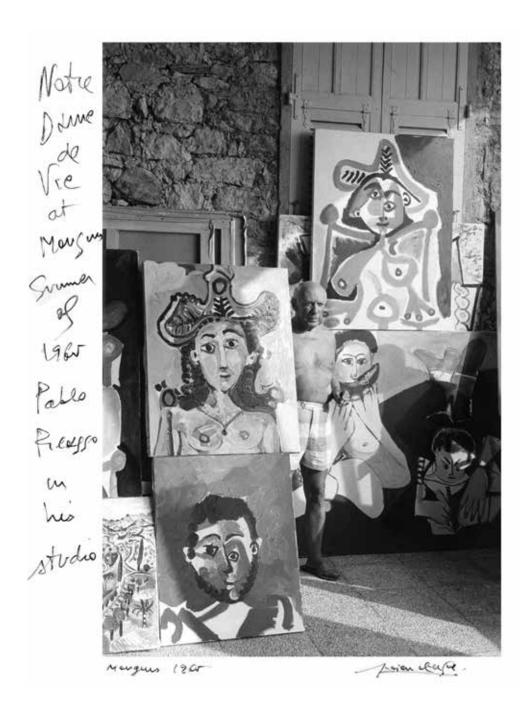
30 Jan 1958 "SANTO-SOSPIR" S! JEAN CAP-FERRAT 251-28 mor che Lucia Toxt et entre et le preme que de photogopho se sur jas di photogophia i'al qu'elle provoquet le même insuets que le tole et que de poenie. Je sui tri Leuren gi o ne te Sacre per " Joli " et "charment; mot d'ordre de inhériles J. tulian Jean

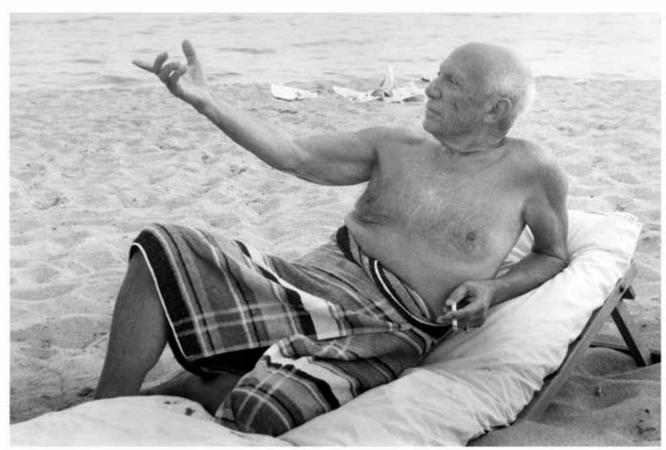
Translation from Jean Cocteau reads:

[&]quot;My dear Lucien, Life is a struggle, but your photographs prove that they are not just photographs. They provoke the same emotions as paintings and poems. I am very proud that you do not believe in "pretty" and "charming", sentiments of imbeciles. Hugs, Jean"



Fregus, 1962.
Fregus, 1962.
Fregus (South of France) august of 1962,
a builfighter presented hein his cape of parade.





the maes too going on the beach of the hotel Gomet, on Carmes, during the hot summer of 1965.





Picusso and my daughter Olivia, he was her god-father, they plan together, gobroury 1967, Notre Dame de Vie, Morgais.

fre den Surden Notre Die Picasso discorring Lang the Sall 1968





mengins, 1968.

End of many 1968 at Notre Dame de Vie . Gypsy friend Manitas de Plata played a solo for Jacquelme and don Pablo.





Last visit to Pablo Picarro, March 1971, where I did the last partrait of the maestro in the living room of Northe Dame de Vie.

I needed, and I still need, his take on my work. I continue to look to him.

"What would Pablo say about it?"

This question, which now goes unanswered, dwells constantly within me.

- Lucien Clergue, 1993

LUCIEN CLERGUE

Lucien Clergue was born in Arles, France on August 14, 1934. On May 31, 2006, he was the first photographer to be elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He died on November 15, 2014 in Nîmes, France.

France

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2002

1999

2018 Odon Wagner Gallery, Toronto, Canada 2017 Cercle Cité Luxembourg, Luxembourg 2014 Odon Wagner Gallery, Toronto, Canada Throckmorton Gallery, New York, USA 2013 Musée Yves Brayer, Les-Baux-de-Provence, France Centre Culturel Français, Madrid, Spain Musée Jean Cocteau, Menton, France 2012 Chris Beetles Gallery, London, England Maison de la photographie, Moscow, Russia 2011 French Institute, New York, USA 2010 Artmia Foudation, Beijing, China Palais de l'Archevêché, Arles, France 2006 Louis Stern Fine Arts, West Hollywood, USA 2004 Recontres Internationales de la Photographie.

Dortmund. Germany Abbaye de Montmajour, Arles, France 1997 UCR California Museum of Photography, CA, USA Centro de la Imagen, Mexico City, Mexico Musée Paul Eluard, Paris, France

Retrospective, Museum für Kunst und Kultur,

Abbaye de Montmajour, Arles, France Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes, France

1993	FNAC, Paris, France
	Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI , USA
1988	International Photo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
1987	Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris,

1986	Retrospective, ICP, New York, USA
	Photo Fiesta, Higeshikawa, Japan
1985	Retrospective George Fastman House Rochester NY

1505	Retrospective, deorge Eastman Floase, Rochester, 141
1984	Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, France
	Environde Landillonia - Fall Andre Leonard

Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland

	French Institute, Tel Aviv, Israel
1980	Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Fran

1980	Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
1978	Shadai Gallery Tokyo Japan

1978	Shadai Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
	Photographic Center, Melbourn

ne, Australia Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium

1974 Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel

> Leopold-Hoesch Museum, Düren, Germany Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden

1969 1963 Kunstgewerbemuseum, Zurich, Switzerland

Pavillion de Marsan, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France 1962

1958 Kunstgewerbemuseum, Zurich, Switzerland

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2003	Echec et succès en créativité, organized by
	Creando, Interlaken, Switzerland
1999	The Association of International Photography
	Art Dealers (AIPAD) Exhibition New York, NY
1998	Paris Photo, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France
1990	Galerie Lieberman and Saul, New York, NY
1979	New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
1978	Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico
1961	Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
1958	Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

NOTABLE COLLECTIONS

And health to a fight and a China and Health A
Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France
Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida
Bühl Foundation, New York, New York, USA
Cabinet des Estampes à Genève, Geneva, Switzerland
Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan, USA
Dortmund Art Museum, Dortmund, Germany
École Nationale de la Photographie, Arles, France
Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Fondation National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France
Galeria de la Foto, Buenos Aires, Argentina
George Eastman House, Rochester, NY, USA
Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
Kunstmuseum, Basel, Switzerland
La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA
Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA
Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland
Musée Picasso, Paris, France
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, USA

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA

Museum of Modern Art of Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico Museum of New Orleans, New Orleans, Lousiana, USA National Gallery of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada Oxford College Collection, Oxford, England Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Arles, France Preus Fotomuseum, Horten, Norway Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington, USA Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C., USA Victoria Gallery, Melbourne, Australia\

CREDITS

CURATORIAL Odon Wagner, Rafael Wagner, Meghan O'Callaghan, Danielle Park Wiseman

LAYOUT Meghan O'Callaghan, Danielle Park Wiseman

GRAPHIC DESIGN Angela Wagner PRINTING Solisco Québec

For all works in exhibition, please visit odonwagnergallery.com

Front Cover: Nu de la Mer, Camargue 1969 (detail) vintage silver gelatin print, ed. 8/30, 20×24 in. $/50 \times 60$ cm



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ASSOCIATION DES MARCHANDS D'ART DU CANADA

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