



Smithsonian Associates

The 10 Greatest Photographs of All Time

Clay Jenkinson

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. ET

History of Photography Timeline

Adapted from Harvard University Timeline

- 1826 Nicéphore Niépce takes the first surviving permanent photograph
- 1839 Invention of the daguerreotype by Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre
- 1841 William Henry Fox Talbot introduces the calotype, a further refinement of his negative-to-positive process
- 1842 Sir John Herschel invents the cyanotype process
- 1848 The Langenheim brothers in Philadelphia introduce the first lantern slide
- 1849 Sir David Brewster develops the lenticular stereoscope
- 1850 Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard announces the method for creating albumen prints
- 1851 Frederick Scott Archer introduces the wet collodion process
- 1854 The carte-de-visite format is popularized by André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri of Paris
- 1856 The tintype process is patented in the United States by American Hamilton Smith
- 1863 Felice Beato, one of the first war photographers and photojournalists, arrives in Yokohama, Japan
- 1869 The pictorialist movement flourishes
- 1874 Silver gelatin paper becomes commercially available
- 1877 Eadweard Muybridge develops a fast shutter and embarks on human and animal locomotion studies
- 1885 French criminologist Alphonse Bertillon introduces the modern mug shot
- 1888 George Eastman markets the Kodak No. 1 box camera with the slogan, "You press the button, we do the rest"
- 1898 Alta-Vista introduces the first mass-produced American panoramic camera
- 1900 Eastman Kodak introduces the Brownie camera at the retail price of one dollar
- 1903 The invention of the airplane by the Wright brothers revolutionizes aerial photography
- 1906 J.P. Morgan finances Edward Curtis to document the traditional culture of the North American Indian
- 1907 In France, the Lumière brothers introduce the autochrome color process
- 1924 Surrealist photography is introduced in Andre Breton's publication *The Manifesto of Surrealism*
- 1925 Leica I becomes the first practical and commercially successful 35 mm camera
- 1935 Eastman Kodak introduces Kodachrome, the first color transparency film
- 1936 Henry Luce's *Life*, the first all-photographic American news magazine, appears on newsstands
- 1940 New York's Museum of Modern Art establishes the first department of photography in an art museum

- 1942 Eastman Kodak develops the Kodacolor process for making color prints from color negatives
- 1947 Edwin Land introduces the first instant camera, the Polaroid Land Camera Model 95
- 1949 The International Museum of Photography opens at the George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y.
- 1955 Edward Steichen curates “The Family of Man” exhibit at New York's Museum of Modern Art
- 1962 *National Geographic* becomes the first major American periodical to publish an issue with all color photographs
- 1963 Kodak releases the Instamatic, the first point-and-shoot camera
- 1975 Steven Sasson, an engineer at Eastman Kodak, develops the first digital camera
- 1977 Susan Sontag's *On Photography* is published
- 2000 Camera phone is introduced

To Read about the History of Photography:

- Alex Alicea. *Lens Through Time: The History of Photography*.
- Todd Gustafson and George Eastman House. *Camera: A History of Photography from Daguerreotype to Digital*.
- Hans-Michael Koetzle. *Photo Icons: 50 Landmark Photographs and Their Stories*.
- Susan Sontag. *On Photography*.

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Sign up for Clay's Cultural Retreats:

Cuba: February 23-March 6

Lewis and Clark Montana and Idaho: July 20-29

Jefferson's France: Late September

Sign up for Clay's Next Online Humanities Course:

John Donne: Life, Mind, and Art: November 16-December 7 (Saturday mornings Zoom)