

Press Release

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SOTHEBY'S TO OFFER PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF MARGARET W. WESTON



Pictured above: Edward Weston's **The Ascent of Attic Angles**, 1921 (est. \$700,000/1 million)

SINGLE-OWNER SALE ON APRIL 25TH & 26TH SPANS THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON CALIFORNIA PHOTOGRAPHERS

New York, New York – On the evening of April 25th and the morning of the 26th, Sotheby's New York will be privileged to offer *Photographs from the Private Collection of Margaret W. Weston*, a pivotal figure in the development of the market for fine art photographs. The sale is comprised of works that Maggi Weston -- as she is known to her wide circle of clients and friends -- has kept for herself from the thousands of photographs she has handled over the years; the 140 lots in the auction span both the 19th and 20th centuries, and include a range of artists, styles, and periods. The sale is especially rich in works by California photographers: the top lot in the sale is a rare platinum print of Edward Weston's mysterious **The Ascent of Attic Angles** from 1921, one of two known prints of the image extant (pictured above, est. \$700,000/1 million). This highly important Edward Weston photograph, a key piece in his transition from Pictorialism to Modernism, is estimated at \$700,000 to \$1,000,000.

Highlights from the sale, which is expected to bring \$5.6/8.4 million*, will travel to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Tokyo in advance of the New York exhibition and sale.

Discussing the sale, Denise Bethel, Senior Vice President and Director of Sotheby's Photographs department in New York, said: "We are thrilled to be offering this remarkable group of photographs from the private collection of Maggi Weston. Maggi's unswerving faith in the medium of photography has been a model for us all over the years---her foresight, dedication, and high standards are an inspiration to our field the world over."

Margaret W. Weston

Maggi Weston established the Weston Gallery in Carmel, California, in 1975, when galleries selling photographs were still an anomaly in the art world at large, and regularly-scheduled auctions of photographs had barely begun. In over three decades as a dealer, taste-maker, and gallery owner, Maggi Weston has both created and influenced the markets for numerous photographers, especially the 20th-century masters Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, and Paul Strand; the 19th-century American landscape photographer Carleton Watkins; a range of 19th-century European photographers, such as William Henry Fox Talbot, Julia Margaret Cameron, Gustave Le Gray, and Edouard Baldus; and originators of European Modernism such as André Kertész and Man Ray. She has helped to build a number of major collections, including the now-dispersed corporate collection of photographs belonging to 7-Eleven, Inc., of Dallas, Texas, and the exceptional private collection of Marjorie and Leonard Vernon of Los Angeles. Known for her superb eye and her high standards of individual print quality and condition, Maggi Weston has educated a whole generation of buyers of photography. Along with a handful of other pioneering fine art photography dealers -- among them the New York gallerist Lee Witkin and the legendary Harry Lunn -- Weston has played a crucial role in the creation of today's exploding market for photographs.

Maggi Weston was born in England and raised in England and South Africa. She came to the United States in 1956, and around 1960 met Cole Weston, one of photographer Edward Weston's four sons, in Monterey, California. They married in 1963, and it was during her decade of marriage to Cole Weston that she was first introduced to photography. The landscape for fine art photographs was vastly different then from now. When Edward Weston died in 1958, photographs were worth very little. After Maggi and Cole Weston were divorced in 1974, Maggi faced the future as a single mother, in an area with limited prospects. It was her friendship with Ansel Adams, another Monterey Peninsula resident, which inspired her to take the bold step of establishing the Weston Gallery in Carmel in 1975; it was Adams who gave the Gallery its first exhibition, a one-man show of his own images, which launched Maggi's gallerist career. Contrary to what one might assume, Maggi Weston was

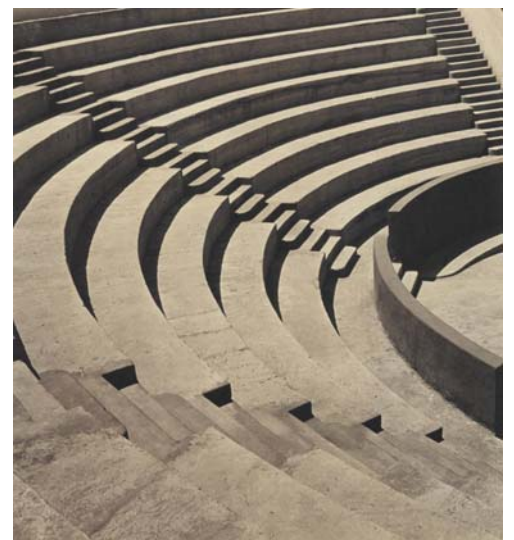
never, through her marriage to Cole Weston, the recipient of a trove of valuable photographs by Edward Weston and others. Instead, Maggi began her gallery stock with images from Ansel Adams and other local California photographers, such as Wynn Bullock and Imogen Cunningham.

The Sale

Highlighting the sale is a rare platinum print of Edward Weston's mysterious **The Ascent of Attic Angles** from 1921, one of two known prints of the image extant, the other held by the Smithsonian (pictured on page 1, est. \$700,000/1 million). This highly important Edward Weston photograph and was purchased by Maggi Weston at a Sotheby's auction in 1979. Another magnificent Edward Weston is **The White Iris (Tina Modotti)**, from 1921, also a platinum print, estimated at \$400/600,000 (pictured here); like *The Ascent of Attic Angles*, *The White Iris* is believed to be one of only two prints of the image extant, the other in the collection of the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson. Among other Edward Westons in the sale are fine prints of two of his classic **Oceano dune studies** from 1936, each estimated at \$150/250,000.



Ansel Adams is represented in the sale by 17 photographs, the largest number of lots by one photographer in the auction. Maggi Weston's close friendship with Adams inspired her to collect the finest and rarest examples of his work from the time of their first meeting through the present. Among the featured Adams lots are a large early print of his famous 1958 **Aspens, New Mexico** (horizontal format) (est. \$60/90,000); a print of the beautiful **Rose and Driftwood, San Francisco, 1932** (est. \$40/60,000); the iconic **Moonrise, Hernandez**, from 1941 (est. \$50/70,000); and one of the scarcest of all early Adams Yosemite views, **Seven Gables, 1929** (est. \$20/30,000). Important images from other California photographers who banded together to form the famous 'Group f.64' include an early print of Imogen Cunningham's **Amphitheater No. 2**, 1920s, an abstracted study of the outdoor



amphitheater at Mills College (pictured here, est. \$200/300,000); Alma Lavenson's 1931 **Glass Circles** (est. \$40/60,000); and Brett Weston's **Hand and Ear**, 1930 (est. \$25/35,000) and his well-known **Ford Trimotor** from 1935 (est. \$50/80,000).

Outstanding among the 19th-century photographs in Maggi Weston's collection are three works by Carleton Watkins, one of the first photographers to venture into the wilds of Yosemite with a camera. Watkins's mammoth-plate photographs of California and Oregon were considered in his own time, as now, supreme achievements of landscape photography. Especially fine is the Weston Collection print of **The Garrison, Columbia River**, 1867 (pictured here, est. \$200/300,000), one of 50 prints from the celebrated album of Oregon views purchased by Weston in a legendary sale at Swann Galleries in 1979; and two earlier views of **Yosemite, River View from the Valley, Cathedral Rocks**, 1865-66 (est. \$80/120,000) and **Outline View of the Half Dome, Yosemite Valley**, 1861 (est. \$70/100,000).



European modernism is represented by a group of diverse images, the most important of which is Man Ray's 1930 **Noire et Blanche (Kiki with Mask)**, the now-iconic image that was originally published in French *Vogue* (est. \$200/300,000); this print was included in the recent show of Surrealist photography at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. André Kertész's **Vert Galant on a Wintry Day**, 1929, a study of Paris in the snow (est. \$80/120,000), was recently exhibited in the major Kertész retrospective organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., and was used as the frontispiece to the catalogue that accompanied the show. The **Still Life (Trieste)**, circa 1930 (est. \$30/50,000), by the Italian Futurist Wanda Wulz, is one of the few extant prints by this elusive artist to ever appear at auction. Other European modernists in the collection include Josef Sudek, Ilse Bing, Werner Mantz, Anton Stankowski, and Jaromir Funke.

Very early in her days as the owner of the Weston Gallery, Maggi Weston began to travel to the photographs auctions in London, where she fell in love with 19th-century European photography, a passion that remains with her today. Her private collection is rich in masterworks of French and English 19th-century photography, including, among others, five superb Gustave Le Grays, among them the **Route de Chailly**, 1850 (est. \$60/90,000) and two **harbor scenes** (each est. \$50/80,000); three very early salt prints by William Henry Fox Talbot, the inventor of the negative/positive process, including his **Oxford High Street**, 1843 (est. \$50/80,000);

Julia Margaret Cameron's **Portrait of Mrs. Duckworth**, the mother of Virginia Woolf, from 1875 (est. \$50/70,000); and works by Anna Atkins, Edouard Baldus, Louis Robert, Linnaeus Tripe, and others.

More contemporary photographers included in the collection are Robert Frank, Richard Avedon, Irving Penn, William Wegman, Joel-Peter Witkin, Vik Muniz, Andres Serrano, Adam Fuss, and McDermott & McGough.

Finally, there are a number of key photographers in the collection that are represented by only one or two choice pieces, individual pictures selected by Maggi Weston from the photographers' respective *oeuvres*, because of their beauty, their rarity, or their remarkable impact. Among these are an unusual platinum landscape by Frederick Evans, **Crepiscule au Printemps**, *circa* 1905 (est. \$60/90,000); a rare Eugène Atget, **Étang de Corot, Ville d'Avray**, 1900-10 (est. \$60/90,000); an exuberant Margaret Bourke-White, **Trumpets (Organ Pipes)**, 1930 (pictured here, est. \$70/100,000); a sensuous **Nude**, *circa* 1925, by Frantisek Drtikol (est. \$60/90,000); Paul Strand's beautiful waxed platinum study of **Boat Houses, Wolf River, Gaspé**, 1936 (est. \$200/300,000); Baron Adolph de Meyer's **Advertisement for Elizabeth Arden**, 1920s (est. \$50/80,000); and Margrethe Mather's **Portrait of Edward Weston**, 1921 (est. \$250/350,000), believed to be unique.



*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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