



Études photographiques

32 | Printemps 2015

Interroger le genre / Retour sur l'amateur /
Personnages de l'histoire

In the spirit of the age

The photographic work of Jacques Henri Lartigue, from creation to
consecration (1966-1967)

Marianne Le Galliard

Translator: Caroline Bouché



Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques/3535>

ISSN: 1777-5302

Publisher

Société française de photographie

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 January 2015

ISBN: 9782911961328

ISSN: 1270-9050

Electronic reference

Marianne Le Galliard, « In the spirit of the age », *Études photographiques* [Online], 32 | Printemps 2015,

Online since 16 July 2015, connection on 19 April 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesphotographiques/3535>

This text was automatically generated on 19 April 2019.

Propriété intellectuelle

In the spirit of the age

The photographic work of Jacques Henri Lartigue, from creation to consecration (1966-1967)

Marianne Le Galliard

Translation : Caroline Bouché

The author would like to express her gratitude first and foremost to the Association des Amis de Jacques Henri Lartigue and the Avedon Foundation, for their kind permission to access their images and archives. She would also like to extend her warmest thanks to Georges Tourdjman, Hiro, Ruth Ansel, Gideon Lewin, Neil Selkirk, Maggy Geiger, Donna Mitchell, Sakata Eiichiro, Bruno Feitler, Hardy Helburn, Kevin Moore, Paul Roth, Patty Sicular (IconicFocus), Pascal Hoël and Irène Attinger (Maison Européenne de la Photographie), and Susan Malsbury (The NY Public Library) and Jenny Swadosh (The New Parsons School for Design).

- 1 It was in the 1960s that the canonization of Jacques Henri Lartigue's photography really took off. This gradual process of recognition was marked by two major milestones: his first solo exhibition¹ at MoMA in New York in 1963, which featured some of his Belle Époque pictures, and the publication of *Diary of a Century*² in 1970, edited by the renowned photographer Richard Avedon, the first monograph to address his entire oeuvre (spanning almost sixty years). Recent historiographical research into Lartigue's photography has shown that although the MoMA exhibition was instrumental in triggering his celebrity, thanks in large part to its curator John Szarkowski, who is regarded as having "invented"³ Lartigue as an artist, it was Avedon, seven years later, who raised Lartigue to the ranks of the great twentieth-century photographers with *Diary of a Century*.⁴
- 2 This study will focus on the intervening period, from 1966 to 1967, between Lartigue's institutional legitimization and the artistic consecration which followed the popular and critical success of Avedon's editorial venture. In the interim, the Lartigue phenomenon was gathering more and more speed in the United States, where he was now considered "fashionable", attracting both the photographers of *Harper's Bazaar* and the editors of women's magazines. Between these two landmarks in his photographic career, from its inception (1963) to its consecration (1970), this transitional period from 1966 to 1967 is

therefore doubly significant, as it established him not only as an artist in vogue but as a fashion photographer in his own right.

- 3 From 1963 to 1966, the curatorial posit inaugurated by Szarkowski remained undisputed: the photographic art of Lartigue, who was born in 1894, was that of a precocious genius of the Belle Époque, uninfluenced by esthetic trends and debates. The images were to circulate for three years, initially perceived as “historic” amateur photographs, dating from the turn of the century and destined to hang in a museum, but later regarded as the acme of contemporary fashion photography and reproduced in magazines. The shift began in September 1966, with the publication of the first monograph, *Photographies de Jacques Henri Lartigue, un album de famille de la Belle Époque*.⁵ Its elegant boxed design, inspired by traditional family albums, immediately made a significant impact. The book was to represent a turning point – only one month later, Lartigue took his “first official fashion photograph” for *Harper’s Bazaar*. In the wake of a highly prestigious institution such as MoMA, it was now the turn of the fashion world, and two photographers in particular – Hiro and Avedon – to be enthralled by his photography.
- 4 As early as 1967, Avedon became convinced that the time had come to acknowledge Lartigue’s “entire oeuvre”. At 43, he was almost thirty years younger than Lartigue, and it was this generation gap that underpinned the need for Lartigue’s photography to come full circle, with the 1910 – 1970 cycle paving the way for a holistic understanding of his work, as reflected in the 1910 – 1967 albums. The fashion context seemed to provide the perfect framework and had the added advantage of highlighting the sensitivities shared by both artists. While Lartigue was credited with playing a part in the artistic lineage of the American photographer, Avedon ensured the promotion of Lartigue’s oeuvre by compiling “the great book of photography of the 20th century”.⁶ Between 1963 and 1970, Lartigue’s rite of passage was slow but steady. Thanks to Avedon and the *Diary of a Century*, however, he finally gained recognition as an artist and photographer.

1966: historical and contemporary affinities

- 5 Lartigue and Avedon’s first exchange took place on 15 March 1963, following the MoMA exhibition. It took the form of a letter written by Avedon, saying that Szarkowski had shown him Lartigue’s photos and that he would never forget them: “It was one of the most moving and powerful experiences of my life. They are photographs that echo – I will never forget them. Seeing them was for me like reading Proust for the first time.”⁷ Their second “get-together” dates from 10 October 1966, in a letter sent just after the publication of *Boyhood*: “Your book is ravishing. A lift to the heart. I have bought ten copies and sent them to my friends. Hiro could not stop talking about your generosity. I felt so badly about not meeting you when I was in Paris but I will return at the end of January and call you then [...] Your book is a serious masterpiece and an inspiration.”⁸ In 1966, Hiro and Avedon started to release the pictures in New York.
- 6 At that time, Richard Avedon was already a key figure on the international fashion photography scene. He had just left the magazine *Harper’s Bazaar* for *Vogue*, where he shared the fashion sections with Irving Penn. Voted “one of the greatest photographers in the world” in 1958 by *Popular Photography Magazine*, his reputation was made. By 1966, he had already published two monographs on his own work, *Observations*⁹ in 1959 and *Nothing Personal*¹⁰ in 1964, and a retrospective had been devoted to him in 1962 at the

Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. By 1966 his name had become synonymous with *Harper's Bazaar*, where he had held the position of official photographer since the 1950s. Just before he left the magazine, he was allowed the honor of acting as artistic director on the April 1965 issue. Alongside co-directors Ruth Ansel and Bea Feitler, who was to work with him on *Diary of a Century*, he oversaw the layout of his own pictures, which in fact took up the entire issue – an exceptional achievement for the time. In so doing, he was following in the footsteps of the magazine's renowned art directors, Carmel Snow (1934-1958), Diana Vreeland (1936-1962), Marvin Israël (1961-1963) and above all Alexey Brodovitch (1934-1958), who taught Avedon from 1944 to 1950 when he was a student at the Design Laboratory in New York. His experience in the world of fashion photography seems to indicate that his meeting with Lartigue went beyond the mere discovery of an unknown artist from a bygone era by a young photographer who had nothing left to prove. In fact, everything points to a revelation, a legacy, an implicit osmosis in their photographic approach: in the relationship between image and private life, in the importance given to looks and appearance, in their way of considering the image as part of a whole (magazine / album), a principle advocated by Brodovitch himself, who continued to be an endless source of inspiration for Avedon. Indeed it is pertinent to stress his importance here as a backdrop to the triangle formed by Hiro, Lartigue and Avedon.

- 7 In fact it was through Georges Tourdjman, and later Hiro, that Avedon got to know Lartigue. All three studied under Brodovitch in New York and all three went on to work for *Harper's Bazaar*. In 1963, the American studio Optics, which employed Tourdjman, was commissioned to retouch some of Lartigue's pictures for a TV commercial relating to the forthcoming issue of *Life*. This was "the first time he had ever heard of Lartigue" and "amazed, like everyone else"¹¹ by the quality of the photographs, he presumed they were the work of someone long gone. It therefore came as a huge surprise when in 1965 he was commissioned to produce a number of portraits of Lartigue to accompany the release of Claude Fayard's movie *Le Magicien*¹² Some of the prints still survive from this meeting, which was held in the rue de Longchamp in Paris, and appear in the 1965 album: Lartigue is posing in his drawing-room, surrounded by his paintings, with the relevant issue of *Life* lying on the table alongside an open photograph album, in the middle of an assortment of *Bazaar* magazines.¹³ Tourdjman was 30 at the time but thanks to the "extraordinary youthfulness"¹⁴ of the older man the two soon became fast friends. A year later, he discovered that Hiro was due in Paris to cover the July collections.¹⁵ Tourdjman offered to act as Hiro's assistant and introduce him to Lartigue. The encounter took place on 25 July 1966, in the company of Tourdjman, who photographed the event.¹⁶ The resulting images take up several pages of the 1966 album. Hiro can be seen poring over the prints or posing with a copy of *Boyhood* on his lap. One photograph stands out in particular: Tourdjman's portrait of Hiro in the process of taking his own shot of Lartigue in the Bois de Boulogne (see fig. 1). The resulting image is a significant one: it was chosen by Avedon as the closing shot for *Diary of a Century*. As such it works on a number of levels: as an acknowledgment and tribute to the "anonymous" contribution of Hiro and Tourdjman but also as a means of forging even greater links between Hiro, Lartigue and Avedon himself, who, out of frame, appears to be acting as an editor, catalyst and mentor rolled into one.



FIG. 1. PAGE 0044R66 OF J. H. LARTIGUE'S 1966 ALBUM, PHOTO BY G. TOURDJMAN, "PORTRAIT OF LARTIGUE BY HIRO", 25 JULY 1966, MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE, ASSOCIATION DES AMIS DE J. H. LARTIGUE COLL., PARIS.

- 8 Before turning his attention to Lartigue, Avedon had indeed been instrumental in shaping Hiro's career. The latter arrived in New York in 1954 and in 1957 chose to work for Avedon rather than Irving Penn, the signature photographer of *Vogue*, *Bazaar's* competitor. Although he recognized similarities between his style of photography and that of Penn's, he was more drawn by Avedon's approach, which he found "intriguing, totally mysterious and fascinating".¹⁷ He acknowledges that everything happened incredibly quickly, thanks to Avedon's "aggressive energy" and his ability to judge a work's quality in record time. By 1958, his photos were on *Bazaar's* front cover and his name was soon associated with that of Avedon.¹⁸ In 1999, as he had done earlier with Lartigue, Avedon published the first monograph to be devoted to Hiro, which opened with the following words: "Only once before has Richard Avedon devoted his energy to the work of another photographer, and that was Lartigue. Now he has edited from the entire range of Hiro's work, selecting only those pictures that are quite unlike anything from another photographer".¹⁹ Mirroring *Diary of a Century*, the book ends with a photograph of Hiro taken by Lartigue during a photo shoot in October 1966 (see fig. 2, right). The premise is fairly clear: as well as being a mentor and publisher, Avedon was also turning out to be a "discoverer",²⁰ with an ability to identify and reveal the latent gold mine inherent in the work of some of his peers.



Fig. 2. Page 0091R66 of J. H. Lartigue's 1966 album, front cover of *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1967 and photo by J. H. Lartigue, "Hiro, Alberta Tiburzi, October 1966, New York", ministère de la Culture, Association des amis de J. H. Lartigue coll., Paris.

- 9 In 1966, events began escalating for Lartigue with the release of *Boyhood*. In September, he was invited by Photokina in Cologne²¹ to show his fashion photographs from the 1910s alongside those of Cecil Beaton, which epitomized the elegance of the 1920s. Photokina also featured other aspects of "Fashion Photography", with work by Hiro, Frank Horvat, David Montgomery and Charlotte March, and devoted a section to "Five Fashion Photographers", namely Peter Knapp, David Bailey, Guy Bourdin, Helmut Newton and Oliviero Toscani. The first "official" meeting between Avedon and Lartigue took place just after Photokina, in October 1966, in his New York studio, during a fashion shoot by Hiro. On 9 November,²² Lartigue received a personal invitation from Avedon to attend a photo session during which both men had fun photographing each other. The album shows them leaping into the air, laughing and pulling faces. One page, featuring a series of portraits taken by Florette (Lartigue's wife), reveals the obvious rapport between the two photographers (see fig. 3). It should be emphasized that such photographs of Avedon were extremely rare, as unlike Hiro he had great difficulty accepting the presence of a third person during a photo shoot. Research into the archives soon reveals, however, that the friendship between Hiro and Lartigue was stronger and closer, less "professional". Lartigue would stay with him, often for a three-week period, and the two men would frequently lunch together and go for a stroll in Central Park. On 5 November, they traveled to West Redding to meet Edward Steichen. Twelve pages of the album are devoted to this encounter, which according to Hiro was instigated by Szarkowski. He recalls that although the exchange was cordial the conversation remained fairly superficial.



Fig. 3. Page 0118R66 of J. H. Lartigue's 1966 album, photo by J. H. Lartigue, "Jacques Lartigue, Richard Avedon, taken by Florette Lartigue, 9 November 1966, New York", ministère de la Culture, Association des amis de J. H. Lartigue coll., Paris.

- 10 This time, on Lartigue's return to Paris in November 1966, it was Cartier-Bresson who requested a meeting and Lartigue called on Tourdjman to capture it for posterity. As with Steichen, "these two giants who respected and admired one another"²³ parted company after an hour or two's conversation. 1966 ended with a December issue of *Camera* entirely devoted to the Belle Époque, with a reproduction of a Lartigue photograph of an *élégante* on the front cover. He featured on sixteen pages and for the first time his name was associated both with Edward Steichen and with Eugène Atget.²⁴ "Photography was still a novelty at the time, and we are truly fortunate in people like Eugène Atget, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Edward Steichen and a number of unknown photographers, who captured Paris for posterity at the height of the Belle Époque and provided precious mementoes of this bygone era."²⁵ In that same year, critics began to rank Lartigue within a tradition of photographers, all dating back to the turn of the century, who were known for their ability to capture a particular period or situation: Atget, the precursor of documentary photography (one can draw a parallel here with Szarkowski's take on Lartigue) and Steichen and Cecil Beaton, the pioneers of fashion photography. Lartigue also possessed an extra trump card, thanks to his background in early twentieth-century amateur photography. An asset that was to provide a reference and introduction to a story that was forged in 1967 and involved Avedon at first hand, the story of twentieth-century fashion.

1967: the end of a "fashion century"

- 11 In January 1967, Avedon was invited to Lartigue's for lunch for the first time. Once again, the meeting was captured by Tourdjman. Avedon was now ready to focus on building

Lartigue's reputation, a process that had already begun thanks to *Harper's Bazaar*. In March, his "first official fashion photograph"²⁶ was published in an article entitled "Lartigue: his Camera Spans a Century".²⁷ A double-page spread featured Mary Lancray²⁸ on the left, in 1912 in the Bois de Boulogne, and model Isa Stoppi on the right, in 1966 in Central Park (see fig. 4). Both women are striking similar poses, stepping out briskly with one foot in mid-air, in an urban environment. The two pictures are emblematic of the continuum of fashion that lasted from 1910 through to the Sixties, with the 1967 shot marking the official debut of "the new century of fashion".²⁹ A whole century is condensed into these two images, from Lancray to Stoppi, from the Belle Époque to the 1960s, from Poiret to Tiffreau, from "spontaneous" photos to commissions, from photo albums to magazines, from the Bois de Boulogne in Paris to Central Park in New York. Lartigue's photographs did indeed span a century, epitomizing its beginning, its end and its renaissance.



Fig. 4. Pages 190 and 191 of *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1967, article by C. Somerall, "Lartigue: his Camera Spans a Century", photo by J. H. Lartigue, private coll.

- 12 1967 marked a turning point, as two aspects of Lartigue's oeuvre came to the fore: one retrospective and prototypal, the other contemporary and modernized, bringing it into line with current fashion photography. In the October 1966 issue of *Camera*, Allan Porter declared, in an article entitled "Fashion and Photography", that the photographs of *élégantes* taken by Lartigue in the 1910s "symbolized the origin of fashion".³⁰ *Harper's Bazaar* went along with this view of Lartigue as a pioneer of fashion photography but went one step further, lending a contemporary flavor to the images. By commissioning them, the magazine was also playing its part in this history of fashion, ranging from the *élégantes* in 1912 to the New York avant-garde in 1967. It is no coincidence if a work was published that same year to celebrate the magazine's centenary, *100 Years of the American Female*,³¹ featuring a great many texts by Colette and Susan Sontag, drawings by Cocteau and Erté and photos by Beaton, Marcel Munkacsy, Hiro and Avedon himself. It was a sizeable volume and provided an exhaustive overview of the history of the magazine since 1867. Curiously enough, a number of pictures were pasted next to each other in

Lartigue's February 1967 album, bearing the caption "Photos by Erté taken for Harper's Bazaar", as well as a portrait of Lartigue himself in the company of Frank Horvat taken by Bea Feitler, the magazine's co-director at the time. Were these originally destined to appear in the book or be reproduced in the magazine? Whatever the answer, it was clear that Lartigue's talents would be called upon again in future issues. *Harper's Bazaar* therefore played a key role in bringing Lartigue's work into the modern era and giving it the place it deserved at the heart of the waning "hundred-year fashion":

"From the mid-nineteenth century to the Sixties, when the system began to crack and in some cases seek new manifestations, fashion had relied on a structure so stable that one may legitimately refer to it as a hundred-year fashion, the first phase in a modern history of fashion, its heroic, sublime moment. A hundred-year fashion: a way no doubt of indicating that a cycle had been completed."³²

- 13 1967 therefore corresponds to the end of a cycle but also to the launch of a new kind of structure. Despite being defined by technological innovations, social uprisings, mass consumption, the Pop culture, happenings and in-the-moment events, no era had ever been so determined to put the clock back and embrace time. Lartigue's renown blossomed within peculiar climate, in the desire for renewal that characterized the 1910s to the 1960s, and in the dawning new history of fashion and of women and their representation.
- 14 Before the publication of *Diary of a Century*, both Hiro and Avedon had attempted to extract Lartigue's oeuvre from this 'fantasized' turn of the century period. On several occasions, they attempted to create 'bridges' between their own work and that of Lartigue. In February 1967, Hiro asked Lartigue to send him some photos he had taken in 1966, with a view to publishing them. In a letter dated March 1967, he told him that he was hoping to set up an exhibition in Japan and get an article published in *Illustrated Magazine*³³ and also passed on Brodovitch's address in the South of France, advising Lartigue to visit him on his recommendation. In March, Hiro returned to Paris and took photographs of Lartigue's sketchbook, which he showed to Avedon on his return to New York.³⁴ For his part, Avedon acted as Lartigue's agent, and managed to get his pictures accepted in magazines and advertisements.³⁵ One month later, he introduced him to the agent Robert Lantz,³⁶ who was to "handle the photos and new book".³⁷ The editorial project was therefore already in the pipeline in June 1967, probably as a result of the comments on *Boyhood* voiced by the Prix Nadar jury that same year, who "regretted that these photographs had not been assembled in a more modern presentation and in far greater numbers, to do justice to sixty years of everyday life as seen through the eyes of extraordinary photographer Jacques Lartigue".³⁸



Fig. 5. Page 0090R67 of J. H. Lartigue's 1967 album, photo by J. H. Lartigue, "Hiro, May 1967, New York", ministère de la Culture, Association des amis de J. H. Lartigue coll., Paris.

- 15 In May, Lartigue returned to New York, where he caught up with his friend Hiro, spending most of his time with him. One can infer that he raised the topic of Avedon's editorial project, who "found it unbelievable that no American publisher had yet approached him [me] with a view to producing a book (that would be totally different from our little album, which he adores). With an avant-garde layout and including the latest photos."³⁹ Again, as with Avedon, the two artists had fun taking photos of each other. Several pages in the album show Hiro jumping up in the air, captured by Lartigue's camera (see fig. 5). Avedon, meanwhile, was depicted poring over *Boyhood*, surrounded by *Vogue* staff. Between 21 and 24 May, Hiro and Lartigue attended "Expo 67" in Montreal. Thirty-five pages of the 1967 album were devoted to the trip, which had been instigated by Hiro. In its various pavilions, the fair displayed artworks around the theme "Man and his World". Two of Lartigue's prints were exhibited, on a panel devoted to Man's conquest of the skies. Throughout their trip, the two men continued to take photos of one another. One of these was reproduced in a tiny format on a television screen, in a now famous photograph of Hiro, which Lartigue enjoyed pasting into his album (see fig. 6). The picture was published in the September 1967 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* to illustrate a series on "The American Circuit", which combined pictures of astronauts in a lunar setting with models dressed in silver Courrèges outfits, next to rows of televisions placed directly on the ground. Yet again, Lartigue's photography straddled two eras, the early days of aviation in the 1910s and space exploration in the 1960s. In producing the insert, Hiro seemed to recognize with great perspicacity Lartigue's unique ability to bridge the gap.



Fig. 6. Page 0088R67 of J. H. Lartigue's 1967 album, four photos by J. H. Lartigue, "Expo 67, May 1967, Montreal" and a page from *Harper's Bazaar*, photo by Hiro, September 1967, ministère de la Culture, Association des amis de J. H. Lartigue coll., Paris.

Lartigue-Avedon: echoes

- 16 Not only was this an artistic meeting of minds, the two men shared many similarities in their approach to femininity and to the canons of beauty proper to each timeframe, the first being the source (the Belle Époque) and the other the apotheosis (1967). The two certainly echoed one another, with Lartigue's pictures, the height of fashion in their time, undergoing a remarkable renaissance that almost literally reflected Avedon's own photographs. In order to examine the issue of historical legacy in the context of social and sartorial mores, one needs to go back to the double-page spread featured in the March 1967 issue of *Bazaar* (see fig. 4). Independently of its photographic quality, which Hiro found mediocre,⁴⁰ the right-hand picture encapsulated the aspirations of 1960s fashion: an obsession with movement and walking, for its allure rather than its plastic beauty, with "ritualized novelty"⁴¹, epitomized by the mini-skirt (invented in 1965), with the street (rather than the photographer's studio) and with the snapshot rather than the posed photograph... The "century of fashion" had originally been launched in Paris, with its *élégantes* strolling through the Bois de Boulogne, but its culmination was undoubtedly personified by the figure of Richard Avedon.
- 17 Between 1911 and 1914, Lartigue compiled a set of photographs of *élégantes* in the Bois de Boulogne and at the races, which took up around two hundred pages of his album. The first mention of a "fashion photo" occurred on 9 February 1911 in his journal. At that time the Bois de Boulogne was the quintessence of elegance, a magnet for society's most fashionable women. Between 1910 and 1914, just before the outbreak of World War I, fashion went through a transitional period. As in 1967, 1914 was to signal a new

departure, a new cycle. Chanel declared that she was “witnessing the death throes of luxury, the passing-away of the nineteenth century and the end of an era.”⁴² In the eyes of *Bazaar*’s editor, Diana Vreeland, “The twentieth century came in fresh as paint and by 1909 had started to roll. Total change took place – traditions evaporated and Paris became the artistic and social center of the Western World. Paris was dance mad [...] Everyone was gay, elegant and totally tuned into the new century. The world was intoxicated with its new art, new music, new way of life and new clothes.”⁴³ In the early years of the century, thanks to Poiret, Chanel and Schiaparelli, Paris represented the capital of fashion. The city was now the last word in elegance and chic and the Parisienne was regarded as a spectacle: her body, clothes, even her way of walking were considered pure art, honed and flawless. The true sign of elegance was movement and innovations in the 1910s, such as the culotte skirt and less cumbersome corsets, allowed high society ladies to walk more easily, take big strides and above all, show off their energetic physique:

“Nowadays, there is no woman in fashionable society, if she wishes to be absolutely correct or noticed, who does not drive horses or motors (in the near future, probably aeroplanes), ride, cycle well, skate, hunt with the enthusiasm of Diana, fence, or walk like the most austere pedestrian.”⁴⁴

- 18 Lartigue’s snapshots provided the perfect medium for these new liberated fashions,⁴⁵ and he had the added advantage of being an amateur photographer who worked independently from the usual circuits (magazines, studios...). This fascination with women in motion was also the prerogative of Avedon’s photography and in this regard their two representational approaches of the female figure certainly echoed one another. They both used snapshots to capture their subjects in motion or walking “with one foot ahead of the other”⁴⁶ and they also shared an imagery that blended humor and spontaneity and showed a similar attachment to the *flâneuse parisienne*.
- 19 Even in the 1950s, Avedon’s work for *Bazaar* was seen as living photography,⁴⁷ and he was always ready to show women walking, jumping or running through the streets of Paris. He rapidly made a name for himself, largely through his images of *flâneuses* modeling the Paris collections in the magazine’s “Paris Report” section. In the September 1956 issue, for instance, he got his models to pose on roller skates on the Place de la Concorde and run in the Bois de Boulogne. To Brodovitch, his work stood out by virtue of its energy and daring: “His first photographs for us were technically very bad. But they were snapshots. It has always been the shock-surprise element in his work that makes it something special [...] Those first pictures of his had freshness and individuality and they showed enthusiasm and a willingness to take chances.”⁴⁸
- 20 *Harper’s Bazaar*’s love affair with Paris lasted throughout the 1950s. Its somewhat snobbish charm stemmed to a great extent from its fascination with Parisian chic and European culture,⁴⁹ epitomized by artists such as Proust, Picasso, Cocteau and Colette (whose portraits by Lartigue all featured in *Diary of a Century*). Indeed Proust’s Belle Époque, Picasso’s prolific output and modernism and Cocteau’s poetry and dandified persona were seen as references in the fashion world. In January 1967, Avedon visited the Picasso exhibition at the Grand Palais⁵⁰ and also saw Lartigue. Avedon’s art grew out of his appreciation of French sophistication and seemed to form a natural continuation from leading names in fashion photography such as Steichen, George Hoyningen-Huene, Man Ray and Adolf de Meyer. During the 1960s, he honed his style, focusing more and more on the subjects’ physical expressivity and dynamism. His sets broke away from their traditional “Parisian background”, to be replaced by the studio. The models also became

emancipated, acquiring a more natural look. The benchmark of French culture held up by the magazine was gradually being eroded in favor of a need for independence, reflecting the artistic climate in the United States at that time.

- 21 Hailed as “the first to introduce movement into fashion photography”⁵¹ Avedon’s photographs mirrored “the era’s frenetic energy”⁵² to perfection, and were emblematic of spontaneity, the here and now, *joie de vivre* and excitement. The April 1965 issue, for which he was given a free rein, represented a fashion revolution in its own right: from then on, the selection and montage process was to become his exclusive prerogative. Between the covers of the magazine, female astronauts leapt from the pages, jumping and twirling in mini-skirts, dressed in avant-garde designs by Courrèges and surrounded by flashy colors to match the new Pop esthetic. The front cover featured model Jean Shrimpton winking at the reader. The slogan-like titles evoked the moon and space exploration but also an electric fashion and lifestyle imbued with color, energy and fun. Gravity, dancing (the fog, the monkey, the jerk, the shake...), weightlessness and altitude all get a mention. The modern woman, no longer content to mince her way through the streets of Paris as she had in the 1950s, had broken free. Young and feisty, she was now ready to show off her legs and take off like a rocket. The “Jet Age” had arrived!⁵³ Avedon’s post-1965 photographs, before he moved to *Vogue*, were the incarnation of this new fashion. One only needs to recall the now-famous portrait of the model Veruschka, taken in January 1967 (see fig. 7). Her body seems to be on the point of keeling over, under the impetus of a willowy, graceful leg movement. The background is empty, uniform, abstract. She is posing with one foot forward, a symbol of the increasingly liberated woman.
- 22 Over and above the obvious parallels in their actual output, everyone (assistants, secretaries, artistic directors) agrees that the two men shared an irrepressible “childlike”⁵⁴ enthusiasm for photography, and were carried along by the excitement of the moment. Avedon discovered Lartigue at a key moment and soon recognized their formal affinities: the same in-the-moment attitude and need to match life or action to the image. In this respect Lartigue became his *alter ego*. Avedon regarded him as an “historic” figure, not only because of their age difference but because his photography was reminiscent of that of Munkacsi, whose *Harper’s Bazaar* photographs in the 1930s had already featured models running along a beach. Avedon was one of Munkacsi’s most stalwart supporters,⁵⁵ and had always openly acknowledged his legacy (alongside that of Brodovitch) and contributed in promoting his oeuvre. One can easily imagine how fascinated Avedon must have been when he first came across the albums in May 1968, as he was preparing his monograph on Lartigue. Not only did he discover a voluminous collection spanning an entire century but a photographic approach that hinged essentially on composition, montage and framing, all of which inevitably recalled his own work.



Fig. 7. R. Avedon, « Veruschka, dress by Kimberly, New York, January 1967 » © The Richard Avedon Foundation, photograph by Richard Avedon.

- 23 Between 1966 and 1967, Lartigue found himself in the center of a complex web involving Hiro and Avedon's fashion photographs for *Harper's Bazaar*. The discovery of his work coincided with a new take on turn of the century fashion, reflecting analogous canons of beauty such as movement, spontaneity, humor, ease and allure. By harking back to its beginnings, Lartigue's photography perfectly encapsulated this renaissance. In a roundabout way, Avedon saw himself as the heir to this (involuntary) tradition initiated by Lartigue and resuscitated in 1967. Seen from this angle, Avedon's determination to reveal Lartigue's oeuvre to the world at large seems less surprising: in the context of this legacy, Avedon, having completed the montage of his own pictures in the special April 1965 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*, was now ready to tackle the work of another artist, particularly as it was unknown and raised the same artistic issues as his own. By 1967, Hiro and Avedon felt it was high time for Lartigue to be recognized as a twentieth-century photographer for his "entire oeuvre" (the albums, sketchbooks and diary) and not just for his Belle Époque photographs. In September 1967, Hiro's plans for a Lartigue exhibit at Young & Rubicam in New York underlined the historical nature of the pictures: "I think the Museum didn't do justice to your photographs. Therefore, this exhibition at Young & Rubicam should go all out to have a spectacular exhibit of all your complete work to date."⁵⁶ A few months later, in May 1968, Avedon threw himself into a project that would take up three years of his life, alongside his commissions for *Vogue* and his personal work: to publish Lartigue's photographic oeuvre "in a spectacular manner". The story had yet to be told, and it was a lifetime long. The project was urgent, colossal and ambitious. The result was the publication of *Diary of a Century* in 1970. Then will be assigned to Avedon the authorship in Lartigue's recognition as "unique photographer in the Twentieth Century".

NOTES

1. The exhibition, initially scheduled for early December 1962, was postponed to coincide with the publication of the *Life* article (“The world leaps into an age of innovation”, *Life*, 29 November 1963, pp. 65-73). It was finally held from 1 July to 3 November 1963. A few of the pictures had already been shown in 1955 in a collective exhibition on color photography at the Galerie d’Orsay in Paris.
2. Richard AVEDON, Bea FEITLER, Jacques Henri LARTIGUE, *Diary of a Century*, (New York: Viking Press, 1970).
3. This is a deliberate reference to the original term used by Kevin Moore. See K. MOORE, *The Invention of an Artist*, (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).
4. A dissertation by the present author has been devoted to this subject: Marianne LE GALLIARD, “Jacques Henri Lartigue sous le regard de Richard Avedon. La question de l’œuvre et de l’album photographique à partir de l’édition de *Diary of a Century* (1970)”, (sup. Michel Poivert), (Paris: Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2013).
5. J. H. LARTIGUE, *Boyhood, Photos of J. H. Lartigue, The Family Album of a Gilded Age*, (New York: Guichard-Time Life Books, 1966).
6. R. Avedon to J. H. Lartigue, telegram, 1968, Fondation Lartigue (FL) archives, Paris, no. 2783: “Your book will be the great book of photography of the 20th century!”
7. R. Avedon to J. H. Lartigue, 15 March 1963, Association des amis de Jacques Henri Lartigue (AAJHL) archives, Paris, no. 6178.
8. R. Avedon to J. H. Lartigue, 10 October 1966, FL archives, Paris, no. 2680. *Boyhood* was published in September.
9. R. AVEDON, Truman CAPOTE, *Observations*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959).
10. R. AVEDON, James BALDWIN, *Nothing Personal*, (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1964).
11. Georges Tourdjman, telephone interview with the author, 4 September 2012.
12. Claude FAYARD, *Lartigue. Le Magicien*, Production Coty, 1966.
13. According to Tourdjman, the layout was conceived by Lartigue himself.
14. G. Tourdjman, telephone interview with the author, 5 October 2012.
15. G. Tourdjman to J. H. Lartigue, 8 May 1966, FL archives, Paris, no. 3186: “The American saga is already over [...] Didn’t get to see Avedon, who was away, but saw Hiro, who greatly admires you and would be delighted to take your photograph when he comes to Paris in late July for the collections. He would also like a few of your prints.”
16. In an article by Carolyn Burke for *Vogue* in 2007, Hiro explains how he “sought Lartigue out because he wanted to see how he did it”. See Carolyn BURKE, “Pleasures and Days”, *Vogue*, September 2007, p. 604. The date is inaccurate.
17. Hiro, interview with the author, 12 September 2012, New York.
18. The October 1966 issue of *Camera* devotes a whole article to him, with over thirty photographs chosen by Brodovitch and prefaced by Avedon: R. AVEDON, “Machine eye mind”, *Camera*, October 1965, n.p.
19. HIRO, *Hiro: Photographs*, (New York: Little Brown and Company, 1999).
According to Hiro, Avedon had an eye: he immediately detected the presence of a diamond in Lartigue where others had only seen a common stone (Hiro, 12 September 2012, *op. cit.*). Ruth Ansel, for her part, compared Avedon’s discovery to finding a goldmine (Ruth Ansel, interview with the author, 15 September 2012, New York).

20. The exhibition was held from 29 September to 9 October.
21. The date is specified in Avedon's diary. R. Avedon, diary, 9 November 1966, Avedon Foundation archives, New York.
22. G. Tourdjman, telephone interview with the author, 4 September 2012.
23. Although it should be noted that in 1963 Szarkowski had already associated Atget's name with that of his contemporary Lartigue.
24. Allan PORTER, "Paris 1900", *Camera*, 12, December 1966, n. p.
25. The expression comes from Lartigue. It originated in a caption on the 1966 album, p. 0128V66.
26. Candice SOMERALL, "Lartigue: his Camera Spans a Century", *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1967, pp. 190-191.
27. Mary Lancray, also spelled Marie Lancret, was a young actress in the 1910s.
28. "Two photographs done by the same man a half-century apart are as rare as the charm of both [...] 1967- striding into the next century of fashion [...]", C. SOMERALL, "Lartigue: his Camera Spans a Century", *op. cit.*
29. A. PORTER, "Fashion and Photography", *Camera*, October 1966, pp. 34-35.
30. Jane TRAEHY, Nancy WHITE, *Harper's Bazaar, 100 Years of the American Female*, (New York: Random House, 1967).
31. Gilles LIPOVETSKY, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, Catherine Porter (trans.), (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).
32. Hiro to J. H. Lartigue, 14 March 1967, FL archives, no. 3019; "U.S.I.A chose one of your photographs which I have enclosed with the others. It will be used in the forthcoming issue of *America Illustrated* and payment will be mailed directly to you. As soon as I finish making a print for them, I will return the negatives to you."
33. His photos of the sketchbooks also contributed to the success of *Diary of a Century*. The book opens with pages from the journals, filled with notes and sketches, and contributed to forging Lartigue's reputation as a serious artist meticulously charting his daily life rather than as a dilettante simply photographing his era.
34. The fashion label ran a campaign in late 1967 based on prints by Lartigue.
35. Robert Lantz was one of the leading agents in the 1960s. He was close to Avedon, whose own agent (and Hiro's) was Laura Kanelous. Lantz had important figures on his books, such as James Baldwin, who wrote the text for the book on Avedon *Nothing Personal*, not to mention Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.
36. J. H. Lartigue to Ami Guichard, draft, 14 March 1967, FL archives, Paris, no. 5777.
37. Albert Plécy to A. Guichard, 28 March 1967, FL archives, Paris, (photocopy), no. 3795.
38. J. H. Lartigue to A. Guichard, draft, 14 March 1967, FL archives, no. 5777.
39. The photograph should normally have featured by itself but according to Hiro it was not good enough. Gideon Lewin, Avedon's assistant from 1965 to 1980, offers the same explanation, as does Ruth Ansel. Gideon Lewin, interview with the author, 14 September 2012, New York. "It is a very contrived picture [...] The picture wasn't a success [...] He wasn't copying modern photographers, he was copying himself, although he preceded everybody." Ruth Ansel, interview with the author, 15 September 2012, New York: "It is a very ordinary shot. It is a failure, a boring picture, not the picture of a man with a camera in his hand."
40. G. LIPOVETSKY, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, *op. cit.* It is worth recalling here that Roland Barthes also wrote *The Fashion System* in 1967. 1967 was not simply a moment marking a cycle of closure and renewal, it was also a moment for fashion to become an object of study in its own right.
41. Edmonde CHARLES-ROUX, *Chanel and her World*, (New York: Vendôme Press, 2005).
42. Diana VREELAND, *The 10's, the 20's, the 30's: Inventive clothes, 1909-1939*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973), p. 1.

43. Octave UZANNE, *The Modern Parisienne*, (London: William Heinemann, 1912), p. 159.
44. This question has already been addressed by the author in the context of her Master 2 studies: M. LE GALLIARD, “L’élégance photographique dans l’oeuvre de Jacques Henri Lartigue de 1910 à 1914” (sup. Michel Poivert), (Paris: Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, 2007).
45. J. H. LARTIGUE, *Mémoires sans mémoire*, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1975), p. 80. “So there I am, poised for action on my iron chair with my camera all set up [...] I have a good eye for judging distances. Here what was more difficult was getting her to place one foot ahead of the other just as I was getting the focus right (which is the most amusing part).”
46. R. AVEDON, “A conversation about Richard Avedon”, *Charlie Rose*, 19 January 1996, CBS News, Nightwatch: “I wanted to grow up and be Fred Astaire, that burst of energy, when you’re 21, 22. I mean I couldn’t start a studio portrait. I loved to dance, to move... I just liked moving.”
47. Alexey BRODOVITCH, *The New Yorker*, September 1958, p. 35, quoted in Kerry William PURCELL, *Alexey Brodovitch*, (London: Phaidon, 2002), pp. 108-109.
48. A fascination that was the particular hallmark of the *Harper’s Bazaar* editor Carmel Snow and later the fashion editor Diana Vreeland.
49. R. Avedon to J. H. Lartigue, 19 January 1967, FL archives, Paris, no. 2681. The exhibition coincided with “Hommage à Picasso”, an event held at the Grand Palais from November 1966 to February 1967. Picasso was also important to Hiro, who told Lartigue in a letter dated 13 January 1967 that he could not wait to return to Paris for the collections and the Picasso exhibition.
50. “La photo et la mode: un certain regard”, radio program with Georges PIERRE, directed by Jean Pradines, 1967, ORTF.
51. Cathy HORYN, “How Avedon blurred his own image”, *The New York Times*, 13 May 2009, p. 53: “If anything, Avedon’s stripped-down aesthetic and motion are representative of the era’s frenetic energy.”
52. Paul J. C. FRIEDLANDER, “Enter the Jet Age”, *Harper’s Bazaar*, January 1958, pp. 128-129.
53. Gideon Lewin, interview, 14 September 2012, New York.
54. R. AVEDON, “Munkacsy by Richard Avedon”, *Harper’s Bazaar*, June 1964, pp. 64-69.
55. Hiro to J. H. Lartigue, 14 September 1967, FL archives, Paris, no. 5633.
56. R. Avedon to J. H. Lartigue, 17 July 1968, FL archives, Paris, no. 2708.

ABSTRACTS

It was in the 1960s that the canonization of the photography of Jacques Henri Lartigue truly began. The history of this gradual recognition is marked by two major milestones – the first in 1963, with the first solo exhibition at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, which displayed a number of images of the Belle Époque, and the second in 1970, with the publication of the monograph *Diary of a Century*, which was devoted for the first time to the entirety of his oeuvre (almost sixty years) and edited by the famous photographer Richard Avedon. Recent research on the historiography of Lartigue’s photography has shown that it was the MoMA exhibition which sparked the beginning of his celebrity, thanks especially to its curator, John Szarkowski, who is seen as having “invented” Lartigue as an artist. But it was Avedon who, seven years later, would definitively elevate Lartigue to the company of the great photographers of the twentieth century with *Diary of a Century*.

AUTHORS

MARIANNE LE GALLIARD

Marianne Le Galliard holds a PhD in History of Art. Her dissertation on the albums of photographer Jacques Henri Lartigue, under the supervision of Michel Poivert, is entitled “Jacques Henri Lartigue sous le regard de Richard Avedon. La question de l’œuvre et de l’album photographique à partir de l’édition de *Diary of a Century* (1970)” (Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2013). Alongside her photographic research (focusing on the albums, snapshots and fashion), she is employed as archive manager and database developer at Lartigue Foundation (Paris) and Hartung – Bergman Foundation (Antibes), also working as a programmer, developer and scientific researcher for Fondation de France. She sits on the board of the magazine *Études Photographiques*.