

**communiqué /press release****For immediate release**

THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY CELEBRATED  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH PHOTOGRAPHER ÉDOUARD BALDUS

**THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF ÉDOUARD BALDUS: LANDSCAPES AND MONUMENTS  
OF FRANCE**

From 25 January to 23 April 1995

**Montreal, 25 January 1995 -- The Photographs of Édouard Baldus: Landscapes and Monuments of France** is the first comprehensive exhibition of works by the photographer who, more than any other, defined the modern landscape and established the standard for architectural photography. The exhibition was organized by the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and the Réunion des musées nationaux (Paris) and will be on view in the main galleries of the Canadian Centre for Architecture from 25 January to 23 April 1995. At the CCA, the exhibition is curated by David Harris, Associate Curator, Photographs Collection.

The CCA was instrumental in identifying Édouard Baldus as one of the first major architectural photographers. Since 1976, it has gradually and systematically built up one of the most comprehensive holdings of photographs, publications, and albums encompassing all aspects of Baldus' career. This exhibition features twenty-six photographs and ten albums from the CCA's extensive collection.

The albums and photographs on exhibit were selected from European and North American public and private collections to represent, through the finest surviving examples, the essence of Baldus' vision. The exhibition is organized into chronological sections to reveal the evolution of his work through each of his major projects of the 1850s. **The Photographs of Édouard Baldus** comprises, in all, one hundred photographs and eleven albums, including twenty-six photographs and ten albums from the CCA's extensive collection, which had never been shown in Montreal.

## The Golden Age of France as seen by Baldus

The mammoth-plate photographs of Édouard Baldus (1813-1889) perfectly suited the ambitions and spirit of France's Second Empire: austere and often frontally composed, they stressed a continuity between Roman, medieval and contemporary civic architecture and engineering projects while projecting a harmony between architecture and the surrounding landscape.

In addition to extensive government patronage, Baldus enjoyed private commissions, producing among other things two extraordinary railroad albums which are included in this exhibition. In 1855, Baron James de Rothschild commissioned Baldus to furnish a sequence of views along the recently constructed railway, the Chemin de Fer du Nord, linking Paris with the English Channel, for presentation to Queen Victoria and entitled *Visite de sa majesté la reine Victoria et de son altesse royale le Prince Albert 18-27 août 1855 : Itinéraire et vues du Chemin de Fer du Nord*. Still housed in the Photographic Collection of the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle and loaned to the exhibition by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the sumptuous album will be displayed at the CCA.

A second album, the monumental *Chemins de Fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée*, commissioned in 1861, represents the culmination of the creative phase of Baldus' career. In a similar manner to the earlier railroad album, but with a far greater emphasis on the massive viaducts and tunnels constructed along the route, the achievements of modern engineers are harmoniously juxtaposed with the legacy of France's Roman and medieval builders in order to draw parallels and to underline continuities.

**The Photographs of Édouard Baldus: Landscapes and Monuments of France** was shown at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York from October 3 to 31 December 1994. It will also be on view at the Musée National des Monuments Français in Paris in 1996.

### Guided tours

Visitors can enjoy guided tours of the exhibition every Sunday from 19 February to 23 April, at 2 pm in French and at 3 pm in English. Guided tours for groups are also available upon reservation from Wednesday to Friday : (514) 939-7026.

### An Exceptional Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by an English and French illustrated catalogue *The Photographs of Édouard Baldus*, the first monograph on this artist. It features a biographical essay by Malcolm Daniel, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and an essay on architects and photographers in Second Empire France by Barry Bergdoll, Associate Professor of Art History, Columbia

University. The publication includes a magnificent portfolio of 86 tritone plates. It is co-published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the CCA. A French version *Édouard Baldus, photographe*, co-published by the CCA and the Réunion des musées nationaux, is also available.

### **In the Hall Cases**

In conjunction with **The Photographs of Édouard Baldus: Landscapes and Monuments of France**, the CCA will be presenting an exhibition entitled **Photography and French Architectural Practice, 1839-1870** on display in the seven Hall Cases of the CCA. It will examine how photography in the second half of the nineteenth century became an integral and indispensable part of the processes of architectural design, construction, restoration, and publishing. This exhibition has been drawn exclusively from the CCA's collections and is being curated by David Harris, Associate Curator, Photographs Collection at the CCA, and Barry Bergdoll, Associate Professor of Art History, Columbia University, one of the two authors of a major essay in the catalogue **The Photographers of Édouard Baldus**.

Transportation assistance has been provided by Air France. The CCA gratefully acknowledges the support of the Consulat général de France for the presentation of the exhibition at the CCA.

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