The Russell Sturgis Collection of University Archives 
Washington University in St. Louis

Russell Sturgis (1836-1909) was an American architect who became a leading figure in the development of architectural criticism at the turn of the 20th century. Sturgis spent his formative years in New York, where he gained an appreciation for architectural history and modern design. He studied architecture in Germany and traveled abroad extensively before opening an architectural practice in New York in 1863. Sturgis became a successful architect who authored many articles and books on various architectural subjects.

Even before opening his practice, Sturgis began collecting fine photographs and drawings of architectural subjects. His collection is particularly thorough and diverse, containing some 11,000 images of European architectural details, topographical views, sculpture, and painting as well as cities and architectural sites in Egypt, India, Japan, Syria, Turkey, and the former Soviet Republic. The collection features works by some of the earliest American and European photographers and photographic editors; these include Leopoldo Alinari, Édouard-Denis Baldus, the Bisson brothers, Howard Crosby Butler, Charles Clifford, Francis Frith, Robert Macpherson, Séraphin Médéric Mieusement, Carlo Ponti, and others.

After Sturgis’s death in 1909, Washington University Department of Architecture purchased his collection of images for use as a study tool for students, and the Saint Louis Art Museum purchased his vast art and architectural collection. Even before opening his practice, Sturgis began collecting fine photographs and drawings of architectural subjects. His collection is particularly thorough and diverse, containing some 11,000 images of European architectural details, topographical views, sculpture, and painting as well as cities and architectural sites in Egypt, India, Japan, Syria, Turkey, and the former Soviet Republic. The collection features works by some of the earliest American and European photographers and photographic editors; these include Leopoldo Alinari, Édouard-Denis Baldus, the Bisson brothers, Howard Crosby Butler, Charles Clifford, Francis Frith, Robert Macpherson, Séraphin Médéric Mieusement, Carlo Ponti, and others.

Today the Russell Sturgis Collection is housed in the Saint Louis Art Museum. The museum later gave some of Sturgis’s architectural books and folios to the Washington University Art Library.

The exhibition is organized by the Sheldon Art Galleries, St. Louis in collaboration with the University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Washington University Libraries. The exhibition is supported by the Sheldon Art Galleries, St. Louis in collaboration with the University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Washington University Libraries. This brochure is made possible in part by the Washington University Libraries.

Credits
Photographs and Folios in the exhibition Of Spirit & Form: The Monuments of France in Photographs by Édouard Baldus and Médéric Mieusement. Photographs by Howard Crosby Butler, Charles Clifford, Francis Frith, Robert Macpherson, Séraphin Médéric Mieusement, Carlo Ponti, and others. The exhibition is organized by the Sheldon Art Galleries, St. Louis in collaboration with the University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Washington University Libraries. The exhibition is supported by the Sheldon Art Galleries, St. Louis in collaboration with the University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Washington University Libraries. This brochure is made possible in part by the Washington University Libraries.

Gallery Hours
Tuesdays and Thursdays: Noon to 8:00 p.m.
Wednesdays and Fridays: Noon to 5:00 p.m.
Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

One hour before Sheldon concerts and during intermissions.

The Sheldon Art Galleries
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St. Louis, Missouri 63108
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www.sheldonsartgalleries.com

Of Spirit & Form: The Monuments of France in Photographs by Édouard Baldus and Médéric Mieusement

The Russell Sturgis Collection of University Archives
Washington University in St. Louis

The Sheldon Art Galleries
Séraphin Médéric Mieusement (1840-1905). Mieusement desired to offer their skills in the cause of documenting and preserving the historic monuments of France. After several years, the Commission des Monuments Historiques decided to reinitiate a collection of photographs to accompany their sets of drawings, and in 1876 hired Mieusement to begin the process of recording. By the end of 1883 Mieusement had created nearly two thousand negatives to aid the government’s building restoration projects throughout the country and continued to supply images from many regions of France until the end of 1891 (Fig. 2).

Mieusement had an understanding and respect for the skill and idea presented in the artistic work of sculpture and architecture from earlier ages but noted “it is necessary to have the man required to create the structure and whose spirits still reside in the work.” Although Mieusement documented components of religious architecture throughout most of the twenty-five years he provided images for the French government, in April 1884 he was hired by the Ministry of Religion to specifically photograph a large group of cathedral interiors for study and reference. His photographs were selected for their aesthetic possibilities. They also effectively fused the descriptive characteristics of the medium of photography with its analytical elements for study and reference. Mieusement was known as a charming conversationalist, a man of great heart and intelligence, and a conscientious architect in 1888 to help form the Société des photographes artistiques group in his hometown of Blois and remain in practice with his own building projects in the Loire valley, were positive experiences that led Mieusement to offer his services to the Minister of Public Instruction and the district of Maine-et-Loire, which are now in the collections of the Archives of Washington University in St. Louis, provide further evidence that the architectural critic Russell Sturgis (1836-1909) acquired nearly six hundred photographic prints created by Mieusement after they became available for purchase in 1884, many of which contain the Monuments Historiques seal along with the artist’s blindstamp. These images, which are now in the collections of the Archives of Washington University in St. Louis, provide further evidence that artists, historians and architects, like those of Édouard Baldus, also effectively fused the descriptive characteristics of the medium of photography with its aesthetic possibilities.

David M. Harlow
Curator of the exhibition

Fig. 1
Édouard-Denis Baldus. (c. 1855-57) Albumen print from glass negative. 39.4 x 29.7 cm. Russell Sturgis Collection, University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Washington University Libraries.

Fig. 2
Séraphin Médéric Mieusement. (1884) Albumen print from glass negative. 32.5 x 40.8 cm. Private collection.

Fig. 3
Séraphin Médéric Mieusement. (1888) Albumen print from glass negative. 30.5 x 40.8 cm. Private collection.

Fig. 4

Endnotes
5. In January 1884, the administration of the Minister Histoirque gave Mienusement the right to print from his negatives as well as negatives he had brought from him that represented the work of other photographers. This agreement, with the goal of “improving the final result of an art monument and French education,” was expanded in February 1889 and allowed Mienusement the ability to sell his prints in several outlets in Paris, including the Musée de la sculpture-compare to the Troubadours place. Although Mienusement documented components of religious architecture throughout most of the twenty-five years he provided images for the French government. In April 1884 he was hired by the Ministry of Religion to specifically photograph a large group of cathedral interiors for study and reference. One of the most distinctive architectural varia- 1. Quoted in Sylvie Cohen, “On Mienusement” in Mienusement, Cathédrales de France; photographies du XIXe siècle, (Paris, 1988), p. 2.
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