



# An Exhibition in Negative: Nigel Henderson, *Parallel of Life and Art* and the Photographic Image

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In the Tate archive in London, there is a partial collection of photographic negatives relating to the ground-breaking exhibition *Parallel of Life and Art*, which opened at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in Mayfair on 11 September 1953.<sup>1</sup> Some of the negatives were produced in preparation for the exhibition, while others were made when the display itself was photographed. Tonally inverted and translucent, these highly ephemeral photographic materials comprise a kind of ‘shadow archive’ of *Parallel of Life and Art*.<sup>2</sup> The exhibition and its contents flicker darkly across the pieces of photographic film, miniaturised, intricately detailed, fragmented (plate 1 and plate 2). Significantly, one of the five collaborators on *Parallel of Life and Art*, Nigel Henderson, kept the negatives throughout his life. For him, these ghostly images were not subsidiary to their positive counterparts. Instead, I argue, they served as the locus of his experimental and extended engagement with the exhibition.<sup>3</sup> When studied through the prism of Henderson’s artistic-photographic work, these negatives provide a key to *Parallel of Life and Art*: a means of unlocking the method and logic through which the exhibition was formed, and of deciphering its afterimage and historicisation.<sup>4</sup>

In the period of more than seventy years since it was first presented at the ICA, *Parallel of Life and Art* has become lauded as a landmark exhibition of the post-war era in Britain, renowned for its wholesale use of photographic technology, and its iconoclastic treatment of cultural imagery.<sup>5</sup> Almost without exception, accounts of the show are accompanied by the photographs that Henderson took of the installation and that he subsequently retained. Yet, the status and function of these photographs in their negative form – a form that was, this essay contends, vital to his practice, and to the workings of *Parallel of Life and Art* – is fundamentally obscured by their universal translation into positives throughout the literature dedicated to the exhibition. While these positive images are reproduced widely, and have proven to be a subject of perennial academic enquiry, there has been negligible examination of the negatives from which such reproductions derive. Indeed, these darker and more fugitive archival materials have remained neglected by art historians, critics, and curators alike. Bringing the negatives from *Parallel of Life and Art* back into focus – and inverting their long-standing exclusion from cultural space – offers an alternative lens onto the exhibition, and onto its ongoing mediation through reproduced images. Crucially, they reveal how *Parallel of Life and Art* was rooted in photographic negativity, not only technologically and aesthetically but also conceptually. At the same time, these interstitial, almost denatured views of the project raise questions about the

**Detail from Roger Mayne, photograph (from contact sheet) of Nigel Henderson at 46 Chisnehale Road, London, 1953 (plate 4).**

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I Nigel Henderson, photographic negatives of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate. Photos: Author.



contested place of photography in 1950s Britain, and its uncertain conjunction with art and exhibition-making.

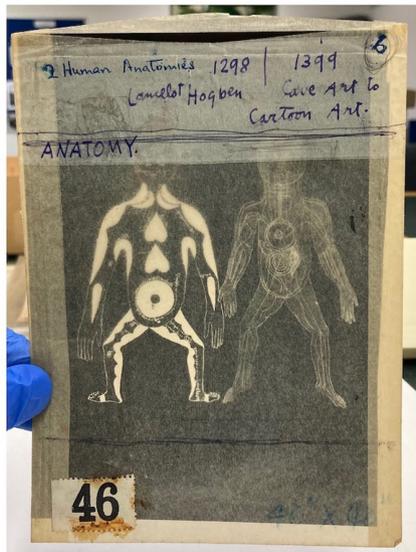
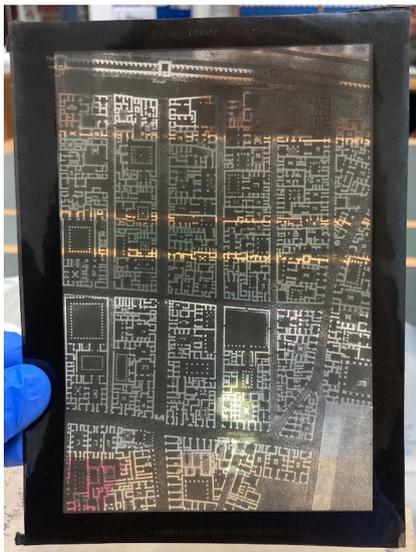
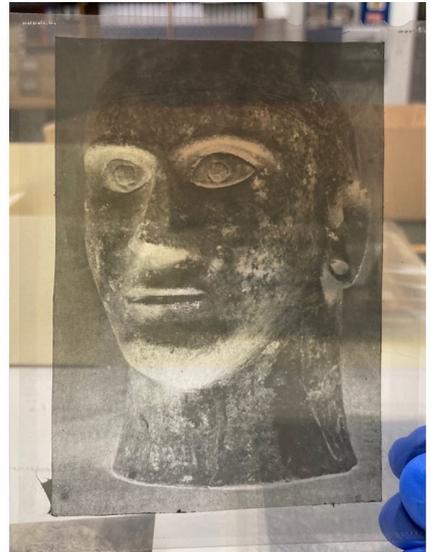
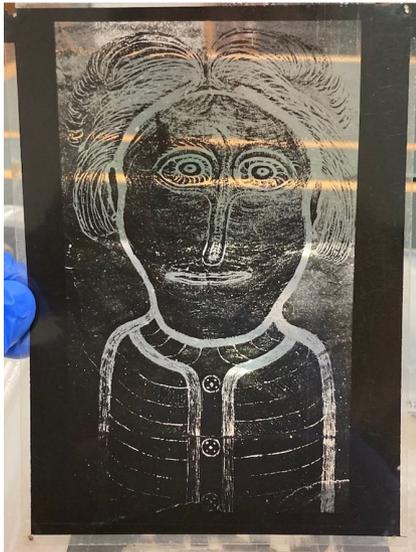
### **The Photographic Exhibition in Post-War Britain**

From the moment that it opened, *Parallel of Life and Art* threw the accepted relationship between the photograph, the artwork, and the exhibition into doubt. Organised collaboratively by Henderson, fellow artist Eduardo Paolozzi, architects Alison and Peter Smithson, and engineer Ronald Jenkins, the show was made up of 122 images, which the group had gleaned from highly miscellaneous sources and then photographically copied, cropped, resized, and reprinted in black and white.<sup>6</sup> This cacophony of monochrome reproductions crowded the ICA's first-floor gallery at 17–18 Dover Street (plate 3). Numerous prints were pinned directly onto the walls.

Some were propped on the floor. Others hung from the ceiling in a fractured canopy of photographic planes, which were suspended – vertically and horizontally – just above visitors' heads. For those entering the Institute from the streets of post-war London, the display must have seemed at once dense and dissonant, poised in a state of irresolution between the photographic uniformity of the material and the staggering variety of its subject matter.

Ostensibly provided as a guide to help navigate the heterogeneity of the hang, a concertina-folded catalogue accompanied the exhibition.<sup>7</sup> This document assembled incongruent groupings of the material under a series of oblique headings to which some of the images bore no obvious relation. A picture of a watch and the underside of a TV chassis are listed as 'Anatomy'; a newspaper photograph of the funeral of King George VI and a radiograph of a cat batting a ball appear under the heading 'Art'; a nineteenth-century engraving of a seal's skull is an example of 'Stress Structure'; and the category of 'Landscape' includes marbled paper, a Japanese woodcut, and a microphotograph of graphite flakes. Characterised by this equivocal gesture of both classification and misclassification, *Parallel of Life and Art* articulated an ambivalent dialogue between photography, exhibition-making and cultural categorisation.<sup>8</sup>

**2** Photographic copy negatives from *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. Approximately 150 × 110 mm. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2 and TGA 201011/5/1. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate. Photos: Author.



While each image was meticulously numbered and named, minimal explanation was provided to account for either their taxonomical (dis)order or their collagic arrangement in space. All that united the discordant hang was, it seemed, the photographically reproduced quality of the material.

Exhibited at a time when the photograph was overwhelmingly excluded from the established canons and museological collections of modern art in Britain, this turn towards photographic reproducibility clearly flouted the conventions of fine art. While the Victoria and Albert Museum had collected photographs since 1852, this was on the basis that the medium was understood 'as a purely mechanical process into which the artist does not enter'.<sup>9</sup> When pushed to consider the question of acquiring contemporary photographs as artworks in 1954, director Sir Leigh Ashton asserted curtly that such images were 'entirely outside of the terms of reference of this museum'.<sup>10</sup> And it was not until the 1970s that the Tate Gallery – as it was then known – gradually began to amass photography for its collection as well as for its newly founded archive, albeit without a clear rationale for the distinction between the photograph as artwork and the photograph as archival document.<sup>11</sup> In the post-war period in Britain, the dominant definition of art that such museums upheld – both in their collecting policies and in their exhibition programmes – was one that elevated painting and sculpture above other cultural forms. Drawings, prints, and works on paper were treated as secondary or supplementary modes of production, while artists' photographs were largely deemed as extraneous to the museum's 'terms of reference'.<sup>12</sup>

By contrast, as a non-museological arts organisation without its own collection, the ICA demonstrated a burgeoning interest in staging photographic displays.<sup>13</sup> In the year preceding *Parallel of Life and Art*, the Institute had presented two consecutive exhibitions dedicated to the medium: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Photographs*, which opened in February 1952, and *Memorable Photographs from Life Magazine: 15 Years of World History in Pictures*, which opened the following month.<sup>14</sup> In many ways, this earlier pairing epitomised the nascent tenets of photographic exhibition-making at the time. In the Cartier-Bresson show, the documentary photograph was transfigured into an original artwork and elevated to the kind of status conventionally enjoyed by the painted image. Meanwhile, Cartier-Bresson himself was presented as an individualised author figure whose 'genius' was comparable with that of a painter.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, for one critic 'any painter capable of expressing in paint half the humanity

3 Nigel Henderson, photographs of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. East Anglia: Nigel Henderson Estate. © Nigel Henderson Estate. Photos: Nigel Henderson Estate.

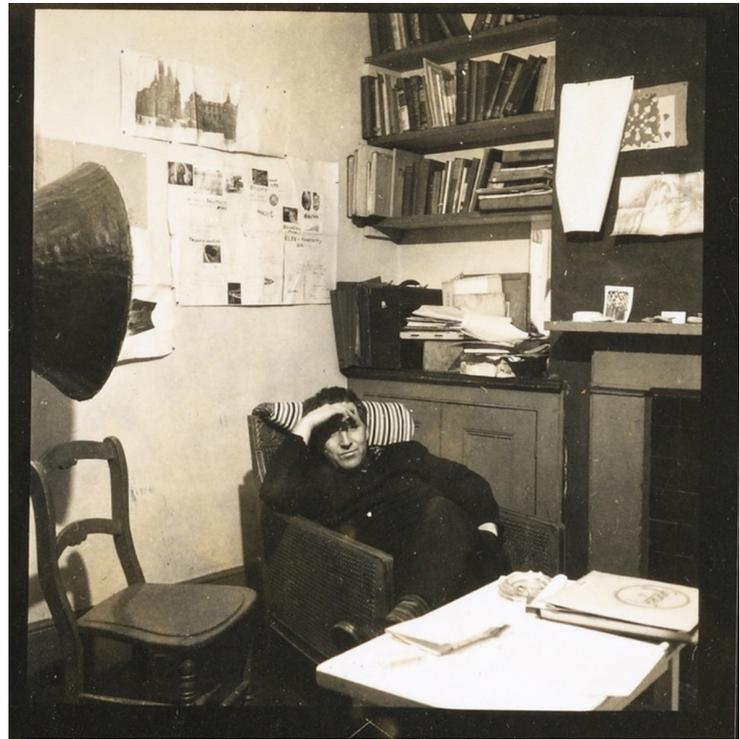


Cartier-Bresson has captured in his photographs would be a very great painter'.<sup>16</sup> Conversely, *Memorable Photographs from Life Magazine* privileged the medium's journalistic capacities, positioning the magazine picture as 'an authoritative source of visual information'.<sup>17</sup> The photographers featured were those for whom, as the catalogue stated, 'neither danger, discomfort nor privation has dampened the ardent search for facts'.<sup>18</sup> In different ways, both of these earlier shows reinforced established cultural hierarchies in Britain. One confirmed the superior standing of art – as epitomised by painting – by attempting to draw photography within its ambit, while the other reinforced the distinction between artworks and photographic images by underlining the latter's role within the realm of reportorial media. Tellingly, in the national press both exhibitions were widely applauded.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, the photographically ambiguous character of *Parallel of Life and Art* troubled contemporary critics. Across popular and specialist publications, commentators accused the exhibition-makers of obfuscation and esotericism.<sup>20</sup> For these arbiters of artistic taste and connoisseurship, the incongruent assortment of reproduced imagery proved bewildering, if not insulting. Writing in *The Listener*, David Sylvester chided the collaborators for creating an exhibition characterised by a sense of 'consummate inconsequentiality', the 'meaning and purpose' of which seemed 'as obscure and muddled as its title'.<sup>21</sup> He was especially perturbed by the (mis)classificatory guide, in which the rationale of cataloguing was itself thrown into question. For Sylvester, this disruption of the traditional taxonomies of culture epitomised the 'arbitrary, inconsistent, and perverse' nature of *Parallel of Life and Art*.<sup>22</sup> Even Reyner Banham – otherwise an advocate for the project – noted the unnerving effects of the photographic installation, remarking that 'truth may be stranger than fiction, but many of the camera's statements are stranger than truth itself'.<sup>23</sup> Reflecting upon the prevalence of such sentiments, Tom Hopkinson concluded in the *Manchester Guardian* that 'to judge from published comments' the dense display of photographic reproductions had proved 'disturbing and even repulsive' to many critics and journalists alike.<sup>24</sup> For these observers, what appears to have been unsettling was not only the departure of *Parallel of Life and Art* from more familiar approaches to the public presentation of photographs, but the failure or refusal of the exhibition-makers to clarify the alternative logic that now occupied the space. Rather than elucidating and stabilising visual knowledge, the assemblage of reproduced imagery appeared only to distort, blur, and disorientate.<sup>25</sup> As the invitation to the private view announced, *Parallel of Life and Art* was 'an exhibition of documents through the medium of photography'.<sup>26</sup> Yet, it was one in which, inexplicably, the norms of photographic documentation and display seemed to have been abandoned.

### Looking and Thinking through Photography

To begin to decipher the underlying logic of *Parallel of Life and Art* it is productive to return to the photographic negatives now held in the archive at Tate under Henderson's name, which include miniature, tonally inverted doubles of the positive images that populated the show. Although absent from the final display, I will argue that these negatives were intimately connected with the technical and conceptual formulation of the project, as well as with its photographic aesthetics. As Henderson later noted, *Parallel of Life and Art* was not initially intended to be an exhibition; instead, it began life as an inchoate process of collaborative visual analysis, which developed over the course of a year, between late 1952 and September 1953.<sup>27</sup> During this period, Henderson, Paolozzi and the Smithsons would meet on an almost weekly basis at Henderson's house at 46 Chisenhale Road in the East End of London.<sup>28</sup>



**4 Left: Nigel Henderson, photograph of 46 Chisenhale Road, London, 1953. East Anglia: Nigel Henderson Estate. © Nigel Henderson Estate. Photo: Nigel Henderson Estate. Right: Roger Mayne, photograph (from contact sheet) of Nigel Henderson at 46 Chisenhale Road, London, 1953. East Anglia: Nigel Henderson Estate. © The Roger Mayne Archive. Photo: Nigel Henderson Estate.**

Gathered in his study, they pooled materials that had piqued their interests, including tearsheets from magazines, newspapers, reference books, specialist journals and manuals, as well as collage fragments, photographic prints, postcards, and cuttings from their scrapbooks. In a series of photographs taken by Henderson and the photographer Roger Mayne in 1953, the residues of this activity can be seen scattered across the interior surfaces of 46 Chisenhale Road (plate 4).<sup>29</sup> Planning sheets and reproduced images are pinned onto the walls. The shelves of the kitchen dresser offer an ad hoc armature of display. Roughly hewn abstract prints adorn the ceilings. Ensclosed in this collagic environment, the *Parallel of Life and Art* collaborators sifted through their mulch of found material. As they did so, they selected pictorial details and pieces of pattern that seemed especially salient or significant for them, albeit perceived from the different perspectives of their respective practices. This research method then took a critical turn: they had their chosen images converted into photographic negatives (plate 5).

As Henderson later explained, this was an iterative process in which they 'continued to select and sometimes replaced an image with one which suited us better [...] having copy negatives made as we went'.<sup>30</sup> These copy negatives were used to extract their chosen images, and to create the monochrome photographic reproductions that populated the hang.<sup>31</sup> A copy negative is produced by photographing a positive print using a large format camera, thereby reversing the conventional photographic order of negative to positive. Not only did these copy negatives permit the reproduction of the collaborators' found material, but they also generated the distinct photographic aesthetic that characterised *Parallel of Life and Art*. Printing from a copy negative amplifies the photographic texture of an image, generating a lower resolution picture that exhibits a more blurred and granular patina. Differentiated from the original by this coarse visual finish, the image's status as a copy is made explicit. As well as translating their source material into a gritty monochrome, this strategy allowed the collaborators to experiment with distortions

of scale, and the tight cropping of visual details. Placed into a photographic enlarger within the darkroom, the copy negatives transformed the found images into highly malleable projections, dematerialised and composed of darkness and light. As projections, the found images became unfixated and unstable, and open to forms of photographic manipulation that further disassociated these copies from their original counterparts. Many of the copy negatives bear the traces of this editorial process. Crop marks appear across the pieces of photographic film; their glassine envelopes have been labelled and re-labelled, numbered and re-numbered; and the images have punctures in their corners where they were pinned up and studied in their negative state. These markings attest to the role of the copy negatives as more than intermediary materials. Instead, they were subjected to – and enabled – forms of photographic alteration, intensive visual analysis, reclassification, and experimental display.

For Henderson, this method of working through and with photographic negatives formed a critical part of his practice. Identified by contemporary critics not as an artist but with the hybrid moniker ‘artist-photographer’, Henderson was rare

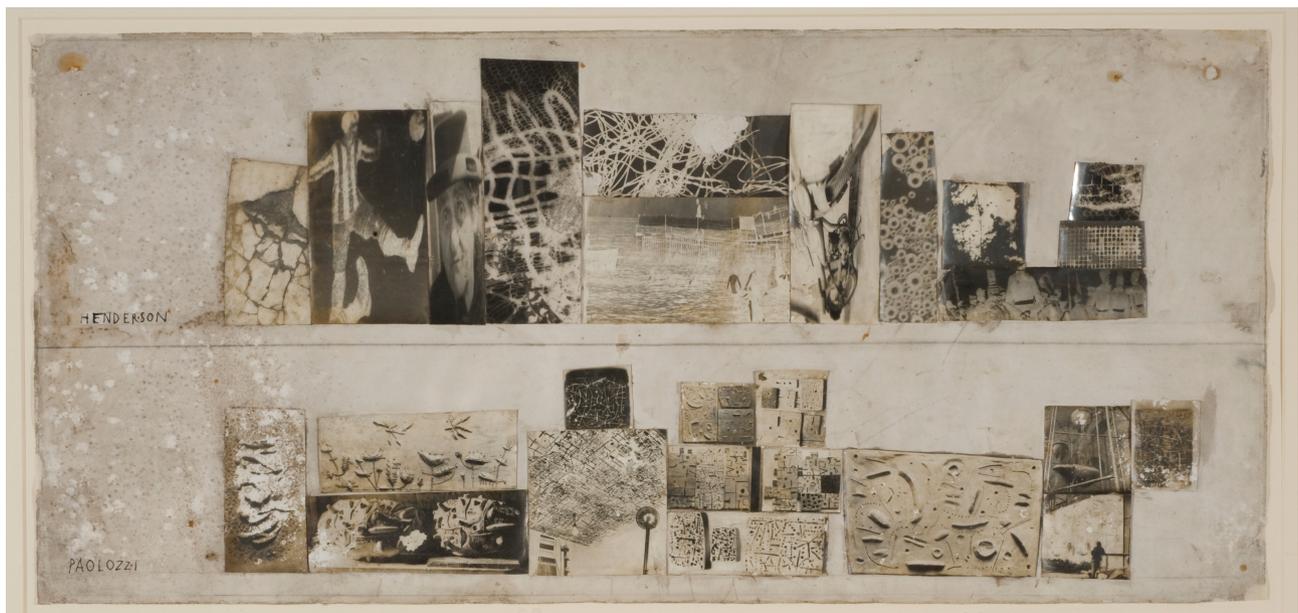
5 Photographic copy negatives from *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. Approximately 150 × 110 mm. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2 and TGA 201011/5/1. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London, 2023. Photos: Author.



among his colleagues for his first-hand knowledge of photographic technologies, and his direct engagement with darkroom techniques.<sup>32</sup> At this time, many modern photographers delegated the printing of their negatives to darkroom technicians, perceiving this as a subsidiary form of photographic activity into which their subjectivity need not enter.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, Henderson's thinking was inflected by his labour within the darkroom. He grounded his photographic practice within the makeshift darkroom that he had established in the bathroom at 46 Chisenhale Road, where he washed and hung prints over the bathtub, and made photograms on the linoleum floor. Working late into the night in this shrouded, photochemical zone, he became preoccupied by the transformative potential of photographic negatives, and by their spectral aesthetics. Henderson's interest in negativity is expressed by a pair of photocollage studies produced collaboratively by him and Paolozzi in preparation for *Parallel of Life and Art*. Staging an intermedial dialogue between the two artists' concerns, these studies combine Henderson's darkroom experiments, photograms, and photographic distortions with his shots of Paolozzi's sculptures, reliefs, tiles, and silkscreen prints (plate 6 and plate 7). Completed in 1952 during *Parallel of Life and Art*'s extended period of gestation, the patterns and pictorial details that make up these studies mirror the kinds of visual fragments that appear strewn throughout the interior of 46 Chisenhale Road. What is more, among Henderson's individual contributions a striking number of images are printed as tonal inversions, in overtly negative forms. Indeed, his input appears dominated by the darker, more aberrant aesthetics of photographic negativity.

In one of these studies, a cut-out of two male figures is positioned in the foreground (plate 7). Backs turned toward the viewer, these figures gaze across a haphazard grid of monochrome images. Their attention appears to have been captured by a photographic distortion by Henderson, in which a third male figure wades through a liquid landscape, beneath a horizon heavy with abstract shapes. Flanked by positive shots showing works by Paolozzi, Henderson's ghostly image is elongated, blurred, and tonally inverted, appearing in negative. In fact, this same image is featured centrally in both studies, cropped differently to alter its focus and scale. What these preparatory compositions seem to insist upon is not only the value

6 Nigel Henderson and Eduardo Paolozzi, *Untitled (Study for Parallel of Life and Art)*, 1952. Black-and-white photographs, pen and graphite on paper, 358 × 779 mm. London: Tate, T12444. © Nigel Henderson Estate/The Paolozzi Foundation, Licensed by DACS, 2023. Photo: Tate.





would sometimes stretch late into the night, benefiting from the natural fall of darkness.<sup>38</sup> As well as spending ‘hours and hours and hours of toying about with chemicals’, a central part of Henderson’s approach was to train his students in photographic looking.<sup>39</sup> His pupils were taught to study photographic images in their negative state, while experimenting with copying, cropping and magnification. As his teaching notes from 1951 explain, ‘good’ negatives offered a means to ‘intensify visual consciousness’, and positive prints could be ‘tacked to the wall for a comparative analysis by the teacher in collaboration with the class’.<sup>40</sup>

At 46 Chisenhale Road, these same methods of intensified visual examination and comparative analysis were being performed by Henderson and his collaborators in the weekly meetings from which *Parallel of Life and Art* emerged. Crucially, not only did the copy negatives offer the group a means of looking at their images differently but they also provided an alternative conceptual framework for thinking about this material. In his notes for a talk on the project, Henderson asserts repeatedly that the ‘conception’ of the exhibition was ‘inseparable from the medium’.<sup>41</sup> And, given the primal role of the negative within photographic processes, and within the formulation of *Parallel of Life and Art*, it is productive to align his comments with this particular element of the medium. In doing so, the conceptual logic of *Parallel of Life and Art* can be read as embroiled within the inner workings of photographic negativity, and within the negative’s reproductive function, destabilising power and marginalised status.<sup>42</sup> As Geoffrey Batchen argues, the negative is the source and emblem of photographic reproduction, and the locus of the medium’s most disruptive capacities.<sup>43</sup> It is an interface across which the photographic image coexists momentarily in the fixed materialities of film and print, and the fluid immateriality of light. Defined by its potential for multiplicity, the negative holds the capacity for copying, for complex authorship, and for divided origin points. Consequently, it is perceived as the ultimate threat to the singularity and stability of the positive print.<sup>44</sup> In *Parallel of Life and Art*, these more troublesome qualities of photography were pivotal. Batchen suggests that negatives offer ‘an inversion of our usual way of looking’.<sup>45</sup> For Henderson, they also provided an inversional way of thinking, a way of reconceptualising images in light of the complexities of photographic reproduction, and of imagining the visual world otherwise. For Paolozzi, Jenkins and the Smithsons, this photographic form of inversion offered a critical correlate for – and an extension of – the different kinds of inversion that they were themselves actively exploring across silkscreen printing, sculpture, interior design, and architectural space.<sup>46</sup>

When *Parallel of Life and Art* opened at the ICA, the results of the group’s research process were filtered into the gallery space, which became a new arena for photographic forms of looking and thinking. Visitors were invited into an inverted landscape of reproduced images, and were called upon to participate in the exhibition-makers’ collaborative method of photographically mediated analysis. Despite the absence of the copy negatives themselves from the final display, their preparatory use contributed to a kind of conflict within the exhibition. *Parallel of Life and Art* was characterised by a tension between the assumed veracity of the positive image and the capacity of the negative to exaggerate, warp and blur. In Henderson’s words, the supposedly ‘objective scrutiny of the photo-process’ was destabilised and contradicted by ‘the distortions inherent in the photographic scrutiny’.<sup>47</sup> The exhibition presented a strange and disfiguring method of photographic analysis, one in which images were subjected to indeterminate copying, decontextualisation and magnification, all mediated through the negative. Yet, this confrontation between

the implications of photographic positivity and negativity was never made explicit. Instead, *Parallel of Life and Art* invoked the logic of the negative tacitly by presenting its images as unreliable, abstracted, and unstable. The outcome was, to borrow from Sylvester's reproach, a kind of photographic 'perversion', which undermined the mimetic function of the medium, and cast its objectivity into doubt.

### The Exhibition as Negative Image

In addition to the copy negatives that were made in advance of the exhibition, there is another type of photographic negative in the archive at Tate among the *Parallel of Life and Art* material preserved by Henderson. These negatives were created when he photographed the installation, detailing its visual contents. They include square 55 × 55 mm negatives made with his Rolleicord II dual lens camera as well as rectangular negatives that were used in his plate camera, which vary in size (plate 8 and plate 9, respectively). The photographs capture Henderson's movements among the maelstrom of images: crouching down, pivoting, and angling his camera upwards to frame specific constellations of material. Like a kind of choreographic score, they also imply the expected or desired movements of a viewer. As Victoria Walsh has argued in relation to the positive iterations of these shots, they did not serve straightforwardly as documentation; instead, they functioned as 'meta images' through which patterns of correspondence and juxtaposition within the display could be captured, framed and probed.<sup>48</sup> The negative components of Henderson's photographs take this strategy one step further and into the territory of the darkroom: they translate *Parallel of Life and Art* into a series of negative images, returning the exhibition to the photographically reproducible state from which it emerged. Alongside the copy negatives of the found images, these photographic negatives of the

8 Nigel Henderson, photographic negatives of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953, taken with his Rolleicord II camera. 55 × 55 mm. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate. Photos: Author.





9 Nigel Henderson, photographic negatives of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953, taken with his plate camera. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate. Photos: Author.

exhibition became another form of visual data, which could be subjected to the same research method of intense, visual scrutiny and collaborative, comparative analysis.

Crucially, Henderson's photographs of *Parallel of Life and Art* indicate his preoccupation with certain portions of the hang, which his camera circles around, lingers over, and shoots from multiple angles. At one end of the gallery – to the right-hand side as visitors entered the space – was one such configuration, which sustained his interest over a succession of photographs (as shown in plate 8 and plate 9). This part of the display featured a wall populated with images that had been tacked up in a loose arrangement of columns and rows, and above which hung a selection of panels that extended and broke open this grid-like formation into three-dimensional space. Included almost surreptitiously within this specific constellation of material were four of Henderson's own photographic experiments. These included a contact print produced from a piece of decaying mirror; a triptych of distorted images of male bathers made from a Victorian lantern slide; a photographic handprint that had been dramatically enlarged; and a form of photogram created from discarded coffee grounds. Importantly, these four photographic experiments were distinct from the rest of the material that comprised *Parallel of Life and Art* in that they were not enlarged reproductions of found images per se. Instead, each articulated different darkroom techniques and notions of negativity. Attributed somewhat tangentially to Henderson in the catalogue, they presented artistic interventions into processes of photographic image-making, which had been performed within the darkroom at the level of the

negative. As can now be explored, their inclusion within the exhibition demonstrates how *Parallel of Life and Art* deployed the negative not only as a central component within its research method, but as a means to experiment with forms of photographic image that operated between the original and the copy. Placed into the medley of photographic reproductions that made up the display, Henderson's own images troubled the medium's directly replicative function, while calling the conventions of art more pointedly into question.

### Abstraction in the Studio and the Darkroom

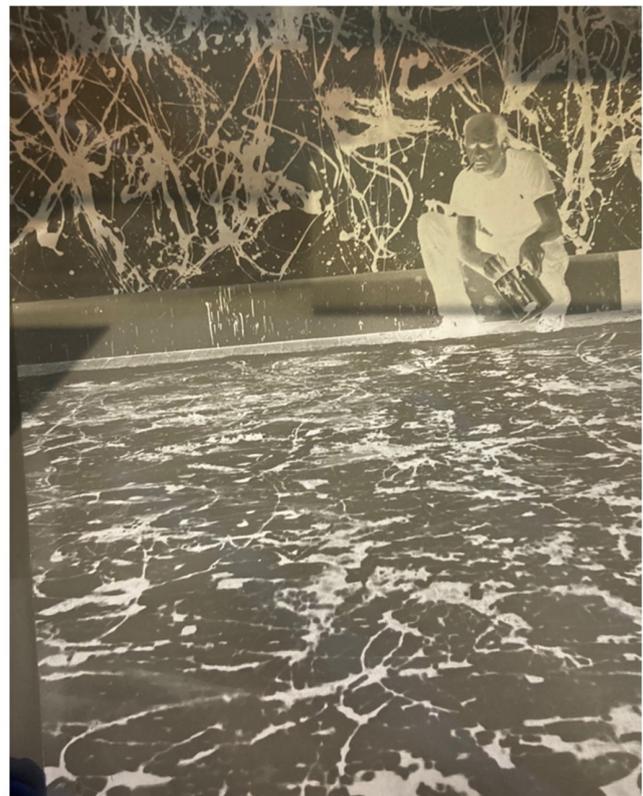
Presiding over the grouping of Henderson's four photographic experiments was perhaps the most dramatic among them: a large, abstract panel positioned face-down and parallel with the ceiling (plate 10). Listed in the catalogue as 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print). Collection N. Henderson', and categorised as 'Art', it featured a shattered lattice of black-on-white marks, which had been amplified photographically. To make a contact print, a negative is placed directly onto a photosensitive surface in the darkroom before being exposed to light. Rather than projecting the image through the negative from a distance using a photographic enlarger, the print is created by the immediate contact between the negative and the photosensitive surface, without any alteration in the scale of the image. This process also works with home-made negatives crafted from thin paper, film, or glass, which can be painted, inked, scratched, or broken to generate patterns and marks. In this instance, a piece of decaying mirror served as a makeshift negative, allowing light to pass through its atrophied surface and creating an inverse of this patterning on the photosensitive paper underneath. To produce the enlarged panel seen in the exhibition, this image was then re-photographed to create a copy negative, altered in scale in the darkroom, and reprinted as a positive.

Across Henderson's photographs of *Parallel of Life and Art*, the 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print)' appears in ever-shifting configurations as his camera tilts to capture the upper register of the space. These shots suggest a dialogue between this image and its pictorial neighbours, including one in which a comparable kind of patterning can be glimpsed. Pinned onto the wall in a roughly gridded formation arranged just below the 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print)' was a photograph

**10 Left: Copy negative of Nigel Henderson's 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print)'. Approximately 150 × 110 mm. London: Tate, TGA 201011/5/1. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate. Photo: Author. Right: Nigel Henderson, photograph (digitised positive) of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate/Tate. Photo: Tate.**



of the American abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock at work in his Long Island studio, paused momentarily in the act of painting (plate 11). Crouching down on his haunches, the artist is dwarfed by canvases that stretch out across the studio floor and wall. Every surface is dripping with the frenetic splatters and tangled lines of freshly flicked paint. Shot by the German photographer Hans Namuth in 1950, it was one of approximately 500 photographs that he took of Pollock painting in the early 1950s, selections of which were first published in *Portfolio* journal and then *Art News* magazine in 1951.<sup>49</sup> In the decades that followed, these images accrued an iconic cultural status. Mobilised within the mythologisation of abstract expressionism as emblems of heroic individualism, they soon became synonymous with the figure of the modern





11 Top row: Nigel Henderson, photographs (digitised positives) of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate/Tate. Photos: Tate. Bottom row: Nigel Henderson's printed positive reproduction and corresponding copy negative of untitled photograph by Hans Namuth of Jackson Pollock, Long Island, America, 1950. Printed positive courtesy of the Nigel Henderson Estate, East Anglia. Copy negative courtesy of Tate, London, TGA 201011/5/1. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate/Hans Namuth Estate, 1991, courtesy of Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. Photos: Author.

12 Left: Unknown photographer, photograph of *Opposing Forces*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953, showing part of Jackson Pollock's *One: Number 31*, 1950. Reproduced in *Architectural Review*, April 1953, page 273. Right: Nigel Henderson, photograph (digitised positive) of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate/Tate. Photo: Tate.

artist-genius at work in the isolated sanctuary of his studio.<sup>50</sup> In London in 1953, this hagiographic trajectory was just beginning to form. The placement of Namuth's photograph of Pollock in *Parallel of Life and Art* appears to acknowledge the latter's growing celebrity, if not notoriety.

Significantly, a painting by Pollock had been exhibited at the ICA not long beforehand. In *Opposing Forces*, which opened on 28 January 1953, Pollock's monumental *One: Number 31* (1950) was hung on the exact same wall, the first of the artist's works ever to be shown in London (plate 12).<sup>51</sup> In this earlier exhibition, the modern painting dominated the gallery; it was so vast that it had to remain partly rolled to fit the space. In *Parallel of Life and Art* – less than eight months later – visitors were met with a miniaturised, photographic echo of this placement. In this latter exhibition, the Namuth-Pollock print functioned as a kind of delayed sequel, a partial shadow of its colossal, painted predecessor. This incisive positioning of the Namuth-Pollock image drew both a connection and a distinction between the two exhibitions, one of which was dedicated entirely to paintings by individual artists, while the other presented practices of collaborative research, photography, and exhibition-making in their expanded forms. In *Parallel of Life and Art*, the photograph of Pollock at work in his studio signified the stark absence of modern painting within the gallery while, at the same time, reinserting a reproduced image of the painter back into this setting via photographic means. As if to highlight the disruptive impetus of this gesture, in the *Parallel of Life and Art* catalogue Pollock's name is conspicuously misspelled: the caption reads 'Jackson Pollack in studio. Hans Namuth, America'.

In the catalogue, the photograph of the painter is categorised under the heading 'Art', and listed almost immediately beneath the reference to Henderson's 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print)'. The proximity of these images within the catalogue as well as within the hang emphasises the significance of their aesthetic correspondence. The photographic patterning created by the decaying surface of glass bears a striking similarity to the web of tangled marks covering Pollock's canvases, and splashed across the surfaces of his workspace. In *Parallel of Life and Art* the iconography of the paint-spattered studio is magnified, cropped and transplanted onto the ceiling in the form of the 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print)'.<sup>52</sup> Again, the logic of this approach had been partly formulated in Henderson's darkroom deep in the basement at the Central School, where he describes one student as practising 'a sort of scaled down & adapted Jackson Pollockry' in which he would

'splatter & shake' photochemicals to create abstract marks.<sup>53</sup> The negative of the Namuth-Pollock image accentuates this concatenation of abstract mark-making across the technologies and materialities of paint and photography, while relocating creative agency from the studio to the darkroom. In negative form, Namuth's photograph shows Pollock paused not in the act of painting but in the moment of his own photographic reproducibility; his monumental canvases are miniaturised and reduced to the scale of the negative, and his black enamel paint is replaced by photochemicals and light.

While Henderson's darkroom practice confronted Pollock's painterly abstraction, his work behind the camera evoked Namuth's labour. Significantly, Namuth took his shots of Pollock with a medium format Rolleiflex dual lens camera, a very similar model to the Rolleicord II dual lens camera Henderson himself used throughout the 1950s, and with which he photographed the *Parallel of Life and Art* hang. Using such Rollei models, the photographer does not look through the viewfinder horizontally at their subject; instead, their gaze is cast vertically onto the small, square viewing screen of the camera, which is typically held at chest height.<sup>54</sup> Just as Pollock looks down onto the canvas stretched across his studio floor, Namuth replicates this line of sight, looking down onto the viewing screen of the camera and waiting for the action of abstract mark-making to play out before him. To capture his shots of Pollock, Namuth staked out positions around the studio, climbing ladders to create aerial views, pivoting, crouching down, and angling his camera upwards: movements that were partially mirrored by Henderson as he took his photographs of the 1953 exhibition.

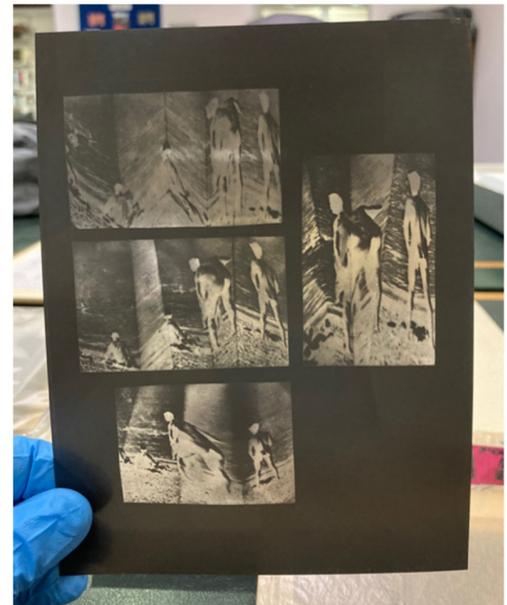
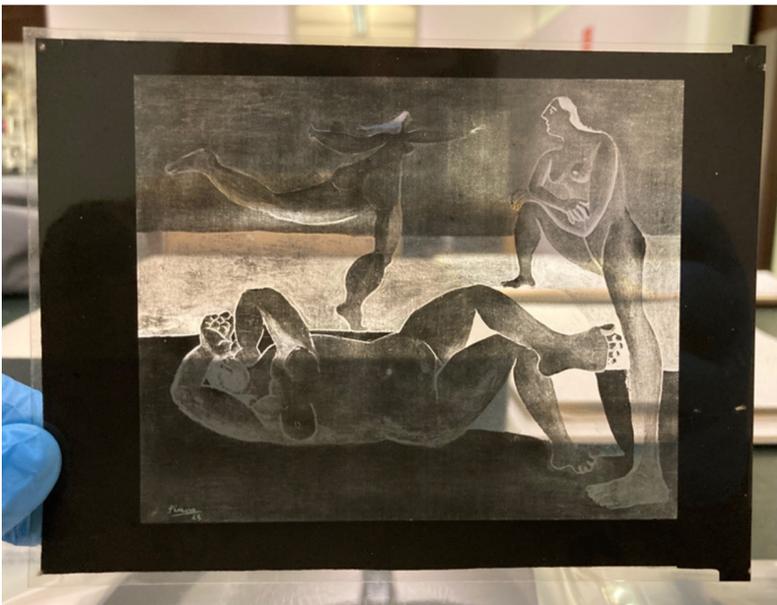
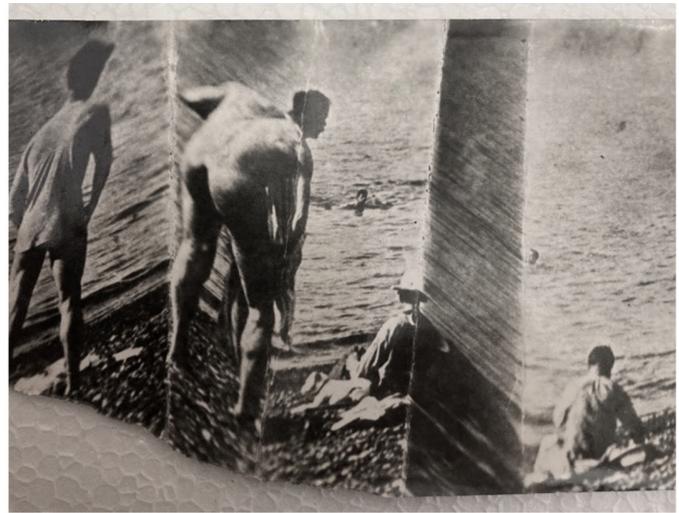
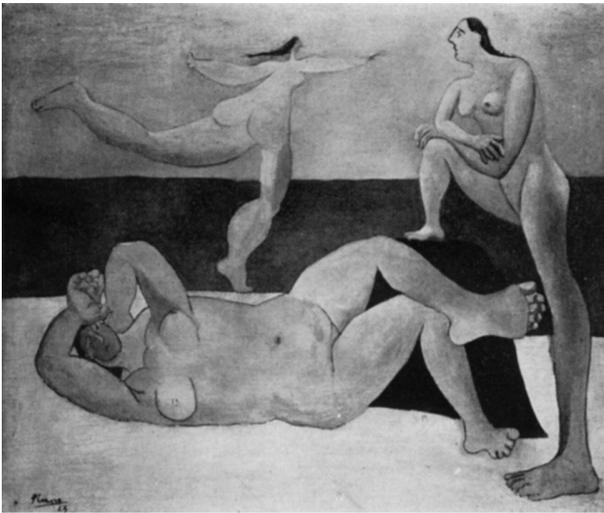
More than a simple, formal parallel or a playful type of mimicry, the interaction between Henderson's darkroom experiment and the Namuth-Pollock picture can be read as expressing a much more fundamental logic running through the exhibition as a whole. *Parallel of Life and Art* was defined by a dialectical kind of negation, predicated upon the non-art status of photography in 1950s Britain, and mediated through the photographic negative and its threat to fixed authorship and stable origin points.<sup>55</sup> First, the exhibition expelled traditional artistic media from the gallery, stripping painting from its walls and emptying its floor of sculptural forms. Next, this vacated space was filled not only with photographic imagery but with the logic of photographic reproducibility itself, a logic retained within the copy negatives and within the negatives from Henderson's photographs of the exhibition. This strategy troubled the established hierarchies and taxonomies of culture as well as negating modern art's most valorised conventions: the singularity of the artwork, and the individualised status of its maker. Yet, these traditions were not erased or abandoned entirely; instead, they were re-invoked through the inclusion of visual fragments such as the Namuth-Pollock image, which pulled the conventions of painting back into focus via photographic reproduction. This manoeuvre repopulated the gallery with visual echoes of the artistic traditions and tropes that the project sought to destabilise, most notably the romanticised figure of the lone artist in his studio, albeit with his name unceremoniously misspelled.

### **Distortions in Photography and Paint**

Pinned onto the gallery wall immediately to the left of the Namuth-Pollock print was another darkroom experiment that extended the dialectical negation of painting performed by the photographic exhibition. Listed in the catalogue as 'Distortion of Victorian Lantern slide. Nigel Henderson', and categorised as 'Stress', it featured a composite of photographically distorted images arranged like a vertical

**13 Top left: Photograph (digitised positive) of Pablo Picasso, *The Bathers*, 1923, from *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate/Tate/Succession Picasso/DACS/ London, 2023. Photo: Tate. Top right: Nigel Henderson, photographic print from 'Distortion of Victorian Lantern slide' sequence of images. East Anglia: Nigel Henderson Estate. © Nigel Henderson Estate. Photo: Author. Bottom row: Copy negatives from *Parallel of Life and Art*. London: Tate, 201011/5/1. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate. Photos: Author.**

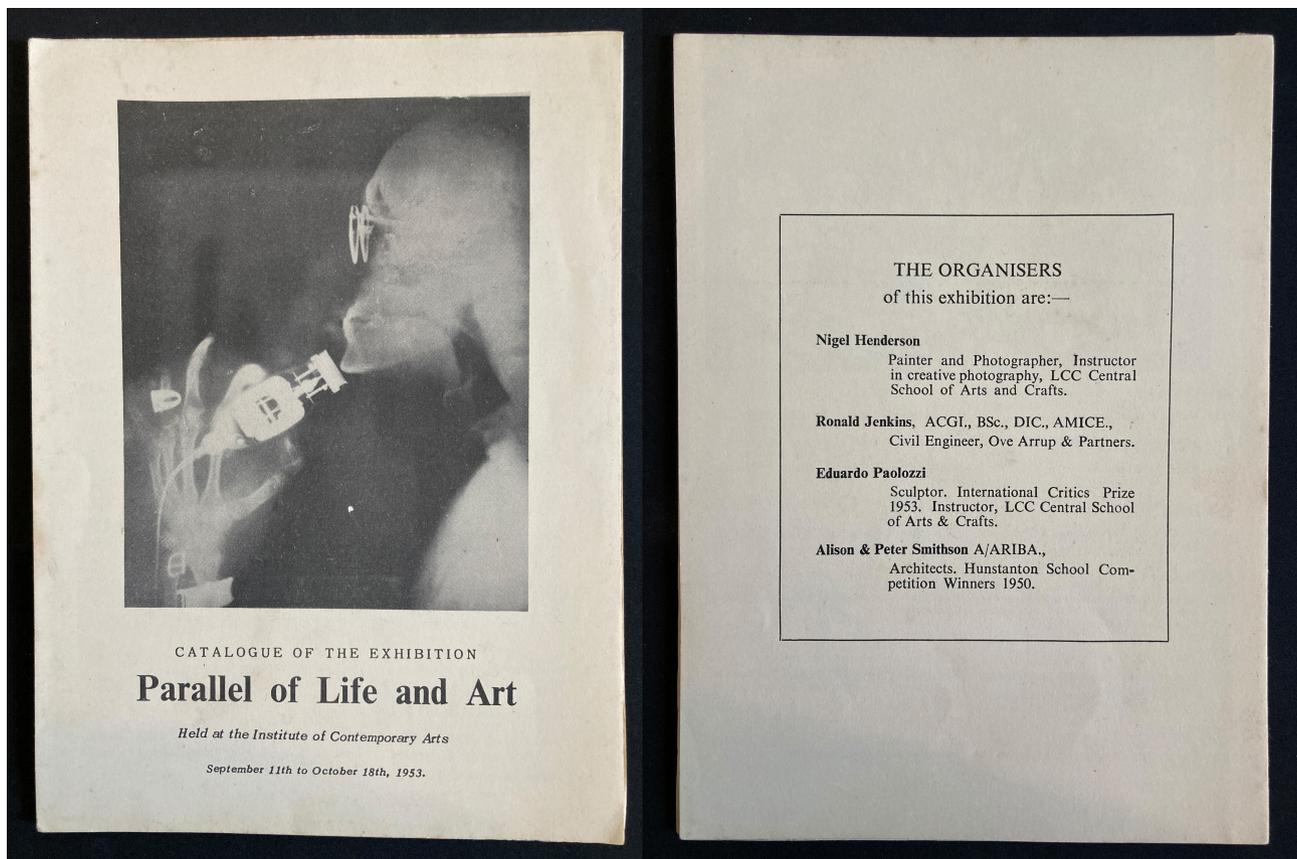
triptych (shown on the right in plate 13, and shown installed in plate 11, top row). Each had been produced from the same glass negative, made from a repurposed nineteenth-century slide for a 'magic lantern' projector. These three distortions show bathers at the seaside, swimming, reclining, and standing along the edge of an unknown coastline. A pair of male figures dominate the landscape, their bodies defined against the horizon of water. One is caught partially naked and bending as he undresses. The other stands upright and gazes out towards the sea. Cast in chiaroscuro, their forms stretch across the scene like shadows. In each iteration, their bodies and surroundings have been warped along vertical and diagonal axes. The images appear to zigzag internally across these concertina-like creases, blurring and inflating some parts of the composition, while tightening others and throwing them into sharp relief. This effect is achieved in the darkroom by folding or pleating the photosensitive paper as the image is projected through the negative from the photographic enlarger above. The contortions of the bathers express the malleability of the projected image as it exists in the immateriality of light. Meanwhile, the creased texture of the print highlights the materiality of the paper upon which the positive is fixed.<sup>56</sup>



In *Parallel of Life and Art*, the ‘Distortion of Victorian Lantern slide’ was played off against another photographic reproduction that partially mirrored its subject matter, composition, and warped aesthetic. Tacked up immediately to the left of Henderson’s darkroom experiment was a work by Pablo Picasso that depicted three female swimmers on a beach (shown on the left in plate 13, and shown installed in plate 11, top row). One is reclining on the sand. Another stands, foot raised on a rock and resting against her bended knee. The third is on tiptoes, one leg cast back, and arms spread wide, as if reaching out to sea. These three nude figures, painted with heavy outlines, are set against a flattened landscape. Their bodies are impossibly proportioned: limbs, hands, feet, and torsos become swollen, elongated, abbreviated. In the catalogue, this picture is detailed as ‘The Bathers 1923, Picasso. Collection of Walter P. Chrysler’ and is also found under the heading ‘Stress’ where it appears immediately beneath Henderson’s ‘Distortion of Victorian Lantern slide’. Emphasising the visual and classificatory parallels between Picasso’s painting and the artist-photographer’s darkroom interventions, the glassine envelopes that Henderson used to store the negatives for his own distorted images of the swimmers are marked ‘Bathers’, echoing the title of Picasso’s piece. At the level of the negative, their correspondence is made explicit.<sup>57</sup>

If the Namuth-Pollock print brought the trope of the studio into focus as the source of artistic individualism and heroisation, then the inclusion of Picasso’s painting foregrounded the traditional association of artistic skill with the technologies of paint, brush, and canvas. Placed alongside Picasso’s bathers, Henderson’s ‘Distortion of Victorian Lantern slide’ showed darkroom processes operating in dialogue with the work of the modern artist’s brush. The manipulation of photographic materials, photochemicals and light mimicked the manipulation of paint in the studio. The texture of Picasso’s canvas was aligned with the photographic grain of the print. This manoeuvre translated traditional artistic technique into photographic terms. In doing so, the distortion of the found photograph troubled the form and status of the painted image, which had itself already been converted into a monochrome reproduction. Again, the pairing suggests a dialectical negation, physically eliminating painting from the exhibition and, at the same time, partially re-invoking its most valorised conventions through photographic reproduction and darkroom experimentation. In this way, *Parallel of Life and Art* both banished and embroiled modern art within its own workings, while deftly inserting the photographic image into the traditional realm of painting.

This conflicted dialogue between photography and modern painting is further articulated in the professional nomenclature assigned to Henderson in the planning and marketing materials produced in advance of *Parallel of Life and Art*. Across these documents, the working titles and specialist credentials of the four collaborators are detailed with care.<sup>58</sup> On the ICA memorandum, press release and catalogue, Paolozzi remains a ‘Sculptor’, the Smithsons are ‘Architects’, and Ronald Jenkins’s role sees a slight but not insignificant shift from ‘Engineer’ to ‘Civil Engineer’. In contrast, Henderson’s title is more emphatically updated from ‘Photographer’ on the memorandum and press release to ‘Painter and Photographer’ on the back cover of the catalogue (plate 14), despite his having rarely painted, and his claim to have had little proficiency in the medium. This self-(mis)classificatory manoeuvre appears to insist on a point of conjunction between his darkroom experimentation and the more traditional artistic work of painting. Yet, there is also a tacit acknowledgement that these modes of practice remained incommensurate in the post-war moment in Britain, and hence needed to be separately named. Mirroring his



14 Catalogue for *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953, showing front and back covers. 190 × 140 mm. East Anglia: Nigel Henderson Estate. Photos: Author.

own 'artist-photographer' designation, the term 'Painter and Photographer' suggests a restless position of both conjunction and division.

In *Parallel of Life and Art*, the juxtaposition of Henderson's darkroom experiments with the reproduced images of painters and paintings plays upon his chosen professional nomenclature like a pun: Pollock and Henderson, Painter and Photographer, Picasso and Henderson, Painter and Photographer. And in his notes for a talk on the exhibition, he emphasises the productive potential of these juxtaposed roles, jotting down 'painter/photog/painter/photog cross fertilization whole time'.<sup>59</sup> The placement of his and Picasso's bathers into the category of 'Stress' further elucidates the nature of this cross-fertilisation. At the time, Henderson referred to his distorted photographs as 'stressed' images, stating: "'Stressed" seems the best way to describe the optically distorted photographic image. The effect [...] is in some degree to destroy the boundaries of the image."<sup>60</sup> While Picasso's bathers have been 'stressed' using the traditional artistic media of paint and brush on canvas in the artist's studio, Henderson's bathers relocate this process into the darkroom, employing the machinery of photographic reproduction, photochemicals, film, photosensitive paper, and light. In this more hidden zone, the spatial and temporal boundaries of his image are destroyed by its multiple existence, successively iterated in: (1) the Victorian glass plate; (2) the film negative created from this plate; (3) the transient projection of the image through the photographic enlarger; (4) the resultant positive print on the creased photosensitive paper; (5) the copy negative created from this print; and, finally, (6) the photographic enlargement exhibited within *Parallel of Life and Art*. By presenting the same image in triplicate, stressed differently each time, Henderson's 'Distortion of Victorian Lantern slide' suggests that artistic skill is no longer confined to the painterly sensuousness and dexterity embodied by Picasso's work. Instead, his

bathers locate skill at the level of the negative, in the reproducibility of the image as it transitions between photographic states.

As with the photograph of Pollock painting, the inclusion of the reproduction of the Picasso piece in *Parallel of Life and Art* offered a kind of photographic citation of previous exhibitions organised by the ICA. Picasso's works had appeared prominently in the Institute's first two shows, which had been presented consecutively at the Academy Hall on Oxford Street between 1948 and 1949: *40 Years of Modern Art 1907–1947: A Selection from British Collections*; followed by *40,000 Years of Modern Art: A Comparison of Primitive and Modern*.<sup>61</sup> In the catalogue for the former exhibition, Herbert Read opens his introduction with a proclamation that 'the Modern Movement in art' began with 'the first cubist paintings of Picasso'.<sup>62</sup> Building upon such 'creative achievements', the ICA tasked itself with encouraging future work of 'even greater brilliance'.<sup>63</sup> Five years later in *Parallel of Life and Art*, Picasso was again summoned as an icon of the 'Modern Movement'. Yet, framed by the negational impetus of the exhibition, the reproduction of his painting troubled the logic of modernism and its precepts of individual genius, originality, supersessive advancement, and cultural canonisation.<sup>64</sup> *Parallel of Life and Art* did not attempt to insert photography into an expanded version of Read's 'Modern Movement'; instead, it drew Picasso's work into the fragmented realm of the photographic image.

As well as indicating an engagement with earlier exhibitions, the inclusion of 'The Bathers' image in *Parallel of Life and Art* gestured to an even more recent display at the ICA's Dover Street premises, *Picasso: Drawings and Watercolours since 1893: An Exhibition in Honour of the Artist's 70th Birthday*, which ran from 11 October until 24 November 1951. This show included a work of wash on paper, titled *The Bathers* and dated 1932, and a comparable piece in pen and Indian ink, described as *Three women on the beach* from 1936.<sup>65</sup> In the exhibition catalogue, Roland Penrose celebrates Picasso's 'genius', which he attributes to the 'complete accord' between the 'inner eye of the artist' and the expressive movements of his hand.<sup>66</sup> Penrose romanticises the hand as the source of artistic skill and authorial sovereignty. Indeed, in the opening paragraphs of the essay, Picasso's hand appears as an active protagonist in its own right. Penrose begins, 'One day in the sun I saw a hand begin to trace a line across an empty sheet of paper. As it started to move I could see that this was no common journey.'<sup>67</sup> And he goes on to describe the seemingly miraculous spectacle of seeing Picasso's hand producing a mirror image of itself, 'another hand, held to its parent by the point of the pen'.<sup>68</sup> Countering this kind of romanticisation, *Parallel of Life and Art* called the role of the hand into question. By juxtaposing photographic reproductions of handmade artworks with hand-altered darkroom experiments, the exhibition reskilled and technologised the hand, pulling it into new territory.

### **The Handprint and Photographic Touch**

This engagement with the conventions of the artist's hand was dramatised further by another of Henderson's photographic works within the exhibition: a fingerless and disembodied handprint, which loomed large over the mechanically reproduced images that filled the gallery (plate 15). Printed in black and white, and blown up to monumental, even grotesque proportions, his photographic palm hung vertically from the ceiling, positioned perpendicular to the wall displaying the Namuth-Pollock image, Picasso's painted bathers, and Henderson's photographically distorted swimmers. At first, the photographic hand appears to emphasise its own dislocation; it hangs alienated among the atomised arrangement of prints. Yet, at the same time, it pulls photographic touch into focus. In the enlarged positive print as well as in its

negative counterpart, the criss-crossing wrinkles of the palm appear embossed in the surface of the photosensitive paper, and in the coating of the film. The presence of the artist-photographer's hand is marked in the gelatin emulsion and the silver salts that comprise the medium of monochrome photography. These traces of photographic touch relocate the hand from the studio to the darkroom, where it works in consort with technologies of reproduction and found images, forging new kinds of artistic skill and authorship in the process.

That the original source of Henderson's palm print remains ambiguous speaks eloquently of the uncertainties of photographic origin points. Henderson's image may have first been made by a paint-smothered hand in the studio, creating a print on paper that could then be photographed, converted into negative, and blown up in scale. Alternatively, it may have derived more directly from the darkroom, using a method of cameraless photography in which the hand is coated in photochemicals and imprinted onto photosensitive paper, creating an image that must then be exposed and developed, before it can be re-photographed, turned into a negative and enlarged. In *Parallel of Life and Art*, Henderson's photographic palm holds both of these possibilities in play, blurring the boundaries between the touch of the painter in the studio and that of photographer in the darkroom.

Reaching towards the photographic prints that populated the exhibition, the palm troubles the traditional separation of the artist's hand from the hands of those producing and reproducing such images. It gestures to the distributed forms of labour from which these pictorial details and pieces of pattern derive as well as to the workers – both named and anonymous – between whose hands they have been made, exchanged, and copied. In doing so, Henderson's palm enlarges and complicates the capacities of artistic authorship in a post-photographic visual world, in which images are replicated exponentially as readymade commodities. In *Parallel of Life and Art*, authorship is multiple and layered, operating at the levels of image production and photographic reproduction, collaborative research and exhibition-making. This is perhaps why the group selected the collective noun

**15 Left: Detail of Nigel Henderson, photograph of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. East Anglia: Nigel Henderson Estate. © Nigel Henderson Estate. Photo: Author. Right: Nigel Henderson, 'Hand print', digitally reproduced positive above and copy negative below. 103 × 100 mm. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate/Tate. Photos: top right Tate, bottom right author.**



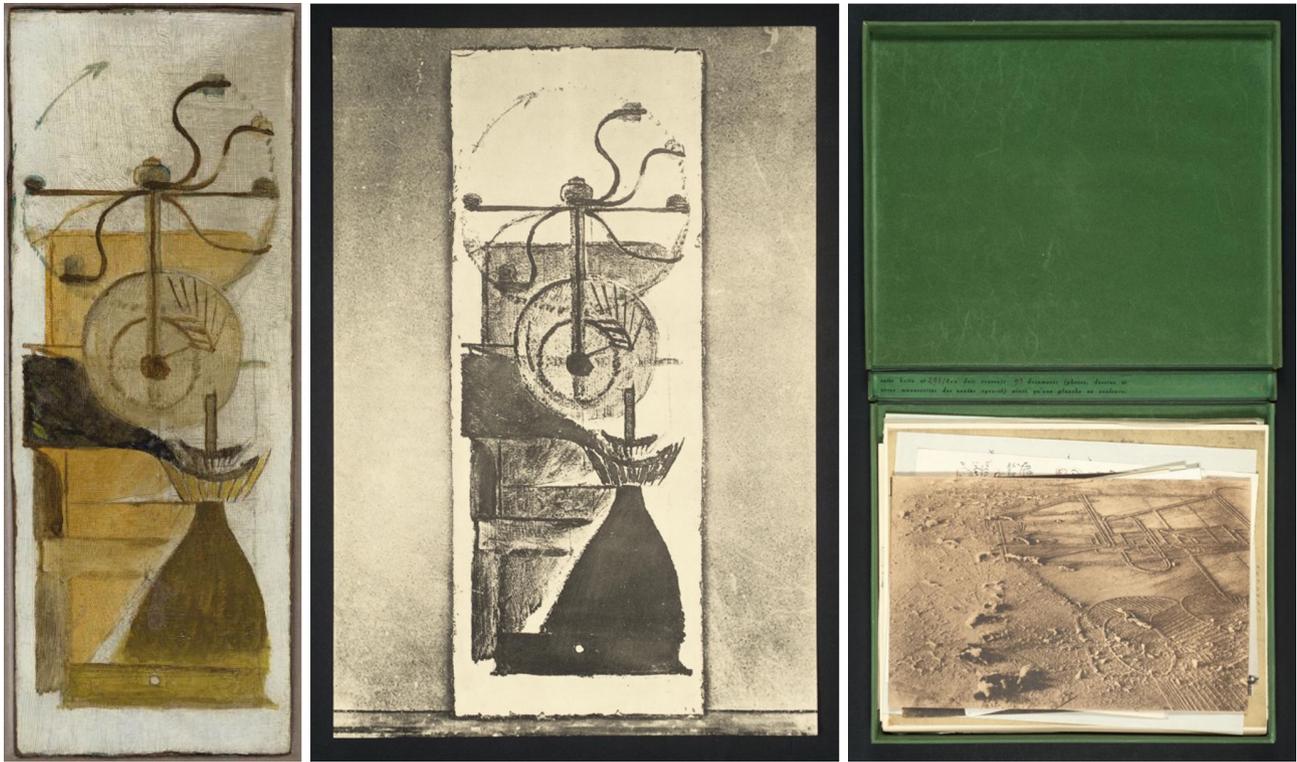
'editors' to describe their interlocking professional positions, and their semi-authorial relationship to their found material.<sup>69</sup> Suspended among the *Parallel of Life and Art* hang, Henderson's 'Hand print' allegorises the editorial role of selecting, cropping, arranging, touching and re-touching photographic imagery. At the same time, appearing in proximity to his chosen title of 'Painter and Photographer', his photographic palm places this editorial work into conflict with the conventions of modern painting, expanding, and multiplying the authorial potential previously delimited by traditional artistic media.<sup>70</sup> Painterly authorship is invoked in order to be negated. And, in the process of this negation, all the complications of photographic authorship and editorial labour are introduced into the space of contemporary art.

### A Photographic Fragmentation of *The Green Box*

In the catalogue, the palm is described as 'Hand print. Nigel Henderson' and categorised under the heading 'Landscape'. Listed immediately above in the same category is a reference to the fourth of the photographic experiments that were included within *Parallel of Life and Art*. Titled 'Coffee grounds (photo-image). Nigel Henderson', this print had again been made in the darkroom using a photogram-like method in which coffee grounds were placed directly onto a glass plate in the photographic enlarger. As Henderson's notes elucidate, 'the coffee grounds print [was] a simple projection thro' the enlarger', casting a pattern onto the photosensitive paper that could then be exposed to light.<sup>71</sup> The resultant print features granular, dappled forms cascading down the image's centre, flanked by black blotted upper corners (plate 16). The abstract markings echo the paint-spattered surfaces of Pollock's studio as well as their photographic counterpart in Henderson's 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print)'. In *Parallel of Life and Art*, this correspondence was accentuated by the hang of these materials. The 'Coffee grounds (photo-image)' appeared in the upper left corner of the same wall as the Namuth-Pollock shot, where it was

16 Left: Nigel Henderson, photograph (digitised positive) of *Parallel of Life and Art*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1953. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/2. © Nigel Henderson Estate/Tate. Photo: Tate. Top right: Nigel Henderson, photographic panel of 'Coffee grounds (photo-image)'. 446 × 548 mm. London: Tate, TGA 9211/5/3. © Nigel Henderson Estate/Tate. Photo: Tate. Bottom right: Nigel Henderson, copy negative of 'Coffee grounds (photo-image)'. London: Tate, TGA 201011/5/1. © Nigel Henderson Estate with permission from Tate. Photo: Author.





17 Left: Marcel Duchamp, *Moulin à Café*, 1911. Oil paint and graphite on board, 330 × 127 mm. London: Tate, T03253. Centre: Reproduction of *Moulin à Café* from *La Boîte Verte*. Right: Marcel Duchamp, *La Boîte Verte*, 1934. Cardboard box, lithographs, collotypes and ink on paper, 333 × 279 × 25 mm. London: Tate, T07744. © Association Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London, 2023. Photos: Tate.

positioned just beneath Henderson's 'Disintegrating mirror (contact print)', which hung horizontally from the ceiling.

The 'Coffee grounds (photo-image)' points towards a critical precedent for *Parallel of Life and Art*. In 1938, Henderson met Marcel Duchamp and, shortly afterwards, he obtained a copy of the artist's *La Boîte Verte* (1934, translated as *The Green Box*) through their mutual friend and supporter Peggy Guggenheim.<sup>72</sup> Henderson retained possession of *The Green Box* during his work on the ICA exhibition, before lending it to Richard Hamilton in 1955.<sup>73</sup> *The Green Box* is an object that – like *Parallel of Life and Art* – troubles the distinctions between hand and machine, original and copy, artwork and archive. As a profound meditation on artistic skill and authorship after the advent of photographic reproducibility, it encapsulates many of the concerns expressed by Henderson's experimental interventions into *Parallel of Life and Art*. The piece comprises a compact box, covered in green felt, and produced in an edition of approximately 320 (shown on the right in plate 17). The contents relate to the wider conceptual and aesthetic projects that shaped Duchamp's early works, and particularly *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* (1915–23). Inside *The Green Box*, the original, handmade mark and its replica converge. The box is filled with loose facsimiles of writings, diagrams, and pictures, including touched-up and torn photographs and hand-coloured photographic copies, produced as collotype prints.<sup>74</sup> Works by Duchamp have been subjected to mechanical reproduction, while mechanical reproductions have been painstakingly reworked by hand.<sup>75</sup>

One of the materials included in *The Green Box* is a photographic reproduction of the artist's small oil painting *Moulin à Café* (1911, translated as either *Coffee Grinder* or *Coffee Mill*) (the original is shown on the left in plate 17, and the reproduction is shown in the centre). The picture presents the splayed parts of the coffee grinding device, seen from different angles simultaneously, while the rotating movements of the machine are indicated by diagrammatic motifs.<sup>76</sup> In this image, as Duchamp later observed, 'you can

see the ground coffee in a heap under the cogwheels of the central shaft'.<sup>77</sup> As a form of photogram made from the waste materials of a similar coffee mill, Henderson's 'Coffee grounds (photo-image)' offers an oblique reference to Duchamp's painted piece and its collotype copy within *The Green Box*. More than a superficial citation or a glib pun, this reference drew deeply upon the negational impetus of Duchamp's practice, which operated through the complexities of mechanical reproduction.

It is worth noting that in Henderson's library at this time there was a copy of Robert Motherwell's 1951 anthology, *The Dada Painters and Poets*, from the 'Documents of Modern Art' series.<sup>78</sup> Towards the end of the book there is an article by Harriet and Sidney Janis, titled 'Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist', and dated 1945. The 'Coffee Grinder', they write, 'is Duchamp's earliest proto-dada work, his first gesture of turning against the practices as well as the symbols of the traditional artist'.<sup>79</sup> If Duchamp's original *Moulin à Café* represents an attempt to disrupt the traditions of art in 1911 using oil paint and graphite, then the collotype print of this image within *The Green Box* demonstrates a delayed extension of this negational gesture, this time turning to mechanical reproduction to dismantle artistic conventions more fully. In turn, nearly twenty years later, these negational strategies are partially invoked and transformed by Henderson's interventions into *Parallel of Life and Art* – dragged into the darkroom and then fractured across the photographic surface of the display. His 'Coffee grounds (photo-image)' pulls the exhibition into dialogue with the work of pre-war avant-gardes, while translating their anti-art strategies into a gravelly, post-war photographic idiom.

Read in this light, *Parallel of Life and Art* demonstrates both an alignment with and a departure from the formative logic of *The Green Box*. Just as Duchamp reproduced his own artworks as collotype copies within the felt-covered case, Henderson populated *Parallel of Life and Art* with his own darkroom experiments, re-photographed and enlarged as gelatin-silver prints. *The Green Box* enacts a gathering, reproducing, and repackaging of Duchamp's archive and his oeuvre into a bounded entity, circumscribed by the box, and associated conspicuously with his name as well as with his hand, albeit a hand shown in close collaboration with mechanical reproduction. In contrast, Henderson's four photographic experiments within *Parallel of Life and Art* are dispersed among a throng of found and photographically reproduced pictures by named and anonymous figures. This manoeuvre subjects Henderson's images to the most troubling implications of photographic technology, casting their authorial status, origin points and identity further into doubt. While *The Green Box* portrays Duchamp working hand-in-hand with the machine, the role of Henderson's hand within *Parallel of Life and Art* is less clear. The status and function of his four photographic experiments are never made explicit. Instead, these images operate subtly within the exhibition as a whole, partially camouflaged among the mass of monochrome prints. This is a quieter, more conflicted kind of negation, one that calls upon *The Green Box* as a precedent, while seeming to break it open and scatter its conceptual repercussions among the contents of the display.

### **Artistic Negation, Photographic Negativity, and the Archive**

Presented against the exhausted and scarified backdrop of post-war London, *Parallel of Life and Art* exhibited a form of negation that was not infused with the revolutionary heroics commonly associated with the anti-art gestures of early avant-gardes. Rather, the project demonstrated a more equivocal kind of negativity, embedded – technologically, aesthetically, and conceptually – within the photographic image itself. In 1950s Britain,

the ambiguous status of photography offered a powerful context for this kind of work, hovering at the interface between art and non-art. Departing from earlier precedents, *Parallel of Life and Art* did not usurp modern art with the photograph-as-artwork, nor with the photograph-as-photograph. Instead, it opened a negative space between artistic and photographic forms. In doing so, the exhibition presented something unnervingly indeterminate, a faltering 'perversion' of the established categories of art and photography, and their attendant protocols of classification and display.

Within the context of the ICA – an institution associated eponymously with the contemporary – *Parallel of Life and Art* signified a critical shift from the codes and conventions of modernism, towards something more searching and unsure. In the place of modern painting and its associated modes of labour, skill and authorship, viewers were presented with the evidence of a collaborative and technologised research practice, one tasked with interrogating the function of the image in the post-war world. What is more, *Parallel of Life and Art* tested the capacity of the contemporary art gallery to serve as an emergent space capable of sustaining this kind of investigation. The negatives now found in the archive at Tate under Henderson's name functioned as the locus of this wider cultural work on the part of the exhibition. They operated at the intersection between collaborative research, lens and print technologies, and experimental exhibition-making, while fostering an engagement with the photographic image in its most unstable form.

Despite their centrality to the formulation of *Parallel of Life and Art*, in the museum today these negatives occupy a marginal position with limited visibility. As with any exhibition, the archival form of *Parallel of Life and Art* is incomplete and fragmentary. While some surviving ephemera from the show can be found among the holdings at Tate that were acquired from the ICA, the majority of the traces of the collaborative project are dispersed across two subdivisions of 'The personal papers of Nigel Graeme Henderson (1917–1985)'. One is titled 'POLAA Exhibition Photographic Panels', and is described as containing an 'incomplete set of the original photographic panels hung in the POLAA at the ICA'.<sup>80</sup> The other is labelled 'POLAA Exhibition Photographs', and comprises a more disparate assortment of material, identified as 'Photographs and photographic negatives of images used for photographic panels hung at the exhibition, installation photographs and layouts for exhibition text'.<sup>81</sup> Interspersed among this latter subdivision, there are also the found images, copy negatives and positive prints that did not become part of the final display. Here, the term 'POLAA Exhibition Photographs' functions as a kind of shorthand for the photographic complexity of *Parallel of Life and Art* as a whole, amalgamating photographs from the exhibition with those of the exhibition, and locating positives and negatives at the same classificatory level.

However, while the positives may be handled and displayed, the negatives are kept under conditions of comparatively restricted access. Many are stored in folders marked 'NEGATIVES. DO NOT USE, PLEASE USE PRINTS ONLY'. Prospective viewers are directed instead to printed proxies or digital renderings on the museum's website. In both instances, the negatives are converted into positives without explanation. The dominant assumption is that their value lies only in the visual content of the positive imagery – the 'correct' form of the photograph – rather than in the particularity of their material and technological functions as negatives. Not only does this obscure the translucency, tonal inversion and miniaturisation that characterises photographic negativity, but it also denies the negative's replicative and mercurial potential. For Henderson and for *Parallel of Life and Art* as an exhibition, it was precisely this potential that proved critical.

Notes

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- 1 In the Tate archive, these negatives are primarily found in 'The personal papers of Nigel Graeme Henderson (1917–1985)' in a subdivision titled 'POLAA [Parallel of Life and Art] Exhibition Photographs', TGA 9211/5/2, with additional examples found in 'Further papers of Nigel Graeme Henderson (1917–1985)' in a subdivision titled 'Negatives [appear to be related to the exhibition 'A Parallel of Life and Art', Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), London, 1953]', TGA 201011/5/1.
- 2 My conception of a 'shadow archive' draws upon Gregory Sholette's writing in *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*, London and New York, 2011, 45.
- 3 Images from *Parallel of Life and Art* resurface elsewhere in Henderson's practice. By retaining and reusing the photographic negatives, he was able to integrate visual fragments from the exhibition into subsequent works and contexts, such as *Collage for 'Patio and Pavilion' (cycle of life and death in a pond)* (1956), his monumental four-panel collage *Screen* (1949–52 and 1969), and the collaged interior of 46 Chisenhale Road. The negatives allowed Henderson to expand *Parallel of Life and Art* beyond the exhibition's immediate moments of production and presentation and to redistribute – and reactivate – its imagery elsewhere.
- 4 The present article draws upon research from the author's doctoral thesis, *Image as Method: Nigel Henderson and the Art of Research*, London, Royal College of Art, 2021. I am grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding this work.
- 5 *Parallel of Life and Art* has appeared prominently in the scholarship on the early formation of the ICA, the Independent Group and new brutalism, as well as in the literature on Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi and Alison and Peter Smithson. See, for example, David Robbins et al., *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*, Cambridge, MA and London, 1990; Anne Massey, *The Independent Group: Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain, 1945–59*, Manchester, 1995; Victoria Walsh, *Nigel Henderson: Parallel of Life and Art*, London, 2001; October (special issue on new brutalism), 136, Spring 2011; *Journal of Visual Culture* (special issue on The Independent Group), 12: 2, August 2013; Anne Massey and Gregor Muir, *Institute of Contemporary Arts, London 1946–1968*, London, 2014; Victoria Walsh and Claire Zimmerman, 'New Brutalist Image 1949–55: "Atlas to a New World" or, "Trying to Look at Things Today"', *British Art Studies*, 4, 28 November 2016; Ben Highmore, *The Art of Brutalism: Rescuing Hope from Catastrophe in 1950s Britain*, New Haven, 2017; Kevin Lotery, *The Long Front of Culture: The Independent Group and Exhibition Design*, Cambridge, MA, 2020.
- 6 In an interview with Dorothy Morland, Henderson describes how the collaboration between him, Eduardo Paolozzi and Alison and Peter Smithson first developed around the sharing of images in late 1952. Nigel Henderson interviewed by Dorothy Morland, 17 August 1976, Tate, TGA 955/1/14/6. An engineer at Ove Arup & Partners in London, Ronald Jenkins joined the project at a later stage. His primary role was to design the complex network of wires upon which the reproduced images were suspended. For a discussion of Jenkins's contribution, see Walsh and Zimmerman, 'New Brutalist Image'.
- 7 Nigel Henderson, Ronald Jenkins, Eduardo Paolozzi and Alison and Peter Smithson, *Parallel of Life and Art*, London, 1953.
- 8 Ben Highmore describes the *Parallel of Life and Art* catalogue as 'systematically unsystematic' and as an antidote to traditional taxonomical ordering, which invites viewers to engage in 'creative misrecognition'. Highmore, *The Art of Brutalism*, 30–33.
- 9 This was stated by Sir Leigh Ashton, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum between 1945 and 1955, in a letter to Henderson's friend and fellow photographer Roger Mayne who had written to Ashton to enquire whether the museum would consider acquiring contemporary photography for its collection. Quoted in Mark Haworth-Booth, *The Street Photographs of Roger Mayne*, London, 1986, 8.
- 10 Ashton in his letter replying to Mayne. Quoted in Haworth-Booth, *Roger Mayne*, 8.
- 11 The Tate archive was founded in 1970. During that decade, the Tate Gallery also began actively acquiring photographic works by conceptual artists as artworks for its collection. It was not until 2009, however, that Tate appointed a curator dedicated to photography, Simon Baker. Following Baker's appointment, the Photography Acquisitions Committee was established in 2010.
- 12 Ashton quoted in Haworth-Booth, *Roger Mayne*, 8.
- 13 In his analysis of the early formation of the ICA, Ben Cranfield focuses upon the implications of its avowedly non-museological status and the significance of its lack of a collection. Ben Cranfield, "'Not Another Museum": The Search for Contemporary Connection', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 12: 2, 1 August 2013, 313–331.
- 14 Henri Cartier-Bresson: *Photographs* opened at the ICA on 7 February 1952. *Memorable Photographs from Life Magazine: 15 Years of World History in Pictures* opened on 7 March 1952. The latter exhibition was on tour from the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, where it had been on display from 20 November until 12 December 1951. At MoMA, the photographs had been selected by Edward Steichen, Director of the Department of Photography between 1947 and 1961.
- 15 In the promotional materials produced by the ICA to accompany the Henri Cartier-Bresson exhibition, Cartier-Bresson is proclaimed to be 'one of the greatest living photographers' and it is emphasised that he 'studied painting in Andre Lhote studio'. Quoted from promotional materials included among 'Press cuttings from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1937–1969', Tate, TAM 48.
- 16 James Dudley, 'Taken from Life', *Daily Worker*, 27 February 1952. 'Press cuttings from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1937–1969', Tate, TAM 48.
- 17 Edward Steichen, *Memorable Life Photographs*, New York, 1951, n.p.
- 18 Steichen, *Memorable Life Photographs*, n.p.
- 19 See 'Press cuttings from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1937–1969', Tate, TAM 48.
- 20 Cited in Walsh, *Nigel Henderson*, 89.
- 21 David Sylvester, 'Round the London Art Galleries', *The Listener*, 24 September 1953, 512. 'Press cuttings from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1937–1969', Tate, TAM 48.
- 22 Sylvester, 'Round the London Art Galleries', 512.
- 23 Reynier Banham, 'Parallel of Life and Art', *Architectural Review*, 114: 682, October 1953, 259.
- 24 Tom Hopkinson, 'Parallel of Life and Art: An Exhibition of Photographic Enlargements', *Manchester Guardian*, 22 September 1953. 'Press cuttings from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1937–1969', Tate, TAM 48.
- 25 Alex Kitnick associates Banham's and Sylvester's 'mournful' and 'anxious' reviews of *Parallel of Life and Art* with their sense that within the exhibition, photography had 'made the world incomprehensible by erasing the differences between its elements'. Alex Kitnick, 'The Brutalism of Life and Art', *October*, 136, New Brutalism, Spring 2011, 77–78.
- 26 Invitation card for the private view of *Parallel of Life and Art* at the ICA on 10 September 1953, Nigel Henderson Estate.
- 27 This collaborative research process and time period is described by Nigel Henderson in an interview with Dorothy Morland, 17 August 1976, Tate, TGA 955/1/14/6.
- 28 As stated above, Jenkins's role in the project principally consisted of designing the lattice of wires from which the image panels were suspended. His attendance at the group's initial planning meetings was therefore less frequent.
- 29 Roger Mayne was introduced to Henderson in the early 1950s and visited him at his East End house in 1953. After this visit, Mayne gave Henderson a contact sheet with the photographs he had taken of the interior of 46 Chisenhale Road. This contact sheet remains in the private holdings of the Nigel Henderson Estate.
- 30 Nigel Henderson, handwritten notes for a talk on *Parallel of Life and Art*, titled 'A discussion on the implications of the exhibition' during the 'Evening Forum 3' at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, 54–56 Bedford Square, 7 pm, 2 December 1953, Tate, TGA 9211/5/1/6. After the exhibition closed at the ICA, the contents

- of *Parallel of Life and Art* were lent to the Architectural Association where a reconfigured form of the display was presented between 30 November and 4 December 1953.
- 31 The group outsourced the production of many of the copy negatives to a technical printing facility, Entwistle, Thorpe & Co. Ltd, which had premises on Eagle Street WC1 and Maddox Street W1 in London. To create some of the photographic enlargements within the display, they also employed a commercial printing company. Other negatives and prints were produced by Henderson himself.
  - 32 For a discussion of Henderson's designation as 'artist-photographer' see Walsh, *Nigel Henderson*, 9, and Walsh, 'Reordering and Redistributing the Visual', 236.
  - 33 Henri Cartier-Bresson, for instance, had little interest in developing, printing, or editing his work after its moment of capture, preferring his images to remain uncropped and to avoid any signs of darkroom labour. In his 1952 book, *Images à la Sauvette*, published in English as *The Decisive Moment*, Cartier-Bresson identifies photographic artistry with the instantaneous perception and shooting of an image, rather than with its transformation in the darkroom.
  - 34 As shown, for example, in Nigel Henderson, handwritten notes for a talk on *Parallel of Life and Art*, Tate, TGA 9211/5/1/5-8.
  - 35 See Nigel Henderson, manuscript on photography, untitled, undated, Nigel Henderson Estate; his notes on the acquisition of his photographic enlarger and his method of producing photograms, Nigel Henderson, manuscript, untitled, undated, Tate, TGA 201011/2/1; as well as his explanation of his use of the plate camera, as recounted in *Nigel Henderson: Paintings, Collages & Photographs*, London, 1977.
  - 36 Eduardo Paolozzi worked as a Textile Design tutor in the School of Textiles between 1949 and 1955, and Peter Smithson was employed as a tutor in Interior Design and History of Architecture in the School of Interior Design and Furniture between 1949 and 1953. See the prospectuses published by the Central School between 1951 and 1955, London County Council Central School of Arts and Crafts Syllabuses and Timetables, Central Saint Martins Museum and Study Collection, University of the Arts London.
  - 37 Ken Garland interviewed by Alex Seago, 16 June 1989. Quoted in Alex Seago, *Burning the Box of Beautiful Things: The Development of a Postmodern Sensibility*, Oxford, 1987, 186.
  - 38 As remembered by a former student of Nigel Henderson's at the Central School, Derek Birdsall in *Group Interview with Ken Garland and Derek Birdsall*, London, 2009, Central Saint Martins Museum and Study Collection, University of the Arts London.
  - 39 Derek Birdsall, *Group Interview with Ken Garland and Derek Birdsall*.
  - 40 Nigel Henderson, handwritten manuscript, untitled, undated, Tate, TGA 9211/3/1.
  - 41 Nigel Henderson, handwritten notes for a talk on *Parallel of Life and Art*, Tate, TGA 9211/5/1/6.
  - 42 Despite the centrality of negatives within analogue photographic processes, they are widely marginalised – if not suppressed – across the fields of art and visual culture and are rarely made visible in publications or exhibitions. Geoffrey Batchen attributes this marginalisation to the threat posed by the negative to the originality, singularity and value of the positive print. See Geoffrey Batchen, *Negative/Positive: A History of Photography*, London, 2021.
  - 43 Geoffrey Batchen, *Negative/Positive*.
  - 44 Batchen, *Negative/Positive*, 88.
  - 45 Batchen, *Negative/Positive*, 5.
  - 46 The *Parallel of Life and Art* negatives also invert and technologise the conception of the 'multi-evocative image', which was central to Henderson's thinking at the time, and which had been partly formulated by Sylvester and taken up by Banham and other critics of the period. See Nigel Henderson, manuscript titled 'IMAGE', undated, Nigel Henderson Estate. Sylvester used the phrase 'multi-evocative sign' in an article on Paul Klee for *Les Temps Modernes*, published in January 1951, and reprinted in David Sylvester, *About Modern Art: Critical Essays, 1948–96*, London, 1996, 45. See also Reyner Banham, 'The New Brutalism', *Architectural Review*, 118: 708, December 1955, 355–361.
  - 47 Nigel Henderson, handwritten notes for a talk on *Parallel of Life and Art*, Tate, TGA 9211/5/1/6.
  - 48 Walsh, 'Reordering and Redistributing the Visual', 235.
  - 49 Frank Zachary, George S. Rosenthal, and Alexey Brodovich, eds, 'Jackson Pollock', *Portfolio; the Annual of the Graphic Arts*, 1: 3, Spring 1951, 76–80; Robert Goodnough, 'Pollock Paints a Picture', *Art News*, May 1951.
  - 50 See, for example, Caroline A. Jones, 'The Romance of the Studio and the Abstract Expressionist Sublime', in *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist*, Chicago, 1996, 1–59; Peter R. Kalb, 'Picturing Pollock: Photography's Challenge to the Historiography of Abstract Expressionism', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 7, 2012, 1–17; Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, 'Jackson Pollock, Painting, and the Myth of Photography', *Art History*, 6: 1, 1983, 114–122.
  - 51 James Finch, "'A Wistful Dream of Far-Off Californian Glamour': David Sylvester and the British View of American Art", *Tate Papers*, 27, Spring 2017.
  - 52 For an analysis of the ceiling as a surface of creative display in post-war Britain, see Mark Crinson, 'Eye Wandering the Ceiling: Ornament and New Brutalism', *Art History*, 41: 2, 2018, 318–343.
  - 53 Nigel Henderson, letter to Chris Mullen, undated. Chris Mullen papers (in author's possession).
  - 54 Walther Heering, *The Rollei Book: A Manual of Rolleiflex and Rolleicord Photography*, trans. Walter Dreisörner, Harzburg, 1939.
  - 55 My reading of the negational strategies of the exhibition draws upon John Roberts's theorisation of artistic negation in John Roberts, 'Art and its Negations', *Third Text*, 24: 3, 1 May 2010, 289–303; and John Roberts, *Revolutionary Time and the Avant-Garde*, London, 2015.
  - 56 Later, Nigel Henderson reflected that, in the early 1950s, he often 'bought glass slides', and that 'From one of these Victorian slides (an amateur shot of swimmers) I did a lot of distortions'. Frank Whitford, *Nigel Henderson: Paintings, Collages & Photographs*, Cambridge, 1977, n.p. Two examples of these printed distortions are now held in the collection at Tate: Nigel Henderson, *Stressed Photograph of a Bather*, c. 1950, Tate, P79311 and P79310. The glass slides and negatives can be found in the archive at Tate: Nigel Henderson, 'Negatives; Glass negatives; "Bathers"', Tate, TGA 201011/5/2/1; and Nigel Henderson, 'Negatives [appear to be related to the exhibition 'A Parallel of Life and Art', Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), London, 1953]', Tate, TGA 201011/5/1.
  - 57 It is worth noting that many of Picasso's paintings make more explicit use of the kinds of folding and warping effects seen in Henderson's distorted images. In contrast, the Picasso piece selected for *Parallel of Life and Art* is more delicately poised between its similarity to and its difference from Henderson's experimental photography.
  - 58 Each of these documents can be found in the private archive of the Nigel Henderson Estate and they also appear among the material held under Henderson's name in the archive at Tate. They include: a memorandum that was circulated at the ICA, dated 27 March 1953; a press release, titled *Parallel of Life and Art: Indications of a new visual order*, dated 31 August 1953; an invitation to the private view on 10 September 1953, titled *Parallel of Life and Art: An exhibition of documents through the medium of photography*; and the catalogue, titled *Parallel of Life and Art*, which was distributed at the gallery when the exhibition opened on 11 September 1953.
  - 59 Nigel Henderson, handwritten notes for a talk on *Parallel of Life and Art*, Tate, TGA 9211/5/1/7.
  - 60 Nigel Henderson, letter dated 29 January 1956, addressed to Michael Pearson, editor of 244 magazine, published by the School of Architecture at the University of Manchester. Nigel Henderson correspondence, Tate, TGA 9211/1/3.
  - 61 *40 Years of Modern Art 1907–1947: A Selection from British Collections* was open from 10 February until 6 March 1948, and *40,000 Years of Modern Art: A Comparison of Primitive and Modern* was open from 20 December 1948 until 29 January 1949.
  - 62 Herbert Read, *40 Years of Modern Art 1907–1947: A Selection from British Collections*, London, 1948, n.p.
  - 63 Read, *40 Years of Modern Art*, n.p.
  - 64 During their work on *Parallel of Life and Art*, Henderson, Paolozzi and the Smithsons were affiliated with the Independent Group (IG), the name given to a nebulous cohort of artists, designers, architects, and theorists who assembled around a series of meetings convened at the ICA between 1952 and 1955, and with whom Jenkins was more loosely associated. The formation of the IG can be understood, in part, as a reaction against the kind of modernism that Read promoted.

- 65 Roland Penrose, *Picasso: Drawings and Watercolours since 1893: An Exhibition in Honour of the Artist's 70th Birthday*, London, 1951; an extended version of the ICA catalogue with additional illustrations was published by Lund Humphries as *Roland Penrose, Picasso: Drawings and Watercolours Since 1893: Homage to Picasso on His 70th Birthday*, London, 1951.
- 66 Penrose, *Picasso: An Exhibition*, n.p. In the longer version published by Lund Humphries, Penrose reflects upon Picasso's ongoing engagement with 'the distortion of the human form', Penrose, *Picasso: Homage to Picasso*, n.p.
- 67 Penrose, *Picasso: An Exhibition*, n.p.
- 68 Penrose, *Picasso: An Exhibition*, n.p.
- 69 On the ICA memorandum, the press release, and the private view invitation, Henderson, Jenkins, Paolozzi and the Smithsons select the term 'editors' to characterise their collaborative work, before reverting to the term 'organisers' on the back cover of the catalogue. See Memorandum, ICA, 27 March 1953; Press release, *Parallel of Life and Art: Indications of a new visual order*, ICA, 31 August 1953; Invitation to the private view, *Parallel of Life and Art: An exhibition of documents through the medium of photography*, ICA, 10 September 1953; *Parallel of Life and Art*, exhibition catalogue, ICA, 11 September 1953, Nigel Henderson Estate.
- 70 Henderson's floating, fingerless palm can be read in contrast, for instance, to the painterly handprints that appear in Pollock's *Number 1A, 1948* (1948), which function as a kind of signature to assert the artist's individual authorship over the canvas.
- 71 Nigel Henderson, handwritten notes for a talk on *Parallel of Life and Art*, Tate, TGA 9211/5/1/7.
- 72 As remembered by Nigel Henderson in an interview with Chris Mullen, *Norwich Now* film recording, 1983.
- 73 Using Henderson's copy of *The Green Box* as a reference, Hamilton published 'The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors Even, A Typographical Version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's *Green Box*, translated by George Heard Hamilton' in 1960. See Roberts, *Revolutionary Time*, 143–146.
- 74 Paul Thirkell, 'From the *Green Box* to Typo/Topography: Duchamp and Hamilton's Dialogue in Print', *Tate Papers*, Spring 2005.
- 75 Sarat Maharaj, "'A Monster of Veracity, a Crystalline Transubstantiation': Typotranslating the *Green Box*', in *The Duchamp Effect: Essays, Interviews, Round Table*, ed. Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon, Cambridge, MA and London, 1996, 61–91. See also John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling After the Readymade*, London, 2007, 54–57.
- 76 Marcel Duchamp, *Moulin à Café* (1911) is in the Tate collection, titled *Coffee Mill*, Tate T03253. See Sophie Howarth, 'Coffee Mill, Marcel Duchamp, 1911', Tate, accessed 5 April 2023, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-coffee-mill-t03253>.
- 77 Marcel Duchamp, quoted in Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, *Marcel Duchamp*, Philadelphia, 1973, 256, referenced by Howarth, 'Coffee Mill, Marcel Duchamp, 1911'.
- 78 Robert Motherwell, ed., *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology*, New York, 1951.
- 79 Sidney Janis and Harriet Janis, 'Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist (1945)', in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, ed. Motherwell, 312. This article first appeared in *New York in View*, 5:1, 21 March 1945, and subsequently in London in *Horizon*, 12: 70, October 1945.
- 80 Nigel Henderson, 'POLAA Exhibition Photographic Panels', Tate, TGA 9211/5/3.
- 81 Nigel Henderson, 'POLAA [Parallel of Life and Art] Exhibition Photographs', Tate, TGA 9211/5/2.