



Faking It: Manipulated Photography before Photoshop

By Mia Fineman

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Faking It: Manipulated Photography before Photoshop By Mia Fineman

Photographic manipulation is a familiar phenomenon in the digital era. What will come as a revelation to readers of this captivating, wide-ranging book is that nearly every type of manipulation we associate with Adobe's now-ubiquitous Photoshop software was also part of photography's predigital repertoire, from slimming waistlines and smoothing away wrinkles to adding people to (or removing them from) pictures, not to mention fabricating events that never took place. Indeed, the desire and determination to modify the camera image are as old as photography itself—only the methods have changed.

By tracing the history of manipulated photography from the earliest days of the medium to the release of Photoshop 1.0 in 1990, Mia Fineman offers a corrective to the dominant narrative of photography's development, in which champions of photographic "purity," such as Paul Strand, Edward Weston, and Henri Cartier-Bresson, get all the glory, while devotees of manipulation, including Henry Peach Robinson, Edward Steichen, and John Heartfield, are treated as conspicuous anomalies. Among the techniques discussed on these pages—abundantly illustrated with works from an international array of public and private collections—are multiple exposure, combination printing, photomontage, composite portraiture, over-painting, hand coloring, and retouching. The resulting images are as diverse in style and motivation as they are in technique. Taking her argument beyond fine art into the realms of politics, journalism, fashion, entertainment, and advertising, Fineman demonstrates that the old adage "the camera does not lie" is one of photography's great fictions.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A talented writer, Met assistant curator Mia Fineman traces photo 'fakery' to the dawn of the medium more than 150 years ago when artists took license for both aesthetic and commercial ends... Each chapter, as well as the 'Discussions of Individual Works,' yields pleasures and erudition, and overall, this finely curated collection is an unequivocal delight." *-Publishers Weekly*

"Brilliant, exhaustive...extraordinary."—BOMB
(*BOMB*)

"As 'Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop'—curator Mia Fineman's illuminating book ...shows us, the habit of aggressively adjusting photographs is actually an activity dating back to photography's earliest days, and one that exposes a central question about the truth or artifice of the medium."—*The Boston Globe*
(*The Boston Globe*)

"Each chapter, as well as the "Discussions of Individual Works," yields pleasures and erudition ... this finely curated collection is an unequivocal delight."—*Publishers Weekly*
(*Publishers Weekly*)

"[O]ne of the most interesting, liveliest art history books I've read this year."—Tyler Green, *Modern Art Notes* podcast
(Tyler Green *Modern Art Notes*)

Named a best book of 2012—*Modern Art Notes*
(*Modern Art Notes*)

"Fineman...presents a most extensive and articulate survey of the myriad ways that photographers have created manipulated photographs over the past 170-odd years. Illustrated with 276 well-reproduced examples of work ranging from the vernacular to the deliberately aesthetic, this well-written book has a good bibliography and a glossary of technical terms...Recommended."—*Choice*
(*Choice*)

Long listed for the 2013 Kraszna-Krausz Book Awards in the Best Photography Book category.
(Kraszna-Krausz Book Awards *Kraszna-Krausz Foundation* 2013-05-22)

About the Author

Mia Fineman is Assistant Curator in the Department of Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. She has been a regular contributor to the New York Times, Slate, the Village Voice, and numerous other publications.

Users Review

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Michael Mazzariello:

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