



Message from the Darkroom

Carlo Mollino

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Once upon a time, in the first half of the twentieth century, photography was considered a purely mechanical art--if it was considered an art at all. Carlo Mollino's *Message From the Darkroom*, originally published in Italy in 1949 and now one of the most coveted books in the history of photography, was one of the first strikes against that attitude, and one of the most visually extraordinary. In 323 plates illustrating the work of 132 photographers and nine painters, Mollino traced a history of the form and the evolution of taste over the years, highlighting the work of Nadar and Hill, Atget, Alvarez Bravo and Man Ray, with a chapter dedicated to each. An equal number of pages are allotted to mastery of photographic techniques, including retouching, as every means to make the print coincide with the artist's vision was legitimate in Mollino's eyes--even required. For work to reach the status of art and communicate the artist's message, it needed to move beyond the accidentally "beautiful" through crafted "subjective transformations." *Message From the Darkroom* is also a fundamental text in understanding Mollino's own development as a photographer--his work, like the book's first edition, is now widely collected. Here for the first time, this early plea for the acceptance of photography among the higher arts is being published in English. The new edition replicates the original, as designed by Mollino himself, with color tipped-in images again pasted in by hand. Limited quantities available.

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