

BTS PHOTOGRAPHIE

ANGLAIS – U. 2

SESSION 2010

Durée : 2 heures

Coefficient : 2

Matériel autorisé :

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Dès que le sujet vous est remis, assurez-vous qu'il est complet.
Le sujet comporte 5 pages, numérotées de 1/5 à 5/5.

QUESTIONS

**I. Document A : "Letter from America" (page 3 et 4/5)
Spirit of the magpie**

Write an account of the article in English. (About 300 words / 12 points)

**II. Document B : "Process Master II" (page 5/5)
Compensating process timer**

Translate document B from "compensating process timer" to "mains adaptor". (8 points)



Letter from America

with Mike Johnston

DOCUMENT A

Spirit of the magpie

Is collecting photography consumerism or obsession? Mike takes a look at the complex world of photographic art and questions what makes a truly creative collection

LET'S SAY THERE'S A PERSON WITH too much money. That person already has several houses and a number of cars and all the indulgences he wants, and is still looking around for things to buy. He decides he wants to become a photography collector.

Scenario One: Would-be collector buys a bunch of books and starts haunting photography galleries in New York, Paris, and London. With the help of her books and dealers, she identifies all the high points of photography's history and makes a list of 'must haves'. The list includes all the deathless acknowledged masterpieces: Edward Weston's *Pepper No. 30*, Ansel Adams's *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*, Alfred Steiglitz's *The Steerage*, and so on (big hits, no faded cookies). Because other collectors with too much money are doing the same thing, and the supply of these masterpieces is decidedly finite, prices are driven up, sometimes into the millions of dollars. Even so, they're still 1/10th to 1/100th the price of similarly well-regarded paintings, so they remain relatively accessible to your average garden-variety multimillionaire.

Scenario Two: Another would-be collector wants to own the same collection as the collector in Scenario One, but he doesn't want

to do all that time-consuming work. So he hires a consultant to research, identify, and acquire all the actual pictures for his collection.

I do have to acknowledge here that one reason people with too much money become photography collectors is because what they really want is to become art collectors, but they don't have that much money. The retired US tennis star John McEnroe, for instance, is an enthusiastic art collector, but considers himself limited because his net worth is 'only' \$100 million (£50.6 million). Rumor has it that this is why he's doing color commentary for the networks and hosting sundry television shows – to earn more money to buy art with.

Without criticizing the chosen activities of other people too much, here's the problem with the two scenarios above: merely owning a collection doesn't necessarily make you a collector. It just makes you a consumer. Art or photography, for many of the world's super-rich, might be just one more species of treasure to amass in order to showcase status, means, apparent good taste, or high self-regard.

I also think mere ownership of a collection misses the point – and much of the pleasure – of collecting. Remember that the genesis of the urge to collect is probably something close to,

or akin to, obsession: you love something so much that you can't get enough of it. It seems to me that the great collectors in history (and they really do make positive, dynamic contributions to art) do one of two things: either they identify the value in something no one else has learned to value yet, or they exercise a very particular and personal taste. In either case, there's a didactic component to collecting – you're helping other people to see something the way you see it. And love it the way you do.

It's useful to remember that there's no intrinsic value or merit to art. Its value is only in what it means to people who view it. Something that is deeply or profligately loved might have special value if it's prized by many people and also scarce, which helps explain the high prices of unique works of art like paintings (It also helps explain why paintings by dead artists frequently cost more than those by living ones: there can never be any more). But you can love something that's obscure and unknown as well as you might love something that many other people value. To understand the truth of this, most photographers need look no further than their own work! If you're like most of us, you have pictures you've made yourself that you love better, and that mean more to you, than the work of certain well-known photographers

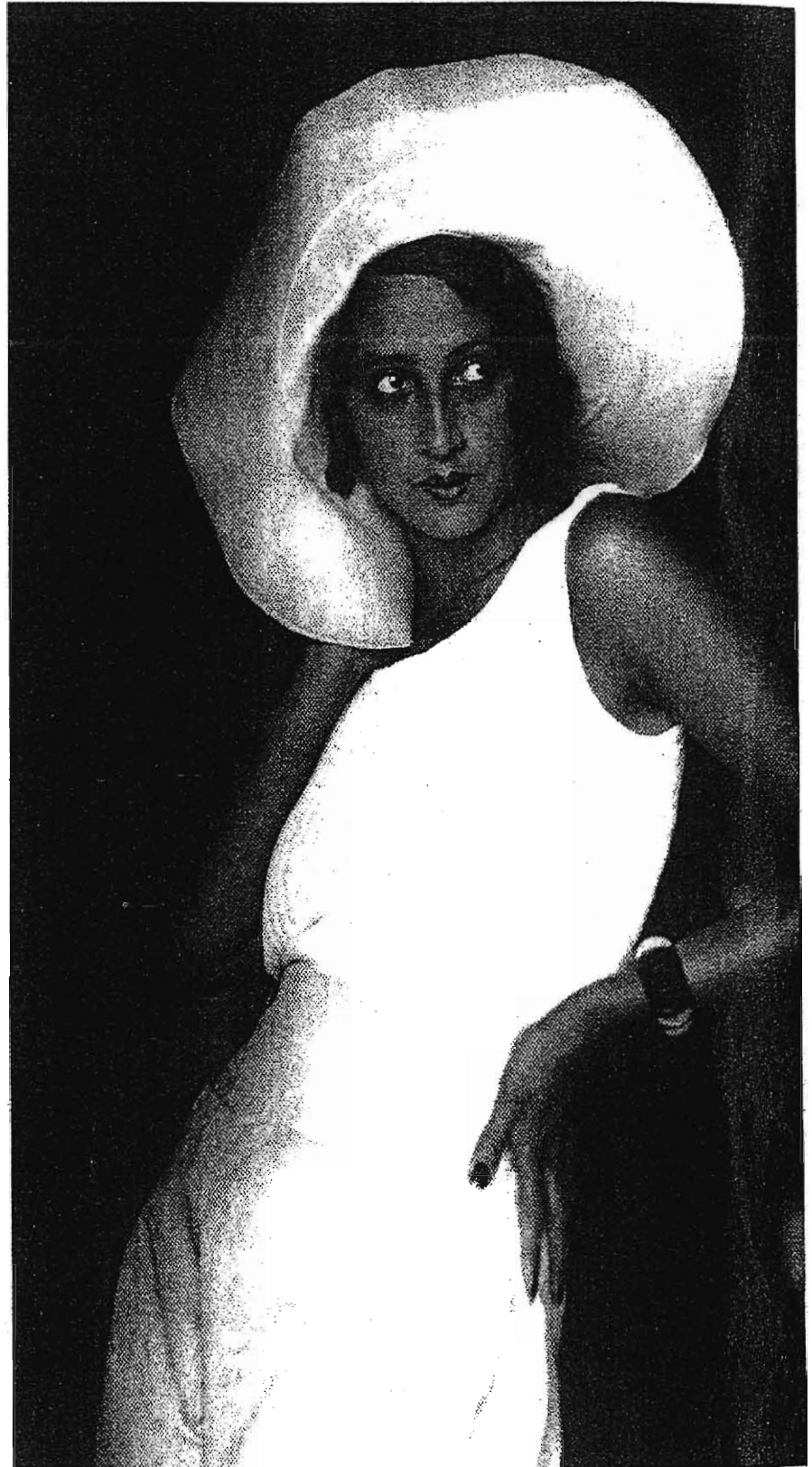
you don't care for, even if the latter are world famous and their work fetches high prices.

And you can love things that are common, too. In this way, collectors often add value to the items they're collecting by putting them in context. There's a beautifully made, scholarly book out recently called *The Art of the American Snapshot 1888-1978* that draws on a collection put together by a man named Robert E Jackson. It's doubtful that any particular picture in the collection was worth anything when Jackson acquired it – they're just snapshots – but the collection as a whole is a wonderful and meaningful document, one that's being acquired by the National Gallery of Art in Washington and, obviously, that's been made the subject of a deluxe book. Pictures comprise the collection, but each individual picture is really only important because it's part of the collection. So Jackson has really added meaning to all the individual pictures.

Sure, if you have too much money and need something to do with it, buying up great master photographs is one way to go. It's certainly possible to derive a great deal of satisfaction from decorating your house with original prints by great photographers. The problem with it is really just that all the 'acquirer' is doing is seconding someone else's taste, reiterating something that's already decided about the work.

It can be more fun to decide for yourself. I would say that two of the hallmarks of a 'real' collection are 1) that the collector is exercising (and thus exploring and developing) his or her own judgement or taste, and 2) that the context of the collection adds something to each of its individual components.

So if you're thinking about collecting photographs, be creative. Ask yourself, what do you really love? A true collection is dynamic; it lives and breathes and grows. It's expressive: it says something not only about its contents but about the person who put it together. It might well be worth more as a collection than the sum of its individual parts, in numerous senses of the word 'worth'. And it certainly needn't be the exclusive province of millionaires. **B&W**



A real classic collector's item and one that (relatively speaking) doesn't cost the earth – *Renee, Biarritz, August 1930* by Jacques Henri Lartigue (c) Ministère de la Culture – France / A.A.J.H.L courtesy Michael Hoppen Gallery. It is a silver gelatin print, 30x40cm with the Jacques Henri Lartigue Association stamp on the recto and certificate and is sold for £900 excluding frame and VAT

To see more of Jacques Henri Lartigue's work visit www.lartigue.org.

The Art of the American

DOCUMENT B

Process Master II

[**Compensating Process Timer**

Having trouble maintaining a consistent temperature during film or print processing ? ProcessMaster II is the answer ! Its integrated temperature sensor monitors the temperature of your chemicals (or water bath) and adjusts the processing time to compensate for any cooling or warming automatically, delivering consistent results every time.

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The ProcessMaster II comes complete with a footswitch for hands free operation. Power comes from an internal 9 v battery (supplied) or optional mains adaptor.]

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