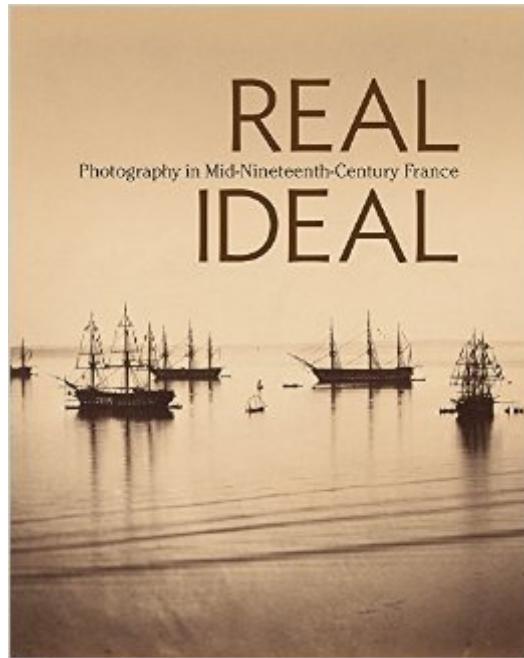


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# Real/Ideal: Photography In Mid-Nineteenth-Century France



## Synopsis

In the years following the announcement of the invention of photography in 1839, practitioners in France gave shape to this intriguing new medium through experimental printing techniques and innovative compositions. The rich body of work they developed proved foundational to the establishment of early photography, from the introduction of the paper negative in the late 1840s to the proliferation of more standardized equipment and photomechanical technology in the 1860s. The essays in this elegant volume investigate the early history of the medium when the ambiguities inherent in the photograph were ardently debated. Focusing on the French photographers who worked with paper negatives, especially the key figures *Édouard Baldus, Gustave Le Gray, Henri Le Secq, and Charles Nègre*, *Real/Ideal* explores photography's status as either fine art or industrial product (or both), its repertoire of subject matter, its ideological functions, and even the ever-experimental photographic process itself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've always wanted to discover more about photography's beginnings, and this book, by looking in close detail at a decade of the medium's development, illuminates an extraordinary amount about photography in terms of its history and its creation. Each essay proposes a different angle on what the four ambitious photographers highlighted--all of whom started out as fine artists--discovered about the paper negative and how they turned these discoveries into art. This is the most substantive book I've read about photography's birth as an art form and it pairs with an exquisite

exhibition curated by Karen Hellman at The Getty Museum. "Real/Ideal" explains why the medium divided into two routes--one of art and one of science--from its very inception. With breathtaking photographs, many of which are images of negatives that have never left France and have never before been publicly exhibited, this volume, and exhibition, is surely the most important addition to the field's scholarship in years.

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