

## The Photographic News 1889

The earliest photographs could not capture motion, but by the time of the Civil War, Oliver Wendell Holmes was studying photographs of men walking to better understand what was needed in an artificial limb. In 1873, Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904), a fine landscape photographer, began his attempts to picture a horse in various stages of running. He began with a succession of photographs taken with carefully spaced cameras. The results proved that no one had ever correctly observed the horse's gait before, and prompted dismay and intense discussion over whether it was artistically truthful, or even convincing, for an artist to copy such a photograph and paint what the eye could not see. In 1880, Muybridge projected these pictures in such rapid sequence that they had the effect of a motion picture. He took thousands of pictures for his volumes of *Animal Locomotion* and later, *The Human Figure in Motion*.

Mr. Muybridge's photographs are, perhaps, rather of indirect importance to the artist, as showing him what actually takes place, than as a direct means of assisting him to represent what the eye sees. The eye certainly does not see an instantaneous phase, such as is shown by one

of Mr. Muybridge's photographs, but it sees a resultant of many motions, and it is this resultant which the artist generally aims at reproducing.

The [London] *Globe* sums up the case as follows:—"Scientifically the inquiry is most interesting, but though Mr. Muybridge's labour has been watched with much attention . . . we doubt whether the contribution to art will be of much importance. Art for the purpose of representation does not require to give to the eye more than the eye can see; and when Mr. Sturgess gives us a picture of a close finish for the Gold Cup, we do not want Mr. Muybridge to tell us that no horses ever strode in the fashion shown in the picture. It may indeed be fairly contended that the incorrect position (according to science) is the correct position (according to art). Nor is this a paradox; for only extremists contend that art must discard every other consideration in an endeavor to represent merely the True."