

## Press Release

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### SOTHEBY'S NEW YORK TO OFFER THE QUILLAN COLLECTION OF NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHS ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 7, 2008



Pictured here: Imogen Cunningham's **Banana Leaves**, before 1929 (est. \$70/100,000)

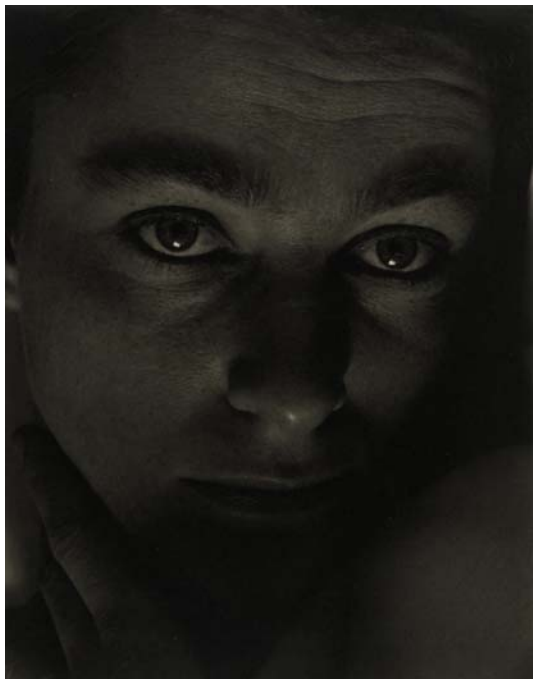
**New York, New York** – On the evening of April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Sotheby's will have the privilege of offering for sale **The Quillan Collection of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Photographs**, a choice offering of some of the most sophisticated works ever brought together in one collection. A true connoisseur's collection of rare and unique images in superb condition, it would be impossible to recreate today. It was assembled by Jill Quasha, a private photography dealer who specializes in building both public and private collections, on behalf of the Quillan Company, an investment group. The collection of 69 photographs, ranging in date from 1839 to 1985, culminated in the book, *The Quillan Collection of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Photographs*, published in 1991. By the time of Sotheby's auction, the collection will have been held by the current owners for nearly

twenty years. It is estimated to bring \$5/7.5 million\*. The works will be on exhibition at Sotheby's Paris (76 rue du Faubourg St. Honoré) from November 14-18<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with Paris Photo and will travel to San Francisco and Los Angeles in the spring before going on view in New York from April 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>.

Denise Bethel, Director of Sotheby's Photographs department, said: "For the inner circle of photography collectors, dealers, and institutions, the Quillan Collection is legendary. Collecting with the eye, rather than precept, Quasha is part of a tradition of collectors such as the esteemed late Sam Wagstaff, or Pierre Apraxine of the Gilman Paper Company. Unlike the collections assembled by those and others, however, which number in the hundreds or thousands of photographs, the Quillan Collection comprises a select 69 images, and stands as a highly concentrated *tour-de-force* of the elusive meaning and brilliance of photography."



The top lot of the collection is Edward Weston's **Nude**, dated 1925 (pictured above, est. \$700,000/1 million).



Among the other highlights are Paul Strand's **Rebecca**, 1923 (pictured here, est. \$600/900,000), Hans Bellmer's **La Poupée (The Doll)**, *circa* 1935 (pictured on page 3, top, est. \$200/300,000), William Henry Fox Talbot's **Study of a Leaf**, *circa* 1839 (pictured on page 3, bottom, est. \$100/150,000), Imogen Cunningham's **Banana Leaves**, before 1929 (pictured on page 1, est. \$70/100,000), Richard Avedon's **Portrait of Marilyn Monroe**, 1957 (est. \$70/100,000), and Diane Arbus's **Flower Girl at a Wedding**, 1964 (est. \$40/60,000).

The collection features a number of images of surpassing rarity, including the only vintage **Schadograph**, a unique cameraless image made by Christian Schad in 1919, ever to appear at auction (est. \$150/250,000), and an elegant and unique **Photogram** by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, made in the early 1920s (est. \$200/300,000). Other classic 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernists in the Quillan

Collection are Man Ray, André Kertész, August Sander, Tina Modotti, and Bill Brandt, to name but a few. The sale will feature a connoisseur's selection of 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs, including two dramatic mammoth-plate albumen prints: **Harbor of Nagasaki** made by the American Charles Leander Weed in 1867 (est. \$70/100,000), and a view of **Yosemite** by Carleton Watkins (est. \$200/300,000), *circa* 1865. The collection is especially strong in 19<sup>th</sup>-century European photographers, among them Gustave Le Gray, represented by **Cloud Study, Sète** (est. \$100/150,000), Louis de Clercq, Roger Fenton, Lewis Carroll, and Juliet Margaret Cameron.

The Quillan Collection of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Photographs may well be unique in the annals of collecting photographs. It was begun, from the very outset, with an idea and a boundary: to put together a group of photographs, numbering no more than 70, that would define the essence of photography, using examples from all of the medium's decades, in a way that had not been done before. Eschewing the traditional approach of most collections of photographs—ones put together partly for philosophical or historical reasons, but also for reasons of sentiment, donation, and that inevitable aspect of many collections, accumulation—the Quillan Collection



stands apart as a collection of rigor and deliberation. A stunning array of images by both well-known and lesser-known photographers, the group comprises almost no work that could be classified as a respective photographer's 'icon.' Rather, the photographs are subtle and elegant objects chosen for their visual intrigue, beauty, and imagination, as well as their relationship to one another and the collection as a whole.

As the collection's creator, Jill Quasha, wrote of her endeavor, in her introduction to the book of the collection: 'Would it be possible, I wondered, to assemble roughly seventy pictures—each by a different photographer and each selected only for its aesthetic qualities—that would represent photography's achievements from its beginnings in 1839 to the near present?'

As she relates, she then easily decided: ‘What not to do. There could be no grand plans, no schematic outline of history, and none of the customary trappings of seriousness or ambition—no critical or political stance, no aesthetic theory, no dogma. And no categories. We would leave classifications of style, eras, artistic movements, and genres—landscapes, portraits, and still lifes—to those who deal best with such things. . . .’

As Ms. Quasha describes, once the philosophy and the size of the collection had been established, the enterprise proceeded picture by picture, one targeted choice followed by the next, until a total of 69 photographs was acquired. Each chosen photograph was a masterpiece in its own way, and, in line with Ms. Quasha’s exacting standards, superb in its object quality and in its condition. As sequenced in the Quillan Collection book, the photographs take on new meanings and associations. The resulting whole is like nothing else in photography, forming what Ms. Quasha has called ‘a comment—spontaneous, rapid, fluid, and supple—on photography and its past.’

\*Estimates do not include buyer’s premium

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