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LARTIGUE BEFORE LARTIGUE: THE GEH ALBUM *PARIS AVIATION 1910*

by

Charlene N. Heath

BFA, NSCAD University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2005

A Thesis Project

presented to Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
and
George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film,
Rochester, New York, United States of America

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

in the Program of

Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2011

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Charlene N. Heath

Lartigue Before Lartigue: The GEH Album *Paris Aviation 1910*

Master of Arts, 2011

Charlene N. Heath

Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario in coordination with George Eastman House

International Museum of Photography and Film, Rochester, New York

Abstract:

This thesis discusses the Jacques Henri Lartigue album *Paris Aviation 1910*, which is held in the collection of photographs at George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film (GEH). It establishes *Paris Aviation 1910* as the only remaining album Lartigue made prior to constructing his large albums and reconstructing them after his solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1963. This thesis also raises questions regarding the provenance of the album and the authorship of the images it contains.

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Dedicated to my Mom and Dad,
who said I could do anything if I put my mind to it.

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Introduction

This thesis investigates Jacques Henri Lartigue's (1894-1986) photo album *Paris Aviation 1910*, a 1976 acquisition by George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film (GEH). The photographs contained in the album represent many of the pioneering individuals and groundbreaking events at the dawn of French aviation. Equally important, however, they represent early developments and trends in instantaneous photography during the French belle époque. But the object itself is riddled with questions regarding its provenance and authorship.

Jacques Henri Lartigue was a French photographer, painter and compiler of autobiographical photographic albums and journals. He began taking pictures at age six and donated his entire life's work – 129 captioned photographic albums, 6,538 black-and-white glass negatives, 89,175 black-and-white flexible negatives, 4,678 black-and-white stereoscopic glass negatives, eighty-seven autochromes, 50,000 colour slides, 8,390 colour negatives, handwritten diaries, and his cameras – to the French Ministry of Culture in 1979.¹ The Association des Amis de Jacques Henri Lartigue (AAJHL) is charged with the conservation and management of the collection under the supervision of the ministry.² AAJHL maintains the albums in the collection in chronological order as Lartigue donated

¹ Lartigue made one large donation to the French Ministry of Culture in 1979 and complemented it with two small donations in 1983 and 1986. Cordesse, "The Donation of Jacques Henri Lartigue," 369-371.

² Donation Jacques Henri Lartigue, <http://www.lartigue.org/us2/donation/index.html> (accessed March 14, 2011).

them and digitized them in 2000 to avoid unnecessary handling.³ It also maintains a numbering system for the negatives and transparencies in the collection.

The albums span from 1880 to 1986, from his family's first album to Lartigue's death; they document seventy-five years of the latest French innovations, sports and fashions.⁴ Lartigue used a wide variety of amateur presentation styles, albums that required photographs to be glued to the pages, and small aperture albums with slide-in mats for contact prints like those found in *Paris Aviation 1910*.⁵ In fact, his October 1907 journal states "We went to the Bon Marché store to buy small albums in which I can put my 4.5 x 6 prints, without sticking them down! By slipping them inside the pages!"⁶ Soon after, in 1910, he began composing large albums that included image enlargements and continually reworked them alongside his 'agendas,' or journals. Lartigue developed his own negatives and made small citrate contact prints as working prints from which to enlarge.⁷

The images for which Lartigue is most known are those covering the French belle époque. When John Szarkowski showcased these images at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1963, they gained unprecedented exposure and fame. The albums that contain these images are also chronologically organized. They measure 37 x 53 centimeters and are stamped on the spine with Lartigue's name, the year, and a number indicating the total number of albums for that year (Figure 1). They have a protective

³ Selma Zarhloul, collections assistant, Lartigue donation, e-mail message to the author, April 14, 2011.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Kevin Moore, Lartigue scholar, e-mail message to the author, February 10, 2011.

⁶ Lartigue, *Mémoires sans mémoire*, 71. Also see d'Astier, "The Autobiographical Enterprise," 37.

⁷ d'Astier, "The Autobiographical Enterprise," 37.

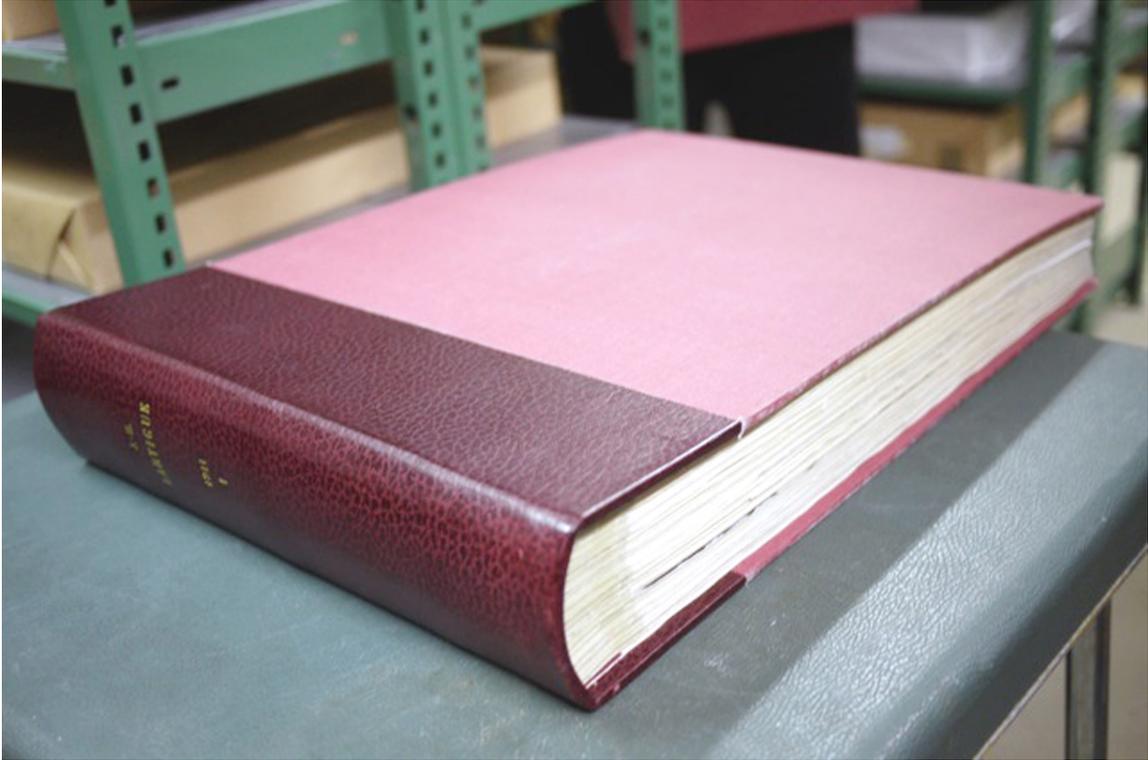


Figure 1. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Large album stamped 1911. 37 x 53 cm. AAJHL.

Mylar sheet covering every page and contain photographs of varying sizes glued to the pages accompanied by hand written inscriptions (Figures 2 and 3).

These albums are reconfigurations; in the 1960s and early 70s, when Lartigue's fame was growing, he took apart his large albums and remade them.⁸ The final incarnation of his now famous albums are a mixture of modern prints – from old negatives – and vintage prints, and the number of albums Lartigue made per year varies. These albums, including his most famous ones of the French belle époque, now reside in

⁸ See Sayag, "A Free and Innocent Eye," 17 and Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 11.

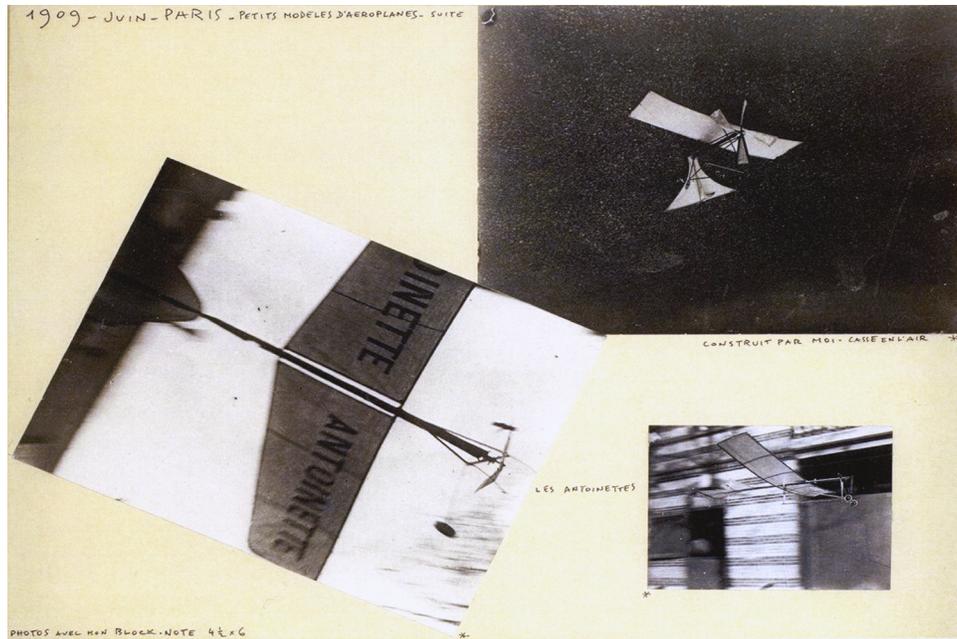


Figure 2. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Single page spread, large album stamped 1909. 37 x 53 cm. AAJHL.

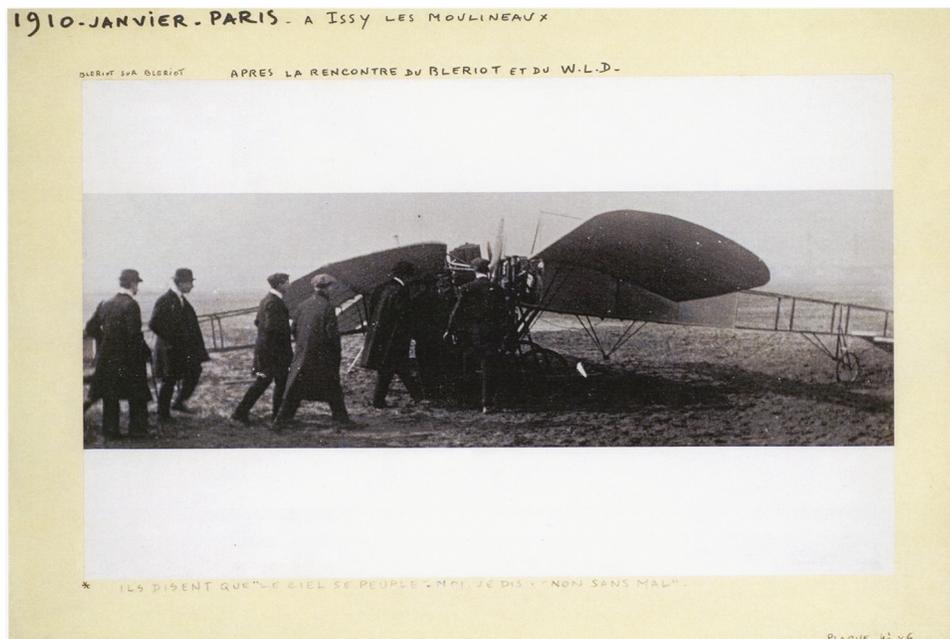


Figure 3. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Single page spread, large album stamped 1910. 37 x 53 cm. AAJHL.

the state repository in France. In Lartigue's diary entry for 24 April 1972 he generally refers to them as his "*nouveau 'vieux albums.'*"⁹

By contrast, the album *Paris Aviation 1910* is much smaller. Lartigue scholar Kevin Moore believes it to be the only extant album from this period of Lartigue's life.¹⁰ It is indeed unique; there are no albums like it at AAJHL or in any other collection.¹¹ It is a thematically organized aperture album, a typical product of the snapshot era from 1900-1920.¹² It is 23.5 x 16.2 cm, is 5.4 cm thick and contains 150 3.9 x 5.5 cm photographs.¹³ The album's forty-eight pages are made of sturdy card stock bound together into a book with a red cover (Figure 4). It is an example of the kind of photographic album that succeeded the mass-produced *carte-de-visite* album: each page has four decorative slide-in window mats through which photographic prints are displayed (Figures 5 and 6). The album has a green label down the spine and the words "Paris Aviation 1910" written in black remains legible (Figure 7). The first sixty-four images in the album depict aviation activities at Issy-les-Moulineaux – an airfield outside of Paris. The following two are of airplanes in flight during a meet in Trouville. The next eighty-one images are of model planes pictured both on the ground and in flight. The final three images in the album depict a monoplane in flight and the wreckage following its crash.

⁹ Moore, "Notes: Introduction," note number nine in *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 223.

¹⁰ Moore, "Notes: Chapter 1, Amateur Photography," note number 155 in *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 231.

¹¹ Selma Zarhloul, collections assistant, Lartigue donation, e-mail message to the author, March 7, 2011.

¹² Horton, "Glossary of Terms Relating to Photo Albums," 26.

¹³ Sabrina Esmeraldo, Paris-based photo conservator, correspondence on file for *Paris Aviation 1910* at AAJHL, May 1996.



Figure 4. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910*. 16.2 x 23.5 x 5.4 cm. GEH.



Figure 5. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Page twenty-one, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 16.2 x 23.5 cm. GEH.

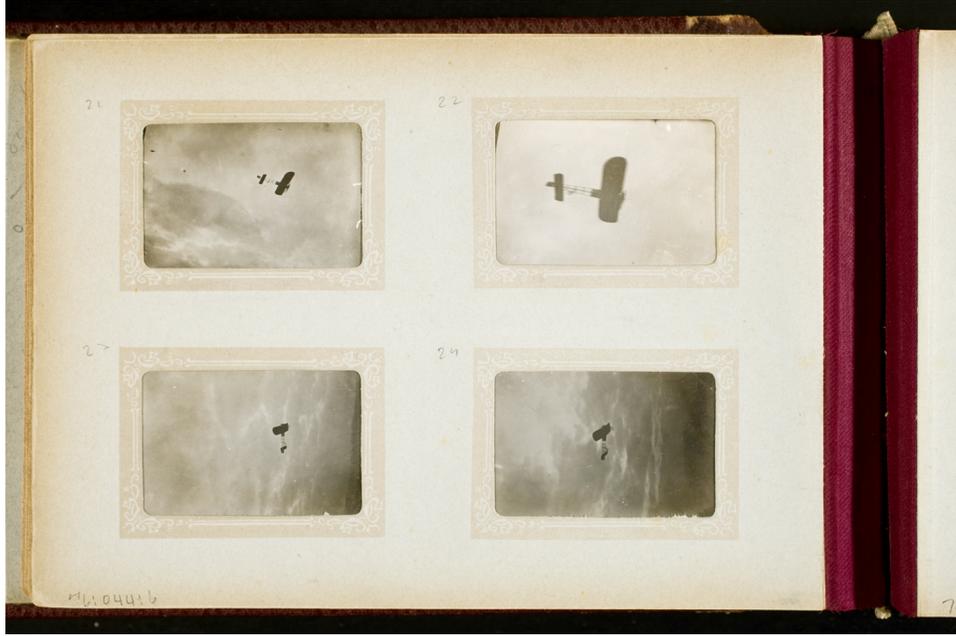


Figure 6. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Page six, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 16.2 x 23.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 7. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910*. 16.2 x 23.5 x 5.4 cm. GEH.

This thesis functions to establish *Paris Aviation 1910* as the only remaining album Lartigue made prior to becoming Szarkowski's Lartigue. Using examples from the album, in Chapter One I will describe the technology Lartigue used. I will demonstrate how he used popular tropes of instantaneous image making from the beginning of the twentieth century. I will discuss the structure of the album – an extension of nineteenth century modes of display – and how it is typical of objects made at the beginning of the 1900s for displaying snapshots. I will then compare the organization and layout of *Paris Aviation 1910* with selected pages from Lartigue's large belle époque albums in order to demonstrate that it predates them. Focusing on the correspondence between AAJHL and GEH in Chapter Two, I will trace as closely as possible the album's provenance and authorship. I will compare images in *Paris Aviation 1910* that are identified in the AAJHL archive with images that are not. I will argue that Lartigue indeed authored at least some of the unidentified pictures in the album early in his life. I will then discuss Lartigue's habit of collecting images made by other photographers and his acquaintance with photo reporters, and suggest alternatives to Lartigue's authorship of the unidentified pictures taken at Issy-les-Moulineaux. Using examples of pictures from the airfield section, I will then argue that Lartigue is likely to have taken the photographs and was actually aspiring to make pictures like the photo reporters he admired in his youth.

Research beyond the scope of this thesis is necessary to completely understand *Paris Aviation 1910*. In my conclusion I will describe the work that remains. This includes intervening with the album itself and locating and scrutinizing additional paper trails associated with GEH's acquisition of the album.

Survey of the Literature

John Szarkowski's (1925-2007) 1963 MoMA exhibition *The Photographs of Jacques Henri Lartigue* showcased photographs made by Lartigue when he was as young as nine years old. In the MoMA bulletin for the exhibition, Szarkowski claimed Lartigue was a 'primitive' of modern photography. In Lartigue's early work, identified as between 1905 and 1922,¹⁴ Szarkowski saw all the elements that legitimized the agenda MoMA set out to achieve for art photography in the 1960s: one that foregrounded the inherent characteristics of the medium itself and retroactively set the stage for such vernacular street photographers as Gary Winogrand, Lee Friedlander and Henri Cartier-Bresson who were being showcased by MoMA at the time.¹⁵ According to Szarkowski, camera operators who had "an artistic eye, and a mind free of artistic theories" achieved this foregrounding – Lartigue "made photographs with a graphic directness and the poetic observation which characterize the best miniature camera work of a generation later."¹⁶ Szarkowski essentially theorized Lartigue-the-child into an ancestor of modernist photography's historical trajectory. By doing so, he laid the theoretical groundwork of what came to constitute modern art photography in America in the 1960s and ultimately framed how Lartigue's work came to be understood.

As a result of Szarkowski's modernist framework, a Lartigue industry took shape. Beginning in 1966, just three years after his debut at MoMA, *Boyhood Photos of J.H.*

¹⁴ See Szarkowski, "The Photographs of Jacques Henri Lartigue."

¹⁵ For more on how MoMA foregrounded the inherent characteristics of photography in order to label it art, see Szarkowski, *The Photographers Eye*. Also see Moore, "The Critical Fortune of Lartigue," 254-266.

¹⁶ Szarkowski, "The Photographs of Jacques Henri Lartigue," no pagination.

Lartigue: The Family Album of a Gilded Age was published. The book contains modern reproductions of photographs from the belle époque and was available only as a limited edition. It has text and captions written by Jean Fordin based on interviews with Lartigue and presented Lartigue as having a “childlike delight and a kind of unshadowed charm.”¹⁷

In 1970, the Viking Press published *Diary of a Century*. The book was an editorial *tour de force* conceived by American fashion photographer Richard Avedon. Avedon met Lartigue for the first time in 1966 and maintained a relationship with him over the next few years. A collaborative project between the two men, *Diary of a Century* includes 200 of Lartigue’s photographs that Avedon selected from more than 10,000.¹⁸ It also includes selections from Lartigue’s diaries, made by Lartigue himself.¹⁹

At the time, Avedon believed that photography was trapped by ideas of capital ‘A’ art. Photography was, according to Avedon, “the second child trying to prove itself.”²⁰ He felt that critics refused to take him, and his success as a fashion photographer, seriously. Szarkowski’s modernist approach to everyday-photographs-as-art changed the rules of the game from which Avedon had always felt excluded. Using Lartigue’s vernacular imagery already accepted as capital ‘A’ art, Avedon, with *Diary of a Century*, achieved success and recognition by showcasing his photographic layout and design skills. While *Diary of a Century* helped Avedon move his own agenda forward, it also reinforced Szarkowski’s conception of Lartigue as a naïve vernacular photographer.

¹⁷ Lartigue, *Boyhood Photos of J.H. Lartigue*, 5.

¹⁸ Carolyn Burke, “Pleasures and Days,” Avedon returned to Paris in May with his friend Bea Feitler.

¹⁹ Ibid, In October, when Avedon and Feitler devised the final layout.

²⁰ Masters of Photography: Jacques Henri Lartigue, http://masters-of-photography.com/L/lartigue/lartigue_articles2.html (accessed August 30, 2011).

Indeed, the New York Times critic A.D. Coleman called it “a profoundly rewarding book by a photographer whose eyes have retained their innocent delight.”²¹

The appetite for Lartigue’s photographs increased throughout the 1970s and into the ‘80s. This hunger was fed by numerous publications and exhibitions that were organized around themes or particular periods of Lartigue’s life. Often put together with input from Lartigue and including text and/or captions written by someone else, for the most part the images were presented as those made by someone with the innocent eye of a by-gone era. In 1974 *J.H. Lartigue: Les autos: Et autres engins roulants* and *Les femmes* were published. In 1975, when Lartigue’s career as a photographer was really gaining momentum, he wrote *Mémoires sans mémoire*, which was loosely based on his diaries. In the same year he also had his first French retrospective at the Musée des Art Décoratifs in Paris – Lartigue then donated his life’s work to the French Ministry of Culture in 1979 and in the 1980s even more books were published. In 1980, Viking Press published *Les femmes aux cigarettes* and in 1981 *Autochromes de J.H. Lartigue, 1912-1927*. In 1984, “Jacques Henri Lartigue” was published in the *Masters of Photography* series with text written by Brian Coe. *J.H. Lartigue: Watersides*, and *Jacques Henri Lartigue: A Boy with a Camera* were published in the early 1990s.

The literature up to this point however, failed to provide an in-depth look at the historical context in which Lartigue made some of his most famous images. *Album of a Century: Lartigue* was published in 2003 and is the catalogue that accompanied the first retrospective exhibition of 130 of Lartigue’s photographic albums at the Centre Georges

²¹ Carolyn Burke, “Pleasures and Days,” *Diary* came out in December 1970 to great acclaim.

Pompidou in Paris, France. Those albums had never been exhibited before 2003. The book contains six essays, the first two written by Alain Sayag and Clément Chéroux. In his essay “A Free and Innocent Eye,” Sayag discusses the de-contextualization of Lartigue’s photographic albums. He first addresses the appeal Lartigue’s photographs had to Szarkowski at MoMA in the 1960s, and traces Lartigue’s entrance into modern art institutions as a result. In the essay “Jacques Henri Lartigue: The Memory of an Instant,” Chéroux discusses the idea that Lartigue’s work represents a history of the amateur snapshot, and that photography, in the context of the modern art industry, underwent a shift from an emphasis on technology to an emphasis on capturing a precise moment. The director of the Lartigue Donation Martine d’Astier wrote an essay titled “The Autobiographical Enterprise: The Invention of Heaven,” covering the albums 1894-1919. In it d’Astier summarizes Lartigue’s fragility as a boy, his beginnings as a young photographer, and his belief that happiness existed only if one kept remembrances of it. In “The Magical Games of Lartigue: Photography – Painting – Writing,” for albums 1920-1943, Quentin Bajac defines Lartigue by his refusal of history and his turn inward. He describes the narrative that begins to emerge in the albums of this time period, arguing that only carefully organized reflections were depicted. Kevin Moore elaborates on Szarkowski’s discovery of Lartigue while writing about the albums 1944-1986 in “The Critical Fortune of Lartigue.” Moore posits that Lartigue’s fame forced France to recognize the potential value of photography as art. Finally, Maryse Cordesse describes Lartigue’s donation to the French Ministry of Culture.

Kevin Moore’s 2004 book *Jacques Henri Lartigue: The Invention of an Artist*, is also a comprehensive attempt at redressing the Lartigue industry begun by Szarkowski in

the 1960s. Moore contextualizes Lartigue and his photographic production in two ways: first as the Lartigue who is formed in the French belle époque, and second, as the Lartigue undergoing transformation in America during the 1960s and '70s.²²

The first section of Moore's book, "Formation," treats Lartigue as a product of France's visual culture at the turn of the last century. Moore's visual culture was characterized by the second wave of amateur photographers, and later filmmakers, using the fast emulsions of gelatin silver bromide dry plates and hand held cameras for instantaneous image making. Moore also makes the important point that Lartigue was amongst the first generation to be brought up on photography-based mass media; by seventeen Lartigue was having pictures published in sports and fashion magazines and operating a motion picture camera.²³

The second section of the book, "Transformations," addresses John Szarkowski's modernist framing of Lartigue in the 1960s. Modern art movements are usually defined by their breaking with past conventions, foregrounding form over content, and drawing attention to the materiality of the medium.²⁴ Lartigue's early work, made right on the precipice of photography's transition from slow emulsions and tripod based image making to the hand held camera and instantaneous photography, allowed Szarkowski to map a modernist agenda onto what was essentially the result of scientific, technological and mechanical change. Szarkowski's assimilation of Lartigue's photographs into a modernist canon allowed him to use Lartigue's images to question the very nature of

²² Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 11-12.

²³ *Ibid*, 9.

²⁴ Sturken, "Glossary," 360.

photography itself and the medium's unique aesthetic identity.²⁵ Lartigue's images provided historical 'evidence' as a legitimizing agent: with Lartigue's images, Szarkowski was able to ask viewers to consider photography's history, to consider a wider body of work than the high formalism of Alfred Stieglitz or Edward Weston, for example. He was also cultivating recognition for photography's "vernacular works." According to Moore, Lartigue became a poster child in a campaign to broaden awareness and understanding of photography's aesthetic history.²⁶ Thus, Moore states, by ushering Lartigue into the modern art canon, Szarkowski presented photography as a closed, formal universe where "vernacular and art photographs shared equal footing."²⁷ According to Moore, Lartigue's transformed identity was "formulated in the hothouse of American postwar formalism – geared to the issues and expectations of a new and spirited generation of American curators, artists and critics – less to him as an actual individual shaped by another era and culture."²⁸

Moore also emphasizes how durable Szarkowski's Lartigue has been. However, he also notes that much of that durability can be attributed to Lartigue himself. Anticipating posthumous fame, Lartigue donated his life's work to the French Ministry of Culture thereby re-inventing himself as an archive.²⁹ As Moore emphasizes, the archive has major pitfalls for historians. Lartigue's albums were remade at least twice, the most recent reconfiguration, as explained above, taking place in the early 1970s when his fame as a photographer peaked. Yet, as Moore states, in almost all publications on Lartigue,

²⁵ Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

the albums are accepted as products of the French belle époque, as original fabrications of the young Lartigue, which they are not.³⁰

In the last decade, with the death of Florette Lartigue and the resurfacing of the collection of Renée Pearle (Lartigue's companion and model in the 1930s), vintage prints attributed to Lartigue have appeared on the market. This is key for Moore, for whom the vintage print, "valued by the historian for its sedimentary deposit of historical detail...offers a glimpse into a more 'authentic' Lartigue." In fact, it is this more 'authentic' Lartigue that Moore seeks in his book, – "the Lartigue formed by cultural and technological conditions that defined photographic practice in France over 100 years ago."³¹

Paris Aviation 1910 is first and foremost a photographic album. But as its subject matter is aviation, I found it necessary to review literature that discussed early developments in heavier-than-air flight and where, if at all, these developments intersected with early developments in photography. Congruent with conditions that defined photographic practice were the scientific, technological and mechanical advancements in aviation. The scale model plane – the subject of more than half the photographs in *Paris Aviation 1910* – and gelatin silver bromide dry plate photography, were used as instruments in early scientific developments of heavier-than-air flight. In the chapter titled "The Last Work" in her 1992 book *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey*, Marta Braun addresses Marey's use of dry plate photography in the development of the cambered wing.³² The twentieth century brought with it

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Braun, "The Last Work," 212-220.

breakthroughs in instantaneous photography and by extension, aviation. Scale model planes were central to early developments in aviation and indeed Marey's successive snapshots of a small paper plane in flight lead to the discovery of stall which had crucial impacts on flight at the time.³³ Henceforth, he created his own version of a wind tunnel wherein he could – with the use of photography – visualize the airflow around an airplane wing.³⁴ While not about Lartigue's images of model planes *per se*, Braun's chapter fleshes out the important role that model planes had in the development of early aviation.

Also, Lartigue was a young boy when he became interested in photography and aviation, and for many young boys the model plane was a toy used to put early flying machines to the test.³⁵ A book like Francis A. Collins' *The Boys' Book of Model Planes* demonstrates the international pervasiveness of model plane building as "The New Sport for Boys." The form and content of the imagery in *Paris Aviation 1910* conflates popular advancements and emerging trends in photography *and* aviation.

Paris Aviation 1910 is also a cultural artifact, an object with a history of its own. I therefore reviewed the literature that discussed photographic objects in the context of Material Culture Studies. Analyzing the trajectory of cultural artifacts as they move on the continuum of public and private space is the focus of Glenn Willumson's chapter titled "Making Meaning: Displaced materiality in the library and art museum" in *Photographs Objects Histories* edited by Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart. Willumson's chapter sets out to foreground the materiality of photographic objects and their supporting medium as a way of understanding their significance at different

³³ Ibid, 217.

³⁴ Ibid, 219-220.

³⁵ Collins, "The New Sport for Boys," 4.

historical moments. He claims that historical moments can still be seen in an object's "atmospheric trail;" that close scrutiny of an object's material existence reveals traces of meaning left behind as a result of contextual shifts. These "gossamer traces," according to Willumson, suggests the need to evaluate photographs as different kinds of historical objects – ones whose meanings change in different social situations.³⁶ His section on a collection of seven photographic albums held at the Getty Research Institute traces the use of commercially produced imagery in the nineteenth century to create albums that were personal and memorable. Willumson states that over time, the albums' ties to personal history and significant memory were broken. The death of the inspiration for the albums resulted in them being consigned to the auction house where they embarked on a new path as public objects.³⁷ They took on new meanings as they moved into new contexts. Willumson's essay addresses the importance of tracing an object's material trajectory and why this is particularly integral to understanding photographic objects. His notion of trajectory is not, however, "the straight lines of geometry, but the incomplete, soft-edged outline of a vapour trail."³⁸ It is through the vaporous wake of *Paris Aviation 1910* that I wish to navigate.

³⁶ Willumson, "Making Meaning," 62-3.

³⁷ Ibid, 65.

³⁸ Ibid, 62.

Chapter One

Album Description

*“The swifter the motion of the object photographed the more the photographer who managed to obtain a clear picture demonstrated his virtuosity.”*³⁹

Lartigue’s images represent a remarkable ability to photographically picture motion in the dynamic, accelerated and newly mechanized environment that characterized the French belle époque. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe saw the invention of the automobile, the bicycle and heavier-than-air manned flight. Developments in photographic technology also made it possible to capture this new world laying the foundations for the kind of instantaneous photographs seen in *Paris Aviation 1910*. The commercial availability of faster emulsions and the convenience of dry plates gave rise to a new repertoire of forms. Among them were galloping horses, motorcars and locomotives at full speed, not to mention the new flying machines.

The images in *Paris Aviation 1910* were made using the French made Gaumont Block-Notes, a dry plate hand held camera. The camera was a gift to Lartigue from his father in 1904.⁴⁰ On one page in the large 1910 album in the AAJHL collection, Lartigue lists all the cameras he used that year. Included in the list is the Block-Notes, which produced 4.5 by 6 cm glass negatives. Lartigue also notes his use of this camera, or its plate size, in other instances where images from *Paris Aviation 1910* reappear in the larger albums.

Dry plates were invented to replace the messy, cumbersome wet plate process. In 1871 Richard L. Maddox introduced a new practical solution. He mixed a warm

³⁹ Chéroux, “Jacques Henri Lartigue,” 21.

⁴⁰ Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 58.

solution of gelatin with cadmium bromide and silver nitrate, spread it on a glass plate and allowed it to dry. Sensitivity was still slower than wet collodion, and the process only improved when Charles Harper Bennet matured the emulsion for several days at thirty-two degrees centigrade. Following Bennet's improvements, the plates were capable of exposures as fast as 1/25 of a second, an extremely sensitive emulsion at the time. More importantly, unlike wet plates, dry plates could be prepared in advance and developed in the darkroom a relatively long time after exposure.⁴¹ The key to the dry plate's success was its industrial production. In 1889, the *Congrès international de photographie*, held at the Paris World's Fair, established standards for the widespread manufacture of photographic materials.⁴² They included industrially produced cameras and standard size dry plates.

A camera like Lartigue's Block-Notes was part of the influx of small, hand held dry plate cameras that flooded the market at the beginning of the twentieth century. It had a reloadable magazine that held multiple plates that made it possible to take a number of shots without having to stop and reload.⁴³ The ability to shoot now and develop later was coupled with faster emulsions allowing camera manufacturers to engineer cameras with shutter speeds well below one second. Lartigue's Block-Notes had a shutter speed of 1/100 of a second, a very fast speed at that time.⁴⁴ There are many images in *Paris Aviation 1910* that demonstrate Lartigue's engagement with the early twentieth century trends and tropes of hand held dry plate instantaneous image making. For example,

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Moore, "Notes, Chapter 1: Amateur Photography," note number forty-two in *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 226.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 58.

Lartigue photographed real airplanes from a distance and toy models at close proximity. Using equipment fast enough to capture moving airplanes from a distance (such as those Lartigue photographed at Issy-les-Moulineaux airfield outside Paris and that make up a large portion of the first sixty-six images in *Paris Aviation 1910*) his Block-Notes could not capture fast moving model planes photographed at close range. Image number ninety-five in *Paris Aviation 1910* shows a model plane in flight (Figure 1.1). The background however, is blurred. In order to capture the plane, Lartigue would have had to pan his



Figure 1.1. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number ninety-five, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

camera along the trajectory of the model's flight. Sacrificing the background for the novelty of capturing the toy model plane in motion, Lartigue's image represents the desirable aspects of the new technology, and its inherent limits.⁴⁵

Dry plate instantaneous photography also brought with it its own brand of publications, instruction books and how-to guides. *Photo-magazine's* games editor, France C. Chaplot, wrote *La photographie récréative et fantaisiste*, a workbook for the new serious amateur with more than 200 recipes for making trick photographs.⁴⁶ Lartigue uses one such "trick" in image sixty-six in *Paris Aviation 1910* (Figure 1.2). The aim of an instantaneous photograph was to capture a split second of dynamic movement. However, often only a portion of the picture space was occupied by this privileged moment; the rest of the image was uninteresting background information. Compositional concerns were best addressed during post production of the print.⁴⁷ According to Chaplot, a photographer could add drama to the image by rotating the print slightly, giving the photograph a steeper horizon line, and cropping the print where necessary.⁴⁸ Crop lines drawn on many of Lartigue's citrate contact prints show that he used this 'trick' when making enlargements for his large albums.⁴⁹

The album structure of *Paris Aviation 1910* was also a popular mode of display for photographs at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is a small album for contact prints made from industrially manufactured, standard size dry plates. Its roots lie in the prefabricated, nineteenth century albums designed to display *carte-de-visite*

⁴⁵ Lartigue also used this technique for his photographs of the Grand Prix of the A.C.F., 1913. See Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 89.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 51.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 55.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 56.



Figure 1.2. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number sixty-six, *Paris Aviation 1910*. .3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

photographs. The visiting card gained popularity in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and an entire industry sprang up around its production.

Carte-de-visite images were made using a camera with multiple lenses. By removing the lens caps one at a time, the operator could make multiple exposures of the same pose or different poses. The result was a negative plate bearing several small images. The plate was contact printed, the images cut and mounted on 4.5 x 2.5 inch cards.⁵⁰ Often the studio or photographer's logo was stamped on the back of the card, or on the front, beneath the image. The negative could be used to make limitless numbers of paper prints. The prints could then be bought, sold, traded, and installed in photograph albums by simply slipping the card into the mat openings. This is similar to how Lartigue

⁵⁰ Lavédrine, "Albumen Prints (1850-1900)," 120.

would have slipped his contact prints into the mat openings in the pages of *Paris Aviation 1910*.

Most important is *Paris Aviation 1910*'s thematic organization; it is a collection of photographs about aviation. Generally speaking, thematic image compilations began at the same time as the *carte-de-visite*. Mass-produced images were collected and placed in albums according to themes such as famous people, places visited or special events, and annotated in a manner similar to Lartigue's organization and captioning of his aviation photographs.

I have identified the handwriting on the pages of *Paris Aviation 1910* as Lartigue's.⁵¹ In the late nineteenth century assembling an album, choosing, sequencing, organizing and captioning the images, domesticated the commercially made pictures and made the album a form of individual expression.⁵² Lartigue's *Paris Aviation 1910* – an early twentieth century extension of late nineteenth century modes of collecting and compiling photographs – is an individual expression; his inscriptions note the aviators and airplane manufacturers he admired: Louis Blériot, Henri Farman, Gabriel Voisin, Hubert Latham, René Hanriot, Paul de Lesseps, André Dubonnet, Léon and Robert Morane, Antoine Odiér, Raul Vendôme, Witzig, Lioré and Dutilleul (WLD), Rossel-Peugeot, and the Antoinette Company.

It is, however, an individualistic expression of its time – a thematic picture archive about aviation, as opposed to his larger albums, which are a narrative made of pictures. Lartigue divided *Paris Aviation 1910* in two, the first section mostly housing his

⁵¹ Selma Zarhloul, collections assistant, Lartigue donation, e-mail message to the author, March 7, 2011.

⁵² Willumson, "Making Meaning," 63.

pictures of real planes at Issy-les-Moulineaux (Figure 1.3 and 1.4), and the second section showcasing his pictures of model planes (Figure 1.5 and 1.6). By contrast, in his large album for 1909, he highlighted the Blériot II airplane by combining pictures of real planes and models on a single page in a dynamic and stylistic page layout (Figure 1.7). Flying his most up to date monoplane, Louis Blériot was the first to cross the English channel in July, 1909.⁵³ For the purpose of narrating triumphs from the belle époque, Lartigue used photographs taken in the past to make engaging compositions half a decade later.

The models seen on this page of the 1909 album are reproductions of images number 122, 123 and 124 in *Paris Aviation 1910* seen in figures 1.5 and 1.6. In fact, *Paris Aviation 1910* is a flaw in Lartigue's large album chronology; images peppered throughout the album also appear in the larger work that covers 1907-1911. Not a surprising margin of error given that Lartigue looked back through almost sixty years of photographs to reconstruct his life through old pictures.

Evidence of Lartigue's reconstructive project is seen in the reappearance of many images from *Paris Aviation 1910* in the larger work. It must be remembered that Szarkowski created Lartigue's identity as a modern art photographer with his MoMA exhibit in 1963, and that in *Diary of a Century*, Avedon molded Lartigue's imagery into a book with innovative page layout and design (Figure 1.8 and 1.9). The effect of Avedon cropping, enlarging and chronologically organizing Lartigue's images to critical acclaim

⁵³ Magoun, *A History of Aircraft*, 351.

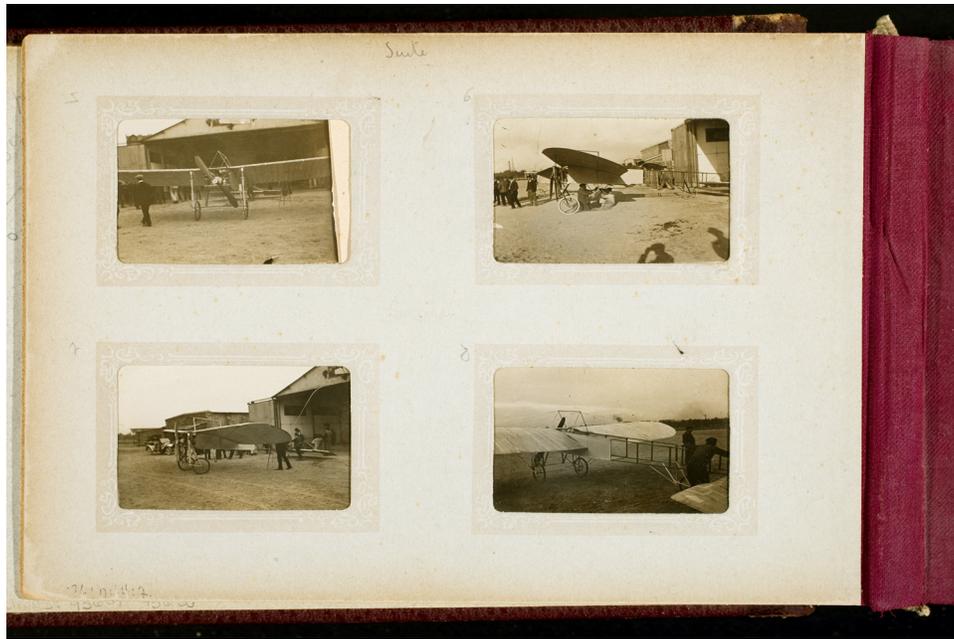


Figure 1.3. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910*. Page two, 16.2 x 23.5 cm. Images number five, six, seven and eight, 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 1.4. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910*. Page eight, 16.2 x 23.5 cm. Images number twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-one and thirty-two, 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 1.5. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910*. Page thirty-one, 16.2 x 23.5 cm. Images number 119, 120, 121, and 122, 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

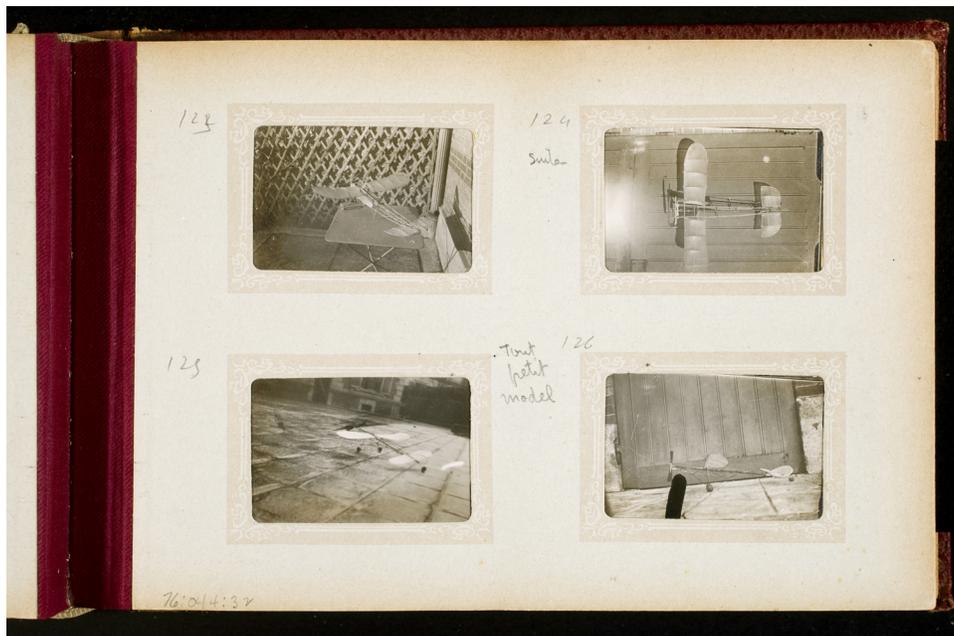


Figure 1.6. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910*. Page thirty-two, 16.2 x 23.5 cm. Images 123, 124, 125 and 126, 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

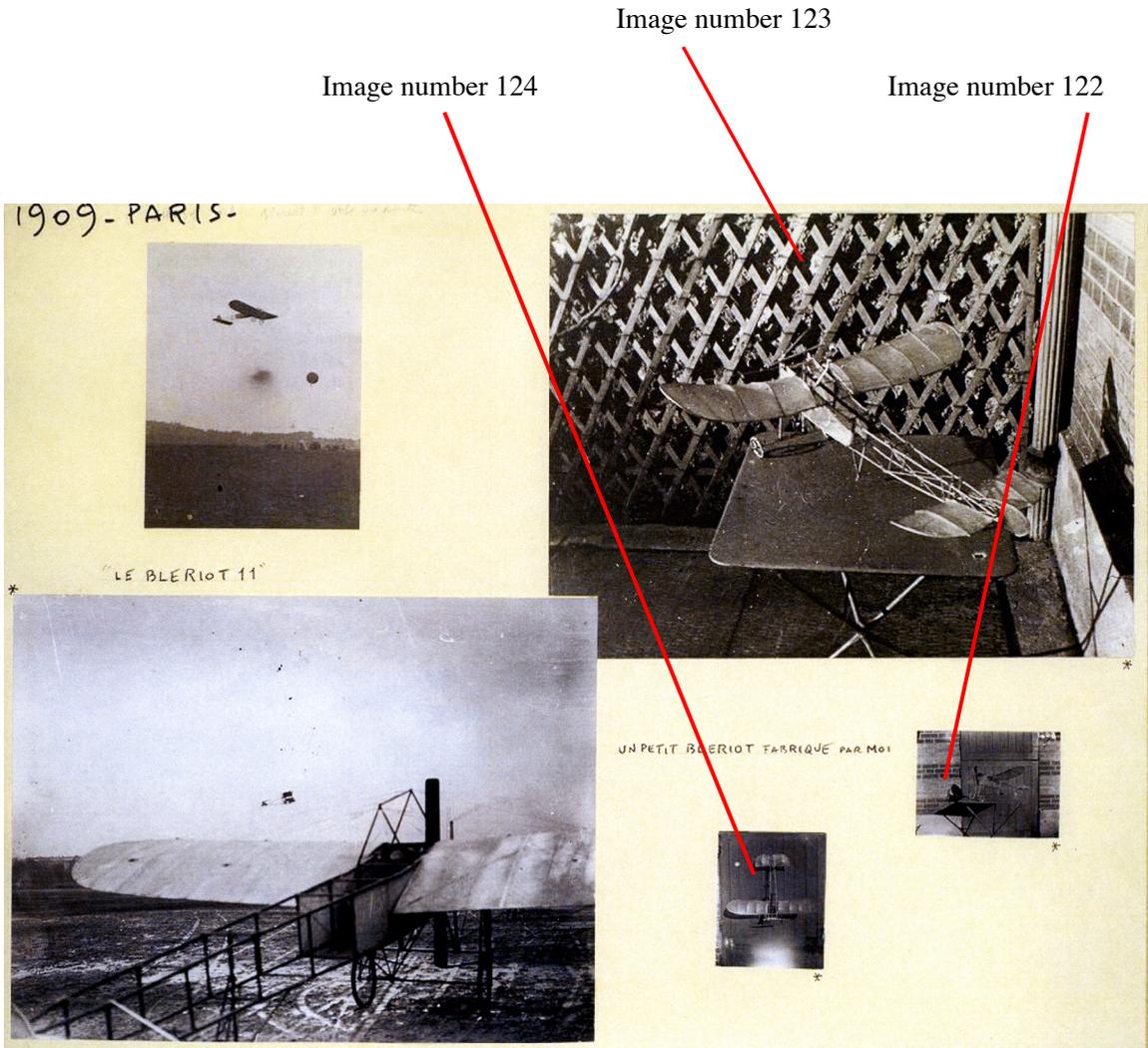


Figure 1.7. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Single page spread, large album stamped 1909. 37 x 53 cm with reproductions of images number 122 (4.3 x 5.9 cm), 123 (18 x 24 cm), and 124 (4.5 x 5.6 cm) from *Paris Aviation 1910*. AAJHL.

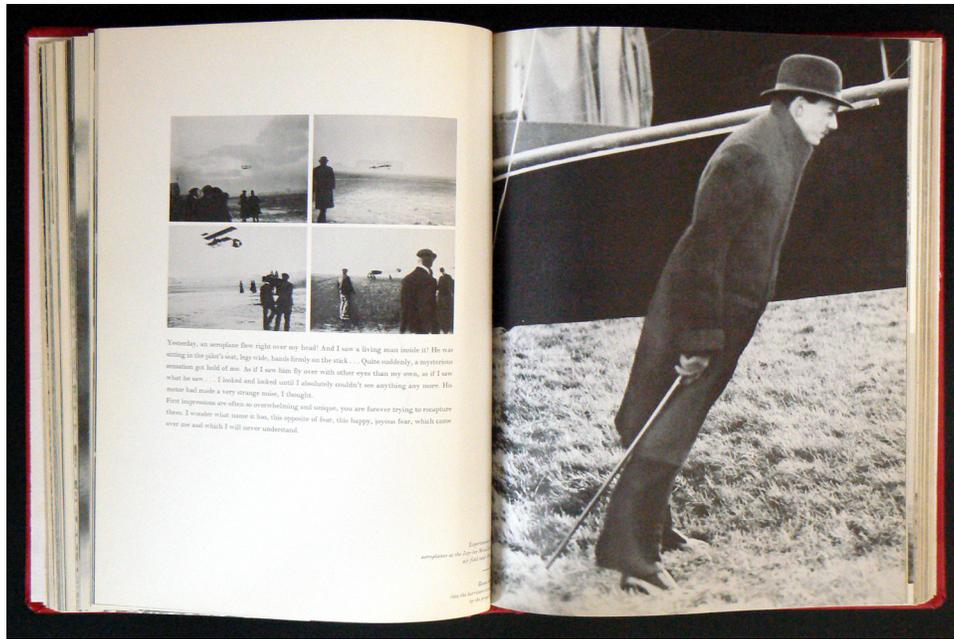


Figure 1.8. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Two page spread, *Diary of a Century* edited by Richard Avedon.

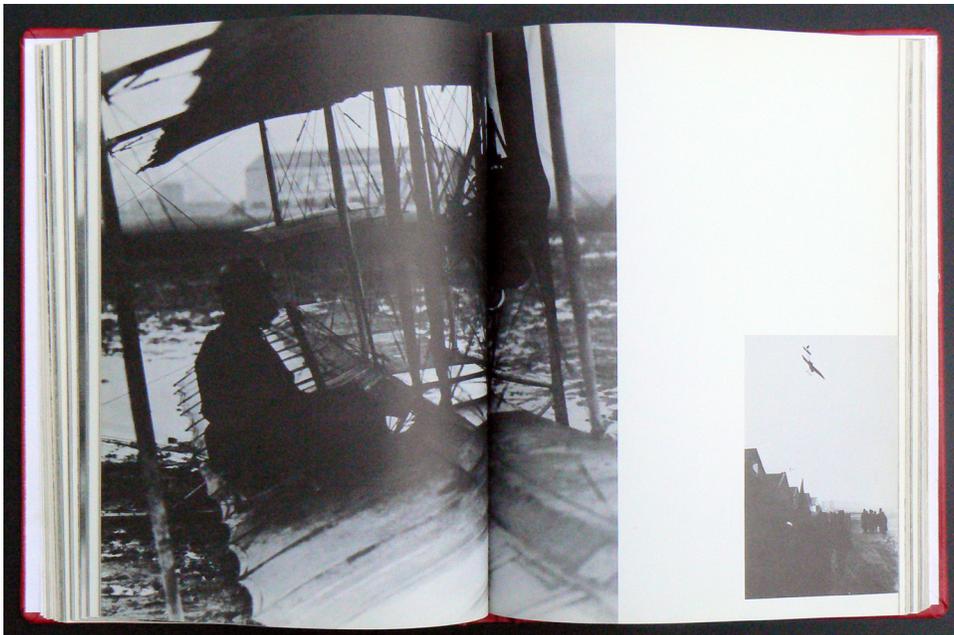


Figure 1.9. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Two-page spread, *Diary of a Century* edited by Richard Avedon.

likely influenced Lartigue's decision to reorganize his albums. He essentially reworked his albums to better reflect his identity as constructed by Szarkowski and carried forward by Avedon. Images number fifty, fifty-one and fifty-two on page thirteen of *Paris Aviation 1910* also reappear as enlargements, this time in the AAJHL album stamped 1910 (Figure 1.10). Similarly, images number seventy-three, eighty-seven, 137, and 140 reappear as enlargements in the album stamped 1908 (Figure 1.11). The most obvious difference is layout. The horizontal placement of many portrait oriented images such as images fifty-two and 140 for example, indicate that *Paris Aviation 1910* served a functional purpose. It organized a visual record of people, places, and events related to aviation, whereas the large album layouts are compositions of photographs meant to please the eye. Of the seven images cited above, five are known to be modern prints, one vintage, and the other unknown. For Lartigue, the actual provenance of pictures was unimportant. The primary goal of the large albums was to narrate his life through pictures, no matter whether the photographs were vintage prints or modern recreations. They are thus a hybrid of past and present; vintage prints next to modern ones in the context of art.

We are limited in what we can glean about Lartigue's early photographic practice from the existing large albums. However, *Paris Aviation 1910* is a visual example of how Lartigue organized his uniformly sized snapshots in prefabricated aperture albums at the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time he had a system of organization that was not strictly chronological, but which adhered more to the conventions of album compilation in the nineteenth century, one with a thematic emphasis. *Paris Aviation 1910* reflects how Lartigue engaged the medium of photography in 1910, and how he used

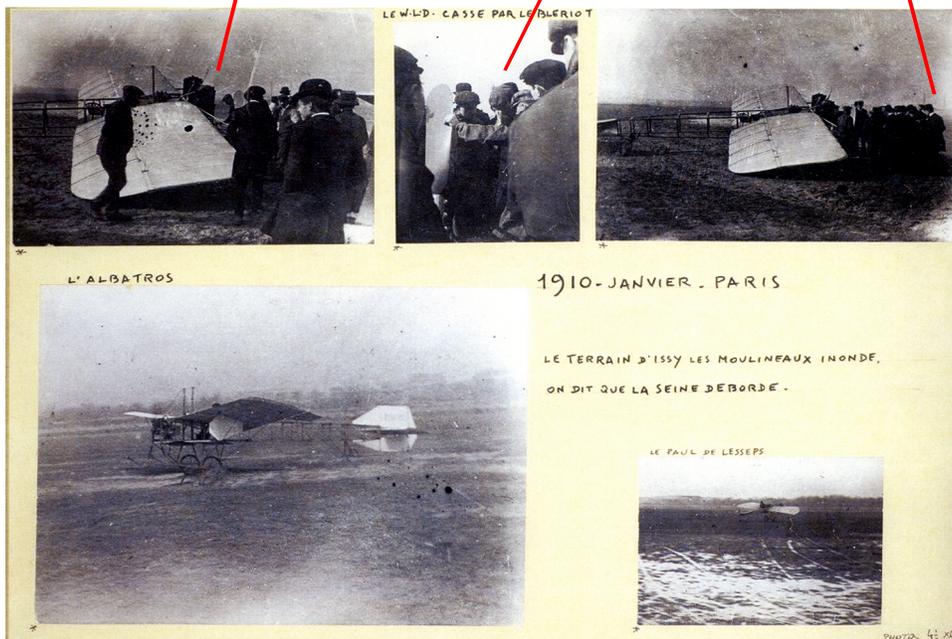
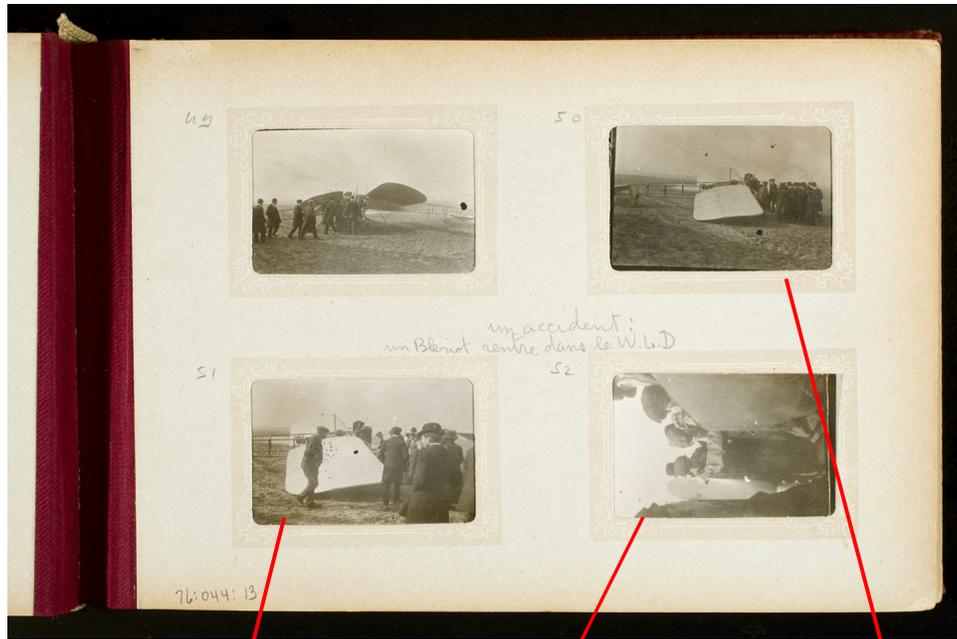


Figure 1.10. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Images number fifty, fifty-one and fifty-two, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH. Single page spread, large album stamped 1910. 37 x 53 cm with reproductions of images number fifty (12.7 x 18 cm), fifty-one (12.8 x 17.7 cm), and fifty-two (unknown dimensions) from *Paris Aviation 1910*. AAJHL.

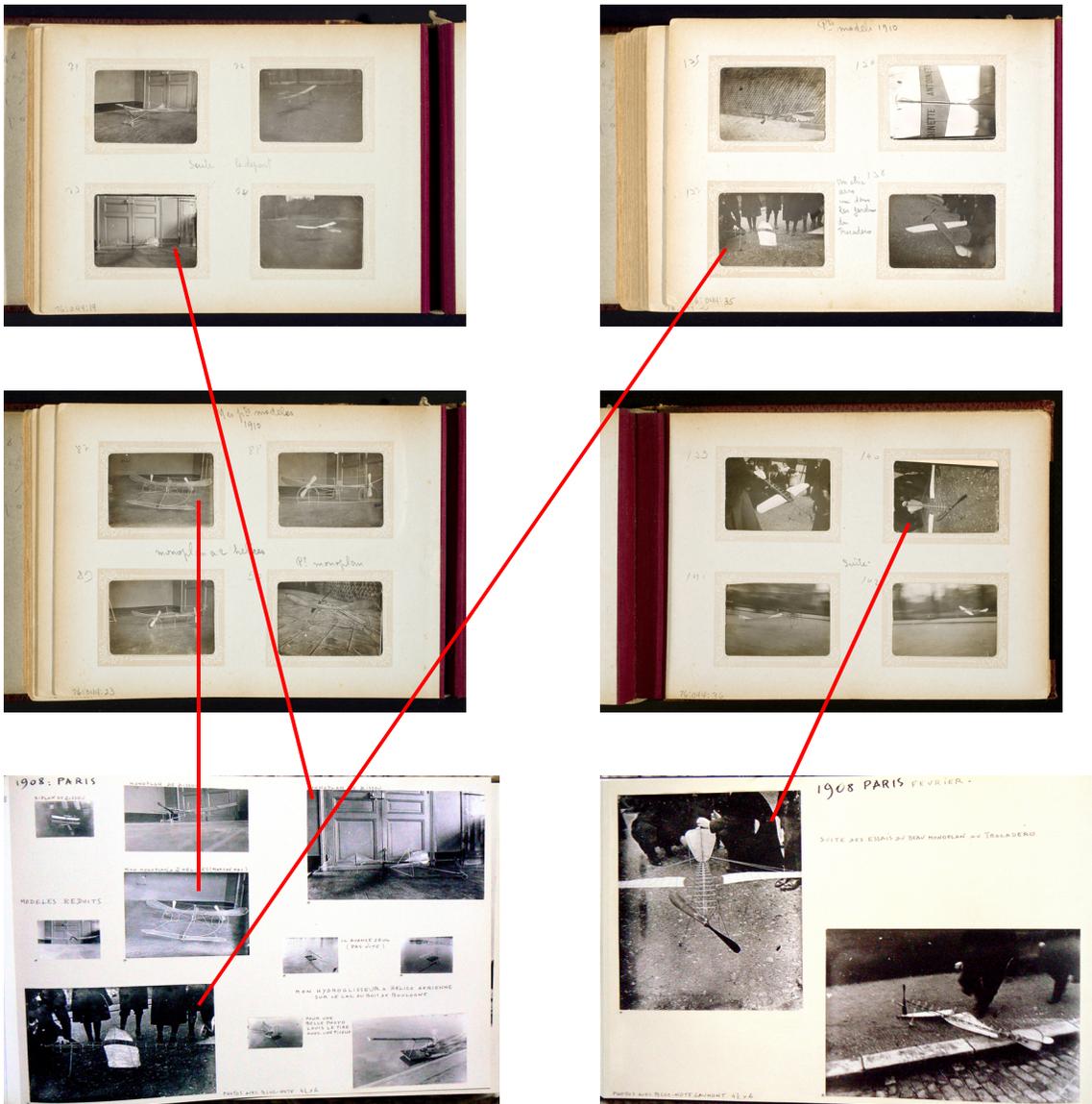


Figure 1.11. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Images number seventy-three, eighty-seven, 137, and 140, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH. Two single page spreads, large album stamped 1908. 37 x 53 cm with reproductions of images number seventy-three (12 x 8 cm), eighty-seven (9 x 11.9 cm), 137 (12.3 x 12.7 cm), and 140 (18 x 24 cm) from *Paris Aviation 1910*. AAJHL.

popular modes of image making and display. Ultimately, it shows us what Lartigue's early photographic practice looked like before he made his large albums and remade them after his 1963 MoMA exhibit.

Given the intentionality of Lartigue's later photographic enterprise and the effort he made to donate his life's work to the French Ministry of Culture, the question arises: how did *Paris Aviation 1910* find its way to the collection of photographs at GEH and why are only half the images identified in the Lartigue archive? It is to the provenance and authorship of the album that I now wish to turn.

Chapter Two

Provenance / Authorship

*.. movement and shifting from private to public, from commercial to a confined social meaning and back to commodity, on the art market, marks the photo object.*⁵⁴

The database records at GEH indicate the purchase of the album in 1976 when Robert Sobieszek was curator of photographs, just four years after Lartigue remade his large albums and three years before he made his donation to the French Ministry of Culture. The inside cover of the album has in pencil “*148 photos / original d’avion / et maquettes d’avion / toutes faites en 1910 / 800 frs.*” The latter number indicates that the album was for sale at some point for 800 French francs. At the time the album was purchased, no one knew that any of the images were by Lartigue. However, in 1992 Sobieszek – having left GEH in 1990 and working at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) – notified the museum that he recognized one of the album’s images in the book *En Avion* by Pierre Borhan, Erick Gudimard and Véronique Masini. Sobieszek initiated contact between GEH and AAJHL and confirmed Lartigue’s authorship.⁵⁵

The database at GEH also gives the source of acquisition: a bookseller listed as *Dux amateurs de livres*. Yet my search for a French book vendor by that name turned up nothing. It did, however, lead me to the website of a retailer of monographs and print

⁵⁴ Willumson, “Making Meaning,” 62.

⁵⁵ The ‘Notes’ field from The Museum System database record for *Paris Aviation 1910* at George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film, accession number 1976:0044:001-150.

books established in Paris in the 1930s called “*Aux amateurs de livres*” (The Place of Book Lovers) with links to various private booksellers.⁵⁶

Furthermore, files at both GEH and AAJHL contained useful information pertaining to the provenance of the album. Both institutions retain the correspondence they exchanged between April and December 1996 – four years after the attribution of the album, and twenty years after it was acquired by GEH. The letters are between David Wooters who was the collections manager at GEH, French photo conservator Sabrina Esmeraldo, and Martin d’Astier, current director of the Lartigue donation. Driven by a desire to locate as many of the images in *Paris Aviation 1910* in the AAJHL archive as possible, Wooters elicited Esmeraldo’s help; they had become acquainted during her 1995 internship at GEH.⁵⁷ At the prompting of Wooters, and with the assistance of d’Astier, Esmeraldo began her investigative work.

AAJHL has on file a report written by Esmeraldo in May 1996. It is not part of her correspondence with Wooters but describes her efforts to discover the provenance of *Paris Aviation 1910*. In it she writes that the album was acquired from *Aux amateurs de livres*, the same bookseller whose website I encountered, located at 62 avenue de Suffren Paris, France. In the same document, she also describes her effort to discover how the album ended up in the hands of a private bookseller. She traced another album in GEH’s collection which was also purchased from *Aux amateurs de livres*: Adolphe Braun’s

⁵⁶ Aux Amateurs de Livres international, =fr&u=http://www.auxam.fr/&ei=S5wITqmW JobX0QGHscD0Cg&sa=X&oi=translate&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CckQ7gEwAA &prev=/search%3Fq%3DAux%2BAmateurs%2Bde%2BLivres%26hl%Den%26client%3Dfirefox%26hs%3Dy4r%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26prmd%3Ddivs (accessed April 2, 2011).

⁵⁷ David Wooters, letter to Martine d’Astier on file at AAJHL, April 19 1996.

Fleurs, photographies de Adolphe Braun. GEH purchased the Braun album in 1966⁵⁸ when a M. Marcel Blancheteau was in charge of the export of books. However, Esmeraldo writes that Blancheteau had left the business some twenty years earlier and that the business ownership had since changed several times. Consequently, according to the accountant to whom Esmeraldo made inquiries in 1996, *Aux amateurs de livres* has no record of how it acquired either the Braun album or *Paris Aviation 1910*.⁵⁹ As a result, Esmeraldo speculates in her final letter to Wooters on 29 October, 1996 that *Paris Aviation 1910* might have been lost by Lartigue, or given to one of his friends and later sold by his/her heirs to *Aux amateurs de livres*.⁶⁰ She also writes that d’Astier is convinced the album was stolen at some point.⁶¹ With no paper trail to trace the provenance of the album any further, Esmeraldo embarked on the task of identifying where the photographs in *Paris Aviation 1910* appear in Lartigue’s larger albums and whether AAJHL had any of the corresponding negatives.

In her October 29, 1996 letter Esmeraldo sends a spreadsheet in which she lists the 150 images in *Paris Aviation 1910* and where they appear in the AAJHL albums (album year, month, page number and whether the print is vintage or modern). Whenever possible, she also lists the negative number corresponding to each image. Of the 150 images in the album, Esmeraldo identifies reproductions of seventy-five – or exactly half – in the larger albums, twenty-five from the first half of *Paris Aviation 1910*,

⁵⁸ Sabrina Esmeraldo, Paris-based photo conservator, document on file at AAJHL for *Paris Aviation 1910*, May 1996, and confirmed by Alana West, Howard and Carole Tanenbaum Fellow in the Department of Photographs, GEH, e-mail message to the author, August 19, 2011.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Sabrina Esmeraldo, letter to David Wooters with attached spreadsheet, on file at AAJHL and GEH, October 29 1996.

⁶¹ Ibid.

the section depicting aviation activities at Issy-les-Moulineaux, and fifty from the section depicting model planes. In the letter Esmeraldo also suggests that someone else made the unidentified images.⁶²

No one knows the identity of the author or authors of the other half of the photographs in *Paris Aviation 1910*. There are no negatives for them and no enlargements in the albums at AAJHL. Further investigation is beyond the limits of this study. Examining the versos of all 150 images in *Paris Aviation 1910* would probably be of great help in understanding the source of the images. However, GEH places preservation concerns first and the album pages are extremely fragile, as are the prints. Therefore these questions must remain unanswered for the moment.⁶³ Yet it is possible that the unidentified photographs in *Paris Aviation 1910* are by Lartigue. The identified and unidentified images are not separated in the album – they are included amongst the two distinct categories of aviation pictures and often appear one right next to the other. Nor is there any obvious difference in composition or style between those that are known to exist in the archive at AAJHL and those that are not. They are the exploits of a young boy independently wielding his very own Block-Notes camera and do only one thing really well: record an object on film.⁶⁴

For example, image number forty-seven – an unidentified picture – and image number eight – an identified one – are almost exact inversions of each other from the Issy-les-Moulineaux section of the album (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). Images number fifteen

⁶² Sabrina Esmeraldo, Paris-based photo conservator, e-mail message to the author, April 11, 2011.

⁶³ Jamie Allen, Assistant Curator, GEH, e-mail to the author, April 14, 2011.

⁶⁴ Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 61.

and forty-one (Figures 2.3 and 2.4) share almost the exact same composition, as do images number twenty-nine and thirty (Figures 2.5 and 2.6) from the same section.

Other comparisons between identified and unidentified pictures in the album also suggest Lartigue's authorship. Image number eighty-eight (Figure 2.7), unidentified in the AAJHL archive, is a picture of the same model plane taken in the same location as the one seen in identified images number eighty-seven and eighty-nine (Figure 2.8 and 2.9).⁶⁵ Image number eighty-eight is taken from a slightly lower vantage point. But the wing on the right hand side of the frame is slightly cropped making it a less than ideal picture. In 1910, Lartigue likely kept all the images he made related to the subject of aviation. The inability to locate a reproduction or negative for image number eighty-eight in the AAJHL archive suggests that Lartigue may have culled his collection and disposed of his 'less acceptable' exposures before donating his life's work to the French Ministry of Culture in 1979. The same can be said about images eighteen and nineteen (Figures 2.10 and 2.11), and images 102 and 103 (Figures 2.12 and 2.13). The nose of the airplane pictured at Issy-les-Moulineaux in unidentified image number nineteen is slightly angled towards the ground. The same plane in identified image number eighteen however, is in perfect alignment with the horizon line. Compositionally speaking, it is a stronger photograph and would have warranted inclusion in Lartigue's self-made artist's archive. Similarly, the model plane seen in flight in unidentified image number 102 is captured just as it enters the right side of the frame, almost impossible to see against the backdrop of a striped brick wall. But in identified image number 103, Lartigue makes a more

⁶⁵ Imagery of this particular model plane is not unknown in Lartigue's oeuvre; a reproduction of image number eighty-seven appears in his large album stamped 1908 (see Figure 1.12 on page 31 of this document). Image number eighty-nine re-appears in the large album stamped 1909.



Figure 2.1. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number forty-seven. (photographer unknown). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.2. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number eight, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.3. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number fifteen (photographer unknown). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH



Figure 2.4. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number forty-one, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.5. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number twenty-nine (photographer unknown). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.6. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number thirty, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

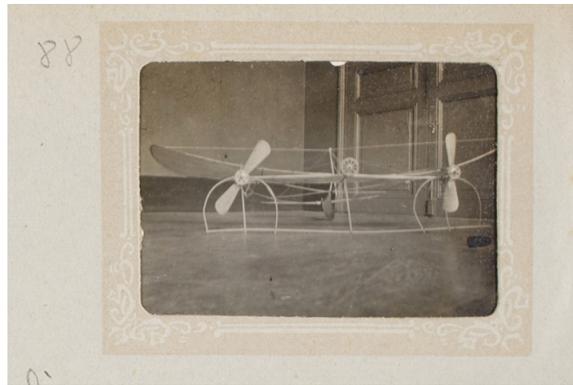


Figure 2.7. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number eighty-eight (photographer unknown). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.8. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number eighty-seven, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

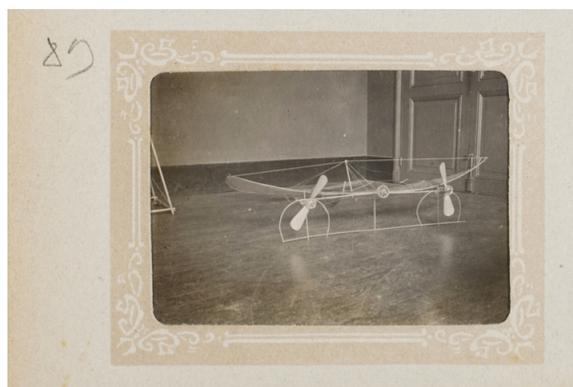


Figure 2.9. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number eighty-nine, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.10. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number eighteen (unknown photographer). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

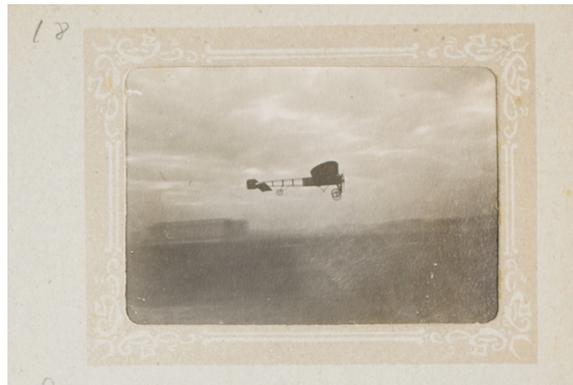


Figure 2.11. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number nineteen, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.12. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number 102 (unknown photographer). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.13. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number 103, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

successful record of the model. He captures it against a dark background in the center of the frame. Lartigue likely took a number of the unidentified photographs in *Paris Aviation 1910*.⁶⁶ It is also highly probable that any album made between 1902 and 1910 would include photographs by multiple authors. For one thing, others in Lartigue's family circle were also enthusiastic photographers at the time.⁶⁷ Lartigue's father and his photographer friend Hubert Laroze, frequently photographed together and shared darkroom secrets, techniques and equipment in Monsieur Lartigue's home darkroom. Lartigue was often present for these communal sessions and makes note of them in his diary entries.⁶⁸ Lartigue did include images taken by his father in his large reconstructed albums,⁶⁹ but Monsieur Lartigue was part of the first wave of amateur photographers. His style therefore, was lifted from amateur photographic culture, which was in turn directly influenced by Beaux-Art principles of composition.⁷⁰ *Paris Aviation 1910* is comprised of dry plate instantaneous photographs – a stark departure from the visual language developed in earlier tripod based wet plate photography. It is therefore highly unlikely that Lartigue's father took any of the unidentified pictures in *Paris Aviation 1910*.⁷¹

In 1910, when Lartigue was sixteen, he began to spend more time with his brother. His social circle began to shift to include his cousins Jean and André Haguet

⁶⁶ Since beginning my research on *Paris Aviation 1910*, an additional six reproductions of images from the album have been located in Lartigue's large albums stamped 1908 and 1909. Martine d'Astier, Director, AAJHL, e-mail message to the author, August 18, 2011.

⁶⁷ Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 58.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 23 and 25.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 68.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 64.

⁷¹ See Moore, "Amateur Photography," in *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 17-69.

(‘Biclo’ and ‘Dédé’) and Raymond Van Weers (‘Oléo’), and his childhood friends Louis and Robert Ferrand (‘Loulou’ and ‘Bobino’) and Henry Broadwater (‘Rico’).⁷² Also at this time – photographically speaking – Lartigue moved from under his father’s wing and, wielding his Block-Notes, was photographing more independently.⁷³ Lartigue’s brother Maurice, nickname ‘Zissou,’ is responsible for at least one image in *Paris Aviation 1910*. Image sixty-six mentioned above (Figure 7), reappears as a cropped enlargement in the large album marked 1910. The inscription from the 1910 album reads: *Latham et Thomas sur ‘Antoinettes’* (Figure 2.14). The image inscription in *Paris Aviation 1910*, in addition to noting specific aircraft and pilots, reads: “Meeting de Trouville. Photos prises par Zissou” (Meeting at Trouville. Photos taken by Zissou) (Figure 2.15). Maurice likely took the picture using Lartigue’s camera during one of the many air shows the boys attended together. Not an unusual occurrence when you consider how often cameras get passed around at sporting events even today. Of interest is the shift in captioning from *Paris Aviation 1910* to the large reconstructed 1910 album. For Lartigue in 1910, it was perfectly suitable to include images made by other people and make note of it; he was compiling as many photographs as he could of aviation whether or not he took them. When he came across photographs he would like to have taken himself, he stuck them in his large albums to integrate them into his own memory.⁷⁴ In remaking his 1910 album, image number sixty-six lost its attribution to Maurice and entered the memory bank of Jacques Henri.

⁷² Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 62.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 65.

⁷⁴ d’Astier, “The Autobiographical Enterprise,” 36.

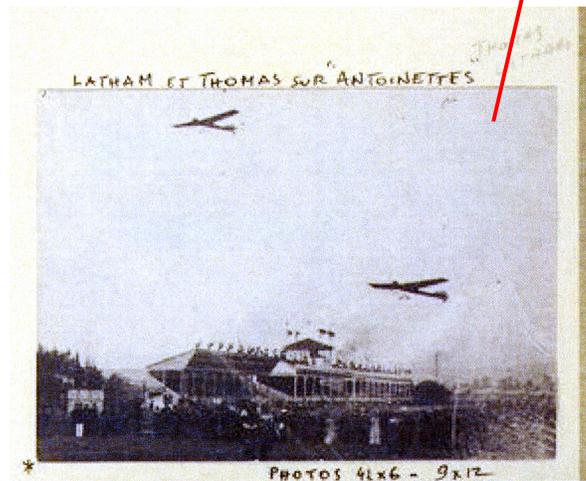
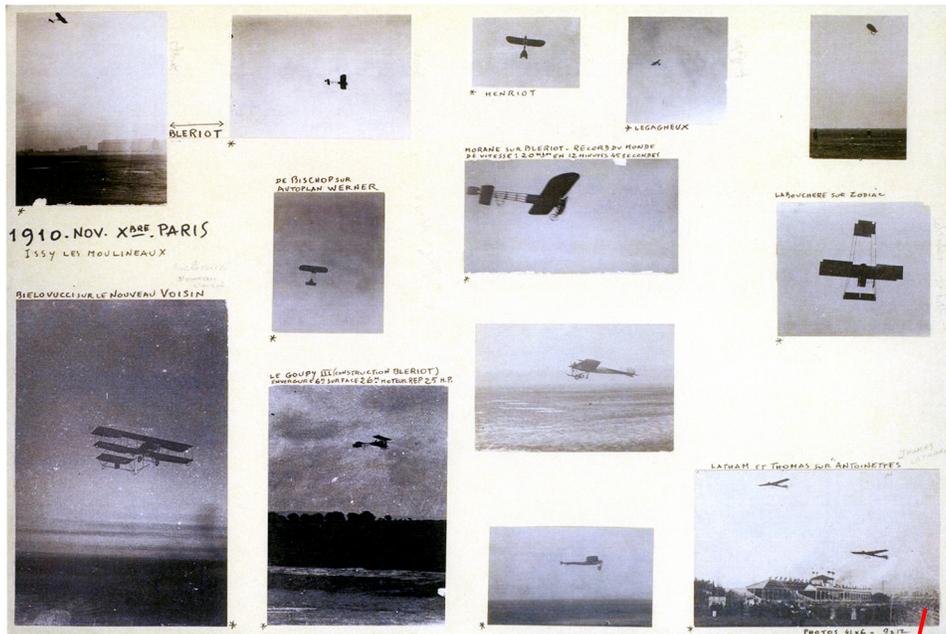


Figure 2.14. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Single page spread, large album stamped 1910. 37 x 53 cm. AAJHL.

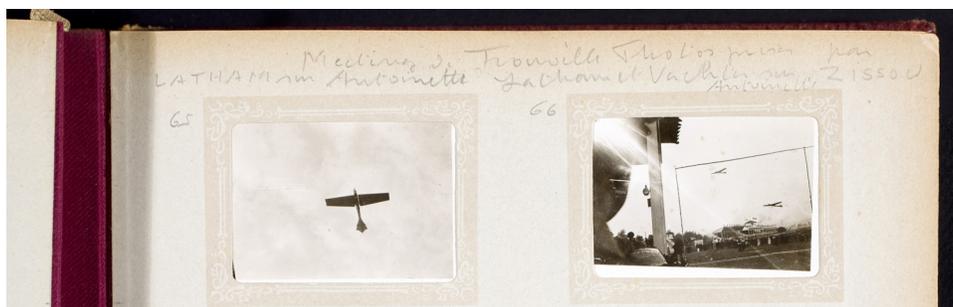


Figure 2.15. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Inscription accompanying image number sixty-six, *Paris Aviation 1910*. GEH.

Lartigue’s habit of collecting imagery by other photographers, in particular from photo reporters, is certainly not unprecedented. The collection at AAJHL includes a small number of lesser known albums made in the same style as his large reconstructions. Titled “Reflets de mon époque” (Reflections of My Time), these three albums are comprised of photographs made solely by other photographers – photo reporters Marcel Rol and Maurice Branger to name two – and bought by Lartigue (Figure 2.16).⁷⁵ My initial hypothesis regarding the unidentified images taken at Issy-les-Moulineaux was that Lartigue collected them from his acquaintance with photo reporters. Two press photographers figured significantly in Lartigue’s early photographic life. The Simons brothers were the most frequently credited photographers for *La vie au grand air* and Lartigue’s first documented contact with one of them (which one is unknown) was at an auto rally in 1905.⁷⁶ Furthermore, according to Lartigue’s memoirs, it was Simons who

⁷⁵ Martine d’Astier, Director of AAJHL, in conversation with the author, May 13, 2011.

⁷⁶ Moore, *Jacques Henri Lartigue*, 80.

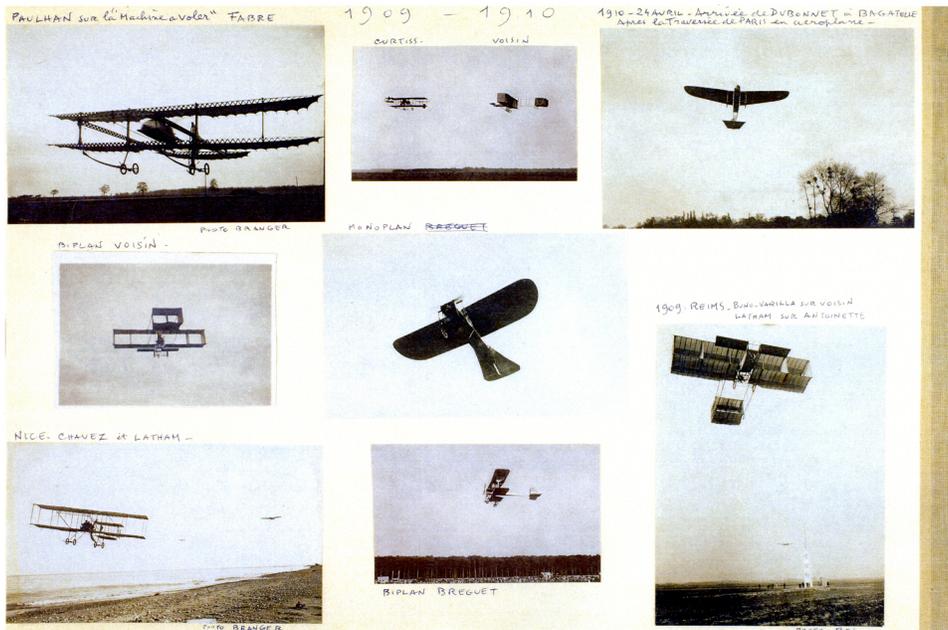


Figure 2.16. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Single page spread, *Reflets de mon époque*. 37 x 53 cm. AAJHL.

obtained a press pass for him, granting Lartigue access to the airfields at Issy-les-Moulineaux and Bagatelle in 1906.⁷⁷ Lartigue maintained a relationship with Simons; in his memoirs for 1907 he wrote: “Simons, the best of all the *La vie au grand air* reporters, is my friend.”⁷⁸ In 1912 he made note of Simons advising him to use the Nette, “the camera for sports photography” as advertisements claimed, and lending him his own.⁷⁹ Over the next few years, Lartigue would seek out Simons for technical advice and professional connections. His diary entries for October 1912, for example, have him stopping by Simons’s studio at Lafitte headquarters (Lafitte was the publishing house of *La vie au grand air*) to look at his photographs and discuss cropping and enlargements.⁸⁰ To determine whether the Simons brothers were the authors of any of the images in the Issy-les-Moulineaux section of *Paris Aviation 1910*, this study would need to expand to include an analysis of the type of equipment the Simons brothers were using within a specific time frame, and the images they were producing at the moment of Lartigue’s encounters with them. I now believe however, that the unidentified images of aviation activities at Issy-les-Moulineaux were actually taken by a Lartigue as he strove to emulate what he saw in the picture press early in his development as an instantaneous photographer.

Images number twenty-five, thirty-four, forty-five, forty-six, and fifty-six from *Paris Aviation 1910* (Figures 2.17-2.21) were all taken at the Issy-les-Moulineaux airfield and are unidentified in AAJHL’s archive. Each image captures an airplane in flight at the centre of the frame. All the planes appear as small black specs against a lighter backdrop

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Lartigue, *Mémoires sans mémoire*, 71.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 81.

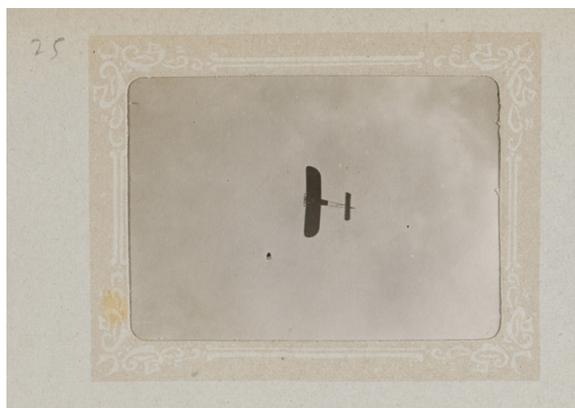


Figure 2.17. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number twenty-five (photographer unknown). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.18. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number thirty-four (unknown photographer). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.19. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number forty-five (unknown photographer). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.20. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, image number forty-six (photographer unknown). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.21. Jacques Henri Lartigue. *Paris Aviation 1910* album, Image number fifty-six (photographer unknown). 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

of sky. The photographs loosely resemble the airplane images Lartigue was in the habit of collecting, and which found their way to the pages of *Reflets de mon époque*. Unlike the images of clearly recognizable aircraft in *Reflets de mon époque*, such as that seen in figure 2.16, the airplanes in these images are too far in the distance to be recognized. Given that they are not found in the AAJHL archive, Lartigue likely felt they had minimal narrative value when he was making his large album rereconstructions in the 1960s and '70s. Image sixty-four (Figure 2.21) – clearly identified in the AAJHL archive by its full-page, inverted reproduction in the large album stamped 1909 (Figure 2.22) – more closely resembles the aviation pictures Lartigue collected, and is a clearer depiction of aircraft in general. Thus it may have made more sense to Lartigue to include in his

reconstructed albums.⁸¹ Images number twenty-five, thirty-four, forty-five, forty-six, and fifty-six likely represent a sixteen year old Lartigue trying to achieve the same results of photo reporters whose images he collected. They were also valued as simple visual records of aviation included in his thematic album and were therefore not subject to the same editorial guidelines he used sixty years later.

⁸¹ The enlargement of image number sixty-four in the large 1909 album is a modern print. Sabrina Esmeraldo, letter to David Wooters with attached spreadsheet, on file at AAJHL and GEH, October 29 1996.



Figure 2.22. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number sixty-four, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.



Figure 2.23. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Image number sixty-four, vertically and horizontally inverted, *Paris Aviation 1910*. 3.9 x 5.5 cm. GEH.

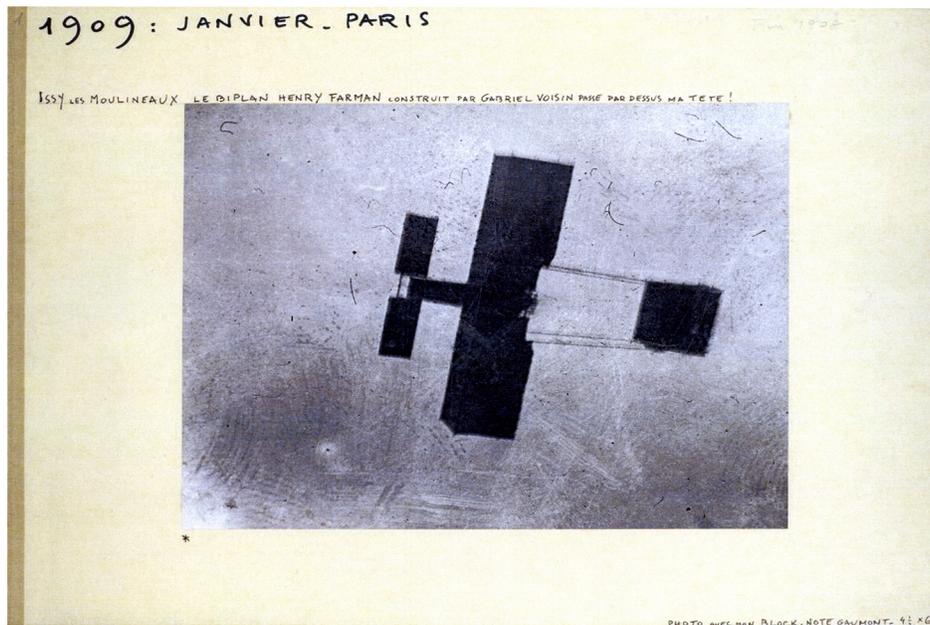


Figure 2.24. Jacques Henri Lartigue. Single page spread, large album stamped 1909. 37 x 53 cm. AAJHL.

Conclusion

Paris Aviation 1910's materiality bears the marks of a multi-dimensional existence that feels, at times, almost impossible to decode. At a basic level, it is an example of Lartigue's early engagement with the two most important inventions in the French belle époque: aviation and instantaneous photography. *Paris Aviation 1910* embodies a moment in the history of photography when amateurs moved their cameras off tripods and away from the slow shutter speeds associated with wet plate photography. They picked up faster dry plate, hand held cameras. It was the perfect medium to picture the accelerated world around them. Lartigue's *Paris Aviation 1910* is also indicative of the first albums he made; they were thematic. The album is a typical early 1900s collection of snapshot photographs about a specific subject. They are housed in an industrially produced album, the structure of which is an extension of popular modes of display developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Between the covers of Lartigue's *Paris Aviation 1910*, advancements in photographic technology converge with scientific and mechanical advancements in transportation, namely aviation.

Unlike Lartigue's remade large belle époque albums – narratives made of capital 'A' art photographs – his aviation album is a thematic picture archive made in 1910. This is clear from a comparison of their organization and layout. The reconstructed albums reflect a made up life, one that conformed to Lartigue's modern art photographer identity invented by Szarkowski, perpetuated by Avedon and carried forward by the 'Lartigue Industry.' *Paris Aviation 1910* is a vintage example of the earliest albums Lartigue made. It likely served as a system of organization for citrate contact prints, some of which later appeared as reproductions and enlargements in his large albums.

For sixteen years no one at GEH knew the album was by Lartigue and half the photographs in it remain unidentified in the AAJHL archive today. But a comparison of identified images and unidentified ones reveals that Lartigue likely took many of the photographs in the album. Lartigue likely culled the unidentified images from his collection while making edits for his large albums and preparing to donate his life's work as an artist's archive to the French Ministry of Culture. In the ambit of Lartigue's life's work, *Paris Aviation 1910* is a palimpsest of sorts for a life in photographs that was continually reworked and recomposed. It shows what Lartigue was before he was 'Lartigue.'

This thesis has served to uncover a number of mysteries associated with *Paris Aviation 1910*. The provenance of the album, for example, is still only partially known. Robert Sobieszek's papers were recently acquired by the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona and will eventually be processed and made available for consultation. Because he was the curator at GEH through the 1970s and '80s, his papers may have information regarding the album's acquisition by GEH in 1976, and clues about where or from whom *Aux amateurs de livres* purchased *Paris Aviation 1910*. Sobieszek's papers may also explain the album's attribution to Lartigue in 1992, possibly providing further clues regarding its provenance.

The attribution of half the images in the album must now also be researched. Removing all 150 pictures from the mats and examining the versos is a crucial step in this direction. Additionally, a study of the Simons's published and unpublished photographs from 1910 would determine if they took any of the photos in the album.

Paris Aviation 1910 was purchased by GEH in the period between Lartigue finishing his large album reconstructions in the early 1970s and donating his life's work to the French Ministry of Culture in 1979. It is a rogue album, so to speak; its singularity and the problems it presents mark it as an important object in Lartigue studies.

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