

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) The 'Norman' Album, 1869**

An album containing 75 photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron, taken between 1864 and 1869, selected by the photographer and presented by her to her daughter, Julia, and son-in-law, Charles Norman, in September 1869.

The album measures 45.9 by 31.4 cm. It is bound in red morocco and is embossed on the cover with the title 'Mrs Cameron's Photographs from the Life'.

Julia Margaret Cameron was one of the greatest nineteenth century artists in any medium and one of the greatest photographers that Britain, or indeed, the world, has ever produced. This album contains examples of some of Cameron's finest work.

The photographs in this album are unquestionably of outstanding aesthetic importance. They are also of outstanding significance for the study of the history of photography and, through her selection of subjects, the broader history of nineteenth century art and literature. Because of its personal connection with the artist and her family I would also argue that this album is so closely connected with our history and national life that its departure would be a misfortune.

In my opinion, this album meets all three Waverley criteria.

### **Bibliographic references:**

Julian Cox and Colin Ford, *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs*, Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003. Appendix C: Albums pp.502-505.

Colin Ford, *Julia Margaret Cameron: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Photographer of Genius*, London: The National Portrait Gallery, 2003.

## DETAILED CASE

This album containing 75 of her finest photographs was assembled by Julia Margaret Cameron and presented by her as a gift to her daughter, Julia, and son-in-law, Charles Norman, in 1869. The frontispiece carries the following handwritten inscription:

*To the givers of my Camera I dedicate & give these works of this camera, with all gratitude for the inexhaustible pleasure to me & to hundreds, which has resulted from the gift.*

*Julia Margaret Cameron, Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight, 1869 Sept 7<sup>th</sup>*

Julia Margaret Cameron, one of the most celebrated of nineteenth century photographers, didn't take her first photograph until 1864, when she was nearly fifty years old. In December 1863, her daughter Julia and son-in-law Charles Norman had given her a camera as a gift, with the words: 'It may amuse you Mother to try to Photograph during your solitude at FreshWater'.

This was the genesis of Cameron's career as one of the most extraordinary and significant artists in the history of photography.

Between 1864 and 1869 Cameron assembled a number of albums for her family, friends and close acquaintances. It is impossible to ascertain exactly how many albums she made but ten are known to have survived (see Appendix One). Each album is a labour of love, representing hundreds of hours of work, and each one is different – designed to be meaningful to the albums' recipients. Each album was assembled with enormous care and considerable thought as to how the images were to be viewed. Cameron embraced the album format, seeing it as an expressive medium which allowed her to present herself and her work as artistic.

This album is particularly significant since it was made as a gift for Julia, Cameron's daughter whose gift of a camera introduced Cameron to photography. The 75 photographs selected for the album range in date from 1864 to 1869. They reflect Cameron's thoughts as to what she regarded as being her best work. They are arranged in a single sequence from front to back and include some of her finest and best-known portraits, including Julia Jackson, John Herschel, Alfred Tennyson and Charles Darwin (see Appendix Two).

Julia Norman, Cameron's eldest child and only daughter, died in childbirth in 1873. Following her death, the album remained in the possession of her family.

Of all nineteenth century photographers, Julia Margaret Cameron is probably the most widely represented in public and private collections throughout the world. In the United Kingdom there are major holdings of her work in the National Portrait Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Tennyson Research Centre and, most importantly, the National Media Museum.

The National Media Museum holds the largest and most comprehensive collection of Cameron's work in the world, including nearly 800 photographs which form part of the Royal Photographic Society Collection.

Other examples of most of the photographic portraits contained within this album can be found in public collections in the UK. However, the significance of this album lies not in its individual photographs but in the album as a whole, representing, as it does, a very personal selection of work chosen and sequenced by the artist herself and intended as a gift for her beloved daughter. Of all the albums compiled by Cameron which are known, this album is arguably the most personal and most important. As we approach the bicentenary of Cameron's birth in 2015 it is essential that this album should remain in Britain.