

**Tichy Lartigue Combined
Sunday Times Magazine
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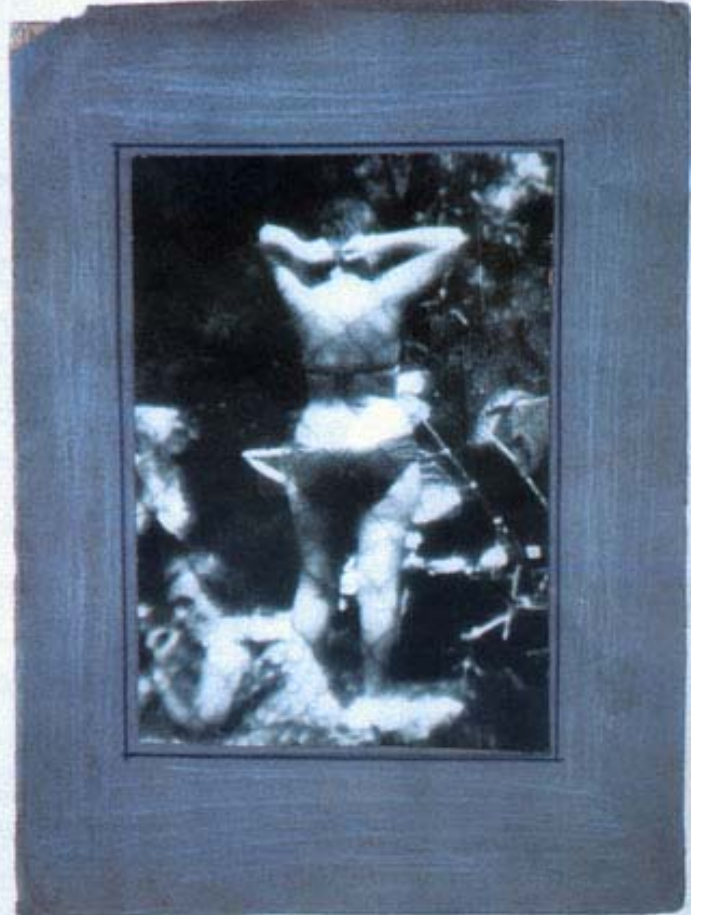
THE MEN WHO S

David Bailey celebrates the work of Jacques-Henri Lartigue and Miroslav Tichy, two p

Bigger Picture



Far left: Lartigue snatches a picture of a young woman in Carnaby Street, London, in 1967. Left: a camera made by Tichy from rubber bands and cans. 'Even his camera is a work of art,' says Bailey. He hid it under his coat in order to take surreptitious photographs, such as the one of sunbathers (below) shot through a wire fence



PIED ON WOMEN

Photographers who wrote their own rulebooks — and couldn't keep their eyes off the ladies



Mary Belewsky, shot by Lartigue in Cap d'Antibes, in May 1941. She was one of his coterie of models on the Côte d'Azur. Right: women on the beach, photographed by Tichy. 'What's charming about Tichy is that there is no technique - you don't feel the camera,' says Bailey



Tichy and Lartigue are like the American blues of the early 20th century, which didn't belong to any tradition. They come from nowhere, they're untraceable. Most photography now has no personality; it's perfectly boring. That's why Tichy and Lartigue are a breath of fresh air. Their work is refreshing and original because it's someone's personal vision.

Jacques-Henri Lartigue was born in a suburb of Paris, in 1894. His childhood was privileged; his family were nuts about buying the latest art, and he was given his first camera at six. He lived in the south of France and came from that bourgeois society where girls wore big white sun. He trained as a painter and it wasn't until 1963, when he was in his late sixties, that anybody even noticed his photography.

Miroslav Tichy, 80, was "discovered" at the Viles photography festival last year. He was a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague when the communists came to power in 1948, and he spent eight years locked up because his paintings were too "subversive". The camera was just a different paintbrush for him. He became a tramp and photographed women using a camera he'd built out of tin cans and rubber bands, that he hid under his coat. Even his camera is a work of art. His work exists because of the country he lived in - Czechoslovakia - and he was forced to take pictures secretly. All photographers are voyeurs. All painters are, too.

Good art has nothing to do with technique. Matisse was a much better painter than →



Top: Florette, Lartigue's third wife, at Lac d'Annecy in France, August 1943. It was not until 1963 that his photography was 'discovered' by a New York curator. **Above:** Lartigue's picture of Chou Valton, sunbathing at La Plage de la Garoupe in Cap d'Antibes, July 1932. **Left:** another sunbather, by Tichy, who often drew Baroque-style frames around his images



Above: Renée Perle, shot by Lartigue in Paris in April 1930. Perle, a Romanian beauty, was his mistress in the early 1930s.



Left: Lartigue's portrait of the model Penelope Tree, an icon of the 1960s, wearing haunted-waif make-up, 1968. **Right and far right:** 'voyeuristic' shots of women by Tichy. His signature style is the secretive, snatched photo, which was necessary under the restrictions and rules of his communist country, Czechoslovakia



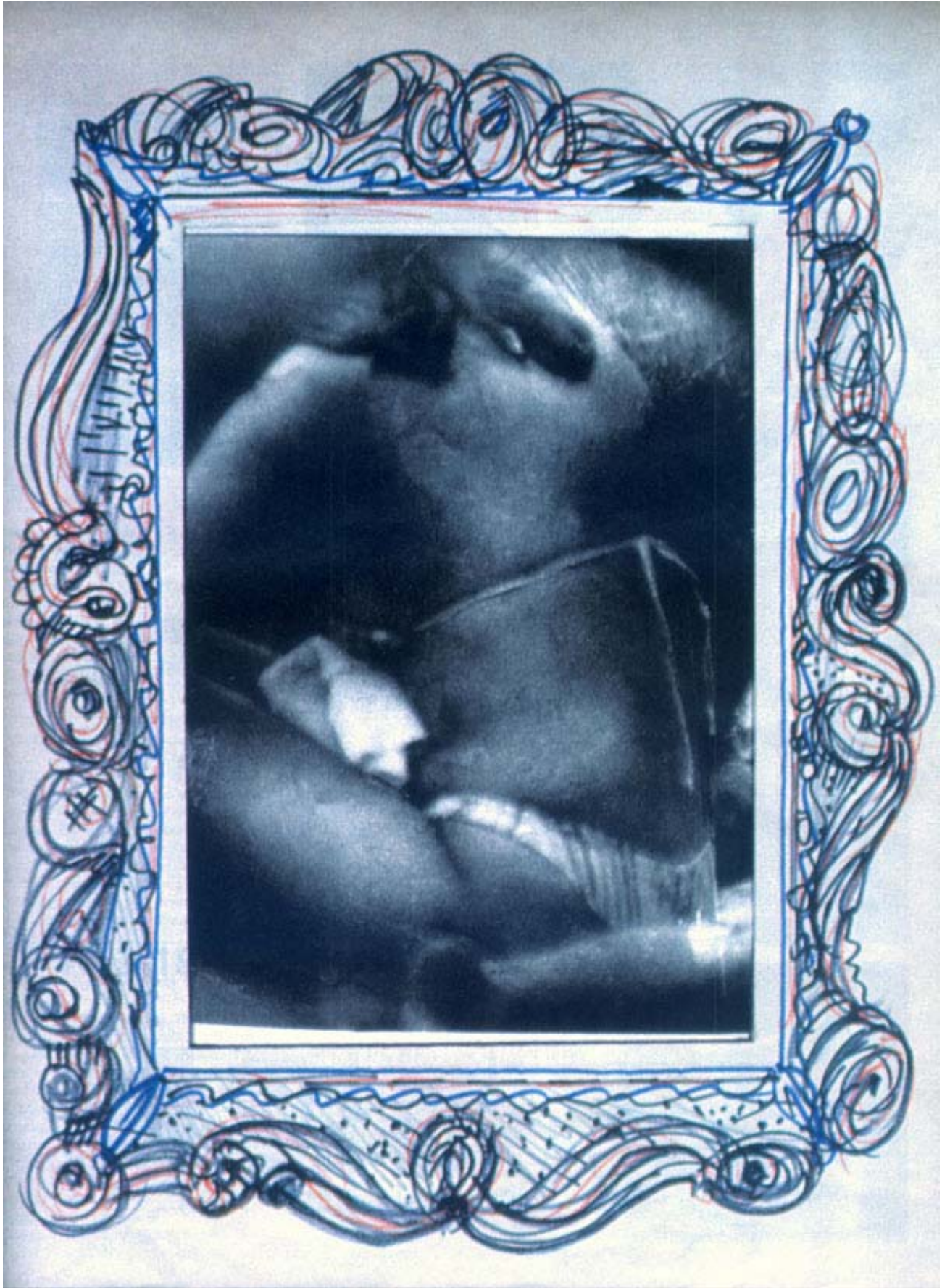
Picasso, but Picasso was a much better artist. He didn't care if it was bad sometimes; he thought: "I'll do another one tomorrow." What's charming about Tichy is that he's got rid of the photography: there is no technique, you don't feel the camera. The pictures are honest. He's just pleasing himself. "I never thought much about it. It just happened," he says. He's obsessive — all the good people are, otherwise you wouldn't do it. It's probably something in the make-up; it's something you've got to do. I don't care about where I go for lunch, or what clothes I wear. All I care about is — have I got a roll of film on me?

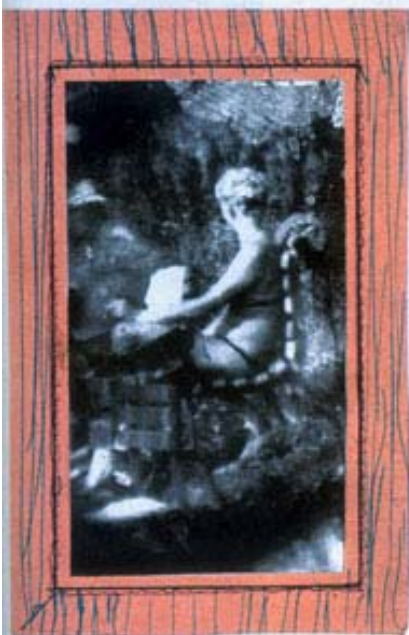
I've bought one of Tichy's pictures because it's an oddity. It has a little insect on it, where a fly has flown into the enlarger — like a mosquito in

amber. He drew these baroque frames in ink around a lot of the images. He took hundreds of pictures but only made one print of each, and I like the mess, the stains from where they have lain around his house for years. He takes terrible, bad pictures, and they become interesting. You can't explain it — you just have to look at them. He's unique.

I knew Lartigue for the last 10 years of his life. I went to stay with him a couple of times. He lived in a funny little town above Cannes, and he had an attic full of bad paintings that he'd done. We first met when he came to photograph me for American Vogue. It was too dark but I was too polite to tell him the pictures weren't going to come out. Then I got to know him quite

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Above and bottom: Tichy took many shots of a setup, but made only one print. 'I like the mess, from where they've lain around his house for years,' says Bailey. Right: Renée Perle, 1931, with black-lacquered nails. Lartigue is said to have had a fingernail fetish

Tichy Lartigue Combined is running at the Michael Hoppengallery, 3 Jubilee Place, London SW3, from May 11 to June 17. For information, tel: 020 7352 3649 or visit www.michaelhoppengallery.com

Bailey on...The Complete Series, is a set of three documentary films he made for ITV between 1968 and 1973, in which he interviews Cecil Beaton, Andy Warhol and the Italian film director Luchino Visconti. These films have never been shown since originally aired, and the set is now available on DVD at £19.99

well. He was a ham, a bit of a poser – a nice man. He stuck all his pictures in large albums. It was a diary, a way of recording his life. Otherwise you forget those moments completely.

Lartigue just took snaps, and somehow went beyond that. They were snaps that turned into magic. He didn't know how he did it, but somehow his snap was better than anybody else's. Composition, light – that's got nothing to do with anything. He just had an eye. That's the thing with photography: you don't have to go anywhere to get great images. You don't have to go to India and come back with hundreds of pictures of sadhus. The most important things are right here around you ■

David Bailey was talking to Kathy Brewer



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