



Early Gaze

Unseen Photography of the 19th Century

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- Celebrates Belgium's early espousal of photography
- Accompanies an exhibition at FOMU, Antwerp, running from 23 October 2025 to 8 March 2026

In 1839, photography was invented almost simultaneously in France and England, quickly finding fertile ground in Belgium – a young nation established in 1830. Positioned at the crossroads of Europe, Belgium became a hub for technological innovation, where photography flourished as both an art form and a means of self-representation. Driven by a wealthy middle class eager to capture its image, as well as strong support from the government, industry, and financial sectors, photography rapidly spread across the country. This book explores Belgium's pivotal role in the early development of photography, offering a fascinating look at how a new medium shaped a nation's identity. Featuring numerous nostalgic photographs by François Braga & Joseph Pelizzaro, Guillaume Claine, Joseph Ernest Buschmann, William Henry Fox Talbot, among others.

Text in English and Dutch.

Tamara Berghmans is an art historian with a specialization in photography, particularly in photohistorical research. Her academic focus encompasses a range of topics, including photobooks, art photography, subjective photography, and pictorialism. She has a strong interest in Belgian modern art photography, with a particular emphasis on the works of Ed van der Elsken and Sanne Sannes. **Ingrid Leonard** is a researcher and assistant curator at FOMU – Fotomuseum in Antwerp.