

## UNIV ONLINE CATALOGUES

### UC:P351 Photographs and Papers of Michael George (matr. 1962)

#### INTRODUCTION

David Michael Gwynne George (b. 1943) was born in Cardiff, and educated at Bromley Grammar School for Boys, Kent, where he was head boy. He was awarded an Exhibition in English at University College in 1962. For several years Michael George was employed as an editor in book publishing in London. In 1971 he moved to New York, where he continued to work in publishing, latterly as a senior editor for Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York's leading publisher of art books. He became a freelance photographer in 1979, the year in which he became a naturalised citizen of the United States. A contributor to numerous magazines in America, Michael George has had exhibitions of his work in New York, Washington, and Tokyo. He gave his first solo show, *Manhattan*, at Brentano's Gallery on Fifth Avenue, New York, in 1981. His photography is represented in corporate, institutional and private collections. Michael George returned to Britain in 1989, and has continued his career as an author, photographer and publisher. He now lives in East Sussex.

The following is a complete list of Michael George's books, copies of all of which have been presented to the Library of University College:

*The Statue of Liberty*, photographs and text by Michael George (1985).  
*The Gardens of Ireland*, photographs by Michael George, with text by Patrick Bowe (1986).  
*New York Today*, photographs and text by Michael George (1988).  
*The South Downs: Travels Through White Cliff Country*, photographs and text by Michael George, with foreword by Denis Healey (1992).  
*The Gardens of Spain*, photographs by Michael George, with text by Consuelo Martinez Correcher (1993).  
*The South Downs*, photographs and text by Michael George, with foreword by David Dimbleby (2008).  
*Sussex by the Sea*, photographs and text by Michael George, with foreword by Michael York (2011).  
*Megan George: A Tribute*, photographs and text by Michael George (2017).  
*Eighties New York: A Portrait in Black and White*, photographs and text by Michael George (2019).

Requests to view any of these books should be made to the Librarian of University College.

Further information on Michael George, along with a full range of images of his photographs in both black and white and in colour, may be found at:

[www.michaelgeorgephotography.com](http://www.michaelgeorgephotography.com).

The items in **UC:P351/3** were presented in March 2018 as Accession No. 1310, and the items in **UC:P351/1** in November 2019 as Accession No. 1430. Further accruals will be made in the future.

The photographs and captions in this collection remain the copyright of Michael George, and may not be reproduced without his permission. Researchers should contact the Archivist of University College for more information.

Archivist: Dr Robin Darwall-Smith E: Robin.Darwall-Smith@univ.ox.ac.uk T: +44 (0)1865 276 952



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Catalogued in December 2019.

**UC:P351/1 - "EIGHTIES NEW YORK: A PORTRAIT IN BLACK AND WHITE"**

**UC:P351/1/P1/1-160** is a collection of photographs of New York which were selected by Michael George for inclusion in his book *Eighties New York: A Portrait in Black and White*. He supplies this introduction to them:

*Eighties New York: A Portrait in Black and White*, a collection of 160 monochrome images, supported by 145 pages of text, is Michael George's personal take on the city in which the Welsh-born photographer made his second home for the better part of twenty years, from 1971 to 1993.

Having worked as a book editor in publishing, first, in London, and then, in New York, Michael George decided in 1979 to take a chance as a freelance in the highly competitive world of professional photography. For much of the decade, the nineteen-eighties, he trod the streets and staked out the rooftops of innumerable tall buildings in an attempt to define the city of our collective dreams.

A frequent contributor to exhibitions and magazines, Michael George published with *The New York Times* in 1983 a limited edition portfolio of his photographs of Brooklyn Bridge in its centennial year.

This was followed, in 1985, with the photographer's celebration, in photographs and words, of another New York landmark, then approaching its centennial in 1986, *The Statue of Liberty*. *Publishers Weekly* hailed Michael George's first book as "an arresting tribute by an accomplished photographer", while *The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* said "Michael George is not only a good photographer who knows how to use the sky like a Broadway lighting director, but a deft writer."

Encouraged by the critical and commercial success of *The Statue of Liberty*, Abrams, the leading publisher of art books for whom he had one worked as a senior editor, offered him a contract for *New York Today*, a collection of 151 colour photographs and text, published in 1988. "Though it is true that a picture's worth a thousand words, the extensive, uniquely informative, well-written captions provide a wealth of history to complement this interesting collection of pictures ... wonderfully captured, distinctly New York moments", said *Promenade*. *Popular Photography* opined "If the mood strikes you and you purchase Michael George's up-to-the-minute photo portrait of protean New York ('It'll be a great place if ever they finish it.') be prepared for more than colourful pictures of a colourful subject. Get ready for a good read. If you're at all interested in Gotham's culture and history, George's terse but highly informative captions almost upstage the book's handsome photography. Almost, but not entirely. Its sharp, vibrant pictures - all made with Olympus equipment - depict the people, vitality, and splendid architecture that make New York the capital of the world for so many."

The Archives of University College hold both digital images and high-quality printouts of all 160 photographs, for which Michael George prepared the following brief captions based on

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the text in the book. Fuller descriptions of the photographs may be found in the limited edition book, numbered and signed by the author, of which there are copies in both the Archives and the Library of University College.

#### UC:P351/1/P1 - PHOTOGRAPHS

Images of New York, as reproduced in Michael George's *Eighties New York*, with accompanying captions, may be found on a pdf file [here](#).

#### UC:P351/3 - "A JOURNEY THROUGH IRELAND"

This section of the catalogue is a personal selection of 396 photographs taken by Michael George during visits to Ireland made in 1982, 1984 and 1985. On his first visit, made at the invitation of Brian and Ulli de Breffny, Baron and Baroness de Breffny, he travelled around Ireland with a fellow photographer, George Mott, on what he himself has called "a series of photographic safaris". On Michael George's second visit, in 1984, it was suggested to him by a friend that he might publish a book on Irish gardens, with the garden designer and historian Patrick Bowe acting as a collaborator. A contract was agreed, and Michael George made a third visit to Ireland in 1985 to work on the book. The fruits of these visits, *The Gardens of Ireland*, was published in 1986.

A detailed account of Michael George's visits to Ireland, and the circumstances which led to the creation of his book *The Gardens of Ireland*, may be found at **UC:P351/3/C1/1** below.

Michael George took these photographs using Kodachrome 64. He made a selection from his original 35mm colour transparencies, and had them scanned by digital specialist Graham Diprose. The archives therefore hold Michael George's photographs both as digital images, and also as high-quality print-outs. The hard copy version of these images includes more information about this preservation process.

Images of all these photographs, with captions and comments written by Michael George himself, are to be found on four pdf files for which links are provided below.

#### UC:P351/3/C1/1 - CORRESPONDENCE

##### UC:P351/3/C1/1

17 May 2018

Letter from Michael George to Robin Darwall-Smith, Archivist of University College, which includes detailed reminiscences of his visits to Ireland in 1982–5, and the creation of his book *The Gardens of Ireland*.

#### UC:P351/3/P1 - PROVINCE OF MUNSTER (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

Images of the photographs taken in Munster, with accompanying captions, may be found on a pdf file [here](#).

Photographs were taken of places in the following counties: Clare (**UC:P351/3/P1/1–18**), Cork (**UC:P351/3/P1/19–97**), Kerry (**UC:P351/3/P1/98–148**), Tipperary (**UC:P351/3/P1/149–175**), Waterford (**UC:P351/3/P1/176–199**) and Limerick (**UC:P351/3/P1/200–210**).

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#### **UC:P351/3/P2 - PROVINCE OF CONNACHT (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)**

Images of the photographs taken in Connacht, with accompanying captions, may be found on a pdf file [here](#).

Photographs were taken of places in County Mayo (**UC:P351/3/P2/1–7**) and County Galway (**UC:P351/3/P2/8–12**).

#### **UC:P351/3/P3 - PROVINCE OF ULSTER (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND UNITED KINGDOM)**

Images of the photographs taken in Ulster, with accompanying captions, may be found on a pdf file [here](#).

Photographs were taken of places in County Donegal (**UC:P351/3/P3/1–30**), and County Down (**UC:P351/3/P3/31–45**).

#### **UC:P351/3/P4 - PROVINCE OF LEINSTER (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)**

Images of the photographs taken in Leinster, with accompanying captions, may be found on a pdf file [here](#).

Photographs were taken of places in the following counties: Dublin (**UC:P351/3/P4/1–13**), Kilkenny (**UC:P351/3/P4/14–35**), Louth (**UC:P351/3/P4/36–46**), Meath (**UC:P351/3/P4/47–55**), Offaly (**UC:P351/3/P4/56–70**), Wexford (**UC:P351/3/P4/71–99**) and Wicklow (**UC:P351/3/P4/100–129**).

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