HER CREATIVE SPACE: PHOTOGRAPHS OF CECILIA BEAUX'S STUDIO, 1885-1890

by

CATHERINE ANN EARLEY

(Under the Direction of Janice Simon)

ABSTRACT

Between 1885-1890, American portraitist Cecilia Beaux posed for a series of seven photographs in her three different Philadelphia studios that she shared with her cousin Emma Leavitt. While images of male artists' studios were popular during the Gilded Age, images of women artists in their studios were quite rare. This thesis examines events and influences in Beaux's life that likely led to the creation of these photographs. I argue that Beaux played a significant role in constructing the photographs, purposefully arranging herself and her studio in ways that would serve as advertisement for her work and allow her to more fully compete with male artists of her time.

INDEX WORDS: Cecilia Beaux, Artist Studio, Photography, Chestnut Street, Women Artists, Gilded Age, Philadelphia, American Art, Nineteenth century

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I. Introduction

"It was in mid-winter of the same year, and a day which began as other days [begin] in my Philadelphia studio," wrote American portrait painter Cecilia Beaux shortly after her return to America in 1889 from her study in Paris.[1] Upon her homecoming, Beaux moved into 1710 Chestnut Street—a space that served as her studio and likely also her home.[2] In this studio, Beaux posed for a series of five photographs alongside her cousin and little-known fellow artist Emma Leavitt between 1889-90 (Figs. 1-5). These platinum print photographs capture a variety of angles of her studio space, as well as showcase Beaux and Leavitt taking part in various activities in more than one change of dress. Two additional photographs in albumen depict an earlier studio on Chestnut Street that Beaux used during 1881-85/86, just before her departure for Europe (Figs. 6-7).[3] While the photographer has not been identified for any of the photographs, the subject matter is quite significant.

Historian and Beaux biographer, Tara Leigh Tappert, wrote brief descriptions of these seven photographs in the Finding Aid for the Cecilia Beaux Collection in the archives of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts while working on her dissertation on Beaux.[4] Tappert separates the photographs by date and type, and provides useful general information about the

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[1] Cecilia Beaux, *Background With Figures: Autobiography of Cecilia Beaux* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), 198.

[2] The Philadelphia city directory from 1889 lists 1710 Chestnut Street as Beaux's residence. Other biographies mention Beaux walking to her studio, but do not mention where she would have lived at the time if not in her studio.

[3] These seven photographs are housed in the Cecilia Beaux Collection, MS.060, File 1, Folder 2, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, PA. They were given to PAFA in 1998 by Cecilia Drinker Saltonstall, Beaux's great-niece. Dr. Tara Leigh Tappert, who wrote her dissertation on Beaux's life in 1990, had custody of these photographs in 1985-98 to be used as part of her research and to be donated to the archives upon completion of her work. The provenance of the photos prior to the great-niece's ownership is unknown. I have used the dates given by Tappert in her notes on the photographs in PAFA's Cecilia Beaux Collection Finding Aid. It should be noted that Tappert wrote names or dates in pencil on the back or outer border of some of the photographs themselves. Some of the photographs were also dated on the reverse side by Mrs. Saltonstall, and one is dated in black ink. The finding aid indicates that the black ink on all photographs is Beaux's own handwriting. Tappert also traced the years and locations of Beaux's studios in her research notes, Tara Tappert Collection, MS.054, PAFA Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

[4] The document was last updated in January of 2016 by current PAFA Director of Archives, Hoang Tran.

images. She notes their size, identifies figures included in the images, names works of art by Beaux seen in some of the photographs, adds the location of the images, and corrects dates written on their reverse by Cecilia Saltonstall, Beaux's great-niece. In 2000, Cheryl Leibold, the former archivist at PAFA, published an article including the photographs titled "'The Only Miss Beaux: Photographs of Cecilia Beaux and her Circle'" in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography.* The article highlights photographs located in Beaux's archival collection at PAFA, as "intimate glimpses into Beaux's life."[5] Leibold classifies the photographs as documents, but does describe the two earlier albumen photographs as "*tableaux vivants*" enacted with others including photographer Robert Redfield.[6] She also mentions the rest of the photographs as examples of what Beaux's later studio entailed, citing some objects seen in the images in a rather documentary manner. However, a closer examination of the photographs is needed. The images can be read as more than documents, as they are carefully created self-constructions of an artist in studio. My focus is examining all seven of these photographs much more carefully in the context of women artists' studios, especially the five later ones.

Taken as a whole, these seven photographs provide a never-before-seen view into the studios of a female Gilded Age artist during a time when male artists' studios were admired and open to the public. Furthermore, scholarship has said very little about American women artists' studios in the nineteenth century despite a surge in the number of women artists after the end of the Civil War in 1865. While this lack of scholarship could be attributed to the few depictions of female artists' studios in various media and the fact that not all female artists of the time were

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[5] Cheryl Leibold, "'The Only Miss Beaux': Photographs of Cecilia Beaux and Her Circle," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 124, no. 3 (2000): 381.
[6] Leibold, "'The Only Miss Beaux', 382-3.

able to have studios, there is evidence that many did.[7] Photographs confirm the participation of women in art classes and female students painting en plein air with their masters before 1891, while paintings and prints by fellow artists show American women, like the painter and printmaker Mary Cassatt, frequenting public art spaces like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre. [8] Yet, there is no American painting of a woman artist explicitly in her studio during the Gilded Age. In fact, paintings of American female artists within their studios are still rare today, though American female artists have used portraiture and self-portraiture to highlight their roles as artists. American Impressionist Lilla Cabot Perry painted a self-portrait of herself at an easel between 1889 and 1896, and American painter Anna Klumpke painted a portrait of French painter and sculptor Rosa Bonheur in her studio seated with palette in hand in front of one of her last canvases (Figs. 8-9).[9] Though these works were created later than Beaux's photographs, they illustrate how images of women as artists were not altogether rare at the time. Additionally, Gilded Age artists employed photography to create self-portraits that highlighted their profession. In Edward Steichen's *Self-Portrait* (1902), a photogravure published in Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work* in April of 1903, Steichen portrays himself as a painter with palette and brush since as a photographer, he was said to paint with light.

Few depictions of female artists in studios likely exist in late nineteenth century America because it would have been controversial subject matter for the time. As pursuing a professional career as an artist was still a relatively new undertaking for women, highlighting their profession

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[7] Altona A. Chapman, "Lady Artists in Philadelphia: Peeps into Their Studios and Talks with Women Who Ply the Brush," *The Sunday Press*, February 28, 1892; Elizabeth Bisland, "The Studios of New York, *The Cosmopolitan* 7, no. 1 (May 1889): 3-22.

[8] Examples of such painted, illustrated, and printed include: Frank Waller, *Interior View of the Metropolitan Museum of Art when in Fourteenth Street*, 1881, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Winslow Homer, *Art-Students and Copyists in the Louvre Gallery, Paris*, January 11, 1868, from *Harper's Weekly*, and Edgar Degas, *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre*, 1879-80, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

[9] Eleanor Tufts, *American Women Artists, 1830-1930* (Washington, D.C.: International Exhibitions Foundation for the National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1987), 13.

in an image may have caused them to not be taken seriously. Women were expected to still serve a domestic purpose, so a work of art or photograph proclaiming one forthright as an artist would be inappropriate, and would likely cause a female artist to "unsex" herself and jeopardize her career.[10] Such an image would cause anxiety for viewers, as it would suggest women artists were breaking out of their domestic sphere into more serious endeavors. Male artists would especially be alarmed at this notion. They would be forced to be competitive not only with other male artists, but with female artists as well. Beaux's photographs maneuver this complex issue by serving as both a representation of the sacred artists' studio, but also as a depiction of a domestic space. In this way, the images serve as examples of a quiet resistance to the standards of her time since they are forthright in their intention, but are still reserved in their navigation of gender roles. Still, their subject matter is rare, and the fact that they are produced in platinum makes them especially remarkable. Platinum prints displayed a wide variety in tonalities and usually had matte surfaces, unlike other techniques, like albumen prints, that allowed for a glossier finish. With platinum printing, the image lies both in and on the paper, which adds to its long-lasting nature.[11] Platinum prints were also expensive, highlighting how special these images must have been for Beaux to have chosen this type of print.

Though it is unclear who the author of these photographs of Beaux may be, the various poses she and others enacted in the images suggest that Beaux played an equal, if not more directorial role to that of the photographer in orchestrating these depictions in her studio. As women were a growing force in photography in the late nineteenth century, it is likely that Beaux

[10] Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 181.
[11] William Crawford, *The Keepers of Light: A History & Working Guide to Early Photographic Processes* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Morgan & Morgan, 1979), 77.

played a key role in creating these photographs of herself.[12] Beaux's choice to remain in her artistically successful hometown would have made it easier for her to have such an elaborate studio in Philadelphia. It would have been convenient for her to change locations within one city, and especially on the same street. She was also fortunate to have the support of her "well-connected Philadelphia family of New England descent on her mother's side," which not only funded her studies but gave her "the advantage from the outset of being a social insider."[13] This support would have made it possible for Beaux to have her own studio that she undoubtedly would have wanted others to see. Drawing from the seven photographs of Cecilia Beaux, I explore the reasons these photographs would have been created, given the few depictions of women artists' studios in the Gilded Age. I suggest that Beaux saw photography as a suitable and purposeful medium through which to advertise her studio and her work to those who visited her creative space. Produced in platinum, an expensive type of print that adds to the photographs' prestige, Beaux's studio photographs highlight her careful consideration of her own space. I explore how Beaux's experience in Europe may have influenced the subject of these photographs, what photography as a medium meant to her, how Beaux's circumstances in Philadelphia and involvement with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts likely formed a positive relationship to the camera, and potential audiences the photographs may have been created for.

II. The Chestnut Street Studios

[12] Kara Fledorek Felt, "Before the Kodak Girl: Women in Nineteenth-Century Photography," National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., podcast audio, November 24, 2019, https://www.nga.gov/audio-video.html.
[13] Burns, "The American Personality in the Age of American Impressionism," in *Crosscurrents in American Impressionism at the Turn of the Century,* (Athens, GA: Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 1996), 59.

In addition to the two aforementioned studios, Beaux inhabited other studio spaces on Chestnut Street, for a total of three or four different locations between 1881-93.[14] This street was a popular place for artists to take up studio spaces, and other artists' studios were located in the same building as Beaux's earliest studio at number 1334.[15] Illustrator Joseph Pennell, who worked in Beaux's building in 1881, reported seeing poet Walt Whitman "walking down Chestnut."[16] Pennell adds that "[there] were real artists—oil painters—in [their] building," revealing that an artist's medium could influence others opinions of them.[17] In her autobiography, written in 1930, Beaux mentions occupying the "top floor rear of 1334 Chestnut Street" and enjoying the company of her neighbor, painter and etcher Stephen Parrish.[18] She recalls leaving her door open for a longer line of vision and seeing Mr. Parrish walk past her door to reach his studio.[19] Beaux's biographer Alice Carter recounts the space as "large and barren with gray walls, a high ceiling, and good, full light. Although later photographs show that the cousins eventually acquired all the necessary accessories and outfitted the room with the typical eclecticism of a nineteenth-century atelier, initially the place was sparsely furnished."[20] Carter seems to be comparing the images of this earlier studio to Beaux's later ones based on the photographs' visual evidence, and emphasizes the large and open space Beaux's earliest studio provided.

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[14] Based on the photographs and a note from Tappert in the Tappert Collection, MS.054, PAFA Archives, Philadelphia, PA, the studio locations are as follows: 1334 Chestnut St. (1881-85/86), 1520 Chestnut St. (1886/87-89), 1710 Chestnut St. (1889/1890), 1708 Chestnut St. (1891?), and 1710 Chestnut St. (1892-93).
[15] Chapman, "Lady Artists in Philadelphia."
[16] Joseph Pennell, *The Adventures of an Illustrator, Mostly in Following His Authors in America & Europe* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1925), 68-71.
[17] Pennell, *The Adventures of an Illustrator,* 68-71.
[18] Beaux, *Background With Figures,* 94; When Parrish later moved out of the studio, Beaux mentions that he "rented his studio to two young women," showing he did indeed own it, making it likely that she did as well.
[19] Beaux, *Background With Figures,* 94.
[20] Alice A. Carter, *Cecilia Beaux: A Modern Painter in the Gilded Age* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), 65.

The two photographs of 1334 Chestnut Street reveal little about the room itself (Figs. 6-7). The images show many fewer decorative objects than can be seen in Beaux's later studios. This early space seemed especially functional rather than decorative, and Beaux recalls artists and fellow students often visiting her studio. Artist Thomas Anschutz visited this studio to see *Les Derniers Jours d' Enfance* (1883-85) shortly after its completion, and fellow art students also stopped by one evening, much to the annoyance of Pennell (Fig. 10).[21] For his part, Pennell recounts that he hated most people who lived there, but clarifies "we hated all the more Cecilia Beaux, and some arty females who had come in, following her. She was soon to do her most interesting work. We thought women had no business there, so we went for revenge."[22] Pennell recalls playing a trick with artist H.R. Poore on the women where they stuffed a pair of pants and a coat with papers and added normal accessories like a hat, mask, and shoes to mimic a real body, and laid it face down at the bottom of the stairs in the building. Pennell adds that "no one ever did find out, whether the man was murdered, or why Cecilia Beaux, had a faint, or Maxfield Parrish took to making billboards."[23] Pennell's account not only suggests that he was threatened by the presence of a female artist in his building and by her success, but also that his exaggerated behavior towards Beaux and her visitors affected others who lived at 1334 Chestnut Street. Beaux's neighbors likely knew the prank was aimed at her, and that by sharing a building with a female artist, they were also subject to rather inhospitable conditions.

Partly motivated by Pennell's behavior, Beaux then moved to 1520 Chestnut Street, bringing her closer to City Hall. Figure 11 reveals the entirety of her studio space, likely this

[21] Beaux, *Background With Figures*, 95; Pennell, *The Adventures of an Illustrator,* 69.
[22] Pennell, *The Adventures of an Illustrator,* 69.
[23] Pennell, *The Adventures of an Illustrator,* 69; Maxfield Parrish was Beaux's neighbor on the top floor of the building, along with his father, Stephen Parrish.

second location on Chestnut Street.[24] The image displays much of the décor in the room as well as the portrait of young *Harold and Mildred Colton* (1887) on the easel (Fig. 12). Facing the easel, the actual chair in which the children sat for the painting takes center stage in the photograph. The vase depicted in their portrait can also be seen on the floor to the back-right side of the posing platform. This photograph provides evidence of Beaux's working method of bringing sitters to her studio and arranging them with her own props. This studio was held during her time in Europe, as her years of ownership of this location overlapped with her travel abroad. It is possible that the photograph shows most of Beaux's artistic belongings, stored there while she was away. The photograph documents the increasing decoration in Beaux's studios, probably reflecting her awareness of the elaborate interiors of successful male artists' studios. Indeed, this interior space reflects many of the popular objects found in studios of the late nineteenth century—tapestries, rugs, paintings, and sculptures—in a space that, Sarah Burns argues, would "[provide] free publicity and [help] construct the image of the well-traveled, highly cultivated artist in an opulent, tasteful habitat."[25] The space's décor suggests that Beaux was already participating in such a construction of her own space and persona to be competitive with others, including male artists.

In May of 1888, Beaux left America and her studio behind to study in Paris and travel around Europe in 1888-89.[26] In Antwerp and Brussels shortly after her arrival in 1888, she imagined a studio space after seeing the work of Rembrandt, Memling, and Van Eyck:

> I longed to know something of the studios in which these works were born. Surely they were not *ateliers*, and did not need to be. A room, perhaps, in the artists' own house. The light would be perfect, coming from the side by a high window. The room would be

[24] This photograph was labeled on the back in pencil in handwriting similar to Tara Leigh Tappert's with "Emma Leavitt – 1520 Chestnut St, Phila."
[25] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist,* 58.
[26] Tara Leigh Tappert, *Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Portrait Gallery, 1995), 3.

> quiet, of course, and reached perhaps by a dark stairway. The artist could *sit* before a small canvas, placing it and himself in the perfect and steady lighting. He might dispose his tools and materials on comfortable stools, within easy reach, and, bending over his pictures, spend whole, uninterrupted days, upon the union, edges, and modelling of small adjoining parts. The drawing would have been perfectly accomplished first. There would never be an impulse to alter, no second thought even on a fold of drapery. The procedure has no margin for change or undoing. The construction of a watch is not more exact.[27]

Though she imagines past studios where great works were created, it is as if Beaux was also imagining her ideal creative space. She simply needs a room, light, a place to "*sit*," and tools within reach that allow her time to work away from others.[28] Beaux describes a comfortable space since she emphasizes the word "*sit*," and suggests that this type of space would not just allow for better work, but nearly "perfect" work that would require few alterations.[29] She highlights the importance of her imagined space of creation in that it would make her feel confident and sure about her artistic choices. At the end of her European trip, Beaux had the chance to create this space when upon her return she moved to her final location on Chestnut Street, number 1710—where five photographs of her were taken (Figs. 1-5).

According to the Philadelphia city directory from 1889, Beaux's 1710 Chestnut Street studio is listed as her place of residence.[30] It is unclear whether Leavitt also lived there, or whether the pair only shared the space during the day as a studio, as Beaux does not make mention of Leavitt's living arrangements in her autobiography. However, it was common at the time for women artists to cohabitate.[31] Today, the building still stands above a renovated commercial space and features several windows on the street-facing side that looks north—likely

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[27] Beaux, *Background With Figures*, 112-113.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] *Gopsill's Philadelphia City Directory for 1889* (Philadelphia: James Gopsill's Sons, 1889): 166.
[31] Laura R. Prieto, "Sculpting Butter: Gender Separatism and the Professional Ideal" in *At Home in the Studio: The Professionalization of Women Artists in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 117.

giving Beaux the "high window" she imagined (Figs. 13-14).[32] A visitor to this studio in 1892 noted the space as being "in the upper regions" of the building, and taking "[a] little bird cage elevator running in the 'well' of a circular iron staircase" to get there.[33] Windows are not visible in any of the photographs of Beaux's studios, since the light from the window would have been carefully used to bring light into the space for the camera. Although the light sources are hard to pinpoint, it is likely that the side of the room not shown is the window-side or either the space is lit from above and Beaux lived on the top floor. The five photographs of this space also affirm that there were at least two rooms in her studio, as one photograph appears to be taken in a different room from the others and shows natural light coming in from the right side of the space (Fig. 3). The one room visible almost in entirety in Figure 1 and from many angles in Figures 2, 4, and 5, can be pieced together to reveal an almost complete layout of the room (Fig. 15). Figure 3, however, shows the space not found in or connected to the other photographs, though Beaux and Leavitt's dresses in this image are the same as those in Figure 2. The space in Figure 3 may have been more of a living area or parlor, rather than the space in which she painted. Unlike her earlier studios on Chestnut that were in buildings where other artists also practiced, there is no documentation on 1710 Chestnut Street being a similar location. It is possible that Beaux could have chosen a space outside of the artists' buildings on the street to use as both her home and her studio, and likely had the financial freedom at the time to do so since "[studio] rents [were] comparatively low in Philadelphia," and Beaux was supported financially by her uncle

[32] Beaux, *Background With Figures*, 112-113; A photograph documenting the building in 1963 reveals renovations to the exterior second-floor facade at some point between then and the present that took away some of the original windows (Fig. 14).
[33] Chapman, "Lady Artists in Philadelphia."

throughout her life.[34] Due to this support, it is possible that she owned the space and would have had the means to do so.

While it is notable that Beaux held an earlier studio in a shared studio building, the idea of this type of communal space was not new, as shared studio buildings already existed in New York City. The Tenth Street Studio Building in New York City was built in 1857 and housed a number of American artists' studios over its tenure like Frederic Edwin Church, Winslow Homer, John La Farge, and most notably, William Merritt Chase, whose highly decorated studio often appeared as a subject of his paintings. Upon its opening in 1858, the building had one female artist among the twenty males—Anna Mary Freeman.[35] Aside from the building's purpose of housing artists and their practice, it also included a gallery "wherein the works of the occupants of the building can be visible at all suitable hours."[36] In these early years of the building's existence, artists' studios included basic necessities, but as time went on, some artists like Jervis McEntee filled his studio, which he lived in with his wife, with "a bedroom, kitchenette, and sitting room," so it would not have been exceptional for Beaux to have also lived in her studio.[37] A space that served a dual role as studio and home would have given artists the freedom to make art more frequently, and therefore take on more commissions to make money. Other artists were photographed in their Tenth Street Studios, like Worthington Whittredge, as early as 1866 (Fig. 16).

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[34] Beaux, *Background With Figures*, 100; Chapman, "Lady Artists in Philadelphia." It is noted by Tappert in the Tara Tappert Collection, MS.054, PAFA Archives, Philadelphia, PA, that Beaux may have moved to 1708 Chestnut Street during 1891, and then subsequently back to 1710 in 1892. However, I have not found any evidence to support this claim.

[35] Annette Blaugrund, *The Tenth Street Studio Building: Artist-entrepreneurs from the Hudson River School to the American Impressionists* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997), 23.

[36] "Architecture," *The Crayon* Vol. 5, No. 2 (February 1858), 55.

[37] Blaugrund, *The Tenth Street Studio Building,* 51.

At the start of the Gilded Age, these studios came to be seen not simply as artistic spaces but also as platforms for advertising the artist and his work. As large shop windows and other commercial spaces became significant urban elements, Burns noted, the studios became, for male artists, "[no] mere workshop … [but] a seductive wonderland of sights, sounds, smells, and textures."[38] The objects within the studio and its décor were equally important to the work produced there. According to Burns, the "studio came to symbolize a new breed of America painter: the cosmopolitan."[39] In this milieu, female artists like Beaux would also have been keen to construct a studio space that was equally, or more, enticing than that of their male counterparts—especially considering how some artists, like Pennell, treated them.

Like the few depictions of women artists' studios, little was written about nineteenth century American female artists' studios. An article published in the Philadelphia newspaper, *The Sunday Press*, is exceptional, in that it highlights the studios of a few Philadelphia women artists in February of 1892, just two years after Beaux's photographs were created. The article addresses these studios as "a most encouraging outlook" on "Fifty of the Fair Sex [who] Have Studios in This City, and They Are All Fairly Prosperous."[40] Altona A. Chapman focuses on the success of these artists with her use of the words "encouraging" and "fairly prosperous."[41] Chapman moves from studio to studio, notes advantages like skylights and elevators, and mentions the type of artwork seen there.[42] The article proves there was local interest in women artists' studios during Beaux's time.[43]

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[38] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist,* 176.
[39] Burns, "The Price of Beauty: Art, Commerce, and the Late Nineteenth-Century American Studio Interior," in *American Iconology: New Approaches to Nineteenth-century Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 209.
[40] Chapman, "Lady Artists in Philadelphia."
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

Another article on the studios of New York published in *The Cosmopolitan* in 1889 mentions that many women artists in the city with studios had just returned from study in Europe or were soon planning to go.[44] The notable examples given are Rosina Emmet Sherwood, Rhoda Holmes Nicholls, and Dora Wheeler. Sherwood, like Beaux, had studied at the Académie Julian and was one of Chase's students. Her studio is described as "a nice old-fashioned looking room divided by columns, and with an odd mingling of the usual drawing-room appointments with canvases, sitters' stand, easels, and paint-boxes," many of the same items found in Beaux's studios.[45] Dora Wheeler's studio is noted as "the scene of the most beautiful modern revival of tapestry," a notable inclusion in that Beaux also had a large tapestry hanging on the back wall of her 1710 Chestnut Street studio.[46] The article emphasizes Wheeler's hand in creating her studio space, adding that "[the] studio was of Miss Wheeler's own designing, covering the entire area of the open space in the rear of a house on Twenty-third Street" that was used for "weekly Thursday receptions, with occasional festivities, where the best of the three worlds of society, art, and literature mingled."[47] The quotation not only shows that artists like Wheeler had studios in New York homes, but also that they were places of entertainment for visitors, making them spaces seen and discussed by guests. Furthermore, Bisland underscores that Wheeler created this studio herself, illustrating how female artists indeed had agency over their own artistic spaces.

One of the closest comparisons to Beaux's studio photographs is a photograph from circa 1890 of painter Lilla Cabot Perry standing at an easel in a space that could be her Boston studio (Fig. 17). The photograph was created by an unidentified photographer and there is little

[44] Bisland, "The Studios of New York," 3-22.
[45] Ibid, 12-14.
[46] Ibid, 14; Dora Wheeler was the daughter of textile designer Candace Wheeler and designed tapestries for her mother's business. This is likely the reason the tapestry in her studio is noted.
[47] Ibid.

information on the image, leaving no promising evidence that the space is in fact her studio. However, it does compare to Beaux's images in that it is a photographic representation of an American female Gilded Age painter in a space where she creates works of art. Although Perry is seen painting a portrait in this photograph, Perry was primarily a plein air painter of landscapes and figure studies, and had spent time in Giverny.[48] While she would have had a studio, she may not have needed this designated studio space as crucially as Beaux since her subjects were more varied in location and often outside, not always created in a specific interior setting; this reflects how a female artist's genre specialty could determine the type of working space she used.[49] Beaux's portraits required a creative space with a staged location and props for her sitters to use, but Perry's did not. Beaux's mode of portraiture, unlike those of other female artists, warranted a space where she could "[commune] with her sitters" and make use of objects in the room to create a new space reflective of the sitter's personality than of the actual place of Beaux's studio.[50]

III. Beaux's Career

As did many American artists in the nineteenth century, to expand her skills and solidify her professional career as an artist, Beaux traveled to Europe in 1888 for training. Supported by her uncle and accompanied by her cousin, May Whitlock, she rented a space "in the quarter of the Pont de l'Ama, at 12 rue Boccador."[51] She began training in ateliers of artists who accepted female students, like that of Rudolphe Julian; his established school trained women equally to men in classes separated by gender. Julian's many studios afforded critiques from established

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[48] Erica E. Hirshler, "Studying Art Abroad," in *A Studio of Her Own: Women Artists in Boston, 1870-1940* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2001) 81-2.
[49] Janet L. Comey, and Ellen E. Roberts, "Artists' Biographies," in *A Studio of Her Own,* 190.
[50] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist*, 176.
[51] Beaux, *Background With Figures*, 100; Tara Leigh Tappert, *Choices: The Life and Career of Cecilia Beaux: A Professional Biography*, PhD. diss. (George Washington University, 1990), 146.

French artists like Jules Lefebvre, Tony Robert-Fleury, and William Adolphe Bouguereau.[52] Beaux disclosed in a letter to her family her eagerness to impress these men, writing "I want these men…to know me and recognize that I can do something," showing some worry that they may not expect much of her.[53] Her time in Julian's studios introduced her to female students and artists like the Russian, Anna Bilinska, and Americans, Anna Klumpke and Elizabeth Boott Duveneck, wife of esteemed American artist Frank Duveneck.[54] These women artists likely bonded over similar experiences of pursuing a professional career, giving Beaux further support to excel in her artistic endeavors. Beaux later enrolled at the Académie Colarossi alongside other female artists and attended night classes there, spending many of her days in ateliers that would have caused her to ponder what her ideal studio space would be.[55]

Beaux also frequented the Louvre during her time in Paris. She notes enjoying the work of Titian, and especially his *Man with a Glove* (1520-22), whose " rich, serious intensity," she sought to emulate.[56] Her autobiography solidifies her preference for the great masters over some of the European contemporary art of her time, a notable point in that many self-portraits exist of the old masters.[57] Her ambivalence to Monet's work is clear, stating "[the] enthusiasm I felt for Monet's iridescent pigments, his divided rays to reach the light of Nature by means of color only, left me with no desire to follow."[58] This remark reveals, however, that she knew of the work of the Impressionists, as they were popular in Paris and would have just had their last exhibition in 1886. It is likely that Beaux would have known of one of the group's successful female

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[52] Tappert, *Choices: The Life and Career of Cecilia Beaux,* 146-7.
[53] Cecilia Beaux to her family, Sunday, February-March 1888, Cecilia Beaux Papers, 1863-1968, Smithsonian Archives of American Art, 2007, Microfilm.
[54] Tappert, *Choices: The Life and Career of Cecilia Beaux*, 163; Tappert, *Choices: The Life and Career of Cecilia Beaux*, 169.
[55] Ibid, 221
[56] Beaux, *Background With Figures*, 129.
[57] Ibid, 127.
[58] Ibid, 127-8.

members, Berthe Morisot. Impressionists were presumably discussed amongst students in her art classes as artists that forwent traditional means of training and took clever steps to have their work exhibited.

It is tempting to think that Beaux saw Morisot's painting, *The Sisters* (1869), which depicts two sisters dressed identically in long white dresses with blue polka dots sitting on a couch in a similar manner to Beaux and Leavitt in Figure 2 (Fig. 18). Beaux and her cousin are also dressed alike and pose quite close together on a couch while reading. Morisot's sisters look neither at each other nor at the viewer but seem to gaze down to the ground in front of them. The figure on the right holds a fan in her left hand, but her right hand appears to be close to her sister's, showing a bond between them despite their disparate gazes. Though there is no evidence to connect *The Sisters* with Beaux's photographs' and the work is not documented in an exhibition until 1916, their similarities are striking as images of women reclining on furniture.[59] In fact, works depicting this state of "repose" would soon become subject matter in works by American artists like John White Alexander and John Singer Sargent, and depictions of women in domestic interiors would largely dominate the Gilded Age.[60]

Similarly, Beaux should have also known of the American Mary Cassatt, a fellow Pennsylvania artist who had studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts beginning in 1859.[61] Cassatt, like Beaux, subsequently pursued training in Paris and settled in the city.[62] Her sister, Lydia, joined her there in 1874 and the two formed "a new intimacy as they shared

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[59] Alain Clairet, *Berthe Morisot, 1841-1895: catalogue raisonne de l'œuvre peint.* Paris: CÉRA-nrs, 1997.
[60] These works are *Repose*, John White Alexander, 1895, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and *Nonchaloir (Repose)*, John Singer Sargent, 1911, The National Gallery of Art, Washington.
[61] Nancy Mowll Matthews, *Mary Cassatt: A Life* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998), 15; Cassatt would prove her knowledge of Beaux in a letter to Louisine Havemeyer in 1902, writing "How did you like Miss Beaux;" Mary Cassatt to Louisine Havemeyer, December 25, 1902
[62] Beaux even studied privately in 1881 with artist William Sartain, who was a classmate of Cassatt's at PAFA in the 1860's, prior to her study in Paris. Matthews, "'The Greatest Woman Painter': Cecilia Beaux, Mary Cassatt, and Issues of Female Fame," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* CXXIV, No. 3 (July 2000), 4.

housekeeping in Mary's apartment and went around Paris together."[63] This sisterly companionship was necessary as it would not have been customary for an unmarried woman like Cassatt to live alone. Lydia continued to live in Paris with her sister, creating a bond one imagines as similar to the relationship between Beaux and Leavitt as they shared the same studio.[64] Leavitt would have seemed more like a sister to Beaux since the pair was raised by their maternal grandmother and Leavitt's mother.

Cassatt's oeuvre has parallels to Beaux's photographs as well since she frequently painted depictions of women in domestic spaces. She famously created works portraying the practice of having tea that she exhibited during her time as part of the Impressionist group, similar to Beaux posing in front of a tea set in Figure 3. One example, Cassatt's *The Tea* (ca. 1880), portrays two women taking part in having their afternoon tea in a drawing room or parlor, as was a common activity for women of Beaux and Cassatt's class (Fig. 19). Beaux's inclusion of a tea set in her studio photograph may not only be a sign of her status and manners, but also a link to Cassatt, an artist she likely looked to in admiration during her career. Further, the inclusion of Beaux's tea set is a link to her domestic role, even in an artistic space—showing that her studio can successfully blend the two spaces into one.

Beaux also spent time in Brittany during her European trip in 1888 and experimented with plein air painting, representing Breton women outside, as in *Twilight Confidences* (1888) (Fig. 20). This is a notable undertaking as it suggests Beaux was open to other working methods and types of art in the late 1880's and also shows her following popular trends of the time as many Americans and other artists had gone to Brittany to paint similar subject matter. Yet, her

[63] Matthews, *Mary Cassatt: A Life*, 95.
[64] I owe thanks to Dr. Patricia Johnston for recommending the relationship between Mary Cassatt and her sister Lydia as similar to that of Beaux and Leavitt.

observation of women in Europe was not limited to those depicted in her art. In a letter to her sister, Beaux describes spending time with May Whitlock watching Parisian women on their balconies from her window. Whitlock even took photographs of them. Beaux remarks that "[indeed] one can not be as much shocked at them here as at home. They are so gay and so childish and seem as irresponsible as their poodles."[65] Beaux was therefore aware of the female image in public spaces in flux, but also would have been aware of how this would appear in photography when captured in a brief moment from watching Whitlock take photographs. Since Beaux depicted her subjects in paint in planned compositions that allowed for careful consideration of the subject, the relatively quick speed of a camera likely both impressed and worried her. If she were to have her photograph taken, she would not want to appear like the ladies she observed. This could help explain why the later photographs in Beaux's 1710 Chestnut Street studio appear more carefully posed than those from before her departure.

As a portrait painter, Beaux was accustomed to depicting and posing others, not herself. Her earliest self-portrait reveals little about her and is a half-length view (Fig. 21). On a rather blank brown background, the self-portrait offers only her facial features and brushstroke style. Her gaze is assertive as a professional woman in a high-neck, collared shirt or dress similar to that of the "new woman" type with her hair pulled back. In the history of art, self-portraits have been used to highlight one's profession, and Beaux presumably saw some of these in the Louvre during her time in Paris. But, Beaux instead chose to make her self-portrait more neutral, and not explicitly reveal her profession. Her artistic side can be read into the work through the visible brushstrokes that blend her body into the background, but her self-portrait does not offer the clarity of her studio photographs where she poses her full body in action in an identifiable space.

[65] Cecilia Beaux to her sister, June 19, 1888, Tara Tappert Collection, MS.054, Pennslyvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

This is a notable change from her self-portraits and suggests that the medium of photography was an important factor for her self-representation. It is not likely that she would have painted a work depicting herself in her studio as this would have been uncommon at the time for a woman to do. Additionally, Beaux was a successful portrait painter and enjoyed some of her most productive years immediately following her return from Europe. It would have been difficult for her to take time out of making commissioned works to paint a more detailed version of herself than what is seen in her self-portrait, as it would not have been a profitable undertaking. While she did complete portraits of family and friends for purposes of exhibition, the subject matter of a painting of her in her studio would be daring for the time as an exhibition work. As it was believed that women artists would "unsex themselves" in becoming professional painters, Beaux had to walk a fine line by retaining feminine qualities and spaces while trying to assert her artistic ambitions.[66] Therefore, the camera was the perfect option for Beaux to depict herself in her studio space as it fit into male artist trends of the time, was a suitable and increasingly popular medium, and would not have taken much time away from her work while still giving her the ability to be creative and purposeful in the images.

Individually, each photograph of Beaux in her studio offers a distinct view of her and her profession. Figure 1 shows most of her studio space with Beaux and Leavitt seated to the left on a couch with only their legs showing—letting the studio be the subject. A small desk meets the couch and in the central corner of the room, the large and nearly full-length Ethel Burnham portrait completed in 1889 is seen framed, highlighting one of Beaux's recent commissions of a young girl from a prominent family.[67] Next to it is the space where Beaux often posed her sitters

[66] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist,* 181.
[67] Ethel Burnham is most likely the daughter of George Burnham, whose portrait Beaux painted in 1887. Burnham was the chief financial officer of Philadelphia's Baldwin Locomotive Works and also an engineer. Ethel Burnham lived from 1872-1912, making her around seventeen years old when Beaux painted her portrait. She married

against the backdrop of the large tapestry that hangs on the wall, although there were alternative backgrounds she employed as well. This particular photograph is especially notable as its reverse features handwriting in black ink reading "Cecilia Beaux 1889" (Fig. 22). The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Finding Aid indicates that the black ink is of Beaux's own hand.[68] However, the two early albumen print photographs of Beaux's studio at 1334 Chestnut Street feature similar black ink handwriting on the reverse marking an early date of "1880?" that Tappert believes is an incorrect date from the hand of Cecilia Saltonstall.[69] The handwriting and ink from Figure 22 appear to be more visible and modern than Beaux's handwriting from her many letters, but there is the possibility that the annotation could be her own. If the marks are Beaux's, they suggest her interest in claiming authorship and involvement in the photographs for future viewers.

Beaux and Leavitt are seen reading on the same couch in Figure 2, next to the desk that is now shown with a glass vase of white flowers rather than ferns. Due to this change and the fact that they now wear different plaid dresses from Figure 1, these two images were not created immediately after each other even though Beaux and Leavitt sit in the same location in both photographs. The alterations in details of the studio and the dresses suggest a careful planning and repeated sessions, not only in the women's poses, but also in how the studio would be displayed in each image. On the wall behind them hang some of the same paintings, studies, and prints of women and children, likely Beaux's own work and those that she has collected to hang as inspiration. Some are framed and some are not, indicating they could be sketches or studies

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William Loring Worcester, a Harvard graduate from Massachusetts, in 1900; Report of the Secretary of the Class of 1881 of Harvard College, Issue 7 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1881), 276.

[68] Hoang Tran, "Cecilia Beaux Collection," Finding Aid (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Updated January 2016), 6-7.

[69] Tran, "Cecilia Beaux Collection," 10.

from previous work. Directly above Leavitt's head is a painting of an infant next to a genre painting or print of a woman outdoors. Framing Leavitt's head is a landscape, with another print of a female figure to its left and a study of a young girl whose gaze looks directly at Beaux at its right. The majority of these works are images of domesticity, further alluding to the domesticity of the space in addition to the fact that Beaux and Leavitt read books as they sit closely on the couch, allowing their dresses to overlap and almost meld into one fabric. They do not look at the camera but instead focus their gazes on their books and sit with their legs crossed and one arm propped up—a position not comfortable in which to sit for an extended period of time while reading. These poses were presumably fabricated in order to be held for the camera to easily capture and also to represent the popular theme of mental absorption, a trait that Nancy Matthews has called "so characteristic of the modern woman."[70] A net hangs on the wall behind them, as it can also be seen in Figure 1, likely as decoration to cover the entire left-hand wall as well as part of the ceiling.

Emma Leavitt, however, does look at the camera in an image of her sitting on a bench near Beaux seated at a table with a tea set (Fig. 3). Unlike the other images, this photograph seems to show an entirely different room. This photograph makes it almost certain that Beaux's studio at 1710 Chestnut Street was a two-room space, with a studio and an antechamber or informal parlor. The photograph features Beaux and Leavitt sitting in front of what is likely a dresser or high table with a mirror that has been covered in fabric in order to place images and decorative works on it. On the wall to the left of Beaux, a print of *Breton Women at a Pardon* can be seen by French academic painter Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret (Fig. 23).[71] Next to this print is

[70] Matthews, "Mary Cassatt and the Changing Face of the 'Modern Woman' in the Impressionist Era,' in *Crosscurrents in American Impressionism at the Turn of the Century* (Athens, GA: Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 1996), 28.
[71] I owe thanks to Dr. Alisa Luxenberg for identifying this painting.

a half-length portrait of a female and a Renaissance-style portrait of a woman hangs nearby above a framed profile view of a female figure. Directly above Beaux's head are prints of the Parthenon frieze hung near a matted horizontal landscape. At the top of the structure, there is a vase, a plate, some ceramic bowls, an image on paper of a bust view of a young woman, and a small bust of a young boy. On the table there are similar items near where Leavitt leans against it, like a vertical print of a woman holding a young child, a plate painted with a floral design, and a small cup and saucer.[72] The variety of displayed works suggests Beaux's knowledge of the history of art from the classics, to the Renaissance, and to contemporary European art of her time. Additionally, the works are not only notable by subject matter, but also by medium as she showcases drawings, paintings, sculpture, ceramics, and decorative arts. Beaux was widely traveled, European-trained, and a professional artist and her studio is decorated to highlight these accomplishments.

It has been suggested by Leibold, the first scholar to publish on these photographs, that a tea party or similar event has just occurred based on the tea setting in front of Beaux and on the idea that the reflection of the male figure in the mirror surrounded by cloth is that of a guest to the tea party.[73] Her reading of a reflection, seen directly to the left of Leavitt's head, is further supported by the small photograph tucked into the lower-left edge of the mirror, as was done in the nineteenth century. Alternatively, the man in the mirror could be the photographer as he sits across from Beaux and Leavitt where the camera would be set up. However, the reflection only shows the man who appears to be looking down, and there is no evidence of a camera's reflection in the mirror. Leibold could indeed be correct that a tea party had in fact just taken place. Bringing friends or family members over for a gathering also helps to pinpoint the exact

[72] These prints and works on display in the photograph may be found in archives for future research.
[73] Leibold, "'The Only Miss Beaux', 384.

use of her studio as not only a working space but also a domestic space seen by others. As women in the nineteenth century often entertained visitors in their homes, an image like this of Beaux doing just that would blend her role as both an artist and a woman of the time, allowing her studio to become a melded space of both artistic merit and domesticity.

Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate Beaux fully embracing her artistic profession, surrounded by her own art. In Figure 4, she sits in what would be the far-right corner of her studio space wielding a palette knife as if mixing colors on her large palette, accompanied by Leavitt who strikes a profile pose in front of Beaux's paintings. On the easels are portraits of Mrs. J Pillingham and Edward Biddle, and directly behind Leavitt is a full-length female figure on paper and matted. The Biddle portrait has a small study for *Twilight Confidences* (1888) leaning against its frame at the bottom right of the easel, suggesting Beaux was indeed reflecting on her time in Europe while in her studio, and certainly hoping others may inquire about it as well. Two small figure studies sit to the left of Leavitt, and one is a mirror pose of hers. The other looks to be a study for the same Ethel Burnham portrait from Figures 1 and 5. Here, Beaux looks assertively to the camera, and therefore the viewer, with her head held high as she poses with the tools of her trade. Leavitt, in profile, looks to the left corner of the room, making Beaux's body appear more open and engaged with the camera in comparison. In addition to holding her palette, Beaux wears a smock over her dress, also visible along with the palette in Figure 1, while her cousin does not—further prioritizing Beaux's sense of agency as the artist of the works on the easels.

In Figure 5, Beaux poses on the platform and in the chair where many of her sitters have sat while Leavitt sketches her from a high stool. The small canvas on the easel in front of Leavitt appears to be mostly blank, suggesting she just began to work as Leavitt assumes the role of

artist. Ethel Burnham's portrait cleverly frames Leavitt in between the painting and Beaux, creating a comparison between Beaux's actual gaze with Burnham's painted one as both appear to look back at the viewer, connecting Beaux and her work. Both painted image and "model" have similar hairstyles as well. The righthand side of the photograph shows Beaux's tools—two containers full of paintbrushes of various sizes and on the table, a few tubes of paint. Since she often painted sitters in this chair, it is likely that this is the corner of the room in which she frequently worked as her tools are nearby and she poses herself as an example. Leavitt's back is turned towards the viewer and follows a tradition in the history of art as a practice that invites the viewer into the work by allowing them to assume the role of the back-turned figure. This makes Beaux the subject of the work and the receiver of the viewer's gaze—both roles she does not normally fill as the artist whose subjects often looked directly at her. Beaux's position in the chair alongside her painting materials asserts her role as an artist in her own space, but she still displays herself as feminine. She sits with her legs crossed and hands clasped in a long dress covered with her smock while her hair is pulled back—assuming the proper fashion of her time in a modest pose. Significantly, Beaux is portrayed not only as a lady, but as an artist with her tools arranged near her almost like a still life. As Burns has argued, "[a] portrait by Beaux was supposed to be the result of intimate sentimental exchange between artist and model."[74] In this photograph, Beaux makes the viewer become the artist and she becomes the model, allowing one to connect with her as she did with her sitters. In addition, the photograph serves literally as a portrait of Beaux as artist.

IV. Photography in late Nineteenth-century Philadelphia and Robert S. Redfield

[74] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist*, 176.

The five photographs of Beaux from her 1710 Chestnut Street studio are all platinum prints, which was an increasingly practiced type of photography in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth century. Platinum paper was distributed in Philadelphia by the firm Willis and Clements, who made the materials easily accessible for those who wanted to take up the practice. The firm "dominated the sale of platinum paper," with Eastman Kodak later trying unsuccessfully to purchase the firm.[75] Robert S. Redfield, visible in an earlier photograph of Beaux's studio between 1885-86, was a Philadelphia photographer who took up platinum printing (Fig. 6). Figure 6 shows the pair along with Beaux's cousin participating in what looks to be a tea party of sorts—indicating again that Beaux may have actually had such events, rather than just posing for one in photographs, and implying that the three of them could have sat and discussed their work or events in the city at the time.

While the platinum process was practiced by many in Philadelphia, in America in the 1880's-1890's, photography was still not yet considered an art form like it was in England, although "a large number of Philadelphians were taking photographs as a hobby [as early as] 1860."[76] Mary Panzer argues that although this was the case, most amateurs wanted to exhibit their work and were taking photographs in order to get their work seen.[77] Many of the amateur photographers in America joined camera clubs or societies in order to be connected with other photographers and share working methods and ideas, as well as find ways to exhibit their work. A member of the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, Redfield was called "one of the most successful photographers among leading amateurs," by *The Cosmopolitan Magazine* in 1891.[78]

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[75] John Hafey and Tom Shillea, "Aesthetic Evolution," in *The Platinum Print* (Rochester, NY: Graphic Arts Research Center, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1979), 6.
[76] William Innes Homer, *Pictorial Photography in Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy's Salons, 1898-1901* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1984), 5.
[77] Mary Panzer, *Philadelphia Naturalistic Photography, 1865-1906* (New Haven: CT, Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 7.
[78] Clarence Moore, "Leading Amateurs in Photography," *The Cosmopolitan 7*, no. 1 (1891): 430.

By 1898, he was named the society's president, after having served as secretary, editor of the journal, and vice-president during his membership.[79]

Redfield's platinum print of his Philadelphia residence created around the same time as the five images of Beaux in her 1710 Chestnut Street studio bear resemblance to them in its framing of similar subject matter in a confined interior space, along with its inclusion of a mirror seen to the right of the image (Fig. 24). These elements, taken along with Redfield's presence in Beaux's earlier image, suggest that he could be the photographer of the images of Beaux. It would make sense for the photographs to be taken by Redfield, as he was working in Wayne, just outside of Philadelphia, and helping with exhibitions of photography, so he could have reasonably been one of the guests invited to events like a tea party at Beaux's 1710 Chestnut Street studio. Redfield exhibited his work in the Photographic Society's exhibitions, but it is not documented that these photographs of Beaux were ever shown. Since they remained in the Beaux family until they were donated to PAFA, the photographs were more likely a keepsake for Beaux to have in her studio to remind her of her status as an artist and for her sitters and visitors to be able to see as an actual object to hold and interact with. They were presumably produced as a favor by Redfield to his friend.

The extent of Beaux's familiarity with photography is not known, but she did have experience with it and those who practiced it. She was photographed at age twelve in the O.H. Willard Galleries of Philadelphia, as a girl.[80] Though Beaux worked from models for the majority of her career, she did have experience with photography in her novice stages of training. When taking a course on china painting around 1879, Beaux mentions that she mastered the skill

[79] Panzer, *Philadelphia Naturalistic Photography,* 41.
[80] This photograph is stamped on the back with the logo from the O.H. Willard Galleries and is included in the Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060 in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

quickly and says, “Of course I used photographs, but was not content with ‘making up’ the color.”[81] It is unclear what the photographs represented, whether that be designs to paint onto the china or were photographs of actual china that she was replicating, but she implies that the monochrome aspect of the photograph was not favorable to her.

Beaux was in Philadelphia during the time of the earliest photographic exhibitions that Redfield helped to organize. In fact, the city’s Photographic Society held its first exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1886 (Fig. 25). Her studio photograph with Redfield suggests that she was most likely aware of what was happening in the photographic world in the city around 1885 and 1886, as Leibold indicates what was “a circle of contacts for Beaux in the world of Philadelphia art.”[82]

Painter and photographer Thomas Eakins had been an instructor whom she avoided during her studies at PAFA beginning in 1876.[83] In the 1880’s, he started to more heavily incorporate photography into his oeuvre and interacted with English photographer Eadweard Muybridge when the latter conducted his motion studies project in Philadelphia.[84] While Eakins did not begin making photographs in earnest until the 1880’s, his early paintings show use of photographs for aid. He likely was not yet using or talking about the camera while teaching at PAFA when Beaux was a student, but Beaux knew of his teaching style, and likely followed his later photographic work as an artist also working in the same city. Eakins also involved many of his students in photography, as well as his wife. Beaux should have been aware of his controversial photography of naked figures, and perhaps thought of her images as foils to his—

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[81] Beaux, *Background With Figures,* 85.
[82] Leibold, "‘The Only Miss Beaux,’ 383.
[83] Carter, *Cecilia Beaux,* 59; Beaux, *Background With Figures,* 98; Beaux stated “[a] curious instinct of self-preservation kept me outside the magic circle,” revealing she felt Eakins may jeopardize her morals.
[84] Mary Panzer, “Photography, Science, and the Traditional Art of Thomas Eakins,” in *Eakins and the Photograph: Works by Thomas Eakins and His Circle in the Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 100.

seeking to represent herself as a sophisticated Philadelphian artist and someone also linked to the school in which she would later become the first female instructor.[85]

Beaux had also taken private lessons starting in 1881 from William Sartain, a Philadelphia-born painter who had studied in the atelier of French painter Léon Bonnat for eight years.[86] Sartain employed a similar style of training to teach female painters in Philadelphia as Bonnat had given his students in Paris—a less-demanding style with little direct instruction, more freedom to develop their style, and led to the students learning from one another. Beaux highlights how much she enjoyed this freedom in her autobiography. Sartain was rarely in his teaching atelier since he lived and worked in his studio in New York.[87] Sartain had photographs of himself made in his New York studio; one was published in *The Cosmopolitan* Magazine the same year in which Beaux's photographs were created (Fig. 26).[88] It is not known if Beaux saw these photographs, but as she was fond of her teacher and followed in his footsteps, it is likely that she, too, had her photographs made of herself in studio just as her teacher had done, and also lived in a space with a dual role as studio and residence as Sartain did.

Similarities exist in the studios of Sartain and Beaux, as photographs of both reveal works on an easel and hung around the room, and feature several wooden chairs, as well as show both artists not looking directly at the camera as they take part in another activity. As studio visits by writers within the city were popular at the time, and Sartain's had just been featured in May of 1889, it is plausible that Beaux could have had photographs taken in anticipation of her studio being visited after seeing her former teacher's in *The Cosmopolitan*. She should have

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[85] Amy Beth Werbel, "Art, Pornography, Freak Shows, Medical Pictures, and the Guilty Pleasures of Photography in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia," in *Thomas Eakins: Art, Medicine, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-century Philadelphia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 86-125.
[86] Tara Leigh Tappert. "William Sartain and Cecilia Beaux: The Influences of a Teacher," in *Philadelphia's Cultural Landscape: The Sartain Family Legacy* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000), 105-109.
[87] Tappert, "William Sartain and Cecilia Beaux: The Influences of a Teacher," 109.
[88] Bisland, "The Studios of New York," 21.

known that her studio was a notable example of a professional woman artist's studio of the time and likely would have wanted to have it featured. If she had these photographs made for that reason, it would show her careful consideration of her image for public viewing in comparison with male images. Collectively, Beaux's studio photographs show her as both a woman and an artist, but viewed in isolation, her various poses highlight different roles she played in her life. She is seen reading, posing, and with a tea set in addition to holding a palette when all five images from 1889-1890 are viewed as a group. The photographs show her versatility, as she could choose to share one image or all of them. Unlike Sartain's one published photograph, Beaux's several studio photographs highlight her studio as both an artistic and a domestic space.

V. Women Artists of the Gilded Age

During her career, Beaux carefully maneuvered the gender boundaries set out for her. She knew that to be too manly was to risk not being seen as a woman at all, and to be too feminine was to risk not being taken seriously. She made several choices during her lifetime, as argued by Tappert, that were in favor of her success as a professional artist.[89] She pursued study in Europe, never married, thwarted attention from male suitors, and forfeited a potential role as a mother all in order to focus on her work and to excel in the profession she admired.

These actions fit her into the role of the "new woman" type that arose in the late nineteenth century with the professionalization of women artists. A *Life Magazine* cartoon published in 1890 by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson depicts what befalls "The Female Artist Who Has Ceased To Be Feminine": she has become too masculine and satirical (Fig. 27). Her studio features uncustomary items for a female artist: large still-life paintings and nude sketches.[90] Additionally, the female artist wears glasses, an uncommon accessory for a woman of

[89] Tappert, *Choices: The Life and Career of Cecilia Beaux*.
[90] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist,* 182.

the time in American art that could be seen as an attempt to be overly intellectual. The tiger rug on the floor of the studio recalls the manly pursuit of hunting and makes reference to American artist James McNeill Whistler's bear rug in his *Symphony in White, No. 1* from 1861-62, again revealing a female artist's clumsy attempt at trying to fit into a man's profession. Women artists who wished to succeed were forced to find a suitable balance between showing their feminine side and being an ambitious professional. Women artists succeeded by assuming more manly characteristics, but Gibson's illustration warns of the dangers of overstepping one's boundaries. This cartoon from a widely read publication during Beaux's time provides key evidence of the prevailing thoughts about women artists, and suggests that Beaux's studio images must have been carefully conceived so as not to be viewed like Gibson's cartoon. Still, male Gilded Age artists worried that women artists might surpass them, especially with the growing number of female patrons, and outfitted their studios to create comfortable, decorated spaces.[91]

A notable example is the work of Chase that often depicts his New York studio. Chase also had his studio photographed, and his paintings were published in magazines of the time.[92] His studio appears like a more domestic space while at the same time showing off the extravagant items he collected during his travel in Europe and his cosmopolitan status. In comparison, Beaux's studio appears more modest and practical rather than flamboyant. Chase often depicted female figures in his paintings of his studio, as seen in *The Tenth Street Studio* (Fig. 28). In this 1880 work, the female figure reclines in a long white dress on a blue chair in much the same manner in which Beaux and Leavitt recline on their couch in Figure 2. However, Chase's figure, in ruffled gown holding a piece of paper, is more of a decorative aspect of the

[91] Ibid, 166.
[92] One example includes "Studio Illustration of Mr. W.M. Chase," John Moran for "Studio-Life in New York," *Art Journal* 5 (December 1879).

studio as she peers back at Chase seated to her right with a palette in hand, in shadow. The inclusion of the artist in the work with her takes away from her sense of agency. She is not the owner of the space in which she is featured, nor likely had much say in controlling how she was arranged in this studio image. In fact, a dog sits at her feet with one paw conspicuously on her dress that prevents her from moving. Chase's inclusion of her in the painting may seem progressive as an example of a female in a male space, but ultimately gives him agency over her in the work named for his studio, and not after her as a portrait. Beaux's photographs, in contrast, feature her as both the main subject and the artist in her own space.

VI. Conclusion

Ultimately, many questions are still unanswered. The photographer(s) of the seven studio photographs of Beaux have not been identified, the precise purpose of the images is unknown, and her exact application of her studios as both live-in and workspaces cannot be confirmed. What is known is that these images of Beaux's studios highlight a female Gilded Age artist's means of fitting herself into the trends of her male contemporaries, and show that on some level, Beaux wanted her studio to be seen. This paper does not argue that Beaux was the first female artist to pose within her studio, or that these photographs are the earliest depiction of an American female artist's studio. Rather, it is a first step in investigating women artists' studios, and would hope with its attention to the subject, that more photographs of other women artists in their studios could be found. The likely unpublished nature of the photographs suggests a tension between having the photographs made and being unable to publicize them. In other words, Beaux was prepared to compete fully with the male artists of her time with these images, but may not have had the opportunity to share them like they did. *The Cosmopolitan*, after all, did not feature any women's studios as they did her male teacher. Or, perhaps the photographs

suggest, assuming that similar photographs of other female artists may exist, that women artists employed their studio photographs differently than men, keeping them in their studios for a more private rather than public style of viewing. This notion is further supported by the fact that Beaux's photographs are in platinum, making them precious and valuable works certainly for Beaux, if not for others. First and foremost, they would have held special meaning for her, likely as examples of her interacting with her creative space and as a form of self-portrait.

Considered as a whole alongside her career at the time, the photographs reflect Beaux's assimilation of standards of both American and European female artists, as well as that of male and female artists. Similarly, the type of platinum print photographs reflects a popular practice for the city and time in which she lived. And, her inclusion of Robert S. Redfield in one of the photographs suggests her knowledge of photographers in Philadelphia and her awareness of the growing support of the practice. The Beaux photographs are astutely composed self-constructions of a female artist on the cusp of a burgeoning career in her creative space. As the first female instructor at PAFA starting in 1895, these photographs suggest that Beaux could have been a pioneer in other practices for women artists as well, like having her studio photographed.

Beaux's autobiography makes several references to the act of artistic creation, as she imagines her own studio space and later recalls enjoying sculptures in the Louvre because they were "surrounded by the never really comprehended glamour of [their] creative act."[93] While Beaux's artistic process was important to her, the space that fostered it seems equally important to her success. These thoughtfully constructed images of Beaux in her studio highlight this important location for her to others, allowing them to see how she envisions herself interacting

[93] Beaux, *Background With Figures,* 128.

with her own space and with potential sitters. A space that began more as a collaborative space with fellow students soon became her own space—her creative space—that she arranged in accordance to her liking and with the accoutrements of her time.

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Figures

Figure 1: [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux and Emma Leavitt in their studio on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, 1710 Chestnut Street, ca. 1889-1890, platinum on cardboard, 6 ¾ x 4 ¾ in.], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 2: [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux and Emma Leavitt in their studio on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, 1710 Chestnut Street, ca. 1889-1890, platinum on cardboard, 6 x 8 in.], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 3: [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux and Emma Leavitt in their studio on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, 1710 Chestnut Street, ca. 1889-1890, platinum on cardboard, 6 x 8 in.], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 4: [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux and Emma Leavitt in their studio on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, 1710 Chestnut Street, ca. 1889-1890, platinum on cardboard, 6 x 8 in.], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 5: [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux and Emma Leavitt in their studio on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, 1710 Chestnut Street, ca. 1889-1890, platinum on cardboard, 6 ¾ x 4 ¾ in.], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 6: [Unknown photographer, Robert Redfield, May Whitlock, and Cecilia Beaux in Beaux's Studio, 1334 Chestnut Street, ca. 1885-86, albumen on cardboard, 4 ¾ x 7 in.], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 7: [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux and May Whitlock in Beaux's Studio, 1334 Chestnut Street, ca. 1885-86, albumen on cardboard, 6 ½ x 4 ¾ in.], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 8: Lilla Cabot Perry, *Self-Portrait*, c.1889-96, oil on canvas, 31 7/8 x 25 5/8 in., Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago, Illinois

Figure 9: Anna Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 1898, oil on canvas, 46 1/8 x 38 5/8 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 10: Cecilia Beaux*, Les Derniers Jours d' Enfance*, 1883-85, oil on canvas, 45 3/4 x 54 in., Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 11: [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux's studio at 1520 Chestnut Street, 1885-86, platinum print], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 3, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 12: Cecilia Beaux, *Harold and Mildred Colton*, 1887, oil on canvas, 55 7/8 x 42 in., The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 13: 1710 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Google Maps, 2019

Figure 14: 1710 Chestnut Street, 1963, Philadelphia Historical Commission Files, Philadelphia Historical Commission

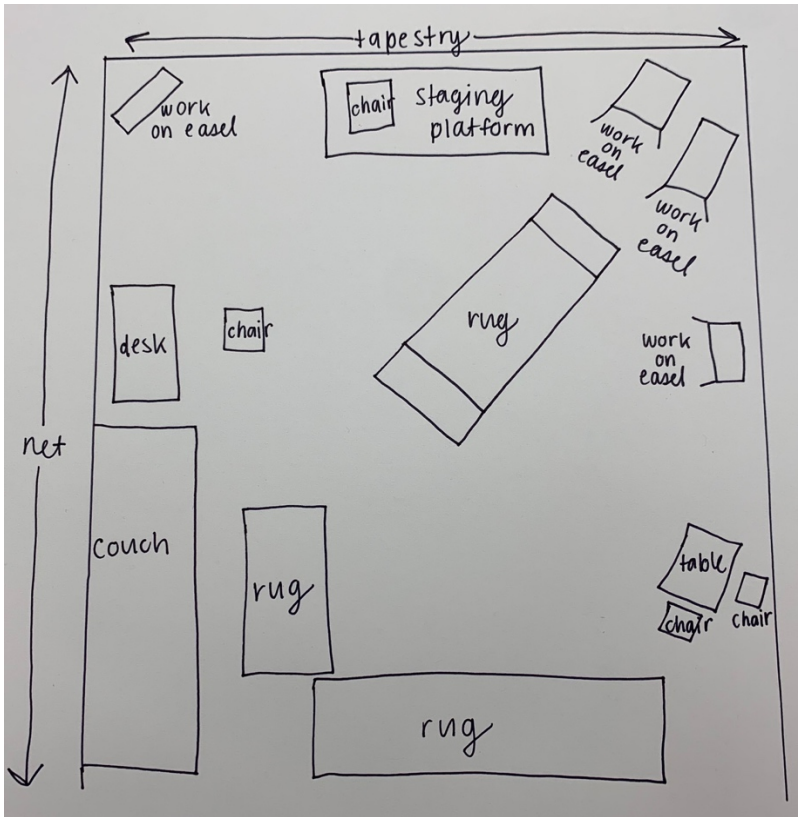

Figure 15: Diagram of 1710 Chestnut Street studio created by the author

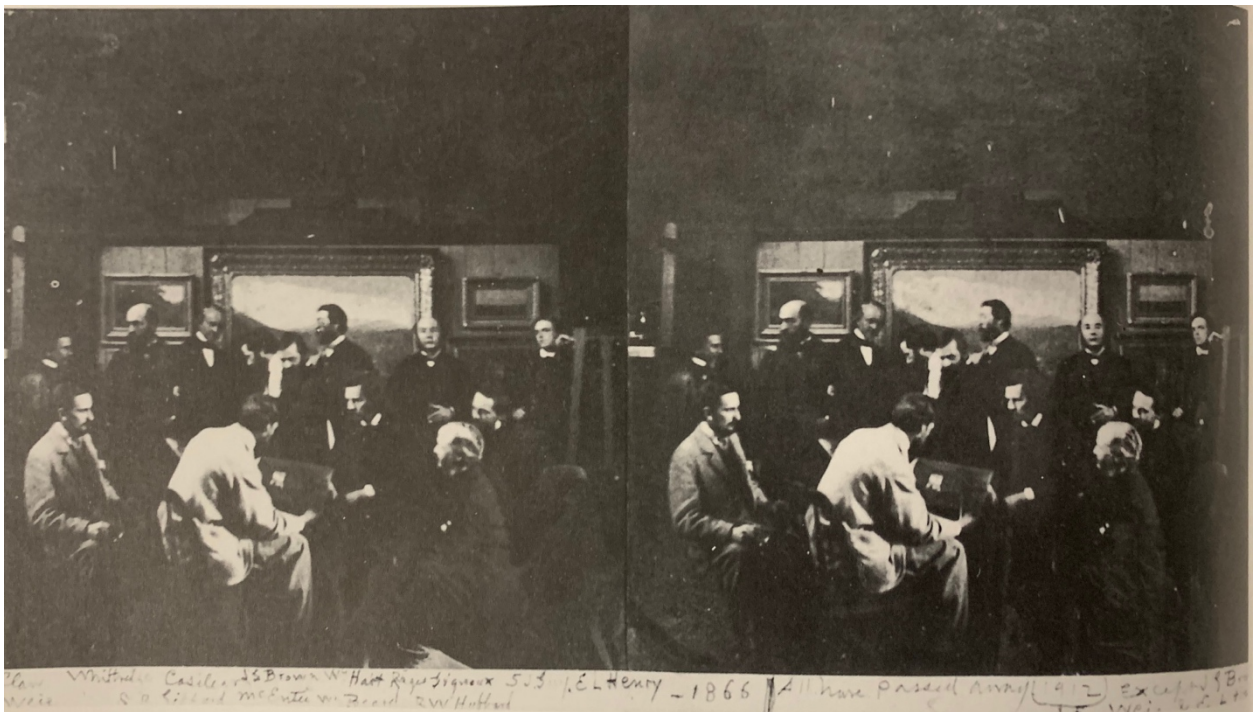

Figure 16: S. Beer, Whittredge and Other Artists in His Tenth Street Studio, 1866, stereograph, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington

Figure 17: Unknown photographer, Lilla Cabot Perry with Portrait of Phyllis Robbins, ca. 1890

Figure 18: Berthe Morisot, *The Sisters*, 1869, oil on canvas, 20 ½ x 32 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 19: Mary Cassatt, *The Tea*, ca. 1880, oil on canvas, 25 ½ x 36 ¼ in., The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Figure 20: Cecilia Beaux, *Twilight Confidences*, 1888, oil on canvas, 23 ½ x 28 in., Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens

Figure 21: S*elf-Portrait*, ca. 1889-1894, oil on canvas, 17 7/8 x 13 7/8 in., National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C

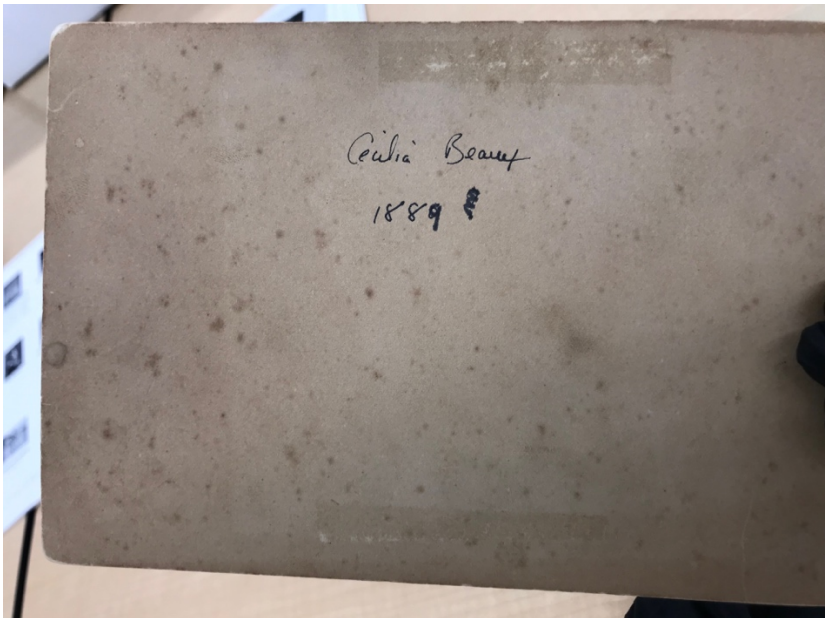

Figure 22: (Reverse of Figure 1), [Unknown photographer, Cecilia Beaux and Emma Leavitt in her studio on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, 1710 Chestnut Street, ca. 1889-1890, reverse side, platinum print], Cecilia Beaux Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, MS.060, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 23: Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret, *Breton Women at a Pardon,* 1887, 49.3 x 55.6 in., Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon

Figure 24: Robert S. Redfield, Interior of Parlor, Redfield Residence, 211 Upland Way, Wayne Pennsylvania, ca. 1895, platinum mounted on cardboard, 19 ½ x 24 cm, Print Department, Library Company of Philadelphia

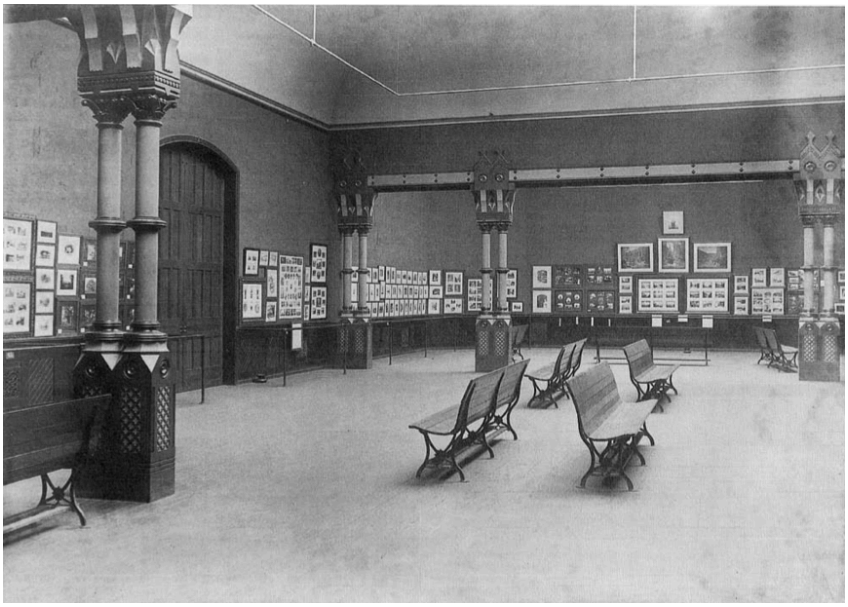

Figure 25: Unknown photographer, Installation of Exhibition at PAFA of the Philadelphia Photographic Society, 1886, George Eastman House: International Museum of Photography and Film, Rochester, New York

Figure 26: Rockwood?, *William Sartain in his Rembrandt Building Studio*, 1889, for Elizabeth Bisland, "The Studios of New York," The Cosmopolitan 7, no. 1 (May 1889)

Figure 27: Charles Dana Gibson, *The Female Artist Who Has Ceased To Be Feminine*, August 7, 1890, *Life* 16

Figure 28: William Merritt Chase, *The Tenth Street Studio*, 1880, oil on canvas, 36 ¼ x 48 ¼ in., Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, Missouri