Rodgers noted how Goss meticulously documented his professional work: "He maintained intellectual control ... by assigning the developed negatives to a category and by numbering, dating, and titling each one by writing backwards across the bottom of the negative with India ink."[8] This practice seems like an important aspect of Goss's process, perhaps as important as the images themselves. When the evidence of an arrangement principle is written backwards by hand on the bottom of the negative, it is probably worth noting in the presentation of a thematic arrangement of prints made from those negatives. Some additional context may have opened up a more reflective contemplation of the images chosen for the *Works and Days* exhibition. Given the concision of the presentation, it seems that the curators expected the images would speak for themselves. Unfortunately, that resulted in the chosen units looking more like a random selection than exemplars of a bureaucratic process.

The Ryerson Image Centre has emerged as a new collecting institution in Toronto with a focus on documentary photography, bolstered by the anonymous 2005 donation of 292,000 images in the Black Star Collection. While this collection remains the cornerstone of the centre's holdings, the *Works and Days* exhibition was just one of several recent exhibitions featuring images curated from other repositories, including the National Gallery of Canada. The centre has also acquired a number of smaller personal archival collections, a list of which can be accessed on its website, via the home page menu.[9] No finding aids or catalogues of the holdings are yet available online, but research requests can be submitted directly to the centre's staff by email. The gallery is free to the general public.

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Life on the Grid: 100 Years of Street Photography in Toronto. CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES. Curated by PATRICK CUMMINS. Mounted at the City of Toronto Archives, Toronto, 27 June 2013–May 2014.

We have long been fascinated with the evolution of our built environment; photographs of a streetscape from a century ago capture our attention as we attempt to trace change and relate to the past. Often this interaction can be very personal: we may forge surprisingly strong relationships with our physical surroundings by looking back and noting how these spaces have changed. The City of Toronto Archives' current exhibition, *Life on the Grid: 100 Years*

8 Ibid., 76.

9 Ryerson Image Centre, Research & Collections, "Collections," accessed 30 September 2013, http://www.ryerson.ca/ric/research/collections.html.

of Street Photography in Toronto, features the work of eleven photographers, each presenting a different view of Toronto's changing urban landscape over the past 120 years. This exhibition draws on the Archives' impressive collection of photography to present us with a carefully curated selection of work by several significant photographers, which attempts to define and interpret the emergence and continued importance of street photography in the city. Taken as a whole, this exhibit successfully challenges the idea of "street photography" as a genre and ultimately adds to our understanding of city life.

Each of the photographers featured had different objectives when composing images, whether working under hire for Toronto's City Engineer's Office to chronicle the construction of civic infrastructure, for example, or illustrating a more personal, subjective view of the city's streets. The exhibition brings all of the artists together under the banner of "street photography," a term whose meaning is only loosely defined in the exhibition text as "photography where the street itself is the subject."

This broad description of the genre, however, allows viewers the opportunity to construct their own definition of street photography as they move through the gallery. When looking at the earliest photographs, those from the nineteenth century – when the technology of the day made photography cumbersome, slow, and costly – it is clear that photographs were taken with great care, most often to document civic projects. Is this street photography? Yes, in the strictest sense, given that the streetscape is documented. This, however, becomes but a single perspective as one begins to see the evolution of the genre over time. What role does the personal intent of the photographer play? What happens when the image focuses not on the building but rather its residents? This discussion becomes more nuanced through the physical arrangement of the photographs in the gallery space.

It is an obvious challenge to link the works of disparate photographers in such a way as to facilitate an exploration of genre. The physical arrangement of the gallery space chosen by curator Patrick Cummins[1] effortlessly overcomes this challenge and serves to be a major strength of the exhibition. By grouping the images by photographer and then in a roughly chronological order, two variables are juxtaposed: the evolution of the art over time and the impact that technology and artistic intent can have on the genre. Where the earliest images – those of F.W. Micklethwaite (1849–1925), Josiah Bruce (1840–1913), and Arthur S. Goss (1881–1940), for example – were constrained by deliberate staging, bulky equipment, and patron demands, the process followed by later photographers, including Michel Lambeth (1923–1977) and Ivaan Kotulsky

1 Patrick Cummins is an archivist at the City of Toronto Archives and the curator of *Life on the Grid: 100 Years of Street Photography in Toronto*. Mr. Cummins is not identified as the curator in exhibition materials on display.

(1944–2008), among others, was less restricted and allowed for a more subjective art. It becomes apparent that street photography, at least as represented in the City of Toronto Archives' collection, began as objective and documentary in approach. Photographers were often employed by government bodies looking to document public works; the depiction of people and social history was secondary to representing the built environment. As time passed and photography became a more portable, affordable, and popular art, an emphasis on personal narrative and human storytelling emerged. The sharp contrast between Josiah Bruce's photographs of roadways, bridges, and other city infrastructure and Peter Sramek's story-like images of 1970s male fashion clearly shows this evolution. Street photography, as presented in this arrangement, is a fluid and amorphous genre of work that can be greatly influenced by technology, motive, and intent.

A second strength of the exhibition is reflected in the decision to concentrate heavily on those photographers who undertook the construction of subjective human narrative in their work. Although the early images of Toronto's nascent streetscapes are fascinating, the most challenging images in this exhibit are those that show individuals and the lives being lived on these streets. Documenting the city as a physical space becomes incidental in these photographs; instead we are invited to relate to and perhaps empathize with, on a human level, the lives shown to us. Most striking is the work of Ivaan Kotulsky. Kotulsky operated a shop in Toronto's Queen Street West neighbourhood in the 1990s and would venture out daily to photograph the streetscape around him: passersby, area residents, shopkeepers, and the homeless. A deliberate form of street portraiture, his work is empathetic and revealing: these are images, as the exhibition text describes, "both of street people, and of people on the street." Kotulsky photographed many of his subjects repeatedly over the period of a decade, allowing for a full personal portrait to emerge. Along with the provocative photographs by William James (1866–1948), which consciously show us individuals rather than crowds, the dozens of Kotulsky images on display beg us to ponder the lives Toronto's streets have hosted over the years. These are the photographs that leave a lasting impression. It is Kotulsky's work, which came to the City of Toronto Archives recently, that inspired Cummins – himself an accomplished street photographer – to mount this exhibit.[2]

2 Eric Veillette, "Life on the Grid Showcases Toronto's Photo Archives: Photographs Show Toronto's Street Life over the Past 100 Years," *Toronto Star*, 3 July 2013, http://www.thestar.com/life/food_wine/2013/07/03/patrick_cummins.html.

Ivaan Kotulsky (1944–2008). Old Woman with a Cane. Credit: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 427, Series 1907, File 55, Item 0.

Arthur S. Goss (1881–1940). Condemned houses – 372 to 376 King Street East. Credit: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 372, Sub-Series 32, Item 512.

Unfortunately, the exhibition does not include any supporting textual records to aid in the interpretation of the photographs on display. The lack of accompanying archival material forces the viewer to interpret the photographers' intent on his/her own merit; the text panels describing each photographer initiate this analysis by way of a biography and possible interpretation, but ultimately viewers are encouraged to draw their own conclusions. With the knowledge that this exhibit was drawn from the Archives' collection, it would have been interesting to have the opportunity to read supporting textual records alongside the images in order to better appreciate the artists' motives. In one instance, reference is made to related records in the Archives' holdings – in connection with the work of Arthur S. Goss, the long-time head photographer of Toronto's Department of Public Works Photography and Blue Printing Section (see the review of *Arthur S. Goss: Works and Days* in this issue) – though these records are not seen and we are left guessing about the documentary context.

Though it has been argued in previous *Archivaria* exhibition reviews that the selective inclusion of archival records in art, history, or science exhibitions risks breaking the archival bond,[3] the incorporation of records in this context may have helped the casual viewer better understand the *why* behind each image. In the case of Josiah Bruce's work, for example, we are told he was an employee of Toronto's City Engineer's Office, so it is assumed the images shown satisfy not his, but his employer's, agenda. Regrettably, no evidence is offered to support or refute this position.

In an interview with Eric Veillette of the *Toronto Star*, curator Patrick Cummins reveals that there is very little in the way of supporting documentation for many of the individual photographs on display and admits that, ultimately, context often remains "left open to interpretation."[4] Although this allows visitors to contemplate larger questions about the artists' intent, the inclusion of archival records – whether they describe the actual photographs or shed light on the artists' motives more generally – may have served to support the narratives being created by the photographers. Including, for example, a copy of an annual report prepared by the City Engineer's Office, which features the photographs taken by Josiah Bruce, would have further illustrated to us *why* his photographs were made, how they were interpreted by his employer, and, finally, how they were packaged and presented to the public.

3 Robert VanderBerg alludes to Rodney G.S. Carter's discussion of this criticism in two reviews published in *Archivaria*. See "Exhibition Review: Black Ice: David Blackwood Prints of Newfoundland," *Archivaria* 72 (Fall 2011), 259. For Carter's original criticism, see "Exhibition Review: Betty Goodwin: Work Notes," *Archivaria* 71 (Spring 2011), 164; and "Exhibition Review: Isabel McLaughlin (1903–2002): Painter, Patron, Philanthropist," *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008), 197–98.

4 Veillette, "Life on the Grid Showcases Toronto's Photo Archives."

Ultimately, this intriguing and visually stunning exhibition is less about the artists on display than it is about a form of expression and a mode of documenting Toronto's ever-changing physical and social landscape. Rather than focusing exclusively on the work of any individual photographer, this exhibit allows multiple bodies of work to be seen as a whole so that the fluid notion of "street photography" itself can be redefined in the minds of visitors as they interpret and question the images on display. The diverse range of artists and photographs proves how varied this genre can be. These photographs lay before us a detailed and complex portrait of Toronto and its residents over the past 120 years through the depiction of familiar things: buildings, public infrastructure, neighbourhoods, and, above all, people. It is in this form of photography that the known is made new again as the viewer engages with each image and attempts to understand *why* it was taken – in effect, to interpret the photographer's intent. The relationship between intention and interpretation is perhaps the most challenging theme presented in this exhibit. Photography is not an objective art, and this exhibit skilfully highlights the tension between the photographers' unknown intentions and the narratives the viewer is left to construct when Toronto's streetscape is the subject of the photograph.

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