

Captain Scott's Antarctic Expedition 1910-1913

The Photographs of Herbert Ponting

A PLATINUM PRINT PORTFOLIO

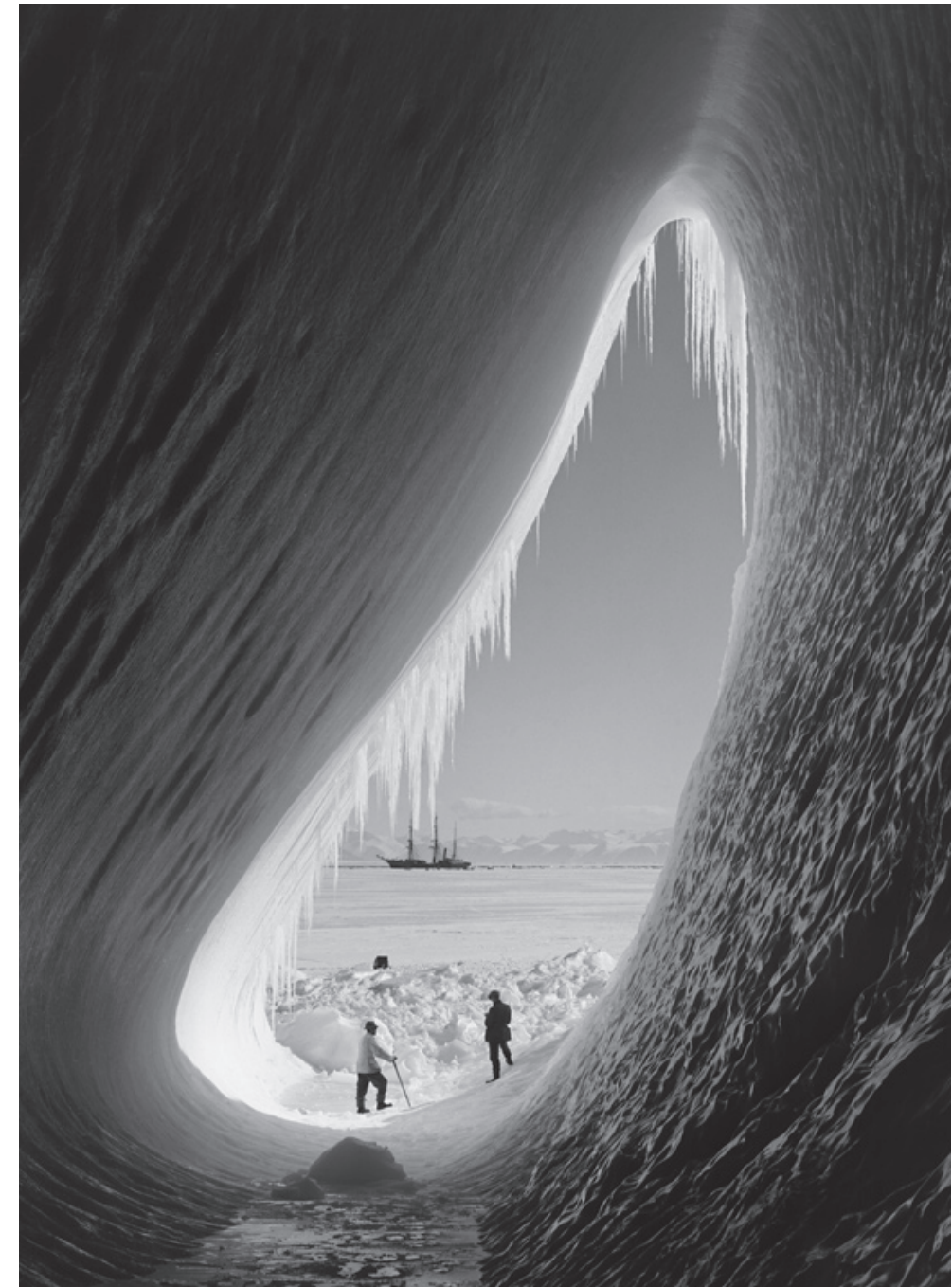
Captain Scott's Antarctic Expedition 1910-1913

The Photographs of Herbert Ponting

The British Antarctic (Terra Nova) Expedition, 1910-1913, on which Captain Robert Falcon Scott and four of his companions perished whilst returning from the South Pole, is among the most important early expeditions to the Antarctic. The photographs of the endeavour taken by Herbert Ponting, constitute one of the most compelling visual records in the history of exploration.

Thanks to a collaboration between the Scott Polar Research Institute and Salto Ulbeek publishers, a selection of Ponting's Antarctic photographs are presented for the first time using the platinum printing process, a photographic technique renowned for its exceptional aesthetic and archival properties.

Handmade from Ponting's original negatives, the platinum prints in this limited edition portfolio are arranged thematically and accompanied by specially commissioned essays. They represent a unique and timely contribution to the presentation, preservation, and contextualization of Ponting's Antarctic work.



Contents

The portfolio is divided into 5 thematic sections
Introductory essay by Colin Ford CBE, author
and founder of the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, UK

Explorers

Portraits
8 platinum prints
Essay by Sir Ranulph Fiennes,
author and explorer



Man and Sledge

Portraits

8 platinum prints

Essay by Dr David Wilson,
author and historian



Terra Nova

Images of the ship, *Terra Nova*

10 platinum prints

Essay by Dr Beau Riffenburgh,
author and historian



Cape Evans

Wintering life

10 platinum prints

Essay by Sara Wheeler,
author and travel journalist



Antarctica

Landscapes

12 platinum prints

Essay by William L. Fox, author

and Director of the Nevada Museum Center for Art + Environment, USA



The Terra Nova Expedition

The British Antarctic (Terra Nova) Expedition, 1910-1913, was the second expedition Captain Robert Falcon Scott led to the Antarctic. One hundred years later, it remains imprinted in public consciousness as the venture in which Scott was beaten to the South Pole by the Norwegian, Roald Amundsen, then died on the return journey, along with four of his men.

Focusing solely on the tragedy, however, is to overlook the great accomplishments of the expedition. These include the first winter sledging journey in Antarctica, the collection of vast quantities of scientific samples and data, and the surveying of previously unknown coastal and interior regions of the continent. The expedition also generated what have become classic literary and visual accounts, including Scott’s own diary, Apsley Cherry Garrard’s **The Worst Journey in the World**, Edward Wilson’s watercolours, and of course, Herbert Ponting’s photographic plates of the expedition and the Antarctic environment.

In the temperament of the men, and the manner it was conducted, the expedition typifies the Edwardian era, but it also stands as a timeless and universal emblem of human endeavour. Against the dramatic backdrop of Antarctica, it will remain, without doubt, one of the greatest expeditions and exploration stories of all time.

Herbert G. Ponting

Herbert G. Ponting (1870-1935) was one of the most renowned photographers of his day when he was recruited as ‘camera-artist’ to the British Antarctic (Terra Nova) Expedition, 1910-1913.

Born into a wealthy Victorian family from Salisbury, Ponting worked briefly as a banker before moving to California and turning his attention to photography. During the first years of the 20th century, a number of assignments took him to the Far East. In 1904-1905, he photographed the Russo-Japanese war in Manchuria, before continuing his travels in Japan, Burma, Java, China and India, selling his work to London’s foremost magazines. In 1910, he expanded his photographs of Japan into a book, **In Lotus-Land Japan**, which was published just before his departure for the Antarctic, and remains much sought after.

As a member of the Terra Nova Expedition, Ponting helped set up the Antarctic winter hut at Cape Evans on Ross Island, and was entitled to a tiny photographic darkroom in which he also slept. Working mostly with glass plate negatives, he set to work photographing all aspects of the expedition and of the environment around Cape Evans. During the winter of 1911, he took many photographs of Scott and the other members of the expedition in their hut, producing images that speak to us both within and beyond their historical context.

With the start of the 1911-12 sledging season, Ponting’s field work began to come to an end. As a middle-aged man, he was not able to take part on the inland trek to the South Pole, and after 14 months at Cape Evans he boarded *Terra Nova* in February 1912.

Ponting returned to London where he set to work shaping a visual narrative of the expedition for Captain Scott to show during his lectures upon his return. This was not to be, however, as Scott and four of his men perished on their return from the Pole.

The tragic outcome of the Terra Nova expedition would affect Ponting’s later life and career. Although they were much used, a prior contractual agreement with Scott did not guarantee Ponting any exclusivity in exploiting the photographs, and his own lectures earned him very little. Then, with the advent of World War I, the world suddenly had more pressing concerns than expeditions to the Antarctic. Paradoxically, Ponting’s most profitable venture was his book, **The Great White South**, a written account of his participation in the expedition.

Ponting virtually gave up photography, turning to business instead, but he was no businessman. He invested money in a number of ventures, only one of which was in his own field - a film printing company. They all failed. When he died in 1935, the net value of his estate was insufficient to pay off his debts.

Scott Polar Research Institute

The Herbert G. Ponting Archive of over 1.700 large-format glass plate negatives taken during the British Antarctic (Terra Nova) Expedition, 1910-1913, is held at the Scott Polar Research Institute in the University of Cambridge.

Founded in 1920 as the British national memorial to those who died during the expedition, the Scott Polar Research Institute is the oldest international centre for polar research. The Institute remains a centre of excellence in the study of the Antarctic and Arctic, and houses the world’s premier polar library, extensive archives on the history of polar exploration, and a museum with displays of both the historical and contemporary scientific significance of the polar regions. www.spri.cam.ac.uk

Salto Ulbeek

Salto Ulbeek Publishers is based in Belgium. Over the past two decades it has built a reputation for uncompromised excellence in photographic and offset printing, thanks to experimentation and the combination of historic and modern printing methods.

Committed to the publication of limited edition photographic books and portfolios, Salto Ulbeek strives to provide the utmost production values and interpretive sensibility to the work of past and living photographers, and through this, to secure the preservation and appreciation of key historic and contemporary photographic images.

Platinum Prints

When compared to conventional black and white silver prints, platinum prints exhibit an expanded tonal range, three-dimensionality, and a uniquely luminous quality. They are also among the most permanent objects produced by man. The platinum metals are more stable than gold, and a platinum image, properly preserved, can last thousands of years.

EDITORS

Julian Dowdeswell - Heather Lane - Georges Charlier - Jean de Pomereu

SPECIFICATIONS

48 platinum prints on 100% cotton paper

6 essay booklets

Print and booklet size: 42.8 x 50.7 cm

Box size: 44.7 x 53.3 x 6 cm

Limited Edition: 50 portfolios

Platinum prints by Salto Ulbeek: Georges Charlier, William Ingram, Nadia Werckx

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Price on application

Proceeds to the Scott Polar Research Institute Appeal

Website: **www.ponting-portfolio.com**

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