

This is the last of five articles in which I have been taking up five organizations (or movements) throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century that were major forces in the direction of American photography. There were similar organizations (or movements) in Europe and elsewhere. Some of the organizations (or movements) were international from the start.

In the last four months, I discussed the Photo-Secession movement, Group f/64, The Photo League, and Magnum Photos. This month, I am going to discuss Getty Images. In coming months, I may discuss some of the photographers from all five organizations that I have not discussed already in earlier articles in this series.

Getty Images is an entirely commercial enterprise, marketing tens of millions of images for royalties. There is a history of acquiring vast collections of images that can generate income for them. The Wikipedia story relates one acquisition after another, and one lawsuit contesting ownership rights after another. I am including Getty Images in this article because it is a major force in how images are commercially distributed in the photography world. There have, however, been some interesting recent developments in how images of women are treated by Getty Images.

First of all, here is the Wikipedia link, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Getty\\_Images](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Getty_Images), and some key summary quotes from there:

Getty Images Holdings, Inc. is an American visual media company and supplier of stock images, editorial photography, video, and music for business and consumers, with a library of over 477 million assets. It targets three markets—creative professionals (advertising and graphic design), the media (print and online publishing), and corporate (in-house design, marketing and communication departments).

Getty Images has distribution offices around the world and capitalizes on the Internet for distribution with over 2.3 billion searches annually on its sites. As Getty Images has acquired other older photo agencies and archives, it has digitised their collections, enabling online distribution. Getty Images operates a large commercial website that clients use to search and browse for images, purchase usage rights, and download images. Image prices vary according to resolution and type of rights. The company also offers custom photo services for corporate clients.

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Beginning in 2008, Getty Images has been the subject of controversy for its methods of pursuing copyright enforcement on behalf of its photographers. Rather than pursue a policy of sending "cease and desist" notices, Getty typically mails a demand letter that claims substantial monetary damages from owners of websites it believes infringed on their photographers' copyrights.

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Getty has also tried to collect fees from photographers for use of their own images that they had previously put in the public domain.

*Public-domain photos from historical photographers such as Dorothea Lange [#4, March 2013] and Walker Evans [#14, Oct. 2014] have long been available for unrestricted downloading from the United States Library of Congress. The exact same images are also available from Getty Images, subject to a licensing fee of up to \$5,000 for a six-month term. This demonstrates an example of copyfraud. [Italics added]*

Here is the link to the Getty Images website: <https://www.gettyimages.com/>. To see what Getty Images is all about, browse around the website and click on various images. Be sure to note that a price page always comes up showing you the cost of buying or using any image. There are filters for subject matter. There is also an area for royalty-free images: go to the bottom of the website page, in the purple banner at the bottom, under “Content” click on “Royalty-free Creative.” But royalty-free does not mean there is no cost for the license. Instead, royalty-free means that the license fee is paid once and there is no need to pay additional royalties if the content is re-used. This is clearly suitable only for professional media preparers.

This 2016 interview with Pam Grossman, Getty Images’ then Director of Visual Trends, is interesting in its non-journalistic good-feeling tone. It is an obviously positive sop interview. No doubt it filled space in the publishing organ, and it was certainly image-forging for Getty Images. I point it out to you to indicate how the business side of the photography industry uses public relations to improve income.

<https://observer.com/2016/03/meet-the-getty-director-changing-how-women-are-portrayed-in-stock-photos/>

Here, on the other hand, is an article from The Guardian reporting on French and British legislative steps to limit image modification of women. The article reports that Getty Images now requires that there be no alteration of body images of women, as they already required no alteration of news images.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/sep/30/getty-images-ban-photoshop-pictures>

The following article shows an example of inappropriate body photoshopping of an image, and reports that Getty Images has only taken a first step by rejecting body modifications, pointing out that cosmetic modification are still permitted by Getty Images.

<https://www.newyorkminutemag.com/getty-images-rejects-heavily-photoshopped-photos-of-women/>

This article has an example of modification of skin blemishes and repeats much of the information in the previous article.

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/getty-images-retouch\\_n\\_59cbdecbe4b05063fe0e84c6](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/getty-images-retouch_n_59cbdecbe4b05063fe0e84c6)

This recent article reports how Getty Images has shifted its view of women in recent years, showing women with a greater variety of body types and colors, and showing women in activities other than being stereotypically attractive.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90818690/getty-images-exhibit-women-advertisements-stereotypes>

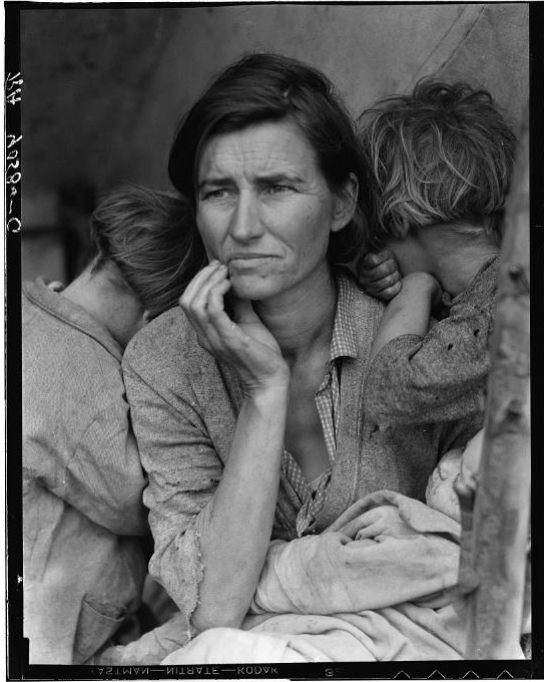
I would have liked to show some typical images from the Getty Images collection, but they are so conscious about licensing, I will not do so with any of their current images. Please have a look at the Getty Images website. In so doing, you might ask some of these questions (I have been asking them of myself):

Is Getty Images a monopoly? If so, is it controlling the course of modern photography? Is it encouraging or discouraging creativity? Is it supporting professional photographers or taking

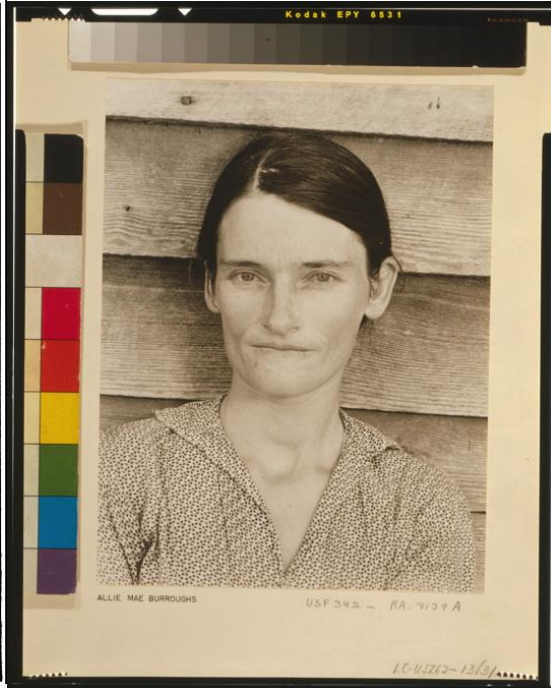
advantage of them? Are the prices fair to the purchasers? Does a fair share of income return to the photographers or to the collection owners that sell to Getty Images?

The Wikipedia article mentioned that Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans images are available free from the Library of Congress (LOC). So here are a couple of famous images copied directly from the LOC website for which Getty Images charges if you get these same images from them.

Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother.



Walker Evans, Allie Mae Burroughs.



I have discussed the Dorothea Lange image before. These downloads from the LOC website are interesting because they show the negative borders.