

Visualizing 19th-Century New York

On View
September 19, 2014–January 11, 2015



Bard
Graduate
Center, Decorative
Arts, Design
History, Material
Culture

Edward Anthony and Henry T. Anthony.
Broadway on a Rainy Day [looking north],
1859. From Anthony's *Instantaneous Views*,
No. 188. Hand-colored albumen silver print
from glass negative (stereoscopic views).
Collection of David Jaffee.

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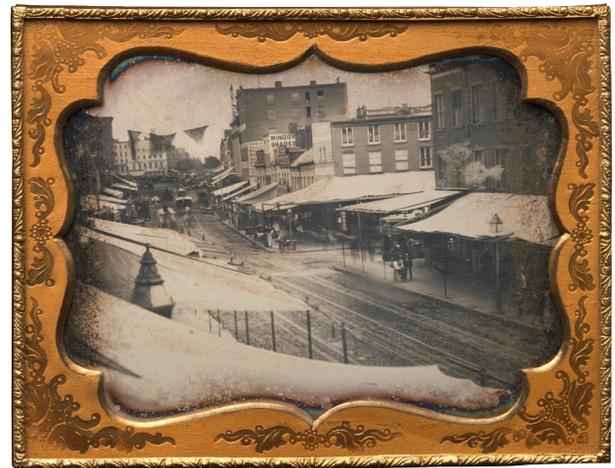
Nineteenth-century New York City was a visual experience—a spectacle for resident and visitor alike. *Visualizing 19th-Century New York*, on view at the Bard Graduate Center Focus Gallery from September 19, 2014 to January 11, 2015, examines how New York's cultural entrepreneurs turned to the production of woodcuts, aquatints, lithographs, and photographs to make sense of their booming metropolis, and to promote their own manufactures to a national and international market.

Anchoring the exhibit is Broadway, New York's great thoroughfare, which dominated the burgeoning number of images of the city that poured out of commercial publishing firms and into American homes in the nineteenth century. Visitors strolling through the gallery—in effect strolling along Broadway—will encounter the storefronts and works of four of the nation's leading visual entrepreneurs: Mathew Brady (daguerreotypes), Edward and Henry T. Anthony (stereoviews), Currier & Ives (lithographs), and Harper & Brothers (woodcuts in popular magazines and books). The final section presents a model middle-class, nineteenth-century parlor, its center table laden with the kinds of materials that a mid-century family might own, such as a stereoviewer and a copy of *Harper's Weekly*.

The exhibition explores not only the changing city, but also the evolving visual genres and technologies that were used at the time. An interactive digital screen takes the visitor “behind the scenes” of the featured entrepreneurs' establishments to see the varying technical processes used to produce these popular products and the male and female workers who made them. Another interactive screen focuses on the key intersection of Broadway and Ann Street, where P. T. Barnum's American Museum stood, along with other important urban attractions.



Lyman W. Atwater, after Charles Parsons. *City of New York*, 1876. Chromolithograph, published by Currier & Ives. Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society.



Chatham Square, New York, 1853–55. Daguerreotype. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, Gift of The Howard Gilman Foundation, 2005.

Publication

Visualizing 19th-Century New York is accompanied by a digital publication that offers a spatial interface to the exhibit materials by placing objects, landmarks, and central themes on Matthew Dripps' *Map of the City of New York* (1851). These spacial tags are connected to essays that explore objects and themes in the exhibition, like bird's-eye city views and technical processes, such as stereoscopic photography, as well as related historical topics, including the spectacle of Broadway or how oysters became a popular food among all classes of New Yorkers. The digital publication will be available on a kiosk in the gallery as well as at visualizingnyc.org.

Visualizing 19th-Century New York is curated by Bard Graduate Center Professor David Jaffee and the students who participated in his year-long Focus Gallery project sequence of academic courses. Students were critical collaborators in all facets of the exhibit, from helping to research and develop the interactive applications, to writing the label copy and texts that appear in both the gallery and the digital publication.

Matthew Dripps, drawn by John F. Harrison. *Map of the City of New-York Extending Northward to Fiftieth St.*, 1852. Hand-colored lithograph. David Rumsey Map Collection.



Focus Gallery

The Focus Gallery presents small-scale exhibitions that are part of an academically innovative project that also includes graduate seminars, public programming, and publications both in print and online. Envisaged as a laboratory, the Focus Gallery promotes experimentation in display, interpretation, and the use of digital media and reflects the BGC's commitment to exhibitions as integral to scholarly activity.

Gallery Programs

Lectures, gallery talks, and conversations are offered in conjunction with the exhibition. For more information, please call 212-501-3011 or e-mail programs@bgc.bard.edu.

Exhibition Tours

Group exhibition tours for adult and school groups are offered Tuesday through Friday between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. and Thursday until 7 p.m. Reservations are required for all groups. To schedule a tour, please call 212-501-3013 or e-mail tours@bgc.bard.edu.

The Bard Graduate Center Gallery is located in New York City at 18 West 86th Street, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Suggested admission is \$7 general, \$5 seniors.

About the BGC

The Bard Graduate Center is a graduate research institute in New York City. Our Gallery exhibitions and publications, MA and PhD programs, and research initiatives explore new ways of thinking about decorative arts, design history, and material culture. Founded in 1993, the BGC is an academic unit of Bard College.

For information about the Bard Graduate Center and upcoming exhibitions, please visit bgc.bard.edu. For press information and images, please e-mail barnhart@bgc.bard.edu or call 212-501-3074.