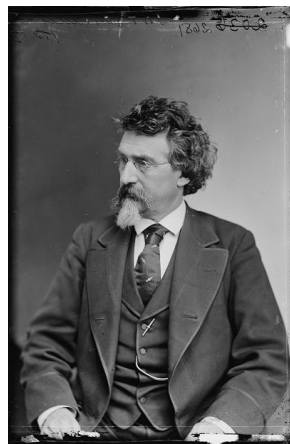


HH Hudson Hills Press

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“There has perhaps never been anything quite like RANSOMING MATHEW BRADY in the genre of history painting. It covers the antebellum and war years by uncovering patterns, issues, textures, and timbres of the times, not in naturalistic detail but realistically nevertheless. While the work alludes to or avails itself of stylistic elements from the history of painting, especially twentieth-century painting, it does so without abandoning anything of itself: its own integrity, its own realism, what is true to the artist’s personal insight, knowledge, and feeling.”

—ALAN TRACHTENBERG

Ransoming Mathew Brady

John Ransom Phillips with Alan Trachtenberg

In a series of oils and watercolors, full of wit and wisdom and rich with historical allusion, John Ransom Phillips portrays the complexity of photographer Mathew Brady. Phillips explores the career of the artist who wanted to make history: an ambitious half-blind man with bluetinted glasses, straw hat, and duster who catapulted his subjects into celebrity and is best known today for his epic photos of the Civil War. Paradoxically, Brady sent assistants to photograph his most famous scenes—the battlefields at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Antietam—instructing them to re-arrange and photograph the dead in order to create images that would enhance public notions about death and dying. Brady himself was unable to handle the chaos and disorder of battle. Walt Whitman emerges in the work as an antidote to Brady. The wound-dresser and poet represents the depths of man’s compassion and reminds us all that the full story of the Civil War can never be told. In his book-length essay, “Mathew Brady Ransomed,” historian Alan Trachtenberg helps to shape both the continuity and content of the study. Composed in an original mode of history painting, Phillips’s oil paintings and watercolors are themselves an extraordinary drama: at once comic, lyric, and tragic. They rediscover a photographer with imperfect vision, a historian who would not or could not gaze on the unburied dead of his greatest subject: Mathew Brady, American enigma.

JOHN RANSOM PHILLIPS is a painter whose work has been exhibited internationally at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C., the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art in Chicago, the Museo de Arte Moderno in Buenos Aires, and the Heidi Cho Gallery in New York. He has been a faculty member of the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Chicago, and Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

ALAN TRACHTENBERG, the Neil Gray, Jr. Professor Emeritus of English and American Studies at Yale University, is the author of *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (1989). Among his other books are *Shades of Hiawatha* (2004) and *Lincoln’s Smile & Other Enigmas* (2007). He and John Phillips have begun another collaboration on Walt Whitman.

RANSOMING MATHEW BRADY:

John Ransom Phillips with Alan Trachtenberg

Paintings by John Ransom Phillips portray the complexity of Civil War photographer, Mathew Brady. Featuring photographs by Brady and a book-length essay by Alan Trachtenberg

HARDCOVER \$60

10-1/2 x 9-1/2 in. (24 x 26 cm.)

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