

In search of Ancient Ireland, 1913

14 November 2007 - 11 February 2008

National Photographic Archive, Temple Bar

The 50 images featured in the exhibition **In search of Ireland, 1913** have been loaned to the National Photographic Archive by the Musée Albert Kahn in Paris. The images, which represent the first ever colour photographs taken in Ireland, were taken in 1913 by two French women, Marguerite Mespoulet and Madeleine Mignon-Alba, who used newly available autochrome colour plates.

The novice photographers recorded life and historic sites on their two month journey through Ireland from Connemara to the Boyne Valley. They arrived in Ireland to take part in a world-wide project entitled 'the Archives of the Planet'. The project was the brainchild of the French banker and philanthropist Albert Kahn whose ambition was to compile a *"kind of photographic inventory of the surface of the earth as it was occupied and organised by Man at the beginning of the 20th century."*

An avowed pacifist, Kahn believed that he could employ this photographic collection to nurture greater understanding among people across the world. Between 1909 and 1931 he spent a vast fortune hiring and dispatching photographers to more than 50 countries on every continent; their mission was to record the elements of a disappearing world in places where Kahn believed huge political and social changes were either already underway or were about to happen.

Between 1909 and 1931 Kahn's photographers compiled some 72,000 colour photographs and 100 hours of film footage in locations ranging from China, Vietnam, India, Iran and Iraq to the Baltic States, Turkey and Ireland.

Visitors to the exhibition can also watch Not Fade Away - an RTÉ documentary about Madeline Mignon and Marguerite Mespoulet - as well as two short pieces about the Albert Kahn collection.

For more information, email photoarchive@nli.ie

See also: Opening Hours;

<http://www.nli.ie/en/opening-hours.aspx>

National Photographic Archive

Meeting House Square

Temple Bar

Dublin 2

The photographic collections of the National Library of Ireland are housed in the National Photographic Archive in the Temple Bar area of Dublin. The Archive building incorporates a substantial storage area, controlled by an air plant system, together with darkrooms, and a conservation area. The provision of a Reading Room, an Exhibition area and a small retail space combine to enhance access to the collections.

<http://www.nli.ie/>