



## Gaudenzio Marconi (1841 -1885)

Gaudenzio Marconi (1841-1885) was an Italian photographer who spent much of his life working in France. Records show that before becoming a photographer Marconi worked as a painter.

Many of Marconi's photographs were images of nude figures. From the mid-1850s, the use of photographs in art schools became increasingly widespread. It was common at this time for artists and students to use photographs as source material for their sketches when live models (or the funds to pay for them) weren't available. From 1871 the Marconi studio mark bore the title 'Photographe de l'École des beaux-arts' due to his relationship with this institution.

Marconi made albumen prints from wet collodion plates. The poses of Marconi's figures often resemble those of classical and Renaissance sculptures. He used male as well as female bodies in his works, and generally avoided props and complex backdrops, often favouring neutral settings. For this reason the focus in his photographs is on the form of the body – its physical movements, musculature and flexibility. He sometimes took pictures of tensed bodies in unusual positions that would have been challenging for live models to sustain during longer painting sessions. There is artistic variety in the poses. Some of his models look directly at the camera, whereas others are photographed in profile.

His photographs were admired and used by many artists of the time, including the sculptor Rodin.