

The Manger



Portrait of Eulabee Dix



The Manger, ca. 1899

Portrait of Eulabee Dix, ca. 1910

Is It Art?

Gertrude Käsebier (1852–1934) was a founding member of the Photo-Secession movement. This group promoted the idea of photography as an art form, not simply a mechanical process or pastime for amateurs as some critics claimed.

Take a closer look

Käsebier is typically classified as a Pictorialist because she sought to make her photographs resemble paintings, drawings, and etchings. She used soft focus, backlighting, and direct manipulation of the negative to mimic brushwork in a painting.

Something to talk about

At the turn of the 20th century, people considered photography either an objective representation of reality or the photographer's subjective depiction of the world. By today's standards, how would you characterize this medium?

Who knew?

A leading portrait photographer of her day, Käsebier earned praise for her images of luminaries like painter Eulabee Dix (1878–1961), also in the museum's collection. In addition, she achieved financial success: *The Manger* sold for \$100 in 1899—the highest price paid for a photograph to date.

Gertrude Käsebier, *The Manger*, ca. 1899; Platinum print, 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of the Holladay Foundation; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth

Gertrude Käsebier, *Portrait of Eulabee Dix*, ca. 1910; Gelatin silver print, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 6 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Joan B. Gaines; Photograph by Lee Stalsworth

