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Patrizia Di Bello, '"Carlyle like a rough block of Michael Angelo's": thinking photography through sculpture in Julia Margaret Cameron's portraits', in **Photography & The Arts: Essays on 19th Century Practices and Debates,** edited by Juliet Hacking and Joanne Lukitsh (in press: London, Bloomsbury Academic)

In 1867, Julia Margaret Cameron sent to John Hershel a 'completed' version of the album she had first made for him in 1864. The new photographs, taken with a camera she had just purchased,[1] include that of the scientist himself, 'Sir John Hershel with Cap', the writer 'Carlyle like a rough block of Michael Angelo's sculpture' (figure 1), and the poet 'Alfred Tennyson' – all titles inscribed in the album's contents page by Cameron herself.[2] Together with the painter G. F. Watts, already represented in the 1864 version of the album, these are some of the men Cameron passionately befriended as mentors and sources of inspiration,[3] and who played a crucial role in the development of her thinking about photographic aesthetics this chapter analyses.

The new camera was larger than her first – fifteen by twelve inches plates instead of eleven by nine – and equipped with a Rapid Rectilinear lens which was especially designed to improve depth of field: the capacity to image sharply details on more than one plane away from the camera, such as nose, lips and eyes while taking portraits.[4] Cameron used it to make extraordinary life-size, close-up portraits of celebrated men and women of her time, almost as out of focus and blurred as the ones she had taken with her first camera. Banking on their success on a market avid for portraits of celebrities that should have been ripe for an alternative to the sharp, detailed, often stilted portraits taken by most carte-de-visite studios, Cameron copyrighted her large 'heads', sold prints through her London dealer, and included them in a number of exhibitions.[5] The photographs didn't make her fortune, as she had hoped, but did improve critical reception of her work, which had been poor in the

[1] On this album and associated correspondence, see Colin Ford, *The Cameron Collection: An Album of Photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron, presented to Sir John Herschel* (Wokingham: Van Nostrand Reinhold for the National Portrait Gallery, 1975).

[2] Ibid., 143.

[3] Victoria Olsen, *From Life: Julia Margaret Cameron and Photography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

[4] Ibid., 17, 374.

[5] Joanne Lukitsh, *Cameron: Her Work and Career* (Rochester, NY: International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, 1986).

photographic press. Her male portraits, in particular, were met with approval: 'the rugged masculine looks of these perfect pictures, the powerful and yet venerable air of the heads, are beyond praise'.[6] Carlyle himself was ambivalent about his photograph: 'It is as if suddenly the picture began to speak, terrifically ugly and woe-begone, but has something of a likeness'.[7] This portrait was later reissued as a carte-de-visite,[8] was in the series of carbon prints produced in 1875 by the London Autotype Company,[9] and featured in Alfred Stieglitz's magazine *Camera Work*, as scholar Joanne Lukitsh discusses in this book.

Carlyle's portrait has since been much written about. Curator Colin Ford, who was instrumental in keeping the Hershel album in Britain when it came up for sale in 1974, describes it as 'one of Mrs Cameron's greatest works, one of the most powerfully intense photographic portraits ever taken'.[10] Photography historian Robin Kelsey talks of her portraiture as 'highly unusual in foregrounding the performative exchange behind the image', and discusses her life-size portraits as 'representing her subjects in a sculpting chiaroscuro', harnessing the glitches of the photographic process to make 'imperfection a sign of achievement, and chance a sign of ambition'.[11] For scholar Mirjam Brusius, in Carlyle's portrait 'Cameron succeeded in rendering his vulnerability in addition to his strength and obstinacy. Imprecision permits ambiguity and makes visible Carlyle's complex and contradictory character'. Cameron, she argues, recasts the tension between the idea and the hand in Michelangelo's work as one between the idea and the machine.[12] My aim in this chapter is to attend to the ramifications of Cameron's a reference to sculpture at the time, to nuance some of these assessments with a richer understanding of what her comparison with Michelangelo – and sculpture more generally – might say about Cameron's photographic thought and practice.

In the portrait, Carlyle's face emerges out of the smudged darkness of the print in a dynamic blur. Lined skin, and white beard and hair, look like stratified rock formations, an effect

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[6] Anon., 'Fine Art Gossip', *Athenaeum* (June 22, 1867), 827.

[7] Olsen, *From Life,* 203.

[8] Philippa Wright, 'Little Pictures: Julia Margaret Cameron and Small-Format Photography', in *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs*, ed. Julian Cox and Colin Ford (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003), 81-94, 84.

[9] Cox and Ford, *Complete Photographs*, especially 500.

[10] Ford, *Cameron Collection*, xx.

[11] Robin Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), 84, 87 and 93.

[12] Mirjam Brusius, 'Impreciseness in Julia Margaret Cameron's Portrait Photographs', *History of Photography*, 34:4 (2010), 342-355, 345.

created by the blur caused by Carlyle's failure to remain still during the exposure, suggesting geological rather than human ageing. The eye on the right, the brighter side of the picture, is palpably soft in both expression and focus. Peering from the darkness on the left, the other eye looks back at us with a more penetrating gaze, emphasised by the relatively sharp highlight in the dark pupil, and the seemingly raised eyebrow. Looking at the print, it is hard to decode exactly which shapes are created by Carlyle's features and expression; which by the lighting and focus set by Cameron; and which by the movement of the subject. The focus is not so much soft as failing to reach Carlyle's face, unwilling to meet and pin down in sharpness either the slightly judgemental eye on the left, or the more vulnerable, appealing eye on the right. It is difficult to decide if the recalcitrance to meet the picture plane pervading the print – or perhaps our experience of it, as our eyes try and fail to focus any detail securely – comes from Carlyle's diffidence towards the photographic process, his unwillingness to sit (still) for Cameron's camera; or from Cameron's unwillingness to reach closer towards Carlyle by moving her lens out towards the face, to image sharply at least some of his features, having already placed the camera closer to his face than would have been the case in more respectfully distanced portraits taken by commercial studios.[13] As a woman, she was already being somewhat transgressive by wielding her large camera in his face. In fact, Cameron had rejected another, sharper version of this photograph, created by printing it the 'right' way around – not reversing the negative as she did in all of the surviving versions of this portrait where 'the printing is done by my own hand', as she had specified in a note to Hershel.[14] We know that the negative is reversed because there are several sharper versions of it, later carbon prints by the Autotype Company (figure 2). In these, Carlyle's bad haircut and uneven shirt collar seem to indicate less Dishevelled Genius, one of Cameron's favoured effects, and more Badly Looked-After Widower – his wife Jane had died the previous year. On the cheekbone, now on the left, the wrinkled skin is more obvious, distracting from our awareness of the eyes. By reversing the plate in her prints, so that the layer of collodion was not in direct contact with the paper but separated from it by the thickness of the glass, Cameron added an even layer of soft focus to the blur and shallow depth of field of her exposure. She also changed the movement of the image so that it reads, left to right (the Western mode of reading), as a journey from darkness into light, which, in the loss of details in the highlights, becomes abstracted into thought, vision, and inspiration. The print, then, is an interpretation rather than a faithful copy of the negative, as the exposure is of Carlyle's face.

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[13] For example those by the studio 'Elliott & Fry', in the National Portrait Gallery, London, on https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/ (accessed 22/09/19).
[14] Ford, *Cameron Collection*, xx.

Cameron's label exploits to the full the affective, social, and aesthetic connotations of the term 'rough', as well as the tactile. Carlyle, who in 1867 was still grieving, was known to be temperamental and bad-mannered, 'very rude & quarrelsome […] a man who had not been brought up in the parlour'.[15] Cameron herself was indignant that Carlyle had initially refused to sit for her, even though she had already 'immortalised' some of the '*greatest* men of the age', protesting that it would be hell – 'a kind of *Inferno*'.[16] To photograph him, Cameron had to move her equipment, darkroom and all, which took a day to set up,[17] to Little Holland House,[18] where her sister Sarah Prinsep held one of London's leading artistic salons, helped by the presence of Watts who lived and had his painting studio there. Carlyle was a regular and might have been already sitting for Watts's portrait of him. The photograph was taken on a bad day, 'a midst of pouring rain & cloud' when lack of light would have given Cameron fewer choices about positioning her subject.[19] Cameron's label 'Carlyle like a rough block' attributes to him the roughness of hand-quarried stone, but also justifies it as an attribute of genius, as Michelangelo's own roughness with people and statues – he was supposed to have hit his *Moses* with the hammer in frustration at its silence even though it looked otherwise so alive – was often described in the many biographical accounts published in the nineteenth century.[20] At the same time, she is pointing out that it is *this* print, numbered '2' in the list Cameron added to the album, that has the power to portray this quality in him, a quality she herself had to experience to convince Carlyle to pose for her. Cameron is comparing her own photographic 'roughness' to Michelangelo's, meeting but not merging with that of Carlyle and the experience of photographing him, compounded by the rough weather. While many of Cameron's prints are labelled 'After the manner' of artists from the Renaissance, here Cameron is implying a correspondence of aims between her and Michelangelo that is deeper. Cameron might learn to compose from painters, but in Michelangelo's sculpture finds a correspondence to her way of working. As she explained in 1867, writing to an unidentified art critic, 'Carlyle's Photograph is more like a block of marble out of Michael Angelo's hands than a work out of such a machine as the camera'.[21]

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[15] Elizabeth Eastlake to Hannah Brightwen, 24 April 1881, *The Letters of Elizabeth Rigby, Lady Eastlake*, ed. Julie Sheldon (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 503.

[16] Colin Ford, 'Geniuses, Poets, and Painters: The World of Julia Margaret Cameron', in Cox and Ford, *Complete Photographs*, 11-40, 28. Emphasis in the original.

[17] Cameron to Hershel in Ford, *Cameron Collection*, xx.

[18] Cameron, 'Annals', 157.

[19] Cameron to 'Dear Sir', 11 June 1867, in Graham Smith and Mike Weaver, 'A Letter by Julia Margaret Cameron', *History of Photography*, 27:1, 66-71, 66.

[20] Lene Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength: The Reception of Michelangelo in Late Victorian England* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 1998).

[21] Cameron to 'Dear Sir', 66.

In her hands, she suggests, photography can transcend the tension between idea and machine.

Carlyle would have been a loaded subject for any artist to portray. He was the one who had made the initial proposal in 1856 for the founding of the National Portrait Gallery. The popularity of his writings on the powers of 'authentic' portraits, to make history alive as a moral inspiration for the present, had played a role in Parliament's decision to invest in portraits made in the presence of the sitter, rather than commissioning copies.[22] This would have made the process of assembling a collection of worthy individuals faster and cheaper than waiting for original portraits to come on the market, but the extra expenditure was justified because only portraits made by a 'faithful human creature of that face and figure which he saw with his own eyes' would allow subsequent viewers to imaginatively stand in the place of the artist and encounter anew the heroes of the past in an educational experience.[23] This understanding of an authentic portrait as the result of an unmediated encounter between sitter and artist is also why photographs were not initially included in the Gallery's primary collection. Sitting for a machine controlled by an operator – mechanical rather than artistic hands – did not count as a 'meeting between two subjectivities'.[24] Cameron's claim that her work is like Michelangelo's insists on the presence of her subjectivity, embedded in the results of her interactions with the photographic process.

Carlyle's writings had influenced Watts's own thinking about heroes-worship, and the power of creative labour to embody in a portrait 'a summary of the life of a person, not the record of an accidental position' as he tried to do in his portrait of Carlyle.[25] If, as art historian Paul Barlow has shown, Watts's painting 'roughly, creating an agitated surface of brushstrokes, smudging and scarping' was how the painter had embedded the authenticity of his encounter with Carlyle in the portraits of him as an 'unresolved struggle',[26] Cameron before Watts embedded in her prints her own struggle with Carlyle and with her materials to record more than the 'accidental position' of her sitter. Her unwillingness to fix Carlyle's stance and (e)motions in front of the camera, visualised by her reticent or imprecise focus,

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[22] *Hansard*, 1856, in Paul Barlow, 'Facing the Past and Present: The National Portrait Gallery and the Search for "Authentic" Portraiture', in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 219-38.

[23] Ibid., 221.

[24] Linda Nochlin on portraiture in 'Some Women Realists', *Arts Magazine* (May 1974), 29.

[25] Barlow, 'Facing the Past and Present', 234.

[26] Ibid., 236

were enhanced and materialised by her 'own hands' handling glass plates, papers and chemicals to make prints.

Michelangelo had a special resonance in Cameron's circles. Watts had labelled himself 'England's Michelangelo' after studying in Italy in the 1840s.[27] He was known to advise his pupils to copy from Michelangelo,[28] and Cameron's 'A Sibyl after the manner of Michelangelo' was part of their ongoing dialogue on composing pictures – a print is included in the album she gave Watts in 1864.[29] Tennyson's house at Freshwater, neighbouring Cameron's, was decorated with photographs of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel in Rome, and his Medici Tomb in Florence.[30] The latter site was one of the recommended highlights in Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* of 1856, when photographs of it were already available from Alinari, international supplier of photographs of Florentine art and architecture.[31] Michelangelo's popularity grew during the nineteenth century, but   critical reception of his unfinished works was mixed. Their rough state could be understood as 'unintentional',[32] and run counter to academic notions that only fully-finished work demonstrates an artist's full mastery, where 'finish' is also the final intervention on the surface of a work to make brushstrokes or chisel-marks less visible, thus suppressing the signs of artistic labour.[33] In the 1870s John Ruskin accused Michelangelo of 'Bad workmanship […] hastily and incompletely done',[34] while Walter Pater asserted the superiority of his non-*finito*.[35] As early as 1833, the *Lives of Eminent Persons: Michael Angelo Buonaroti* [sic] – published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge when

[27] Ford, 'Geniuses, Poets, and Painters', 18.

[28] Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength,* 120

[29] Now in the Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York, https://collections.eastman.org/objects/31824/george-frederic-watts-album/related/24/list?page=2 (accessed 22/09/19). On Cameron working with Watts, see Martha Weiss, *Julia Margaret Cameron: Photographs to Electrify You with Delight and Startle the World* (London: Mack, 2015), 38-19.

[30] Ford, 'Geniuses, Poets, and Painters', 28.

[31] Graham Smith, 'Florence, Photography and the Victorians', in *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. John Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2005), 7-32, 21-24.

[32] Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength,* 31.

[33] Ibid., 116.

[34] John Ruskin, *The Relation Between Michael Angelo and Tintoret* [sic] (London: Smith, Elder, and Co, 1872), 16.

[35] Walter Pater, 'The Poetry of Michelangelo' (1871), *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 73-97.

Cameron's husband Charles Hay was on the committee – described the figure of *Day* in the Medici Tomb as:

> much unfinished – little more than blocked – yet most magnificent. To have done more would have diminished the noble effect of the whole, which is only heightened by what is left to the imagination. Perhaps none but a mind so gifted as that of this great master could have […] succeeded in so bold an attempt. Genius is creative […] the unfinished state in which many of his splendid works were left must have been occasioned by that impatience so often the concomitance of genius, which, having attained its grand object […] forsakes the details.[36]

Here, Michelangelo's work is unfinished not because of regrettable accidents of history – having to leave Florence – or bad workmanship, but because of an aesthetic decision. Impatience is not a defect of temper but the intelligence of genius, understanding that forsaking details improves the work. This understanding also helped to make sense of Michelangelo's statement, repeated by many biographers, that his vision for a work emerged in dialogue with the marble block he was working from. By revealing the marks left by Michelangelo's chisel, rough sections made visible the development of his vision in action. Cameron's claim to Michelangelo is asking us to understand blurred and out of focus prints as the actions of posing and focusing made visible, and optical or chemical glitches as the non-*finito* of photographic materials.

It is hard to say if Cameron had read these or similar evaluations of Michelangelo's non-*finito*, such as that in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 1851 poem *Casa Guidi Windows*, where the unfinished bust of Brutus is powerful because it gives nineteenth-century Italians the need to imaginatively complete it with the features of a modern hero who would stand up to despots – as Brutus had to Cesar – to unify Italy.[37] It is easy, however, to imagine similar opinions being aired at Little Holland House, frequented by the Brownings, where 'England's Michelangelo' was beginning to practice sculpture.[38] Watts's later *Prometheus* was based on *Day*, whose unfinished face was thought to be Michelangelo's self-portrait.[39] Or at Freshwater, looking at Tennyson's photographs of the Medici Tomb where *Day* was

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[36] Library of Useful Knowledge, *Lives of Eminent Persons: Michael Angelo Buonaroti* [sic] (London: Baldwin and Craddock, 1833), 42.

[37] Leigh Coral Harris, 'From *Mythos* to *Logos*: Political Aesthetics and Liminal Poetics in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows*', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28:1 (2000), 109-131, 120.

[38] Wilfrid Blunt, *England's Michelangelo: A Biography of George Frederick Watts* (London: Hamilton, 1975), 191.

[39] Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength*, 249-252.

situated, or discussing the South Kensington Museum's acquisition of a cast of *Brutus* in 1864.[40]

Discussions about degrees of finish were not confined to painting and sculpture. Elizabeth Eastlake's 1857 article on photography discusses at length the tension between technical and artistic control over the photographic image. More of the former might be desirable but would not result in the latter. For Eastlake, control over 'finish' as the degree and distribution of legible details across an image was central to 'the connection of photography with art'.[41] Artists working with their hands were able to exercise aesthetic judgment not only by arranging the elements of a composition, but also by signifying their importance by degrees of detailed rendition. This was crucial to convey the artist's unique understanding of the subject. Photography's lack of such control over details had been emphasised by the use of collodion, developed in the early 1850s, which was faster and sharper than the earlier calotypes, appreciated by Eastlake as 'Rembrandt-like studies'. Collodion portraits made visible every accidental detail, detracting attention from the face, resulting in images that worked as 'facial maps' but were not 'modelled and rounded with that truth and beauty which art attains'.[42] 'Correctness of drawing, truth of detail, and absence of conventions', for Eastlake the best characteristics of photography as a new form of communication, excluded it from the realm of 'that mystery called Art'.[43]

The aesthetic of the unfinished, championed by Romanticism because it left on the work the tactile traces of the artist's creative process, gaving a more active role to the imagination of the sensitive viewer, was becoming widespread during the nineteenth century.[44] This was a problem for photographs because their forms emerged fully finished from camera and darkroom, and this overabundance of details was not proportional to the photographer's skill or labour, as it was for painters and sculptors. Unlike painting, where every detail has been given conscious attention by the artist's eyes and hands, photography records everything, trivial or important, and the photographer cannot discriminate by finishing them differently. As Kelsey argues, photographers could eschew finish only by courting chance, as Cameron did in her embrace of mistakes and accidents. Her decision to halt, reverse, or not invest in technical proficiency – photography's indiscriminate finish – is not, however, an accident.

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[40] http://collections.vam.ac.uk (accessed 31 August 2019).

[41] Elizabeth Eastlake, 'Photography', *Quarterly Review*, April 1857, 442-68, 84.

[42] Ibid., 94.

[43] Ibid.

[44] *Unifinished: Thoughts Made Visible*, ed. Kelly Baum and Andrea Bayer (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016).

We find an echo of Eastlake's article in a letter Cameron sent Hershel in 1864:

> I was interested in reading Sir David Brewster's eloquent speech on photography. I could not help wishing you had been writing on the subject and that you had spoken of my Photography [which is not] mere conventional topographic Photography – map making – & skeleton rendering of feature & form without that roundness & fulness of form & feature that modelling of flesh & limb which the focus I use only can give tho' called & condemned as 'out of focus'. What is focus – & who has the right to say what focus is the legitimate focus.[45]

In this often-quoted letter, Cameron argues that received notions of legitimate focus trap photography into 'map making', flattening a three-dimensional world into schematic signs that don't achieve 'modelling of flesh & limb'. For Cameron, 'the focus I use' is more than a way to avoid the issue of details. She wants to use her lens not by passively following what it is defined as able to do by its manufacturers – converge rays of light into one point – but as a way to react to, and interact with, the relative spatial, compositional and affective positions and relations between sitter, camera and photographer.[46]

The reference to Brewster's speech in the letter to Hershel is also a reference to sculpture, albeit a different one from Michelangelo's. Photography, in Brewster's speech, is a scientific or commercial instrument, of use to art only to 'supply […] perfect copies of every work of art' with 'unerring accuracy' and precision of details.[47] Brewster does mention, however, one use of photography as a tool not to record sculptures but to make them: 'M. Willème in Paris has invented the new art of photosculpture' making a 'correct copy of the living figure'. He predicts that the 'wonderful process' will make portrait sculpture more affordable, so that:

> our houses may be cheaply adorned with the busts of relatives and friends, and of those who, by their genius, their learning, or their virtues, are objects of interest or veneration.[48]

In Eastlake's terms, these would be but three-dimensional copies of sitters, with all the faults of unthinking detail that also barred photographs from achieving the status of 'authentic' portraits. Brewster had been one of the first to write extensively about

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[45] Ford, *Cameron Collection*, 140-41.

[46] My thinking here is informed by Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-Century Photography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[47] David Brewster, 'Address to the Members of the University of Edinburgh', *Photographic Journal* (Dec 15, 1864), 167-8, 167.

[48] Ibid., 167.

photography as part of his interest in 'engines of the fine art' – photography, electroplating, and sculpting machines – new inventions that powered the production and reproduction of 'art manufactures', commodities inspired by or copying works of art or natural objects, using mechanical means. Willème's short-lived photo-sculpture, using 360-degree photography, was a variant of the many sculpting machines that continued to be made and used in the twentieth century and beyond.[49] Cameron's awareness of these devices might have informed the characterization of her and Michelangelo's works as different from those 'cut out of such a machine'. It is in the context of these debates about and artistic authenticity versus mechanical or unthinking finish, that Michelangelo's rough faces in *Brutus* or *Day* become a reference for Cameron's thinking about how to 'revolutionize photography'.[50] Her comparison with one-off direct carving, substituting the gestures of the sculptor with hammer and chisel with those of the photographer handling lenses, negatives and prints, left unanswered, however, the inherently multiple nature of (collodion) photography, and, on a more practical level, the issue of how to make it profitable when relying on each print being made by her own hands. To come to terms fully with photography's nature as a medium of mechanical production and reproduction, Cameron had to look at the sculpture of her contemporaries.

This is what she did in 'Annals of my Glass House' in 1874. This autobiographical account, written as she was about to leave Britain partly because of her financial problems, characterises the camera as not a machine but 'a living thing, with voice and memory and creative vigour'.[51] Cameron's vision for her portraits, like Michelangelo's for his faces, develops from her interaction with it:

> when focussing and coming to something which to my eye was very beautiful, I
> stopped there instead of screwing on the lens to the more definite focus which
> all other photographers insist upon.[52]

Crucially, she abandons Michelangelo while discussing Carlyle's portrait, but returns to sculpture in her description of Tennyson's reactions to the portrait by her he had nicknamed 'Dirty Monk':

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[49] Angel Dunstan, 'Nineteenth-Century Sculpture and the Imprint of Authenticity', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 19 (2014), http://19.bbk.ac.uk (accessed 31 August 2019).

[50] Anon., 'A Reminiscence of Mrs. Cameron by a Lady Amateur', *Photographic News* 30 (1886), 2-4.

[51] Cameron, 'Annals of my Glass House' (1874), in Mike Weaver, *Julia Margaret Cameron 1815-1879* (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 1984), 154-157, 154.

[52] Ibid., 155.

The Laureate has since said of it that he likes it better than any photograph that has been taken of him *except* one by Mayall; that *except* speaks for itself. The comparison seems too comical. It is rather like comparing one of Madame Tussaud's waxwork heads to one of Woolner's ideal heroic busts.[53]

The only sculptor associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, Thomas Woolner had portrayed Tennyson several times, in profile medallions and busts that had been issued in several materials. Cameron had included a photograph by William Jeffrey of Woolner's 1857 Tennyson bust in the album she made for her sister 'Mia' (Maria Jackson) between 1863 and 1869.[54] Nineteenth-century sculpture was in some ways closer to photography than to the direct carvings of Michelangelo. Like photographs, Woolner's Tennysons came from original 'negatives' which were not for show: the moulds used to make the 'original plasters' which were then cast in bronze, copied in marble, or used to create editions in plaster or Parian. As in photography, the touch of the artist is mediated by mechanical means – moulding and casting maquettes, the only 'original' sculpture made by the hands of artist, and sculpting machines used to make original plasters, all indexical methods also used to turn original plasters into marbles, bronzes or statuettes by expert mechanical labourers. As Lukitsh has shown, Woolner was interested in photography,[55] and not adverse to complement his modelling from life with mechanical copies – he procured direct casts of Tennyson's forehead and nose to improve the realism of his 1856 bust.[56] These were standard studio practices which allowed sculptors to concentrate on seeking new commissions, imperative to turn an expensive medium into a viable business. Cameron was at the time thinking along similar lines, letting her portraits be reduced to cartes-de-viste, or giving her negatives to the Autotype Company to make carbon prints, a process that involved making copy-negatives – new 'moulds' from her original ones.

'Annals' is full of Carlyle-inspired notions of portraits that show 'the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man' (156). It is also infused with disdain for the Photographic Society of London and commercial photographic studios. Yet, by thinking about photography through Woolner as well as Michelangelo, Cameron might be closer to

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[53] Ibid., 157. John Jabez Edwin Mayall's portraits of Tennyson are in the National Portraits Gallery, London, https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/ (accessed 22/09/19)

[54] Joanne Lukitsh, 'Album Photographs on Museum Walls: the Mia Album', in *For My Best Beloved Sister Mia: An Album of Photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron*, ed. Therese Mulligan (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Art Museum, 1994), 27-31.

[55] Joanne Lukitsh, *Thomas Woolner: Seeing Sculpture Through Photography* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2006).

[56] Amy Woolner, *Thomas Woolner R.A., Sculptor and Poet: His Life in Letters* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1917), 110-11.

developing for photography a machine aesthetic where ideas, hands and technological apparatus can work together to make portraits in which the idealised heroes – privileged subjectivities unalienated by modernity – are both behind and in front of the camera. In this conceptualization of photography, Cameron's photographs and writings are a crucial moment in the on-going dialogue in the history of photography between photographs as commodities for a machine age; and photographs as works in which traces of the real, footprints of the world, mingle with the actions of human hands which endow the machine with a subjectivity of its own, marking them with fantasy, desire and imagination.