









A TINY ONTARIO PRESS **CRANKS OUT HANDMADE** LIMITED-EDITION WORKS WHILE **BREATHING LIFE INTO THE** LOST ART OF THE BOOK.







The first Lumiere Press book, on another American photographer, Edward Weston, was published in 1986.

The press also published Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky's first book, in 2001.

Remarkably for a book publisher, the entire Lumiere Press backlist is sold out. More than 100 libraries and museums worldwide hold the books. Last fall, the Special Collections Department at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland acquired the complete collection of Lumiere Press work.

Left: Untitled (Man with Cap and Cigar), Edward Steichen, c. 1915

ichael Torosian stands at his letterpress, feeds it a single sheet of 100-per-cent rag paper bought from an English mill, and cranks out a page printed with a portion of a text he has written about the work of American photographer Edward Steichen.

With the exception of the writing, these are actions he would repeat approximately 18,000 times in the production of Steichen: Eduard et Voulangis in the fall of 2011. Writer, photographer, curator, designer, typesetter, publisher, printer—Torosian is the very definition of the one-man band.

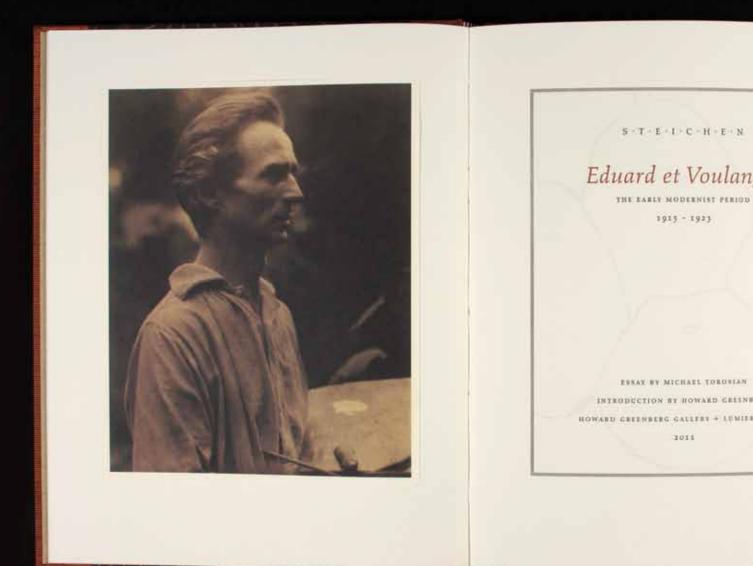
Not surprisingly, then, he was also so busy last year he blanked on his own 25th anniversary. "I might have done a commemorative edition or something, but I was so steeped in the Steichen book I didn't notice," he admits. The occasion was certainly auspicious: His publishing company, Lumiere Press, passed the silver mark in 2011 at a time when publishing houses of all sizes and stripes were struggling to regain their footing or to carve out new territory in a digital world many don't really understand or resist outright.

Unlike most of these publishers, however, Torosian isn't making fast tracks toward apps, interactive user experiences and a paperless universe. Rather, he spends his time methodically, mechanically, setting type on a 1950s-era hot-lead Intertype machine. That's right—he sets type. In addition, with the help of a single assistant, the self-taught publisher and entrepreneur designs page layouts, prints on individual sheets of handpicked paper and binds his handiwork into a book. Much of this activity is carried out in a workshop—which he constructed himself, naturally—in his Toronto backyard. His print run for any edition usually runs to between 200 and 250 copies, and working at this rate, he produces about one book per year. This is what he's been doing for 25 years. —Carolyn Kennedy

68 INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

BY DESIGN





S-T-E-I-C-H-E-N

Eduard et Voulangis

1915 - 1923

RESAY BY MICHAEL TOROSIAN

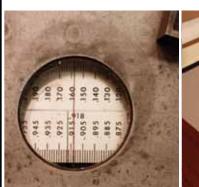
INTERDUCTION BY HOWARD GREENBERG

HOWARD CREENBERG GALLERY + LUMIERS PARSS

2011

ON HIS BEGINNINGS

When I started publishing I took complete control.
I came up with a template for the books—a business plan would be too grandiose a title. I don't think I knew what I was doing, but little by little, I suppose I refined the business model. I always work with absolute editorial autonomy.







ON PHOTOGRAPHY

I think books are the best medium for photography. Until recently, most photographs that existed were contact prints, usually about 8" by 10", usually only seen in exhibitions. And over their careers, photographers have produced monographs of their work. But they've discovered, over the last 50 years, that the only way to stay current with photography is through books; the two are highly amenable in scale and process.

To create the book, images were photographed using an extraordinarily high-resolution digital camera; it produces a 289-megabyte file for each 8"-by-10" photo. The idea is to give the reader, as closely as possible, the sense of holding the original prints. To this end, each plate is handtipped onto the page.

Three never-before-published photographs appear in Steichen: Eduard et Voulangis. The book covers a period in the photographer's career during and after the First World War, when he lived and worked in the village of Voulangis, France. The three images were reproduced from the only prints Steichen made of them, when he returned from France after the war. These images, included here, are Untitled (Man with Cap and Cigar), c.1915, and Untitled (Coal Stove with Poker), c. 1920. The third, Self-Portrait, c. 1915, appears on the title spread of the book (above). Photographs courtesy Lumiere Press and Howard Greenberg Gallery.

Above left: Untitled (Coal Stove with Poker), Steichen, c. 1920



Steichen's widow, Joanna, kept a substantial archive of his material, finally revealing the work in the late 1990s. Its impact at the time was such that it elevated the status of New York City's Howard Greenberg Gallery, the estate's representative. Greenberg, in turn, who had a long business association with Torosian, suggested they co-publish the work.

The idea of a book on Edward Steichen is something Torosian had considered for many years. The edition of 250 copies of Steichen was launched in New York City in December 2011. It is 55 pages and its price is set at \$650.

BY DESIGN



EDUARD ET VOULANGIS

the fire itself, he simply said, "I was burning my bridges behind me. I was going out into a new world,"

The passport to a new world was an experiment - as rigorous and methodical as a mathematical proof and as poetic and ritualistic as the creation of a sand mandala - in the studio at Voulangis he would photograph a white cup and saucer again and again.

Having shown photography as his primary means of artistic expression, Steichen wanted to find its unadulterated essence. "I've got to know what photography is," he said, "what it does and how it does it." For a craftsman of such spectacular technical provess it was an act of humility to return to the darkerom in 1021, to begin again.

The setup that Steichen designed for himself was simple, yet as dislactic as a still life constructed for a drawing class at the Académie Julian. A prosaic white cup and saucer - providing planes, parabolas and a surface disposed to specular highlights - was placed on a white, wedge-shaped backdrop. Next to this Stelchen positioned a scale which he had painted in progressive steps of gray, establishing a range "from the whitest white possible to the nearest possible absolute black." To simulate a value for the hollows of deep shadow, Strichen placed a piece of black velvet in a box.

The experiment indulged the obsessive side of Steichen's nature as he proreeded to expose short after short of film in his view camera. Over and over the darkroom regimen was repeated and at the end of the summer when Steichen counted the negatives he had more than 2,000. Curiously, he never made even one print. His only artifacts were inverted images to be held up to the light. What was he looking for in this shadowland?

The inclusion of the gray scale in the assemblage and his conscientious note taking suggests that he was attempting to arrive at a method of tonal modulation, a kind of proto-Zone System. It is certainly plausible because the notion was part of the literature of the time and individual experimentation was devigueur (Stieglitz had famously undergone his own "complex, self-imposed trials"). And surely, the experience with arrial reconnaiseance had taught him how to quantify technical results. But there is something about the very idea of

DIAGRAM OF DOOR





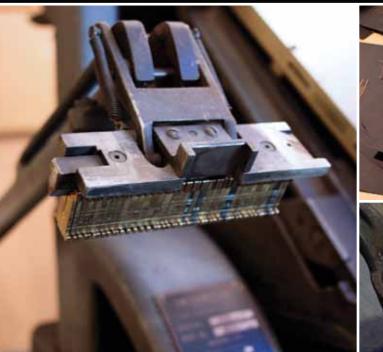
The spine and edges of Steichen are covered in copper-coloured Japanese silk. The book was set in 10-point Palatino and printed on 100-per-cent rag paper, custom-made at a mill in England for this edition.

Torosian casts type in lead on a 1950s Model C4 Intertype machine, which dates to 1911. It's a contemporary of the Linotype, the industry standard from the late 1800s. Both machines were used through the 20th century.

To cast type, Torosian sits at a keyboard divided into lower case, upper case and punctuation keys. Each keystroke causes a small brass mould with an engraving of the character (in roman and italic) to drop down a chute onto a shelf—the composing stick—where the characters slowly assemble into words and sentences. The brass moulds, known as matrices, are then injected with molten lead. A collection of type—or a slug—is placed on the press, inked and a proof is pulled. A single day's production results in about three pages of type.

Right: Three Pears and an Apple, Steichen, 1920









ON THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNET

Once people got addicted to buying books on the Internet, it changed the whole mindset. I don't think there's anything to be done about that. But although I don't earn anything directly from the resale of my books that way, on the other hand, I'm the beneficiary of the aura when one of my books is sold on eBay at a higher price.