

Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière: The Physician and the Hysterical Woman



Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière (1876-80), a landmark publication in medical photography, is on view in the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library through November 15th. This collection of texts and photographs represents the female patients of Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière hospital and asylum during the years of his tenure as director. The patients, diagnosed primarily with hysteria or epilepsy, were treated at the asylum even as they acted as experimental subjects for Charcot's development of the hysteria diagnosis. This collection represents a transformative moment in the history of the diagnosis, treatment, and representation of mental illness. The exhibit was organized by Courtney Thompson, doctoral student in the Program in the History of Medicine, and Susan Wheeler, Curator for Prints and Drawings at the Medical Library.

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