

## Photography

**P**hotography was born in France in 1839, the date customarily given for its invention. The year marks the presentation by F. Arago to the Academy of Sciences of the daguerreotype of L. Daguerre, who had improved upon the invention of J.-N. Niépce, who died in 1833. Niépce had worked with Daguerre in 1829 to refine his method.

In the past 15 years, professional photography has undergone a transformation of enormous magnitude, as a result of the development of digital technologies and the mass diffusion of content on the Internet. In addition to mastering the culture of images, photographers now need to understand computer technology.

Photographic work can be divided into several components: conception; location scouting; setting techniques (lighting, framing, focusing, speed, etc.); setup and composition; selection of photographs; printing; and indexing of images. People with training in photography can become portrait photographers, photo-journalists, industrial photographers, advertising agency photographers, or fashion, scientific, or medical photographers. The profession can also be applied to laboratories, where 90 percent of jobs are found. These jobs involve selecting and assembling images, developing negatives, developing positives on paper or slides, and performing finishing operations (verifying, calibrating, bagging, pricing).

### Photography in France in Figures

- 25,000 professional photographers in France (2015)
- 48,400 students enrolled in artistic or cultural institutions of higher learning, of which 31,100 are enrolled in private institutions (2014)
- 11,000 foreign students enrolled in artistic and cultural institutions of higher learning (2014)
- Almost 50 artistic residences dedicated to photography and more than 20 festivals in France (2013)
- More than 20 competitions and scholarships in photography (2013)

Source: INSEE - MCC - MENESR.

### INTERNATIONAL

The work of French photographers Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau, Sarah Moon, Yann Arthus-Bertrand, Jean-Baptiste Mondino, Pierre et Gilles, and Bettina Rheims, and others is known around the world.

More than 20 French photographic festivals are internationally recognized—among them those in Arles, Paris, and Nancy.

Almost all of public arts schools in France are part of the Erasmus+. Students at French institutions can spend a semester abroad, based on the arrangement they reach with their home institution.

### Related fields

Arts – Culture – Design – Fashion – Management – Teaching

### Subfields

Architectural design - Art history - Art market - Art restoration and conservation - Audiovisual - Ceramics - Cinema - Crafts - Cultural mediation - Design - Drawing - Graphics - Engraving - Illustration - Fashion and textiles - Heritage - Information - Interior architecture - Multimedia - Museography - Museology - Painting - Photography - Scenography - Sculpture Studio arts - Video - Visual arts

### Useful Links

- ANdÉA (National Association of Institutions of Higher Learning in Art): [www.andea.fr](http://www.andea.fr)
- APPEA (National Association of Public Preparatory Schools for Institutions of Higher Learning in Art): [www.appea.fr](http://www.appea.fr)
- ARAGO, photography portal: [www.photo-arago.fr](http://www.photo-arago.fr)
- Blog of the Association of Art School Teachers: [www.blog.cneea.fr](http://www.blog.cneea.fr)
- Circulation, festival of young European photographers: [www.festival-circulations.com](http://www.festival-circulations.com)
- CNAP (National Center of Plastic Arts): [www.cnap.fr](http://www.cnap.fr)
- CPIF (Photography Center of the Ile de France): [www.cpiif.net](http://www.cpiif.net)
- Culturethèque – Institut Français: [www.culturetheque.com](http://www.culturetheque.com)
- Information sheets on programs in art and culture: [www.campusfrance.org/fr/ressource/les-diplomes-dart-et-de-culture](http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/ressource/les-diplomes-dart-et-de-culture)
- FETART: [www.fetart.org](http://www.fetart.org)
- MEP (Maison Européenne de Photographie): [www.mep-fr.org](http://www.mep-fr.org)
- Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication: [www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr](http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr)
- Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie d'Arles: [www.rencontres-arles.com](http://www.rencontres-arles.com)
- RNCP (Répertoire nationale des certifications professionnelles): [www.mcp.cncp.gouv.fr](http://www.mcp.cncp.gouv.fr)
- Vidéadoc (Center for the Documentation of Audiovisual and Multimedia Creation): [www.videadoc.com](http://www.videadoc.com)

### Choose Your Program

- CampusArt catalogue and online registration for artistic fields: [www.campusart.org](http://www.campusart.org)
- Catalogue of Campus France programs: [www.campusfrance.org](http://www.campusfrance.org)
- Catalogue of short programs, cultural and language stays: [www.coursdete.campusfrance.org](http://www.coursdete.campusfrance.org)
- Catalogue of courses taught in English: [www.campusfrance.org/en/page/programs-taught-English](http://www.campusfrance.org/en/page/programs-taught-English)
- CampusBourses, find financial aid for your studies: <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/page/campusbourses-lannuaire-des-programmes-de-Bourse>

## Licence level

Admission to the first year of the École supérieure d'art (ESA) is competitive and determined based on review of portfolio of artistic work. Students may transfer into the program through equivalence.

It is often necessary to spend a year in a preparatory school for the ESA entrance exam. Certain schools offer preparatory classes coupled with French courses and preparation for the art school admissions competitions.

Some private schools offer certifications that are listed in the national registry of occupational certifications (RNCP). The cost of these courses is often high.

**Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS, senior technical certificate)**  
(Baccalauréat + 2 years of higher education) – L2

- The **BTS** in photography, a two-year (120 ECTS) program, is offered at seven private and public institutions.

**Diplôme National d'Art (DNA, national art diploma)**  
(Baccalauréat + 2 years of higher education) – L3

- The **DNA**, the first degree in art, is a three-year (180 ECTS) program with three majors. Some 50 institutions offer courses in photography.

**Licence**  
(Baccalauréat + 3 years of higher education) – L3

- The **licence in arts, letters, and language** with a major in **photography** is a national diploma earned after three years (180 ECTS) of study. It is offered by the University of Vincennes-Saint-Denis. [www.univ-paris8.fr](http://www.univ-paris8.fr)
- The **licence in arts, letters, and language** with a major in **plastic arts or art** and including courses in photography is a national diploma earned after three years (180 ECTS credits) of study. It is offered by some two dozen universities.
- The **licence professionnel in humanities and social sciences with a concentration in documentary resources and database management and publishing of photographic and media archives**, is a one-year (60 ECTS) program offered by the University of Lille 3. [www.univ-lille3.fr](http://www.univ-lille3.fr)

**Three-year programs appearing in the RNCP (Level II):**

- **Photography**, offered by the Ecole des Gobelins and the Ecole EFET, two years of core studies and one year of specialization (video and 3D postproduction). [www.gobelins.fr](http://www.gobelins.fr) and [www.efet.fr](http://www.efet.fr)

## Master's level

**University Diploma (DU)**  
(Baccalauréat + 4 years of higher education) – M1

- The **DU in documentary photography and transmedia writing** is offered by the University of Perpignan Via Domitia. [www.univ-perp.fr](http://www.univ-perp.fr)

**Diplôme National Supérieur d'Expression Plastique (DNSEP, national higher diploma in plastic expression)**  
(Baccalauréat + 5 years of higher education) – M2

- The **DNSEP** is a two-year (120 ECTS) master's, the second cycle in art. The program is devoted to individual work. About 50 art schools offer courses in photography as part of the program.

**Master 2**  
(Baccalauréat + 5 years of higher education) – M2

- The **Master's in arts with a concentration in plastic and contemporary arts, with a specialization in photography and contemporary art**, is a national diploma earned after two years (120 ECTS) of study. It is offered by the University of Vincennes-Saint-Denis. [www.univ-paris8.fr](http://www.univ-paris8.fr)
- The **Master's in arts, letters, languages, and human and social sciences** includes courses in photography. It is offered by about two dozen universities.

**Institution-Specific Diplomas/Master**  
(Baccalauréat + 5 years of higher education) – M2

- **Designer/creator of decorative arts at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs (ENSAD)** of Paris, is a five-year program. Students can specialize in **photography** beginning in their second year: art photography, documentary communication, and printing and digital techniques [www.ensad.fr](http://www.ensad.fr)
- **Diploma National Supérieur d'Arts Plastiques (DNSAP)** of the l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts (ENSBA) de Paris. [www.beauxartsparis.com](http://www.beauxartsparis.com)
- **École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie (ENSP)** d'Arles is a five-year program. [www.ensp-arles.com](http://www.ensp-arles.com)
- **École nationale supérieure Louis Lumière (ENLL)** section **photographie** is a five-year program. [www.ens-louis-lumiere.fr](http://www.ens-louis-lumiere.fr)
- **Institut National du Patrimoine (INP)** offers a five-year program. Seven specialities are offered, including photography: restoration of photographs. [www.inp.fr](http://www.inp.fr)

Level I RNCP certifications, granted after five years:

- **Photography**, Spéos with modules on photojournalism, studio photography, and the photography market. [www.speos-photo.com](http://www.speos-photo.com)

## Post-master's level

**Institution-Specific Master's**  
(M2 + 1, 2, or 3 years of higher education) – Post-M

Postgraduate programs are offered together with other foreign art schools and universities. Candidates from all countries are welcome.

- Two dozen arts school offer two- to three-year postgraduate programs for students who want to pursue research and develop contemporary art, design, or graphics project. [www.andea.fr/fr/post-diplomes/070613-post-diplomes](http://www.andea.fr/fr/post-diplomes/070613-post-diplomes)
- Le Fresnoy, Studio National Studio des Art Contemporains, offers a two-year degree to students with a master's diploma or its equivalent. The degree, which is awarded based on a project, is certified by the Ministry of Culture and Communication. [www.lefresnoy.net](http://www.lefresnoy.net)