While photography was undoubtedly of great interest to the European public, debates raged on whether or not the medium could be considered fine art. Exponents claimed since the image was created by use of a lens and chemical process which fixed an image, as opposed to painting which was a result of the imagination of the artist, it could not be considered art. Some went as far as to relate a photograph to a textile created by industrialized machine. Some saw the use of the lens as a scientific tool, which removed the artist from the creation of the image. It was therefore a useful tool to aid artist, but the photograph itself could not be art, nor the photographer an artist. While the exactness of the photograph made it a scientific marvel, its acute details disqualified it as art in the eyes of many critics. Art was meant to be beautiful, expressive and a reflection of intellect and fine taste. The overly detailed images produced by the “industrial” photograph failed to meet these lofty standards. Further, the ability to reproduce and market photographs made them a commodity among the middle classes. While the subject matter of photographs could have compared to fine art, their appeal to the middle class made them unattractive to the elite classes. Baudelaire went as far as to call photographers “unendowed” painters, seeing them as lazy and unable to express cultivated ideas and internal expression.

Others claimed the lens was like a paintbrush, and that a camera in the hands of an imaginative photographer could produce images of equal value to art. Among some of the great proponents of the art were artists like John Millais and Gabriel Rossetti, who were avid collectors and supplemented their own work with studies based on photography. The French artist Louis Figuier claimed that what “makes an artist in not the process but the feeling”.

However, these claims alone would not convince the wider public of the photographs value as fine art. British press still insisted that art had to be handmade to be fine art. In response photographers published journals and articles to convince readers to reexamine photography. Works by influential photographers like *Portrait of Elizabeth Rigby, Later Lady Eastlake* byDavid Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson were used as examples of the expression possible with the Calotype method.

The photographer Charles Negre understood the arguments against photography as a fine art. He created his *Young Girl seated with a Basket* with these arguments in mind. Negre, among other artists, began to purposely limit the detail of their photos. Negre would leave the background of his piece unarticulated to give it the appearance of a painted piece. He would instead focus the light on the head, hands and basket of the sitter, giving the figure a high art quality while maintaining the “truthful” quality viewers had come to associate with the medium. These methods were an attempt by photographers to compete with high art.

Other methods, which combined the collodion glass plate with drawing, were used by artists like the realists. This group was interested in capturing the mundane details of life through art and saw the merits of the camera both as an aid to their work and as an art form. *Woman Emptying a Bucket* from 1862 by Jean Francois Millet shows how these artists combined techniques to create more realistic fine art images.

Other artists began to incorporate elements of both fine art and photograph into their works. Thomas Eakins used photographs to create studies for his 1885 painting *Swimming Hole*. Impressionists, like Degas, were fascinated by the effects of light and often incorporated lighting seen in photographs into their works. In addition, elements of scope and cropping which originated with the photograph are seen in impressionist works. These artists helped to elevate the public opinion of photography.