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Tata, Sam  
Photographs  
Photographer

Collection contains large black and white photographic prints and scrapbooks related to the life and work of Sam Tata.

Purchased from John Metcalf in 2006

Extent: 5 boxes (2.5 metres)

Biographical sketch:

Sam Tata was born in Shanghai, China, on September 30th, 1911, to father Bejan, and mother, Naja, of the wealthy, mercantile Tata family. He died July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 at the age of 93 at Sooke, British Columbia, Canada, on Vancouver Island.

He took up photography after studying at the University of Hong Kong in the 1930s, and was one of the founding members of the Shanghai Camera Club. He learned studio portraiture with Oscar Seepol, later studying with well-known photographers, Chin San Long and Liu Shu Chong. His photographs began to be accepted for publication by British and American magazines. In the 1940s he had his own photography exhibition in Bombay (Mumbai). He lived in India for part of the 1940s where he met future mentor and friend, famed French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. With Cartier-Bresson, Tata learned the art of street photography. The two documented the Indian Independence movement from 1946-1948, including the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1949, Tata returned to Shanghai, where he documented the rise of Communism in China following the Chinese Civil War. Tata immigrated to Canada in 1956 with his wife, Marketa (Rita) Langer and settled in Montreal, developing his photography career as a portraitist, and raising his daughter, Toni. Photographs of Toni as a small child appeared frequently in Canadian magazines-- she was clearly one of her father's favourite subjects. Tata also became known for his portraits of celebrities such as Leonard Cohen, Irving Layton, Buster Keaton, Elizabeth Smart, Christopher Plummer, Donald Sutherland to name a few.

Tata is survived by daughter Antonia (Toni), in Canada, sister Aloo Daver, of Hong Kong, brothers Phiroze Tata of London, England, Jango Tata, of San Francisco, and two grandsons. One brother died before him.

Tata's work has appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers, including *Macleans*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *Time*, *The Globe Magazine*, *Star Weekly*, *Perspectives*, *French Chateleine* and many others, especially during the 1940s-1960s. His work has also appeared in numerous books and photography shows. In 1982 he received an honorary degree from Concordia University, Montreal. He was awarded the lifetime achievement award from the Canadian Association of Photographers and Illustrators in Communication (CAPIC). In 1991, forty of his photographs appeared in the National Library of Canada exhibition, Canadian Writers at the National Library of Canada.

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Box 1 47 photographs	46 black and white photographic prints. 1 colour photographic print. 8x 10 mostly
	5 x 8 colour photograph 'Two guitars, Montreal, 1962, Sam Tata', holograph. 'The only colour of Sam's I saw. He loathed colour, saying "it betrayed form".' J.M.
	'Hommage to Kertesz, McGill University, Montreal, 1982 (Tata)' holograph
	'Conversation, Shivajinagar, Bangalore '83', holograph
	'Family, Hong Kong, 1984', holograph
	'Roof Tops, Tokyo, 1973 (Tata)', holograph
	'Toy Shop, Udaipur '84', holograph
	'Latrine, Market place, Udaipur '84', holograph
	'Drugstore, Mohammed Ali Rd., Bombay '83', holograph
	Uncaptioned [China street scene?]
	'Race Club, Bombay '83', holograph
	'Destitutes, Shanghai, April 1949 (Paper with writing gives reasons for begging)'
	'Sisters, Wan Chai, Hong Kong 1973 (Tata)', holograph
	John Metcalf, 1985(?)
	'Quick lunch, Des Voeux Rd, Hong Kong 1973', holograph

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	Montreal [Jewish men studying]
	John Metcalf with Al Purdy 1989, 5x8
	John Metcalf 1978, Delta, ON
	Montreal. [Jewish men and boys praying]
	Montreal. [Jewish man studying]
	Buster Keaton during the making of CN movie.
	[Interior. Seated Chinese man.]
	'Overheard in a barbershop.' Kashmir?
	'Pupils for Parsi priesthood, Dadar, Bombay '84', holograph
	'Pedicab coolie, Ernakulam, Cochin '83', holograph
	'Muslim merchants, Mohammed Ali Rd., B'bay '83'
	'Market, Panaji, Goa '83'
	'Shopper, Southall, London, 1983', holograph
	London (Probably 1983) J.M.
	One of the Shanghai photos J.M.
	I have a suspicion this is Cartier-Bresson. J.M. [Henri Cartier-Bresson]
	'John Metcalf', holograph, October 1987, signed Tata
	John Metcalf by Sam Tata, Oct. 87
	'Elizabeth Smart, Toronto, 1983' holograph

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	'Yoshi Toshi Mori, Artist, Tokyo 1984', holograph
	Leon Rooke 1988-89 Victoria
	'B'bay 1948', holograph
	'Clothier, Udaipur '84', holograph
	Buster Keaton, CN film
	Parsi function, Montreal
	'Bookstall, Mohammed Ali Rd, Bombay '83' holograph
	'Marketplace, Udaipur '84', holograph
	R. Caouette [Réal Caouette]
	'Merchant, Mohammed Ali Rd., Bombay '83', holograph
	'Sikh flower seller, Chandni Chowk, Delhi '84', holograph
	'Papier Maché elephant, Delhi 1984', holograph
	'Brahmin couple, Chandni Chowk, Delhi '84', holograph
	'Journey to Amarnath, Kashmir 1955', holograph
Box 2 29 photographs/folders	Mostly 11 x 14 inch black and white photographs
Folder 1	'Pilgrims at Panchtarni enroute to Amarnath, Kashmir 1955' holograph
Folder 2	'Family, Nantao, Shanghai 1949', holograph

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Folder 3	'Beggar Boys, Shanghai, 1949', holograph
Folder 4	Uncaptioned, [Shanghai, 1949?]
Folder 5	'Street conversation, Shanghai, 1938', holograph
Folder 6	'Mourners, Millionaire Aw Boon Haw's Funeral, Hong Kong, 1954', holograph
Folder 7	'Baby-Sitter, Shanghai, China, 1949', holograph
Folder 8	'Parade Participants on Stilts, Shanghai, 1949'
Folder 9	'Actress Diana Van Der Vlis, New York, 1959' 2 prints
Folder 10	'Priest With Hindu Women and Child, Galta, India, 1955', holograph
Folder 11	'Trevor Payne, Musician, Montreal, 1974' 2 prints
Folder 12	'probably Montreal', note, John Metcalf
Folder 13	'Market Place, Udaipur, 1984', holograph
Folder 14	'Chovalo-Cleroux, copyright 1960' boxers George Chovalo and Bob Cleroux in action
Folder 15	'Family on the move: boy in the basket awaits his parents amidst goods and chattels. Shanghai. 1949.' Note by J.M.
Folder 16	'Craig St. (now St. Antoine), Montreal. 1962', holograph
Folder 17	'Hampton Court, 1978', holograph
Folder 18	'Blind Beggars, Darjeeling, India, 1946', holograph

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Folder 19	'Children's Clothes over door with antique carving, Shanghai, 1949', holograph
Folder 20	'Peasant Women, Delhi, 1955', holograph
Folder 21	'Donald Sutherland, actor, London, 1976', holograph
Folder 22	uncaptioned
Folder 23	'Street Market, Hong Kong, 1973'
Folder 24	'Jumma Masjid, Delhi, 1955'
Folder 25	Uncaptioned [Shanghai, 1940s?]
Folder 26	'Comedian Arthur Treacher, Montreal, 1958'
Folder 27	'Sacred Cow, Bombay, 1947', holograph
Folder 28	'Pilgrims to Amarnath, Pisu Ghati, Kashmir, 1955', holograph
Folder 29	uncaptioned
Box 3 52 photographs/folders	55 11 X 14 black and white photographic prints
Folder 1	'used as front cover of Ovo Magazine (Montreal)' – note J.M. mounted print of nuns ascending church steps.
Folder 2	John Metcalf, 1969 or 1970. Inscribed 'For John, to celebrate "auld acquaintances, affectionately, Sam'. Signed and mounted on board
Folder 3	'H.W. Jones, Painter, Montreal, 1977' 2 prints
Folder 4	'John and Myra Metcalf (1985?)'
Folder 5	'Escaping Nationalist Soldier, Shanghai, 1949. Ironically flags in background

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	celebrate some previous Nationalist Victory Day.’ Holograph
Folder 6	‘Crowds Seeking Entry into the China Travel Service for Railway Tickets Early May, Shanghai, 1949.’ Signed ‘Tata’ holograph. 2 prints [1 original?]
Folder 7	‘Roof Tops, Tokyo, 1972’. Signed ‘Tata’. holograph
Folder 8	‘Parade of Soldiers of the Peoples’ Liberation Army, Shanghai, 1949’ holograph
Folder 9	Hong Kong
Folder 10	‘[dancer, Southeast Asia?]
Folder 11	‘Graffiti, Amsterdam, 1981.’ holograph
Folder 12	‘Emile Belcourt, Singer, Wimbledon, 1976’ holograph
Folder 13	Uncaptioned [musicians?]
Folder 14	Note – J.M. ‘I think this is Edward Steichen’ [photographer]
Folder 15	Mulk Raj Anand. Author of ‘Coolie’. [reading ‘Coolie’]
Folder 16	‘Fakir, Pakistan, 1955’ holograph
Folder 17	uncaptioned
Folder 18	‘Trial by a Nationalist Court of man accused of being a Communist and Blackmarketeer. Shanghai, China, 1949.’ Holograph
Folder 19	Uncaptioned [trial, Shanghai, 1949]
Folder 20	‘Nationalist trial of a man accused of being a Communist, Shanghai, China, 1949.’

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	Signed, holograph
Folder 21	'Trial of man accused of being a Communist and blackmarketeeing. His "crimes" are inscribed on paper-covered stick of wood.' Shanghai, 1949. holograph
Folder 22	'... after which he is hustled off to be shot.' Holograph
Folder 23	Montreal sculptor. Stanley Lewis (?) note by J.M.
Folder 24	'Pauline Julien, Montreal. 1972' signed 'Tata'. Holograph. [singer, actress, songwriter, 1928-1998]
Folder 25	'Coolie woman, Monsoon, Bombay, 1948.' Inscribed 'For Myrna and John with affection, from Sam, 11 July 1992'. Signed, holograph
Folder 26	'Salvation Army Band, St. Ives, Cornwall, 1978' signed 'Tata'. Note from John Metcalf: 'I used this as cover for Norman Levine's <i>From a Seaside Town</i> (Porcupine's Quill).'
Folder 27	'Yoshi Toshi Mori, Artist, Tokyo, 1984. J.M.'
Folder 28	John Colicos [Actor, played first Klingon in Star Trek]
Folder 29	'House-moving, Shanghai, 1949'. Holograph
Folder 30	Uncaptioned [China]
Folder 31	London, UK
Folder 32	Uncaptioned [cellist]
Folder 33	'Papier-maché Horse, Jaipur, 1955', holograph



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Folder 34	'Petticoat Lane, London, 1959' holograph
Folder 35	'Concert, Public Square, Panaji, Goa, 1983' holograph
Folder 36	Uncaptioned [India?]
Folder 37	'Fountain, Trafalgar Square, London, 1983.' Holograph
Folder 38	'Uniforms and Musical Instruments, Udaipur, 1984.' Signed 'Tata' holograph
Folder 39	'Lubavitcher Bride, Montreal, 1972' holograph
Folder 40	Uncaptioned [cat and statue, China?]
Folder 41	'A Lubavitcher Bridegroom, Montreal, 1972.' Holograph
Folder 42	[lion dancers in parade]
Folder 43	'Muslim Woman outside the Zakaria Mosque, Bombay, 1948' holograph
Folder 44	'Hikers, Luxembourg, 1976' holograph
Folder 45	Young foreign refugee waiting to embark on the <i>Wooster Victory</i> . Shanghai, 1949. note by J.M.
Folder 46	Uncaptioned [India?]
Folder 47	'A View from a window, Wembley, London, 1976'. Holograph, signed. Ada and Frenny Tata – 'Tata's brother and wife at home in London' J.M.
Folder 48	Réal Caouette. 1962. Atwater Market. Provincial campaign. J.M. note
Folder 49	'Worshippers, Hazrat Bal Mosque, Srinagar, Kashmir, 1955', holograph

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Folder 50	[Christopher Plummer]
Folder 51	Montreal. Ritz. J.M.
Folder 52	'Coolies resting, Jaipur, 1955' holograph
Box 4	4 scrapbooks blank notecards in folder depicting Tata photos
Box 5	Scrapbook, large with 'T' on cover