

# LOUIS VIGNES

French, 1831 - 1896

*Temple of Baalshamin*

1864

Louis Vignes was a French naval officer who photographed scenes from his deployments across France's Middle Eastern colonies. The albumen print depicts a literal ruin being preserved as a photograph. However, at the same time, the print itself is decaying, while the ruins in the photo continued to be preserved as a World Heritage Site until its destruction by the Islamic State in 2015. Both the ruin and the print itself could be preserved temporarily, but not permanently. This revisits the idea of decay being an inevitability, neither strictly positive nor negative, but instead up to each individual to decide, based on the circumstances surrounding that person or object.