



Felix Nadar

1820-1910

Felix Nadar (born Gaspard-Félix Tournachon) was a French photographer who pioneered the use of aerial photography for reconnaissance, mapping, and surveying.

In 1855 Nadar patented the idea of using aerial photographs for mapmaking and surveying. In 1858 he made the world's first aerial photograph from a balloon. His balloon had an enormous gondola with its own darkroom, since the exposure and development of photographs had to take place while the glass plate was still wet. Long after his early work with aerial images Nadar and colleagues such as Jules Verne continued to be a vocal advocate for the development of flying vehicles.

In addition to aerial imagery, Nadar is also recognized for being the first to use electric lighting to illuminate his subjects and for being the first to experiment with “serial photography” – an early precursor to motion pictures. In 1865, he photographed himself in a set of 12 images, each from a different angle. He then projected the still pictures in quick succession to create an impression that the camera was moving around him. He called it a “revolving self-portrait.”