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PAUL STRAND: THE EARLY YEARS, 1910-1932

by

Naomi Rosenblum

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1978

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## PREFACE

Paul Strand's creative debut in photography coincided with America's awakening to modernism in the visual arts. To a large extent, Strand's aesthetic ideas and photographic vision were formed by his contacts with Alfred Stieglitz and the modern art shown at 291 and in Camera Work. In addition, the social and scientific outlook of the reform era, as it was embodied in the education Strand received at the Ethical Culture School, was a significant factor in the formation of his attitudes and beliefs. The resolution of forces sometimes considered antagonistic--aesthetic awareness and social concern--formed the outlook which produced the imagery of his maturity.

The period between 1915 and 1932, when this vision was being forged and tested, was crucial to Strand's later development. In 1916 he was accepted into the inner circle of 291 and his photographs were regarded by Stieglitz as the most promising then being done in the United States. Two years later his experiences in the Army Medical Corps had a significant effect on his approach to reality.

Throughout the early twenties, he maintained a close relationship with Stieglitz and organized support for the Stieglitz circle artists as well as for the photographer himself. At the same time, his own work reflected an uncompromising concern with the reality of the material world. Towards the end of the twenties, he became convinced that both his concept of reality and his social outlook no longer coincided with that of Stieglitz and he left the United States for Mexico, where his imagery assumed a complexion that remained relatively constant for the remainder of his creative life.

Strand's close relationship with Stieglitz should not eclipse the fact that unlike his mentor, Strand's creative ideas clearly belong to the twentieth century. In Stieglitz's romantic view, the objective world was formed into metaphors of emotional states and eventually he came to consider the artists' feelings, or expression of the self, to be greatly more significant than objective reality. In contrast, Strand approached the world of objects and experiences with respect for their material qualities and interest in their structure, growth and relationships. In the work he produced between 1916 and 1932 one can trace both the vitalism and positivism of his early years, with its belief in the spirit in all living matter and its

faith in the efficacy of the machine and the comprehensibility of nature as well as the beginnings of his interest in the processes of history, tradition and social organization. The medium he worked in, and the way he used it at the time, represented to him the most modern means of producing an expressive statement in the plastic arts.

In his observation of the forms of nature and artifact, Strand attempted to create a synthesis involving the thing photographed and his own sense of its emotional and intellectual significance. In common with many artists, the emotional quotient in Strand's work is so controlled that one is rarely aware of an outpouring of personal joy or anguish that is distinct from the forms and structures of the object itself. Pain and pleasure have become imbedded in the stuff of the image--in the rock grains, dew drops and twisting roots--with the result that feeling is inextricably bound to matter.

Unlike many photographic (and graphic) artists of the twentieth century, Strand was not concerned with design or decoration. His images were not conceived merely as appreciations of textures and shapes, designed to give pleasure through a just arrangement of line and pattern. They are informed by a serious purpose--a commitment to deal with things basic to the human mind and spirit that is as

traceable to Lewis Hine as it is to Alfred Stieglitz. Despite shifts in emphasis, Strand's photography represents a consistent development in its attachment to material reality, its effort to understand the forms and processes of the natural world, its insistence that emotion be based on experience and its affirmation that man and nature are part of a comprehensible organic whole. His work is the most significant visual embodiment in modern expressive photography of faith in the scientific revolution.

From 1915 through 1932, Strand, Stieglitz and Rebecca Strand kept up an extensive correspondence which documents the exchange of ideas between the two photographers and confirms their complex artistic and social relationship. Much of the information about Strand's development is based on this material, which is in the Alfred Stieglitz Archive of the Beinecke Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Yale University and at the Paul Strand Archive at the Center for Creative Photography of the University of Arizona. Articles written by Strand for publication as well as letters to the family, also in the collection of the Paul Strand Archive, provided information and insights into Strand's experience in the Army and on several long trips. Conversations with Strand over a number of years helped clarify a number of questions about the period, although

the passage of time prevented his retrospective view from being completely reliable. In addition, the images themselves provided clues to changing ideas and new developments. In assembling this material, my aim has been to recreate the text and texture of a relationship of great significance and to place it within a social and aesthetic context in order to understand the work of one of America's most significant twentieth century artists.

Despite the fact that Strand was an esteemed photographer for sixty years, there is no full-scale scholarly work that discusses influences or relates him to the men and ideas of his time. Recent books, such as the Monograph of 1971 and the more biographical Paul Strand: Sixty Years of Photographs\* of 1976 are popularly oriented works designed to introduce Strand to a general audience. There have been numerous articles about Strand but few have addressed the question of influence and style. Among the first to do so was Milton Brown in 1945. "Cubist Realism: An American Style" placed Strand's work within the context of Precisionism. In a 1975 essay on the machine images of Morton L. Schamberg and Strand, Van Deren Coke discussed stylistic influences. Somewhat later Ulrich Keller attempted an art historical analysis of Strand's imagery and, more recently, William Innes Homer described Strand's rela-

tion to the Stieglitz circle. In a piece on "Painting or Photography" published in London in 1963, John Berger used Strand's style to discuss the broader implications of photography in relation to painting. During the period under examination, Stieglitz, Harold Clurman and Lola Ridge wrote appreciations of Strand's work; similar appreciations appeared in greater numbers after 1945. This essay will be the first to suggest the interplay of the social, psychological and aesthetic forces that formed Strand's photographic art.

\*Excerpts from correspondence, interviews and other documents, supplied by Naomi Rosenblum.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

During the first decade of the twentieth century, photography in the United States became a medium of aesthetic significance largely through the efforts of Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo Secession. From the Philadelphia exhibition of 1898 to the Buffalo show of 1910, standards for exhibiting aesthetically conceived photographic images were similar to those used for the older arts. Photography became aware of its artistic potential through the sponsorship of photographic exhibitions by a number of prestigious art institutions, including the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Carnegie Institute, the Corcoran Gallery and the Albright Gallery. In addition, the program of exhibitions at the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession, known as 291, and the reproduction of photographs in Camera Work, resulted in a significant revision of attitudes about photography, with criticism in particular showing marked improvement.

The Photo-Secession included most, but not all, of the

best pictorial photographers of the day. During the ten years of its active existence, from 1902 to 1912, several approaches to subject and style were apparent among the members' work; these eventually coalesced into two main directions. In general, Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence H. White, Annie Brigman and Frank Eugene represented a conservative outlook. Their subjects were of a romantic nature, often similar to those painted by Whistler, Chase, Dewing and Hassam. Their compositional schemes also were often derived from painting, resulting in an unfavorable comparison of their work with that of the realist painters of New York.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Alfred Stieglitz, Eduard Steichen, Alvin Langdon Coburn, and later, Karl Struss, evidenced a contemporary vision by organizing urban subject matter into fresher and more original compositions. Eventually, when the Secession fell apart, one of the ironies was the alignment of the most aesthetically conservative members with several of the most avant-garde, an indication that the split was based on personality difficulties more than on aesthetic considerations.<sup>2</sup>

In 1907, however, at the time that Paul Strand paid his first visit to the Little Galleries, Secessionist activities and aesthetic positions were only just beginning to disintegrate. The exhibition of Secessionist work that

Strand saw was criticized for lack of creative imagination by Joseph T. Keiley, who in 1899 had praised the artistry and directness of the future Secessionists. The fact that both the conservative journal, American Photography, and the modernist publication, Camera Work, singled out Annie W. Brigman's dryads and nymphs in sylvan settings as "rich works of the imagination" suggests the outdated romanticism which characterized much Secessionist photography of the time.<sup>3</sup>

In 1908, the last year that the Secession photographers exhibited together at 291, they participated also in the "Special Exhibition of Contemporary Art", held at the National Arts Club. Despite the generally favorable reception, it was the only time that Secession photographs were exhibited alongside paintings, sculpture and graphic works of a realist nature.<sup>4</sup> From that time, the Secession, as a whole, tended toward vapid imagery which departed further and further from reality. Moreover, in their desire to create aesthetic objects, many Secessionist devoted considerable time to printing processes. They produced complicated pigment prints that emphasized technical virtuosity; these were frequently criticized as being indistinguishable from etchings or lithographs.<sup>5</sup> By 1910, when Stieglitz had begun to organize the last large Secession-

ist exhibition for the Albright Gallery, several journals were already calling for a new direction; one noted the reactionary character of the Secession and urged that "the present generation in photography must go back to realism."<sup>6</sup>

With its six hundred photographs, the "International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography", held in Buffalo in 1910, was the summing up of the rise and decline of the Secessionist aesthetic. Critics realized that the exhibit was a major event in photography but they were painfully aware also of the large number of dull works and the limitations of genteel subject matter. The handling of the installation helped point up the unevenness of achievement. By hanging the photographs of Clarence White separately, his outdated subjects and style were emphasized, leading one critic, F. Austin Lidbury, to label the White room "anemic".<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the repetition of printing styles and subjects in the open section (non-invitational participants) refuted the claim that Secession pictorialists or their followers could always be depended on for high standards or original work.

In the context of critical reaction to the Albright exhibition, it is interesting to note that the Secession idea of acceptable subject matter was very limited indeed. A number of photographers, among them Leigh Richmond Miner

and Edward Curtis, were creating aesthetically conceived images during the first decade, but were not included in Secession exhibitions. Miner, who photographed rural blacks in Virginia and on St. Helena's Island, paid careful attention to composition, avoided displeasing shapes and produced soft-focus works whose Barbizon inspiration is evident. Likewise, Curtis's photographs of Indian life were made with attention to lighting and composition and were printed and gold-toned with as much care as any Secession work. One can only conclude that the Secession construed artistic subject matter in the same limited way as pictorialists generally, and as Academicians in painting. Images that touched on social conditions or portrayed ethnic peoples were considered too vulgar to be art.

In view of Stieglitz's own choice of subject matter, this restriction appears as one of the anomalies of the Secession and suggests that it was suffering from a kind of photographic schizophrenia towards the end of the first decade. It is ironic that despite his own demand for 'life' in the photographic image, Stieglitz never acknowledged aesthetic qualities or psychological force in any works outside the Secession. Throughout the 'nineties and into the first decade, Stieglitz was frequently drawn to the less fashionable neighborhoods of New York where he found meta-

phors for his feelings of aloneness in images such as The Terminal (Fig. 1) and Steerage (Fig. 2).

In dealing with city subjects around the turn-of-the-century, Stieglitz emphasized mood and the changing character of urban life rather than social realities, but he expressed the uneasy excitement of urban experience better than any of his contemporaries in pictorial photography. After a decade of organizational activity with gallery and publication, he again turned to the city for imagery in 1910. This time he found visual symbols for both the modernity and the dynamic quality of the city in its harbors, structures, ships and aircraft.

Another Secessionist who found New York captivating was Alvin Langdon Coburn. More than any other pictorial photographer of his time, Coburn articulated how photography, as the most modern visual medium, was exactly suited to capture the evanescent quality of the modern city.<sup>8</sup> Photographing in New York in 1910 and 1911, Coburn sought unusual angles and configurations, as in House of a Thousand Windows (Fig. 3), to express his sense of the replication of anonymous activity in the city. As Sadakichi Hartmann had pointed out in 1904, Coburn was by far the most avant-garde photographer working in the United States at the time.<sup>9</sup> A similar aesthetic approach characterized the photographs

made between 1910 and 1912 by Karl Struss, a younger member of the Secession who had been Clarence White's pupil and later became his associate. Both Coburn and Struss communicated the tempo and appearance of urban street life (Fig. 4) without expressing the compassion that moved a photographer like Lewis Hine.

Although the Secession lingered on in name until 1917, when both 291 and Camera Work were terminated, Stieglitz was convinced by 1912 that nothing new would be forthcoming from its ranks. In that year, Kasebier resigned, perhaps sensing Stieglitz's opinion of her as a "regular commercial factory."<sup>10</sup> With regard to White, Stieglitz felt that a lack of intellectual growth had hampered his development as a photographer and he now also found Coburn's work superficial. Of the general picture in 1912, he wrote: "As far as photography in the pictorial line, I don't see any growth anywhere."<sup>11</sup> At the opposite end of the aesthetic spectrum, Frank P. Fraprie, editor of American Photography made the same observation but expressed the hope that "a new outburst of activity will re-awaken public interest in our art."<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, between 1913 and 1916, several Secessionists did attempt to revitalize the pictorial movement with exhibitions, publications and finally, the formation of the Pictorial Photographers of America. In 1913, realizing that

Stieglitz would no longer open the pages of Camera Work to their images, they issued Platinum Print--A Journal of Personal Expression. The first issue featured work by Coburn, Struss, Paul Anderson and Edward Dickson; the second included an article by Max Weber entitled "The Filling of Space". By mid-1915 the journal had changed its name to Photo-Graphic Art, shortly after which it ceased publication. The group involved in this venture were strange bed-fellows with divergent aesthetic ideas; it is understandable that they could not maintain the same enterprise for long.

By 1913 Stieglitz had completely disassociated himself from his former friends in the Secessionist movement. Despite an article in Camera Work in 1910 assuring readers that the magazine and gallery were still devoted to supporting photography,<sup>13</sup> only three photographic exhibitions were mounted at 291 between 1910 and 1913. One was the work of Steichen, whom Stieglitz still regarded with affection, a second featured the photographs of Baron De Meyer, who, in Stieglitz's eye "had no pretensions to what he isn't,"<sup>14</sup> and the third, on view during the Armory Show, was of his own work.

Instead of photography, Stieglitz promoted new ideas and movements in other visual arts. Believing these to be

the ideas of the future, and realizing that they had few adherents in photography, he turned the gallery and publication over to the support of artists whose work embodied the modern spirit. It is doubtful whether he would have had either the contacts or the vision to conduct this campaign without the help of Steichen.<sup>15</sup> Together they prepared the way for the movements and artists whom the Armory Show was to display to fuller advantage. Stieglitz was fully aware of the seminal role of the gallery, writing in 1913 that "the big International Exhibition . . . was really the outcome of work going on at 291 for many years."<sup>16</sup>

Indications of new directions in photography appeared in organs outside the Photo-Secession and pictorialism. Long before the Armory Show, a plea for straight photography had been voiced in an unsigned review of Coburn's exhibition in 1909, which held that "the nearer he gets to straight photography, the better he gets."<sup>17</sup> Dan Dunlop, a Scottish photographer, posed the question: "Can a straight print from a straight negative be art?" in a 1912 article in Photo-Era and answered with an emphatic yes.<sup>18</sup> A number of articles in the photographic press were concerned with street photography, including one with that exact title in the journal of the Camera Club.<sup>19</sup> In its blurb for a photographic contest on the subject "Newsboys", the editors of Camera

magazine urged contestants to aim for straight realism.<sup>20</sup> For the first time in 1911, Photograms of the Year, the British pictorial annual, reproduced seven urban scenes, including one each by Stieglitz and Coburn. Somewhat further afield, but germane nevertheless, was the appearance of a number of articles in American journals giving instruction for photographing machinery.<sup>21</sup> Although aimed at professional photographers, their appearance indicates growing consciousness of new subject matter.

Another significant factor in returning photography to realism was the rise of photo-journalism and social photography during the first decade. Photographers working in these capacities created images which often seemed more expressive of the pulse and tenor of modern life than the images emanating from the Secession. These works were not hung in art galleries, although a number were shown at national and international expositions.<sup>22</sup> They were visible mainly in reproduction in the popular and special interest press. The kind of realism, and the straight approach being demanded towards the end of the first decade was characteristic of the work of Frances Benjamin Johnston, Lewis W. Hine and Arthur Hewitt, who were among the outstanding photo-journalists of the period.

The conception that photography might provide a

truthful witness to social conditions had emerged at about the same time that Stieglitz, returning to New York, realized its potential as an expressive art medium. Towards the end of the 1880's, advances in printing technology made it possible for Jacob A. Riis to envision using the camera to create straight images of deplorable living conditions (Fig.5). He published How The Other Half Lives and numerous other works, creating a genre of photography known as "documentary". At the turn of the century, Johnston, who had photographed factory workers in Massachusetts (Fig. 6) and miners in Pennsylvania fourteen years earlier, documented educational activities at Hampton Institute (Fig. 7). Her approach was as contrived as that of many pictorialists in that she carefully composed and lighted the students in their settings to create a feeling of the harmonious and orderly life for which Hampton was preparation. Although Johnston was herself a member of the Secession, this kind of work was inadmissable as 'art' because it was made to reveal social conditions rather than to be personally expressive.

At about the same time that Lewis Hine took the Ethical Culture School photography club, Strand included, to the Little Galleries, he became involved with photographing for a pioneer social document, The Pittsburgh

Survey. This experience convinced Hine to leave teaching and use the camera to redress social ills. Hine had photographed immigrants at Ellis Island (Fig. 8) entering the United States to attain happier and more secure lives; by following them into the Lower East Side and the ghettos of Pittsburgh and Chicago (Fig. 9) he realized that the camera might speak for their unfulfilled dreams. As a teacher he had been interested in the potential of the young; now he focussed on the effect of exploitative work on children. Although he paid little attention to complicated photographic processes, Hine was as aware as pictorialists that a good photograph was more than merely a representation of an object. However, Hine did believe that

the highest aim of artists is to have something to relate and to know how to select the right things to reproduce that story by accenting the important parts and minimizing the effects of the unimportant factors.

23

The documentary character of the work of Riis, Hine and Johnston (in the Hampton Album, mainly) derives from the fact that these photographers had an emotional investment in their subject matter. Their beliefs, every bit as passionately held as Stieglitz's or White's were unusual in the photo-journalism of that period, or of any period

for that matter. A more common attitude is apparent in the work of Arthur Hewitt, whose images (Fig. 10) appeared often in the popular press during the decade. Hewitt had little use for Secessionist aesthetics,<sup>24</sup> but his images indicate that he had a fresh and interesting eye that was as aware of bold design as Coburn's. Despite their negligible emotional content, the unusual angles and daring cropping in Hewitt's work forecast the emphasis on design that was to characterize much art photography in the next decades.

The unsettled nature of the art world between 1910 and 1914 reflected changes in the intellectual and social temper of the times. Nineteen-fourteen brought to an end a period that had begun with hope, optimism and the belief in an orderly, democratic, peaceable, inevitable progress toward a richer American civilization. In politics and the social sphere, the period had been characterized by the activities of the Reform movement--muckraking journalism, progressive education, settlement house programs and the rise of labor and socialist political activities. Its literary voices had been Stephen Crane, Floyd Dell, Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris and Upton Sinclair. In the visual arts, the painters of the New York realist group--the 'ash can' artists--took as their theme the

vitality and humanism of the times, while Stieglitz and the Secessionists and Hine and the photo-journalists gave photographic expression to the optimistic expectations of the "confident years".<sup>25</sup>

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 1

1. Mary Fanton Roberts (Giles Edgerton), "The Younger American Painters: Are They Creating a National Art?" The Craftsman 13 (February 1908):523, remarked that "Either America may have an art of her own, as the eight young men at the Macbeth Gallery believe, or she may copy Burne-Jones and Secessionist landscapes."
2. Clarence H. White, whose work suggested Whistler and tonalism, joined with modernists Coburn and Struss to publish Platinum Print in 1913; three years later they organized the Pictorial Photographers of America.
3. Joseph T. Keiley, "The Philadelphia Salon," Camera Notes 2 (January 1899):113-132; "The Members' Exhibition at the Little Galleries," Camera Work 21(January 1908): 47; "Society News," American Photography 2(January 1908):51.
4. According to J. Nilsen Laurvik, "New Tendencies in American Art," Camera Work 22(April 1908):33-34, "For the first time pictorial photography was shown on a level with paintings and etchings." A dissenting voice was that of John Sloan, who called the show "a mixup. My etchings are hung atop photographs, to make a point for art 'phuzzygraphy' I suppose." Bruce St. John, ed. John Sloan's New York Scene (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p.180.
5. Sadakichi Hartmann, "The St. Louis World's Fair Photographer's Impressions," Photographic Times Bulletin 36(August 1904):488, remarked that "Even Stieglitz's famous 'Winter on Fifth Avenue' shows pencil marks on the snow most glaringly. . . . the pictorialists, not only Stieglitz and his clan, have gone mad on the art question."
6. "The Albright Exhibition," American Photography 4 (August 1910):476.
7. F. Austin Lidbury, "Some Impressions of the Buffalo Exhibition," American Photography 4(December 1910): 681. On the other hand, Sadakichi Hartmann, "The International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography--Albright Art Gallery," Photographic Journal of America 48(January 1911):4, found White's room "a rare treat for the connoisseur."

8. In J.J. Firebaugh, "Coburn, Henry James's Photographer," American Quarterly 7(1955):224, Coburn is quoted as follows:  
 "As I steamed up New York harbor, I felt the kinship of mind that could produce those magnificent Martian-like monsters, the suspension bridges. . . . the work of both the bridge builder and the photographer owes its existence to man's conquest over nature."
  
9. Sadakichi Hartmann (Sidney Allan), "The Exhibition of the Photo-Secession," Photographic Times Bulletin 36(March 1904):37, noted that Coburn "seems to have a natural gift for line and space composition, and has solved various pictorial problems, which even would set a Stieglitz or a Steichen thinking."
  
10. Alfred Stieglitz to R.C. Bayley, 29 April 1912, Alfred Stieglitz Archives, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn., hereafter referred to as ASA/YU.
  
11. Ibid.
  
12. Frank P. Fraprie, "The Eighth American Salon," American Photography 6(January 1912):10.
  
13. Paul B. Haviland, "The Photo-Secession and Photography," Camera Work 31(July 1910):42. See also Alfred Stieglitz, "To Readers of American Photography," American Photography 4(January 1910):56.
  
14. Alfred Stieglitz to R.C. Bayley, 11 December 1913 re De Meyer; 15 April 1913 re Steichen, ASA/YU.
  
15. Although Steichen was a generating force in the formation of the Little Galleries (291), he was still undecided between painting and photography during the first decade. Up until 1914 he spent considerable time in France where he was especially important in introducing ideas and personalities in modern French art to Stieglitz.
  
16. Alfred Stieglitz to Mr. Schumacher, 7 April 1913, ASA/YU.

17. "A.L. Coburn Exhibition at 291 Gallery," Photographic Journal of America 46(February 1909):96.
18. Dan Dunlop, "A Plea for Straight Photography," Photo-Era 28(May 1912):208. See also T.J. Whittaker, "Some Recent Work in Artistic Photography," Arts and Decoration 2(September 1912):396-97; David J. Cook, "Straight Photography," Photo-Era 28(June 1912):256-57; 29(July 1912):3-6.
19. "Street Photography," Bulletin of Photography 2 (January 1908):102; C.D. Boyd, "Street Photography," Photoisms 2 (September 1911):5-7. See also Harry A. Brodine, "Street Scenes," Photographic Times 45(February 1913):49-53; Allen E. Churchill, "Photography Among the City Byways," Photo-Era 33(October 1914)164-69.
20. "Newsboys," The Camera 12(June 1909):207: "What we want is real genre pictures plainly showing the boys in action."
21. e.g., "Photographing Machinery in Position," Photographic Journal of America 48(March 1911):129-30; "Engineering Photography," American Photography 10 (August 1916):412-421.
22. According to Pete Daniel and raymond Smock, A Talent for Detail: The Photographs of Frances Benjamin Johnston (New York: Harmony Books, 1974) p. 87, Johnston's photographs of Washington, D.C. schools were shown at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Hine's photographs were displayed in San Diego and San Francisco in 1915. Hewitt's work was shown at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904.
23. Lewis W. Hine, "The Silhouette in Photography," Photographic Times 38(November 1906):490.
24. Arthur Hewitt and Alfred Stieglitz, "Irreconcilable Positions--A Letter and the Reply," Camera Notes 5 (January 1902):217-18.
25. Van Wyck Brooks, The Confident Years: 1885-1915 (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1952).

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND: 1890-1915

Paul Strand's early outlook was conditioned by the particular flavor of New York City in the first decade of the twentieth century. The year of Strand's birth, 1890, is widely regarded as the terminal date of American continental expansion. From that time, cities, especially Chicago and New York, became the effective centers of national wealth and power. They were the hubs of significant political, intellectual and artistic activities, attracting creative individuals from the farms and small towns. In the same year--1890--Ellis Island, the port of entry for and the future symbol of the great European immigration to the United States, was established. By 1900, the impoverished conditions of urban immigrants had become the focus of the Settlement House movement and Reform policies. This movement was centered in New York and Chicago and added still further to the stimulating character of urban life at the time.

Strand was born into a relatively comfortable middle class family in New York City on October 16, 1890. He was

of Bohemian Jewish descent, his grandparents having come to the United States from Bohemia in the 1840's. Three years after Strand's birth the household settled into a brownstone building on West 83rd Street near Riverside Drive which remained Strand's home for nearly forty years.<sup>2</sup> Strand was the only child in an extended family which included his maternal grandparents, Catherine and Ephraim Arnstein, a maternal aunt, Frances Arnstein, and his mother and father, Matilda and Jacob Strand. They maintained close ties with the family of Nathaniel Myers, a lawyer for the United States Rubber company who had married Matilda's sister Josie. While not as affluent as the Meyers, the Strands and Arnsteins occupied the entire brownstone and enjoyed the services of household help. Extra amenities, including summer vacations at Bay Shore, Long Island and gifts such as cameras, were made possible by the generosity of the Meyers family.

Growing up in a household dominated by female relatives, including a strong-willed grandmother,<sup>3</sup> may have contributed to the stubbornness and reserve that characterized Strand throughout his life. His mother was a woman of somewhat moody disposition, frustrated by her inability to pursue a career in singing due to the early onset of deafness and at loose ends in a household run by her mother.

A factor contributing to her moroseness may have been Matilda Strand's envy of the more affluent members of her family; Strand later recalled that she found it difficult to smile.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, she supported Strand in his choice of career and respected his judgment, as her letters to him in the Army indicate. She died in 1919 from pneumonia, caught while visiting Strand in Minnesota.

Frances Arnstein, known to the family as 'Weentie', was one of the first women to be professionally involved in the kindergarten movement in New York City. She lived in the 83rd Street brownstone until her death in 1952. Strand both respected and was fond of her and took his concern for her welfare as an obligation. He was genuinely fond of Josie Arnstein Meyers as well, while this childless aunt appears to have catered to him during his lifetime and settled a financially helpful gift on him when she died in 1923.

Between Strand and his father there existed an exceptional relationship based on affection and trust (and perhaps alliance against the women of the household). Jacob Strand was for many years a salesman, first of French clocks and then of imported German enamelware. He traveled frequently up until Matilda's death, after which he opened a small manufacturing business in New York. Through wise

management and sound investments he was enabled to live comfortably and eventually to offer occasional financial aid to his son's associates at the Intimate Gallery and An American Place.

The senior Strand's attitude toward his son is first revealed in a letter addressed to the infant in 1891. Rather surprisingly, he wrote him as an equal, urging him to eat, sleep, grow strong, to be considerate of his mother and grandparents and "to keep right on this path and even improve as you go along the walk of life".<sup>5</sup> Throughout his life, the elder Strand's sense of humor made him impatient with the ceremonials and appearances which the Arnstein women considered proper middle class behaviour. He was one of his son's strongest advocates and supported Strand's interest in photography despite the fact that it was not an acceptable bourgeois career.<sup>6</sup>

According to Strand's recollection, his was a fairly normal middle-class city childhood. In addition to the usual activities--skating, cycling, playing in Riverside Drive park--there were rounds of familial events, such as weekly Sunday dinner with the Meyers family and excursions to entertainments with Josie Meyers, who seems to have been hostess to visiting relatives. There was little religious observance among the Strands, Arnsteins and Meyers, al-

though the latter were members of the Ethical Culture Society. By the first decade, their ethnic origins had been largely erased and their attitudes were those of many of the enlightened Jewish bourgeoisie of the late Victorian era--a mixture of well-bred civility and interest in ethical behavior and social betterment.

Strand's first school experience was in the New York Public School system. After third grade he was transferred to another public school before being enrolled in 1904 at the Ethical Culture School on 63rd Street and Central Park West. Strand credited the move, which necessitated some financial sacrifice, to his parents' alarm over the rough character of the West Side schools bordering 'Hell's Kitchen'.<sup>7</sup> The change must also have represented a way for Matilda Strand to maintain middle class parity with her more affluent acquaintances.

The education offered at the Ethical Culture School had considerable effect on Strand's future ideas and was directly responsible for introducing him to photography. Organized originally in 1878 as a workingmen's school, the institution still offered an innovative and progressive curriculum, although by 1904 its student body was mainly middle-class and largely Jewish.<sup>8</sup> With its concern for developing both intellectual and manual capacities, serious

courses in craft skills, such as shop work, printing and mold making, as well as language arts, mathematics and science were given. The social and moral flavor of Ethical Culture education had been established by Felix Adler, who had studied for the rabbinate and taught oriental languages before he founded the humanist religion, Ethical Culture, in 1876. It stressed the worth, dignity and creativity of the individual; the program was designed to foster these qualities by example as well as by precept.

Strand was fortunate that his attendance at ECS coincided with Lewis W. Hine's tenure at the school. Hine had been brought East in 1901 by a new Principal, Frank A. Manny, to teach nature studies and geography. Around 1903 he was given a camera in order to make records of school activities and because Manny wished to explore the medium's potential in education. In order to convince school authorities of the value of a photography class, Hine worked out a program for integrating the new subject into the curriculum, visited 291 with ECS personnel and arranged for a Secessionist exhibition to be held at the school.<sup>9</sup>

Hine started an after-school club and later an accredited class, probably the first in a New York secondary school. At ECS, Hine's own photographs were used in slide talks in an effort to bridge the gap between the classroom

and the world outside. It was hoped that the students would learn to respect strangers and immigrants when their photographic likenesses stressed their humanity rather than their oddity. Hine took students on photographic trips for similar reasons--to engender respect for, as well as visual awareness of, the world around them through their experiences with the camera.

Hine's interest in social photography is often considered antithetical to Strand's concern with art photography and as a result, little attention has been paid to his influence on the young Strand.<sup>10</sup> Despite their stylistic differences, however, Hine's ideas about photography, expressed in articles written while Strand was still a student, suggest common attitudes that have been generally overlooked.<sup>11</sup> Hine emphasized that the entire photographic process achieved important educational goals because photography appealed to the visual sense and sharpened perception. It made students aware of the salient features of their surroundings, rather than seeing haphazardly. Taking photographs required a "systematic attempt" by students to record what was seen and induced them to organize their experience and exercise judgment in selecting what was significant. Darkroom activity promoted discipline and good working habits without which one could not expect accept-

able results. In Hine's view, however, these practical considerations were less important even than photography's service to art. His approach to the question of composition is worth noting because it is descriptive of Strand's attitude as well:

The recognition of what is good composition in art never becomes so vital as when one is able to select from the infinite variety of objects about some bit that is pleasing to the eye, and then transfers to the photograph the lines and groups in the form of an idea of composition. This sharpening of the vision to a better appreciation of the beauties about one I consider the best fruit of the whole work. When children realize, even to a limited extent, that success cannot be attained by snapping at everything, but by patient, careful, orderly work, they have taken an important step. . . .

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Throughout his career, Strand maintained that photography enabled him to explore the shapes and structures of the objective world in order to give visual form to their complexity. Changing Hine's search for beauty to a pursuit of truth, he wrote that

the true artist, like the true scientist, is a researcher using materials and techniques to dig into the truth and meaning of the world. . . . what he creates, or better perhaps brings back, are the objective results of his explorations.

13

Strand invariably selected shapes, patterns, forms and textures that revealed the "salient" features of the object photographed. He regarded the environment as a challenge that would yield its secrets to the camera provided the

photographer exercised selective judgment. His approach to subject matter was clearly systematic, especially in his later work. His attitude toward darkroom work reflects Hine's ideas as surely as it does Stieglitz's. From the first, Strand insisted that processing--developing and printing--was an integral part of seeing and realizing. Certainly Strand would have had no problem with Hine's dictum that "in the last analysis good photography is a question of art."

An evaluation of Hine's influence on Strand should take into account the fact that Strand appears to have been a student in both Hine's class and club when he was seventeen years old. This involved about nine months of weekly contact at the very beginning of Strand's involvement with photography. The weekly sessions consisted of a discussion of student examples followed by talks on plates, lenses, enlarging and flashlight photography. Club members had free access to the ECS darkroom and Hine arranged exhibitions and trips.<sup>15</sup>

For many years, Strand himself did not regard his ECS experiences as especially influential but in 1965 he credited Hine with being a decisive factor in his decision to become a photographer.<sup>16</sup> Although their paths had crossed occasionally after graduation, Strand seems to have

been unaware of the caliber of Hine's work or its role in social reform during the second decade; at the same time, Hine found his former pupil's work incomprehensible.<sup>17</sup>

While in later years Strand began to reappraise Hine's work, he never fully acknowledged the influences on his own career of either the imagery or the ideas of his teacher.

Charles Caffin may have been another influence during Strand's student days at ECS. The author of Photography as a Fine Art taught Art Appreciation in 1907 and 1908, discussing the work of contemporary artists as well as historical figures. From Strand's reaction to examples of visual art shortly after he graduated, it is not clear whether he actually became aware of "pictorial abstraction" in Caffin's class;<sup>18</sup> what he did learn was to look at the image and to remember what he saw. Strand was not particularly active in ECS, especially in his senior year when he began to feel that the institution was no more 'ethically' run than other schools. He participated in athletic events, mainly baseball, basketball and gymnastics and was on the Exhibit committee. Among those he met at the school who were to remain friends for long periods were Herbert Seligmann and Harold Greengard. His wife to be, Rebecca Salsbury, was a member of the class of 1911, but it is unlikely that they were more than acquaintances during

Strand's attendance.

On many occasions during his life, Strand attributed his choice of career to an exhilarating afternoon spent at the gallery 291 in 1907.<sup>19</sup> The visit had been arranged by Hine in either November or December for members of the photography club, which included Strand. The exhibition on view--the work of Photo-Secession Members--afforded the young Strand the opportunity to see the best in pictorial photography of the day in the photographs of Clarence White, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Frank Eugene, Gertrude Kasebier, Eduard Steichen and Alfred Stieglitz. Although the exhibition had been criticized by Joseph T. Keiley for "its curious placidity and its unobtrusiveness of creative imagination," Strand regarded it as opening up a new world. He later recalled that he noted a variety of materials, techniques and approaches, ranging from straight platinum prints to heavily manipulated pigment prints, which impressed him with the artistic possibilities of the medium.<sup>21</sup> At the time he could also have seen the first large exhibition of autochrome color transparencies by Stieglitz, Steichen, Eugene and White but he never mentioned this aspect of the visit. And although he later claimed that the exhibition had introduced him to the work of Julia Margaret Cameron and David Octavius Hill, these nineteenth century British

photographers were not included in the Secessionist exhibition of 1907 nor in any subsequent 291 show. Nor does it seem likely that they were included in the loan exhibition at ECS.

Strand began to visit other 291 and pictorialist exhibitions and he became acquainted with Camera Work at the same time. The immediate result of his enthusiasm for the kind of photography he saw appears to have been his decision to enroll in Hine's accredited photography class in the spring of 1908. In addition, he began to think about a place to continue darkroom work after ECS facilities would no longer be available. This problem was solved when he joined the Camera Club of New York sometime in early 1909.

After graduation that year, when Strand decided to devote himself seriously to photography, the Camera Club became his 'home'. At the same time, he regarded photography as an activity he might pursue after working hours in order to become more proficient in the medium. Accordingly, he worked in the family enamelware business for about a year and spent his free time taking pictures and learning as much as possible about techniques and processing at the Club, which was conveniently located on West 68th Street. Young and middle-aged amateurs from many professions used the Club darkrooms and exchanged experiences and technical

know-how. By watching, Strand learned sophisticated procedures including platinum and pigment printing and the technique for making enlarged copy negatives. He heard of tricks and short-cuts, such as attaching a prism to a lens to photograph at an angle. The club charged fifty dollars a year for unrestricted use of the darkrooms and other facilities. Among the most important of these was a large library of photography books which Strand consulted frequently.<sup>23</sup> Included were American and European photographic journals and over one thousand books on the artistic and scientific aspects of photography; Strand found the manuals on gum printing of particular use.

Strand's seriousness and ability were soon recognized; the year after he joined he was asked to serve on the print committee for the Annual Exhibition. He was pleased to have his own work hung in the Annual Members Print Exhibition of 1910, where a portrait of his mother was singled out for comment in American Photography.<sup>24</sup> The following year, a photograph he had taken at Versailles during a brief European trip received third prize in a Club competition and was reproduced in the July issue of the club journal, Photoisms, shortly after he had developed and processed it in the Club darkroom. The next month, a second Strand photograph was reproduced, an image of two

horses drinking from the fountain in front of the Plaza hotel. This print (Fig. 11), bought by a club member, was the first work that Strand sold.<sup>25</sup>

Strand remained a member of the Club until 1932, but by the First World War he had already begun to have little respect for the members' ideas and after his return from the Army, he came into direct conflict with the Board of Directors, a situation which will be discussed presently. One dividend of membership was his friendship with Kurt Baasch, a young businessman who, like Strand, realized that photography could be more than a hobbyist's activity. Baasch's work never achieved the high level to which he aspired, but he and Strand became lifelong friends nevertheless.

While Strand became to regard his association with the Camera Club as one of convenience and practicality only, there is no question that in the beginning he enthusiastically accepted the pictorial standards and ideas shared by most club members. This is apparent both from the kinds of photographs he made and the nature of his activities at the club. The Temple of Love (Fig. 12), the Versailles image mentioned above, was a soft-focus gum print made with five printings. In 1912 he entered this work in the London Salon, the most prestigious non-Secessionist pictorial ex-

hibition, where it received Honorable Mention. The following description of the picture, now retitled The Garden of Dreams, suggests that its pictorial qualities had little in common with his later direct and 'brutal' approach:

"The Garden of Dreams" by Paul Strand, with its temple and still waters, partakes of the romance of the rococo, and as such is entirely successful. <sup>26</sup>

During this period, Strand showed his work to both Clarence White and Gertrude Käsebier for criticism, and while he later felt that they had little to offer, his selection of the two least experimental members of the Photo-Secession as mentors suggests his own youthful conservatism at this time.

The images Strand made during his early association with the Camera Club were not especially remarkable in regard to subject matter or point of view, although in composition and technique they demonstrated a level of competence unusual in a young photographer. Like the majority of pictorialists both in and out of the Secession, Strand used a soft-focus lens (on an Adams Identio and later an Ensign camera). This produced an image that in Strand's words "demonstrates what this particular lens does best--flattens and mushifies."<sup>27</sup> In retrospect Strand felt that this was not an unjustifiable way to begin because it enabled the young photographer to pull things together and create a

pictorial unity without having to deal with textures and patterns at the same time.

At the time, indistinction was considered an important means by which art photographers could differentiate their products from the "sharp, shrewish acidity of your ordinary cabinet photograph,"<sup>28</sup> as Coburn put it. Between 1910 and 1914 Strand's subjects were mainly genteel genre scenes made in Central Park, along Riverside Drive or on the streets near his home in a soft manner (Fig. 13). He made a few portraits of family and close friends and some landscapes at Bay Shore and at Twin Lakes, Connecticut (Fig. 14). A large group of scenic images were made in Europe in March and April of 1911.<sup>29</sup>

The European visit occurred after the family enamel-ware business was sold and Strand was out of a job. Experiencing difficulty finding acceptable work, he decided to spend his entire savings on a European 'tour'. Behind this abruptly conceived and executed venture--within a week of deciding he had sailed--there may have been the vague idea that artistic photographs of tourist attractions might prove saleable. Strand took along an Adams Identoscope Camera, an Identoscope and film. In the months following his return, he processed the film at the Club and hand colored a number of prints which he gave to a friend, Nathaniel Shaw,

to sell abroad. Several works from Europe, which he had enlarged at the Club, were included in his first one person exhibition at 291.

The 1911 trip covered twenty-five cities in fifty-three days. It included a great deal of country walking, sightseeing, museum visits and socializing, in addition to photographing. The itinerary and the descriptions in letters to the family suggest that the twenty-year old Strand had boundless energy and remarkable maturity. He was helpful and agreeable to his travelling companions--all strangers, and was able to accommodate himself to changes in plans and to go off on his own when necessary. He was photographically active from the very first, taking pictures in the first port of call, Gibraltar and Algiers. When he reached Rome, eight days after embarking, he had made nearly five dozen exposures.<sup>30</sup> In addition to well known sites, he searched for picturesque landscape views, sometimes asking locals where the best might be found (Fig. 15). Although at the time he may have selected his subjects in the light of possible sales value, the trip turned out to be a learning experience in photography. He discovered some of the things for which the medium was not suited--among them, pastoral scenes of fleecy sheep taken near Oxford.

After his return, Strand put in a brief period of

boring office work at an insurance company before he decided definitely to make his living in photography. The hand-colored prints which Shaw was trying to sell in Europe were well received, but he wrote that the British considered them too expensive to appeal to American tourists who were the only buyers abroad.<sup>31</sup> Little financial gain resulted from the venture but it may have suggested Strand's next project. Sometime at the beginning of 1912 he conceived of selling photographs of university buildings to college seniors as souvenirs. This scheme was more successful.<sup>32</sup> Strand pursued it for about five years, at first in the East Coast Ivy League colleges and later in the Middle and Far West.

The photographs were sold through a 'reliable' fraternity brother, contacted by Strand upon arriving at a campus to make the exposures. The developing and printing, on platinum paper, were done at the Camera Club, and the hand-coloring was done at the Strand home by a group of young women employed occasionally for the purpose. Although a number of the college photographs have turned up, it is difficult to estimate how many were made. Strand believed that he had never collected more than six hundred dollars from the enterprise.<sup>33</sup> Financially, he was fortunate that board and lodging were always available in the family home

and his extra income paid for photographic materials, equipment, travel and entertainments such as concerts and the opera. When he traveled, it was in comfort, if not in high style.

In April 1915, Strand made a real effort to expand the college business in an extensive trip through the United States.<sup>34</sup> Among the universities he visited were Tulane, Baylor, Stanford, Grinnell and state institutions in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He took advantage of the cross country itinerary to stop at Clarence White's hometown of Newark, Ohio and at scenic attractions such as the Grand Canyon (Fig. 16), where he photographed the landscape in a manner reminiscent of Coburn's images of the same subject (Fig. 17). In California, Strand toured and photographed the two West Coast Expositions in San Diego and San Francisco and he made a number of exposures in various cities en route including New Orleans, which appealed to him as a pictorial place. However, the photographs he made there reveal an eye for the aesthetics of the commonplace rather than the picturesque (Fig. 18). In this regard, his comment about the Texas landscape (Fig. 19) reveals his growing interest in objective reality:

Texas is interesting. The country is flat. But the way the monotonous plain is broken by shacks and little white houses is quite fascinating. Things become in-

teresting as soon as the human element enters in. 35

Strand found the architecture of the San Diego Exposition dull and imitative, and he summed up his general reaction to southern California in a card to "dear Mr. Stieglitz: Everything is extremely American out here--You know what that means."<sup>36</sup> San Francisco proved more congenial, for on his arrival he solicited a visit with the West Coast Secessionist, Annie W. Brigman. He spent a pleasant afternoon and found the artistry of her house and table noteworthy but did not mention her work. After a sight-seeing excursion through the Canadian Rockies, he returned to the business of making university photographs, establishing contacts in Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa. At the end of May he was back in New York to develop and print the orders for images of college buildings.

It is interesting to speculate on the art Strand might have seen during his trip. His letters home, full of travel details, make no mention of museums. Other than Japanese prints at the San Francisco Fair, there are no comments on either photographs or other works of art. Possibly Strand felt that his family was not interested, but his 1911 letters described visits to Italian museums. There is no way of knowing if he saw the Marin room or the Italian Futurists at San Francisco. Although Lewis Hine's photo-

graphs were displayed at both Fairs, it is unlikely that Strand would have examined the National Child Labor Committee display. Pictorial photography was not represented in the San Francisco Fair Fine Arts Pavilion which Strand photographed and no doubt visited, a fact that prompted Stieglitz's refusal to send Secessionist work. However, West Coast Secessionists not only participated but won top prizes. If Strand saw any of these examples, he did not mention them in letters home.

Between 1913 and 1915, when Strand was attempting to get his bearings both economically and aesthetically, expressive photography in general also was passing through an unsettling period. Aside from Strand, photographers including Coburn, Stieglitz, Steichen and Struss were attempting to assimilate the current of modernism of which they had become aware through 291 and the Armory Show. Pictorialism had run its course, despite sporadic exhibitions and the publication of Platinum Print, mentioned earlier. On the other hand, no photographer had yet appeared during this period to infuse cubist and futurist form with a sense of real immediacy, although Coburn seemed headed in that direction for a while. As Stieglitz noted not long after the Armory Show:

Over here there is a great deal of photography being

done. The average is fair, but there are no photog- 37  
raphers I know who are doing real personal work.

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 2

1. Calvin Tomkins, "Profile," Paul Strand: Sixty Years of Photographs (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, Inc., 1976), p. 17. Jacob Strand changed the family name from Stransky shortly before his son's birth.
2. The house at 314 West 83 Street was purchased for Catherine and Ephraim Arnstein by Nathaniel Meyers and was left to Harriet Arnstein after Josie Arnstein Meyers died in 1924. After Strand married Rebecca Salsbury in 1922, they occupied a room on the third floor and took meals with the family, an arrangement that obtained until they moved to the West.
3. Ephraim Arnstein died before Strand was ten years old; according to the latter, he and his grandfather barely spoke to each other. Interview with Paul Strand, 21 January 1976, New York City, hereafter designated NYC.
4. Interview with Paul Strand, 17 March 1975, NYC on occasion when he unpacked a number of early photographs including one of his mother.
5. Jacob Strand to Paul Strand, 22 February 1891, Paul Strand Archive, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, hereafter referred to as PSA/CCP.
6. Strand dedicated Paul Strand: A Retrospective Monograph, The Years 1915-1968, 2 vols. (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, Inc., in connection with the Philadelphia Museum, Philadelphia, Penna., 1971) to his father, noting that his "faith in my work never faltered."
7. Tomkins, "Profile," p. 17.
8. In 1904, the present building was opened on 65 Street facing Central Park. Previously the school had been on West 59 Street in a working class neighborhood known as 'Hell's Kitchen'.
9. Lewis W. Hine to Alfred Stieglitz, 14 December 1906, ASA/YU: "I am planning to bring our Superintendent and several teachers. . . . we are trying to introduce the camera work into our high school as a regular course." See also Frank A. Manny to Lewis W. Hine, n.d.

[1939], Elizabeth McCausland Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, New York for Hine's use of photography in education. The "Loan Exhibition of Secessionist Photography" was arranged as part of the end term activities at ECS in 1907; see Stieglitz Scrapbook, ASA/YU. (My thanks to Elizabeth Pollock, Research Assistant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for calling this exhibition to my attention.)

10. William Innes Homer, Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977), p. 244, merely quotes Strand as saying that "Hine's greatest contribution . . . was to take the class to 291."
11. The following articles by Lewis Hine appeared while Strand was a student: "The School in the Park," Outlook 83 (July 28, 1906):712-18; "The School Camera," Elementary School Teacher 6 (March 1906):343-47; "The Silhouette in Photography," Photographic Times 38 (November 1906):488-90; "Photography in the School," Photographic Times 40 (August 1908):227-32.
12. Hine, "The School in the Park," p. 717. cf., Alfred Stieglitz, "Simplicity in Composition," The Modern Way of Picture Making (Rochester, N.Y.: Eastman Kodak Co., rev. ed., 1907) p. 16: "Exclude everything that is unessential to a clear statement of the dominant underlying idea."
13. Paul Strand, "Letter to the Editor," The Photographic Journal (London) 103 (July 1963):216.
14. Hine, "Photography in the School," p. 230.
15. Information about the Camera Club at ECS from the student magazine Inklings, February 1906; May 1907; November 1907; November 1908. (My thanks to Danielle Kruger for arranging the use of this material.) For the Spring Term, 1908, Strand received the grade A- for work in Hine's photography class. Transcript given the author by Strand in 1975.
16. "Paul Strand," Current Biography 26 (July 1965):40.
17. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, n.d. [1920], ASA/YU: "Lewis Hine, my first teacher in photography at school

was here. . . . He amused me much by saying that he thought my work would offer much to a psychoanalyst." Strand claimed to have first realized the quality of Hine's work after the Photo League reprinted Hine negatives in the early 'forties. Interview with Paul Strand, 29 May 1975 NYC.

18. Homer, Alfred Stieglitz, p. 244. Nothing in Strand's correspondence from Europe or the West indicates that he looked at modern art or was especially aware of abstract pictorial qualities in the art he mentioned seeing.
19. The importance of the visit to 291 is noted in Elizabeth McCausland, "Paul Strand," U.S.Camera 1 (February-March 1940):20; Nancy Newhall, Paul Strand (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945) p. 3; Tomkins, Sixty Years, p. 17.
20. Keiley, "The Members' Exhibition," p. 46.
21. Newhall, Paul Strand, p. 3.
22. Tomkins, Sixty Years, p. 17. It is possible also that Strand later confused the Loan Exhibition at ECS with a visit to 291. His failure to mention either the school exhibition or the autochromes is surprising.
23. Juan C. Abel, Photographic Library of the Camera Club of New York (New York: Camera Club, 1902). This library was sold in 1955 when the club was in financial straits. Strand's use of gum and carbon printing manuals established in Interview with Paul Strand, 3 May 1975, NYC.
24. "The Camera Club's Annual Members' Print Exhibition," American Photography 4 (June 1910):371, "Paul Strand shows two soft portraits made with a Smith lens, that of the artist's mother being the better in pose and composition."
25. "Versailles," reproduced in Photoisms 2 (July 1911): frontispiece; "Two Horses," reproduced in Photoisms 2 (August 1911): frontispiece; the latter purchased by Mr. Allison, Paul Strand to Mr. and Mrs. J. Strand, 19 April 1911, PSA/CCP.

26. F.C. Tilney, "The Exhibitions," Photograms of the Year 1912 (London: Hazell, Watson & Viney Ltd., 1912), p. 20.
27. Interview with Paul Strand, 16 March 1975, NYC.
28. "The Painter's New Rival--An Interview with Alvin Langdon Coburn," American Photography 2 (January 1908): 18.
29. A group of 3¼ x 4¼ inch platinum prints, one of which was hand-colored, was found in April 1978. The European images had previously been seen only in enlargement.
30. Details and itinerary of trip contained in correspondence of Paul Strand to Mr. and Mrs. J. Strand, April and May 1911, PSA/CCP.
31. Nathaniel Shaw to Paul Strand, 29 April 1912, PSA/CCP: "I've been to every shop in the American quarter. . . . They told me that if I could sell them for half a crown, the Americans might buy, at which biting sarcasm I cringed."
32. Nathaniel Shaw to Paul Strand, 11 November 1912, PSA/CCP: "It's good to know that your college scheme is 'panning' (sic) so well."
33. Interview with Paul Strand, 15 March 1975, NYC. Strand was not clear whether he had collected six hundred dollars altogether or yearly or only in the last year. Each print sold for two dollars and fifty cents.
34. Details and itinerary of trip contained in correspondence of Paul Strand to Mr. and Mrs. J. Strand, April and May 1915, PSA/CCP.
35. Paul Strand to Mr. and Mrs. J. Strand, 11 April 1915, PSA/CCP.
36. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 6 May 1915, ASA/YU.
37. Alfred Stieglitz to R.C. Bayley, 11 December 1913, ASA/YU.

## CHAPTER 3

### MODERNISM AND ABSTRACTION IN PHOTOGRAPHY

The artist's attitude to the city and the machine is an integral part of the development of Modernism in American art. Alfred Stieglitz, returning to New York as a stranger in 1890, had viewed the city as romantic experience, finding in it a wonderland of lights, forms and atmospheres. Casting his images in the photographic equivalent of tonalism, he expressed his sense of vitality and excitement as well as his feelings of isolation, through the forms of the city.<sup>1</sup> Despite his later reassessment of New York's attraction, he was constantly drawn back, experiencing a duality that eventually found glittering expression in his 'thirties images of New York architecture.

In the early twentieth century, the realist painters (also coming to New York from elsewhere) approached city subjects with a similar intent to portray the vitality of urban life. Even if New York was not exactly a bohemian paradise<sup>2</sup> it provided a safe harbor for individualists, artistic and other, at the same time that it was seen as a

social organism, responsive to individual and group efforts for improvement. Whatever their styles, painters and photographers of the first decade had focussed on the human aspect of the city even when they pictured harbors and structures. Their works acknowledged that human activity, vibrancy and variety were associated with the urban environment. By 1914, however, changes in the social and political spheres, loss of interest in Reform programs and intimations of the impending European conflict created a different perception of the metropolis. The city appeared less amenable to change, less charitable to individualism, menacing instead of promising, while its structures were beginning to be perceived as oppressive as well as invigorating. Strand's city imagery, made between 1915 and 1917, reveals these changing perceptions and is a record, as well, of the development of an appropriate style for this new vision.

Contrary to William I. Homer's notion that he "suddenly and unexpectedly appeared on the photographic scene with a group of startlingly abstract images,"<sup>3</sup> it is possible to trace the development in Strand's work from the pictorial to the expressive cubist-realist style. Two early photographs, Central Park, 1913 (Fig. 20) and Riverside Drive, 1914 (Fig. 21) are based on the orientaling

compositions in vogue among Camera Club pictorialists, even to the inclusion of a monogram. The forms are irregular and the focus, soft.<sup>4</sup> In another image of Central Park of about the same time, the combination of vertical tree, strong shadow pattern and the nurse and child suggest a different mode of seeing, which is carried even further in Morningside Park, 1914 (Fig. 22) with its pronounced geometrical emphasis. In the absence of horizon line, all these images owe something to the influence of Coburn and possibly Struss, whose work was known to Strand through Camera Work, 291 and an exhibition at the Ehrich Gallery in 1914, in which all had participated. Coburn, in particular, frequently selected photographic vantage points that enabled him to stress the patterns created by architectural elements, as in The Octopus, 1912 (Fig. 23) while Struss emulated this style in Eastside Promenade (Fig. 24) of the same year.

Nearly all of Strand's city views made shortly after 1914 were taken from above. By angling the camera downward he could compose the geometric elements of ground and structure, as in From the Viaduct (Fig. 25), Shadows-Under the El (Fig. 26) and Snow, Backyards, New York (Fig. 27). He became interested in the shapes created by shadows, giving them a hard edge suggestive of a concrete form, as in

83rd Street and West End Ave. (Fig. 28). In a number of images he contrasted the precisely edged architectural and shadow elements with the less definite and irregular forms of the people; the best known is Wall Street (Fig. 29), also made from the high vantage point--the steps of the Sub-Treasury Building.

The threatening quality apparent in this image results from the contrast between the masonry and the human forms. The strong dark verticals of the black windows, occupying the upper three-quarters of the picture space, seem to suggest the oppressive power of modern industrial society, while the fragile human shapes along the lower strip appear to scurry by, insect-like and anonymous. Although Strand claimed to have been unaware of making a political statement at the time,<sup>5</sup> Wall Street stands as the quintessential visual assertion of the relation of man to institution in modern capitalist society, even if one is unaware that the building pictured is the Morgan Trust Company Bank. Other Strand photographs of the same year, 1915--Forty-Second Street and Fifth Avenue (Fig. 30), in particular--suggest the unending, yet often purposeless, activity of urban life in the repetition of circular forms of wheels, sewer discs, carriage windows and hats. At the same time, however, one senses the photographer's excite-

ment with the perpetual motion and variety of the city.

Nearly all of the New York views made just prior to the First World War are concerned with the relationship of human to impersonal forces. With the exception of the street portraits to be discussed presently people are seen as dwarfed by either the substance or the shadow of concrete structures or as forms churning along in unspecified activity, suggesting that Strand was aware of the same machine-like forces which concerned the Futurists. Only nursemaids and infants rest and commune with each other; others are driven. One does not know what they do, why they do it or how they feel; they are merely part of the organism that is the city.

The stylistic development of Strand's work of 1915 derived from sources more significant than that of Coburn's flattened perspective mentioned above. Primary among them was Stieglitz's criticism. Early in 1915, Strand, who had been visiting 291 off and on since about 1913, brought Stieglitz several soft-focus landscapes including a view made the year before at the Meyers' home in Bay Shore (Fig. 31). Using this image as an example, Stieglitz pointed out that all substances--sky, grass, water--have their own particularity and he suggested that the all-over sameness of texture caused by shooting the scene with a

soft-focus lens wide open deprived the image of specificity and vitality.

In response to these comments, Strand began to use smaller apertures, sometimes stopping the lens down to f22, which resulted in sharper definition of form and texture. The criticism was itself a response to Stieglitz's growing perception of a new aesthetic; by transmitting it to the young Strand he enabled him to find the technical means of controlling city imagery to create a sense of dissonance rather than harmony. Besides Stieglitz, Coburn and Struss, European photographers such as Pierre Dubreuil, J. Dudley Johnston and George McKissack had been experimenting for some time with the flattened plane but due to the soft-focus, their images were still pictorial in feeling.<sup>6</sup>

Strand's awakening to the modern idiom in painting was of significance also in the creation of his new aesthetic. Despite his belief that "creative artists do . . . influence each other . . . but basically this is much less deep than the direct influence of the world in which the artist lives,"<sup>7</sup> there is little question that he was aware of developments in modern art. Toward the end of 1915 he met both Picabia and Duchamp and was already familiar with the work of Picasso and Braque, as is apparent from his images incorporating bits and pieces of lettering (Fig. 32). It was

not until 1916, however, that he began to draw more directly on the ideas of these painters and the subjects were not, at first, city landscapes. In addition to examples of work by modern French painters, abstract ideas were popularized by a small group of teachers and critics who occasionally submitted articles to American photography journals. Shortly after the Armory Show, Photo-Era reprinted an extract from Arthur W. Dow's "Composition" which stated that "the picture, the plan and the pattern are alike in the sense that each is a group of synthetically related processes."<sup>8</sup> H. Rankin Poore was another critic whose discussions of abstract composition appeared in the photographic press.

Strand's awareness of the city as subject coincided with an awakening of interest in city imagery on the part of the popular photographic press. With few exceptions, these magazines had ignored the metropolis and especially working class districts and slums as pictorial subjects, opting instead for more genteel scenes. Aside from a 1900 piece by Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Plea for the Picturesqueness of New York," articles on street or city photography had appeared only rarely. By 1914 journals were featuring essays such as "Photography Among the City Byways" which suggested that pictorialists would find the "old world types" of the Lower East Side picturesque.<sup>9</sup> A well-known picto-

rialist enumerated "The Pictorial Possibilities of New York" and indicated that since landscape imagery had exhausted itself, city scenes, including slums and markets, would awaken fresh interest.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, despite increased numbers of city images reproduced in photography magazines<sup>11</sup> and submitted to Salons and competitions, few photographers other than Strand and Stieglitz seemed able to invest urban images with significant meaning and emotion, perhaps because their approach was decorative rather than profound.

291 became Strand's new 'home' in 1916, replacing the Camera Club as the effective center of his activities. Stieglitz now offered an exhibition at the gallery and promised publication of gravure reproductions in Camera Work. Strand was made welcome to visit freely and was asked to join the Prince George luncheon crowd.<sup>12</sup> As a result, he made friends with the Stieglitz circle artists--Steichen, Hartley, Marin and Dove--and the writers, Waldo Frank and Paul Rosenfeld. These contacts increased his awareness of new trends in American art as well as his interest in contemporary ideas in literature and music. Eventually he became involved in polemical efforts to arouse support for American avant-garde artists, particularly those of the Stieglitz group. Above all, a personal relationship developed between Strand and Stieglitz that was to have a pro-

found effect on the younger photographer.

The exhibition, "Photographs of New York and Other Places by Paul Strand," was held in March 1916 at 291, concurrent with the "Forum Exhibition of Modern American Art" at the Anderson Galleries. It included many New York views, among them Wall Street (Fig. 29), Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street (Fig. 30) (made from the window of the Modern Gallery) and City Hall Park, several European scenes and a number from the cross-country trip.<sup>13</sup> The exhibition was favorably reviewed in the New York American by Charles Caffin and the New York Tribune by Royal Cortissoz, with the Caffin article reprinted in Camera Craft, an established West Coast periodical.<sup>14</sup> American Photography devoted a paragraph to the photographs, noting that they were evidence of a strong creative individuality and demonstrated exceptional "aliveness."<sup>15</sup> Although Cortissoz singled out for praise a somewhat pictorialist image, The Maid of The Mist (Fig. 33), he observed in Strand "the faculty for seeing possibilities of beauty in the most commonplace objects and places."<sup>16</sup> Caffin's long review discussed the delicate relationship between objectivity--the representation of what is outside the individual--and the artistic taste and craftsmanship with which Strand composed the elements and created a print that was aesthetically pleasing. All the reviews pointed out

that the images were straight photographs--supposedly un-doctored--and were at the same time 'artistic', a combination obviously new to expressive photography.<sup>17</sup>

Stieglitz himself experienced an uplifting feeling as a result of the exhibition, probably due in part to his sense of again being a 'discoverer'. In a letter to R. Child Bayley, he noted that he had been watching Strand for years, that Strand had never exhibited before, and that

his exhibition was quite an event. He is without doubt the only important photographer developed in this country since Coburn. In my opinion his work is of greater importance than Coburn's. His prints are more subtle. They have greater lasting quality. He has actually added some original vision to photography. There is no gumming (sic)--no trickery. Straight all the way through, in vision, in work and in feeling. And original. 18

Significantly, at about the same time, Stieglitz too became more firmly committed to sharp imagery in his own work, avoiding diffuse focus and occasionally stopping down to f128. He described his own images of the time as "just the straight goods--everything simplified in spite of endless detail."<sup>19</sup>

No issue of Camera Work had appeared since 1915, but Stieglitz now planned to reproduce a number of Strand's photographs in order to invest the moribund photographic scene with vitality. The issue, which appeared in October 1916, reproduced five New York scenes and a Texas landscape,

the only one of the six to show sky and horizon. The New York views are compact compositions in which people, architecture and shadow pattern are orchestrated to create a compelling sense of the vital yet anonymous character of the city. In the preface to the reproductions, Stieglitz noted the logic of exhibiting Strand's photographs at the same time as modern works of art were shown at the Forum Exhibition and emphasized the originality, intelligence and purity of Strand's photographic vision.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that both Caffin and Stieglitz discussed the relationship of Strand's photographs to painting suggests their growing awareness of the dichotomous aspect of representation as it applied to the two media. In Caffin's view, since painters such as Benton, Dasburg, Hartley and Morgan Russell demonstrated a "reaction from objective, illustrative or representational art . . . ," it was up to photography to deal with objective reality in an artistic fashion.<sup>21</sup>

While Stieglitz did not mention objectivity as such, his point was that Strand, in common with painters like Dove and Marin, was "in close touch with all that is related to life in its fullest aspect."<sup>22</sup> Perhaps because the photographic images were recognizable, the critics failed to see the close affinities between Strand's aesthetic ideas and those of avant-garde painters.

Strand began to push his experimentation even further toward abstraction during the summer of 1916, at Twin Lakes, Connecticut. Starting in 1913, the Strand family had rented a cottage on a farm close to the lake in a rural community that was becoming an area of well-to-do summer homes. Until 1918, Strand spent every summer at the O'Hara cottage, photographing the countryside and farms around Twin Lakes. His earliest photographs of this community exhibit unexceptional pictorial qualities, as in Landscape, Twin Lakes (Fig. 14), but stylistic changes are evident in his portrait of an elderly man, with its severe arrangement and cropped hat (Fig. 34).

Strand's experimentation with abstraction became most pronounced in images such as Sky and Ridge Pole (Fig. 35). The cottage became the subject of many experiments, as Strand used the structural elements to create a series of geometric compositions such as Porch Shadows (Fig. 36). The same porch was the setting for the still-life objects used in another series made the same summer--the well-known Abstraction--Bowls (Fig. 37) and Abstraction--Cups and Orange (Fig. 38). All were made on  $3\frac{1}{4}$  by  $4\frac{1}{4}$  negatives with the Ensign camera, hand-held. Later they were enlarged at the Camera Club, and then printed on platinum paper.

The photographs which resulted from this summer's work have been frequently dated 1915,<sup>23</sup> but there are several cogent reasons for suggesting a later date of 1916. The almost completely abstract quality of several, in which the image can be viewed from any side, suggests that they evolved from the earlier vision. Furthermore, none of them were shown in Strand's 1916 exhibition or reproduced in the 1916 issue of Camera Work, which went to press in September. In addition, in a letter to Stieglitz from Twin Lakes in August, Strand noted:

It has been a summer of work, the first for me (emphasis added), and I think I shall have some things to show you. 24

A later note from Stieglitz to Bayley confirms the more daring quality of Strand's 1916 imagery:

I am already working on a series of new plates. A series which goes far ahead of this one just published,<sup>25</sup> The new series will show his real originality.

As will become evident, several of the still-lives now dated 1915 may even have been made after Strand's return from the Army, when he returned to the subject matter again in 1919.

The stylistic and intellectual sources of the still lifes and architectural abstractions are not easily discernible. Unlike the continuous movement into and around the picture plane in the New York scenes, abstractions such as

Porch Shadows (Fig. 36) are thoughtful arrangements of formal elements. The shapes seem rigidly locked in place and the vitality is contained--almost repressed--within the formal structure. Although they appear to have no photographic antecedents, they are visual reflections of Coburn's statement of 1916: "Think of the joy of doing something which it would be impossible to classify, or to tell which was top or which was bottom."<sup>26</sup>

In later years, Strand referred to the lessons learned from French Cubism when asked to explain the images of this period, but actually they seem closer to the abstractions of Hartley and Dove than to the transparent analytical constructions of the French cubists. Dove's Plant Forms (Fig. 39) of 1915 might be compared with Strand's Bowls and Hartley's Movement No. 2, (Fig. 40) of 1916, with Porch Shadows (Fig. 36); all display less elegance and a heavier, more sober approach to formal problems than French Cubist works. Although Strand felt that his summer's work on abstraction was invaluable for his understanding of composition, he stopped short of carrying experimentation to the point where the object becomes so submerged that the process is either intellectualized or aestheticized as in the work of Man Ray and Coburn, respectively. This refusal was consistent with the American avant-garde approach, which was

not intended as a denial of matter.<sup>27</sup> Matter, the object, "livingness" were significant entities for Strand, as they were for Stieglitz at the time, for they both scorned aesthetic exercises that substituted formal or satirical playfulness for serious understanding.

After his return to the city in the fall, Strand began a series of street portraits instead of continuing with experiments in abstraction. Using a false lens attached to the side of the Ensign, he attempted to capture 'candid' expression and gesture and to organize shape, pattern and texture into a statement of New York's harsh vitality. When the deception proved obvious, he changed to a right angle prism lens.<sup>28</sup>

Again, the immediate inspiration for Strand's 1916 portraits is not readily apparent. As expressions of honest street realism, they refer back to Stieglitz's Venetian Boy (Fig. 41) of 1887, which Strand may well have seen, and to portraits of the poor made by Jacob Riis in the late 'eighties' and by Hine (Fig. 42) around 1905. Most likely Strand was ignorant of Riis' work; he may have been shown Hine's Ellis Island portraits while a student at ECS but it is doubtful that he retained a memory of these images. The fact that Strand considered his own street portraits to be the first expressive "candid" further in-

dicates that for most of his life he was not fully aware of the work that Hine had been doing for social service agencies. Hine's Lunchtime, 1915 (Fig. 43) evokes the quality of street life in the city with as great sense of palpability as Strand's Blind Woman (Fig. 44), but it would be difficult to demonstrate that Strand was familiar with this image or the work of other photographers with an avowedly social purpose. While street life interested him, Strand evinced little concern for the problems of the poor at this time, although intellectual curiosity led him to attend Emma Goldman's lectures and to read Randolph Bourne.<sup>29</sup>

The street portraiture may have been stimulated by the fact that Stieglitz had returned to making portraits in 1914 and had continued intermittently photographing members of the 291 circle and gallery habitués. In these works, he concentrated on filling the frame with a large head against a simple background, seeking to evoke personality through facial expression and composition, as in Marsden Hartley (Fig. 45). Somewhat earlier, Coburn had treated the portrait expressively, using well-known figures in the literary and political spheres to create a gallery of personalities (Fig. 46).<sup>30</sup> A similar approach characterized a group of large head portraits made by Baron De Meyer in London in 1913, with the exception that they were

of unknown street people. Despite the softness of focus, these works attempted to reveal personality by capturing animated 'unposed' expression. The Balloon Man and Mrs. Wiggins of Belgrave Square (Fig. 47) were among those exhibited at 291 and reproduced in Camera Work 37 in 1912. Street portraiture and specifically close-ups, were the subjects of articles in the popular photographic press at the time, including one of Hartmann in 1913, entitled "How to Make Large Heads."<sup>31</sup>

Strand's portraits differ from those of Coburn, De Meyer and Stieglitz both in their sharper definition and the manner in which they are framed by the rectangular edges of the picture, as well as in the type of subject selected. There is little gentility or grace in these street images; instead they emphasize qualities associated with survival in the city: determination in Blind Woman (Fig. 44), furtiveness in Man with a Bowler (Fig. 48), despondency in Five Points Square (Fig. 49), resignation in Washington Square Park (Fig. 50). The framing (most frequently pre-visualized but on occasion cropped) suggests a kind of physical compression or airlessness that results in an almost claustrophobic effect. For example, it is difficult to realize that the porcine gentleman in the bowler is surrounded by the air and space of Washington

Square Park. Like the stone wall of the building behind the blind newspaper vendor,<sup>32</sup> the substances surrounding the subjects are either indefinite or harsh, adding to the sense of the city's stridency.

The contrast between the psychological intensity of the city portraits and the coolness of the still-lives and porch arrangements is instructive as well as startling. For both Strand and Stieglitz, photographing in the city resulted in images of a different nature from those made in the country in regard to feeling as well as subject. Away from New York one might dwell on formal problems, or search the sky for metaphors, but the city, whether loved or detested, impinged too much for serenity and inner contemplation.

Not counting the few portraits that Strand made of family or friends at the time, there appear to be only twelve street portraits of eleven individuals, all taken in the fall of 1916. After he returned from Army duty in 1919, Strand photographed friends but made no portraits of strangers other than occasionally on commission. In fact, he did not return to street portraiture for sixteen years, when he took up almost exactly where he had left off, using the same prism lens. The relatively small number of street portraits poses an interesting, if unanswerable question

which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Strand's involvement with the larger community of pictorial photographers virtually ceased after his exhibition and acceptance into the Stieglitz circle. Although of necessity he still used the Camera Club darkrooms, he took little part in committee work or other activities. Previously he had entered work in annual Members' Exhibitions and other pictorial shows; now, noting that he "was past the stage of easy enthusiasms. . . . he asked Stieglitz's advice about sending work to a show organized by the Pictorial Photographers of America.<sup>33</sup> Other than those sanctioned or organized by Stieglitz, the only exhibitions in which Strand participated between 1916 and 1932 were a group show at the Modern Gallery in 1917 and one at the Camera Club in 1922. Nor would he allow his work to be used or published in any context that did not also include Stieglitz, and for a brief while, Sheeler. At that time, Strand felt that he had aligned himself with the only force in the United States that had demonstrated the most profound respect for photography but eventually he was to realize that these self-imposed restrictions cut him off from other vital and creative impulses in photography.

"The Twelfth Annual Exhibition of Photography"--the Wanamaker Competition--was held in March 1917 in Philadel-

phia. It was the first time that Strand participated, and the judges--Arthur B. Carles, Charles Grafly, Steichen, Stieglitz and F. Vaux Wilson, selected Wall Street (Fig. 29) as first-prize winner from more than eleven hundred entries by two hundred and fifty photographers. Among other prize winners were Karl Struss and Edward Weston; several high prizes went to individuals whose names and work have been completely forgotten.

Press reaction to show and awards was divided; the exhibition was praised in one publication for the high level of the selections at the same time that it was censured in another for being too decadent.<sup>34</sup> Wall Street was not mentioned specifically in the reviews but the following year, when Charles Sheeler received first prize and Strand second and fifth, Strand's Wheel Organization (Fig. 51) evoked comment for its directness. W. G. Fitz, a photographer from Philadelphia, noted that

this segment of a wheel expressed not only the power of the thing itself but also the cohesive strength of business, the spirit of industry which produced it.<sup>35</sup>

Another article citing the "brutality" of the wheel photograph, termed it derivative, and devoted more space to Strand's other winner, The White Fence (Fig. 52), which it reproduced, concluding that "we hardly see how more contrast, emphasis, eccentricity and ugliness could be combined with-

in four sides of a print."<sup>36</sup>

Strand's close-up view of an automobile wheel was indeed unusual. Few pictorial photographs of machines had been made in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century. Stieglitz's Hand of Man 1902 (Fig. 53) may be one of the earliest expressive images in American photography that had as a subject the industrial age, although both French and American impressionist painters had embraced the subject matter since the eighteen-seventies. Towards the end of the first decade, Stieglitz, Coburn and Struss, photographing construction machinery and portions of automobiles, were expressly concerned with the activity and vitality of industrial urban life. The most direct pictorial images of mechanical objects prior to Strand's wheel were Stieglitz's photographs of an aeroplane (Fig. 54) and a dirigible of 1910 and Coburn's views of Manhattan bridges but they expressed the romance of exotic mechanisms rather than their force and power. In the same vein, Coburn's Pittsburgh trainyards and factories of 1910-1911 (Fig. 55) suggest something of the energy of the new industrialism but not its naked power.

In the area of applied photography, industrial images had started to appear even before the first decade. In addition to the previously noted articles in photographic

journals on the technical problems of photographing machinery, brochures and albums issued by industrial concerns occasionally reproduced straight-forward machine images. During the decade, the photo-journalist Arthur Hewitt made inventive compositions of hoisting and construction machinery and the workers who operated them, often silhouetting angular shapes against the sky for emphasis. Many amateurs, including the proficient Alice Austen, photographed the machines of their milieu--automobiles, bicycles and the like--while social photographers, Hine especially, had been taking pictures of machines in factory interiors from 1907 on. Whether or not Strand saw any of these images is irrelevant; as he noted, interest in machinery was "in the air."<sup>37</sup>

A more significant source of his interest in the machine may have been his friendship with Duchamp, Picabia and Sheeler. Although Strand was not an habitué of the Arensberg circle, he was aware of its ideas and productions from association with the aforementioned artists, but mainly through Sheeler, whom he had met, with Schamberg, in 1916 at 291 and the Modern Gallery. Sheeler had been photographing professionally since 1912, but in 1914 he had begun to use the camera more creatively, creating spare and angular images of the farm buildings and interiors in Bucks

County. With its geometric emphasis, Doylestown Staircase (Fig. 56) made in 1915, is devoid of human shapes, although not of human content. However, Sheeler's images convey a sense of the clean and simple qualities of country life--a sensation far removed from the tension evoked by Strand's city photographs of this period.

Starting in 1915, the two Philadelphia painters, Sheeler and Schamberg, came to New York frequently to visit the galleries, 291 and the Modern Gallery included. Sheeler was especially deferential to Stieglitz, offering suggestions about new photographic products and urging him to avail himself of the Bucks County House that he and Schamberg owned. The friendship became warmer in 1917, when Schamberg seemed to be more at ease in 291. Sheeler made photographs of O'Keeffe's paintings for her exhibition in March at 291 and Stieglitz, in turn, suggested reproducing a number of Sheeler's photographs in Camera Work.<sup>38</sup> Nothing came of the proposal, perhaps because of the demise of the publication. Sheeler's work was shown at the Modern Gallery, which Stieglitz had been involved in setting up, and the photographer acknowledged Stieglitz's help in gaining the Wanamaker prize of 1918, writing:

Someone on the Wanamaker Jury must have been prejudiced in my favor. . . . for that which happened would not have happened otherwise. 39

In March 1917, the Modern Gallery held a photographic exhibition of the work of the three--Schamberg, Sheeler and Strand. After noting Sheeler's perfectionism and Strand's "intense realism," the reviewer for American Art News termed Schamberg's "charming portraits" most attractive, but a more perceptive article recognized the relationship between the modern movement in art and the work of the three photographers.<sup>40</sup> Strand later claimed that although the artists he met at 291 rarely discussed aesthetics,

Sheeler and I were aware that we were beginning to experiment with abstraction. We all talked the same language. . . . It had to do with understanding a painting like a Villon or a Braque--things in which there is an enormous amount of movement and no recognizable content as a whole. The thing is that it has three-dimensional movement--a picture that you have to go into--lovely 41  
to the eye, full of color and variety.

Although there is no direct evidence, it is possible that Strand's understanding of Schamberg's machine paintings led to the wheel images. In formal approach and expressive idea, as well as subject, Wheel Organization (Fig. 51) is closer to Schamberg's precise, enlarged image of a mechanism (Fig. 57) than it is to anything Sheeler was doing at the time. However, unlike Schamberg's, Strand's machine was not completely isolated from context; rather, it suggested the larger mechanism and the motive force of which it was part. Ultimately, the source of both images may be traced back to the chocolate grinders and carburetors of Duchamp

and Picabia but both Schamberg and Strand regarded their subject matter with more reverence and their images lacked the playfulness and scepticism inherent in the French works.

Whatever its source, the wheel photographed (a portion of his friend Harold Greengard's family car) is probably the first American expressive photograph of this nature.<sup>42</sup> It was the first of many such images by Strand and was bought by Mrs. Charles Liebman, a Stieglitz patron, for her husband's office. As the major part of Strand's machine images were made during the 'twenties, they will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, but it should be noted that this first machine close-up had an immediate effect on advertising graphics, as seen in a 1920 tire advertisement (Fig. 58).

At the time of the 1917 Wanamaker exhibition, Strand was awaiting publication of the last issue of Camera Work. When it appeared in June, it contained eleven gravures of his photographs--eight New York views and portraits, two abstractions made at Twin Lakes and The White Fence. The section was prefaced by an article, "Photography," written by Strand and published in the August issue of Seven Arts, also. In his first written essay on his medium, Strand set the style and tone for all his subsequent expository pieces on the arts and outlined ideas about the creative

process which he was to develop further throughout the next decade.

The prose style is straight-forward and unemotional if occasionally ponderous. He noted the unique nature of photography's "absolutely unqualified objectivity," and urged that photographers use the medium with honest respect for the thing in front of them.<sup>44</sup> In emphasizing that photographic images should be achieved without tricks of processing or manipulation, Strand was expressing views that had been put forward for a number of years in the popular press, particularly by Hartmann, but his special contribution was to understand that creativity was "the formal conception, born of the emotions, the intellect or both" which would invest objective reality with the common goal of all art-life.<sup>45</sup>

Strand's contribution of the piece on photography to the short lived journal, Seven Arts, may have come about through his companionship with Waldo Frank and Paul Rosenfeld, both close associates of Stieglitz. In 1916, with James Oppenheim, the two writers had started the magazine which was as Bram Dijkstra has noted, "in many ways. . . . an amplification of what Stieglitz stood for."<sup>46</sup> The editors wished to make the publication a channel for new tendencies in American art; its emphasis on the vitality of

native artistic and intellectual life reflected the growing impatience felt by a number of American intellectuals with the snobbery that held that foreign culture was invariably superior to native efforts.

In addition, Seven Arts voiced the anti-war sentiments of a group of American intellectuals, foremost among whom was Randolph Bourne, the philosopher of youth and progress. Bourne was one of the few non-political intellectuals of consequence to oppose openly American entry into the First World War, and his position precipitated the demise of the magazine. Strand supported Bourne's position, despite his own eventual service in the Army. After himself submitting a manuscript on the author's theme, "Below the Battle", Strand arranged to show Bourne his work and took him to meet Stieglitz, on whom Bourne made a strong impression.<sup>47</sup> Bourne's death, at the beginning of 1919, was seen by many, including Strand, Seligmann and Stieglitz, as marking the end of rational discourse about America's future.

By mid-1917, both the American intervention in the First World War and the closing of 291 affected Strand, Stieglitz and others of the group, for whom the gallery represented an almost mystical commune. In a piece written in October of that year, Strand made the quasi-religious

nature of the 291 experience specific, and in so doing he touched on several ideas which foreshadowed his attitude toward the commercial aspects of American society during the 'twenties. Of the gallery, he wrote:

What was 291? Was it a spiritual idea? Was it a Man? Or was it a place? . . . It seems to me that 291 was none of these things because it was all of them, a complete unity of parts that fulfilled each other. <sup>48</sup>

Strand eulogized Stieglitz for creating this experimental laboratory and, surprisingly, went on to compare 291 with the Rockefeller Institute, noting that:

In both, all commercialism is ruled out with an iron hand, as inimical to the freedom of work. . . . the introduction of the laws of supply and demand . . . make creative search impossible. . . . At 291 . . . Stieglitz was relentless in guarding the idea from the twisting power of money. . . . Such was the purity of those little grey rooms that they finally became holy <sup>49</sup> ground.

Evidence of Strand's elitist conception of the liberated artistic spirit at this time is his conclusion that:

It was the people themselves who killed 291. . . . In the intense heat of freedom carried to the nth power, most of them instead of becoming finer, were made less sensitive to fineness. . . . It is for those of us whose hearts and minds are instinctively projecting into the period of reconstruction to keep the spiritual fire of 291 burning, that it might light the way <sup>50</sup> to American promise.

Although the end of 291 in 1917 sometimes has been attributed directly to American involvement in the war, it was the result of many factors. Among them was Stieglitz's desire to return to creative photography, a wish he had al-

ready expressed to Steichen in 1914. The following year he had agreed to let DeZayas and the Modern Gallery take over some of the functions of 291, mainly the business of finding clients and selling work. While Stieglitz was somewhat revitalized by the Strand and O'Keeffe exhibitions of 1916, he was soon again finding it difficult to face the innumerable tasks and the financial drain associated with the gallery and Camera Work.

Furthermore, personal problems brought about by the estrangement from his wife, and his awakening interest in O'Keeffe, brought him to the end of his tether and made him feel old and useless. After closing the gallery in July 1917, he wrote from Lake George:

New York seems far away and I assure you I don't miss any part of it--If I never saw it again I don't think I would hear its Call. . . . You see, the years do make a difference--I have lived hard and very honestly--I have fought every moment because I believed--I have<sup>51</sup> lived on nervous energy.

Strand was at Twin Lakes for the summer of 1917, but he too found it difficult to work. As he wrote Stieglitz,

it seems impossible to get away from the war--it touches everybody now and everyone finds the same re-<sup>52</sup>sentment and lack of enthusiasm.

And in his usual fashion, Stieglitz responded by personalizing its effect:

The war, as background, emphasized all the weaknesses which I have tried to overcome all these years--in<sup>53</sup> which I failed.

The last exhibition held at 291 was of watercolors and oils by Georgia O'Keeffe, whose abstract charcoal drawings Stieglitz had exhibited a year earlier in a group show. Following their meeting in the early summer of 1916, Stieglitz began to take a special interest in the artist and her work. O'Keeffe, who had taken a teaching job in Canyon, Texas, returned to New York during her exhibition and met Strand for the first time. She was enthusiastic about his photographs, comparing them to Picasso's drawings.<sup>54</sup> When she returned to Texas, she extracted and hung Strand's backyard snow scene from Camera Work, and wrote Strand that she had begun to look at objects in a new way after seeing his work.<sup>55</sup>

Between the summer of 1917 and May 1918, there was an extended correspondence between O'Keefe, Stieglitz and Strand.<sup>56</sup> In May, Strand traveled to Texas to visit O'Keeffe, stopping in New Orleans and San Antonio to photograph. The two returned to New York together in June, after which O'Keeffe began her life with Stieglitz. A few months later, Strand was called for Army duty, a distraction he may actually have welcomed despite his anti-war feelings.

By the time of Strand's service, rumors of the end of the war were already circulating, so that the prospect of

Army duty, either in the United States or overseas, was not as grim as formerly. Although Strand was attached to a medical group which promised interesting work, he immediately applied for a transfer to either the Air Corps Photography Group or the Signal Corps Photographic School at Columbia University. When letters written by Stieglitz and other attempts to 'pull strings' proved ineffectual, he finally accepted becoming an X-ray technician at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

Strand requested, and received, an extended term of training in x-ray photography and served on other medical services as well. His absorbing interest in medical practice did not surprise him, although his lack of adverse reaction to his first surgical experience did, because he looked on it as proof that

the scientific and artistic spirit are very closely related when they are both creative and impersonal. It seems the impersonality of the operating room makes the unpleasant side almost negligible. . . . I know I could more easily be a surgeon than a nurse because ideas interest me more than the routines of bringing people back to health. 57

Aside from the usual complaints about the lack of information and the illogicality of Army procedure, Strand adjusted well to Army life. He found friends among Army buddies and socialized whenever possible with local families who extended hospitality to soldiers. Recommending the

experience for several of the 291 circle, he wrote

Stieglitz:

I'll say it has done much for me. I have yet to meet the man, and I've met hundreds, that I haven't been<sup>58</sup> able to get along with--all kinds.

Having sent for Camera Work soon after his arrival at base camp, he later added: "I've been showing Camera Work a bit. . . . all much impressed. . . . respected by everyone who has seen it."<sup>59</sup>

In addition to learning X-ray technology, Strand actually photographed operations in progress at the Mayo Clinic, an experience that was to have some bearing on his career after he returned to New York. As his friend Seligmann wrote, the medical experience was the best thing that could have happened.<sup>60</sup> It provided Strand with the discipline to undertake unpleasant tasks and to derive advantage from seemingly impossible situations. It confirmed his convictions about the interrelationship of art and science, a theme he was to return to a number of times in his life. It increased his respect for objective reality--the thing itself--and clarified his belief that photography was discovery rather than self-expression.

The armistice occurred while Strand was stationed in Rochester, Minnesota. Although neither he nor Stieglitz were sanguine about its probable effect on the art scene,

it is surprising to find Stieglitz concerned with the general economic situation too. Describing the demonstration of November 10th, which he and O'Keeffe observed from the 291 building, he wrote Strand:

These men. . . had stopped work on the spur of the moment to parade Fifth Avenue. . . men who themselves didn't realize that "Victory" meant a probable breadline not far away for any of them. . . It made one shudder to think of what's probably coming to so many blind ones and to many of us who see and have seen all along but are powerless. <sup>61</sup>

In January 1919, Strand developed a case of bronchial pneumonia so severe that his parents were advised to make the trip to the hospital at Fort Snelling. While there, his mother contracted a fatal case and died within a few days. Under the circumstances, her death must have been especially difficult for Strand, but one can only surmise his sense of responsibility in the matter as he did not refer to it in writing at any time. He was given a month's leave which he spent in New York.

In addition to doing some work of his own, Strand had a number of photographic sessions with Stieglitz while in the city. He saw the portraits of O'Keeffe that Stieglitz had begun making shortly after her arrival from Texas, a body of work that had a signal effect on Stieglitz's self-esteem. Not only was he again able to work in concentrated fashion, but the results were praised by the avant-garde in

painting and photography--Arensberg, DeZayas, Sheeler and Strand.<sup>62</sup> After his return to duty, Strand wrote:

Your photographs and her work are part of me--they are great. I don't have to close my eyes to see the ones that hit me hard. I am seeing the grey painting and the portrait--they seem somehow related. <sup>63</sup>

Stieglitz's approach to portraiture at this time is of special significance because it addressed the new aesthetic of cubism and the new philosophy of objectivity in seeking to recreate the spirit of O'Keeffe. The sitter is viewed from innumerable angles and vantage points, seen in entirety and in part, clothed and nude, passive and active. Theoretically, no single view predominates, nor is the entire meaning understandable from any single image. As early as 1913, DeZayas had noted that Stieglitz was attempting to do synthetically with the same camera what some of the most advanced cubists were trying to do analytically in painting.<sup>64</sup> After 1915 however, Stieglitz became somewhat more concerned with objectivity as he demonstrated in the portraits of 291 artists, although his prime interest was always in expressing what he termed the living quality of the subject. The O'Keeffe portrait was an effort to carry both directions further; through concentration on the object--O'Keeffe--it attempted to create the mystic force of her personality. This conception--a synthesis of inner and outer realities--had an important effect on Strand's por-

traiture of the 'twenties, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Although Stieglitz has been credited with establishing the basis of non-metaphoric art in America, in his own work over the years he displayed a variety of approaches to realism.<sup>65</sup> His early work was in the genre tradition, as exemplified by A Good Joke, after which he passed through a Barbizon phase, followed by the tonalism of the New York images, which blend romanticism and realism. When he wrote of The Terminal:

There seemed to be something related to my deepest feeling in what I saw, and I decided to photograph what was within me, 66

he made clear that reality had become a metaphor for inner emotion. He reiterated the personal symbolism of his work in regard to the Steerage, relating the scene to his loneliness and lack of personal relations with his wife.<sup>67</sup>

At the same time, the objective world greatly fascinated Stieglitz; as early as 1887 he made the straightforward photograph of a young boy in Venice (Fig. 41) which revealed both beauty and ravage in the child's face. However, in spite of the modernity of subjects such as the railroad yards and the Flatiron Building, Stieglitz's images of them evoke a complex of nineteenth century feelings and ideas related to progress, industrialization and urban-

ization. His underlying romanticism becomes apparent when The Hand of Man (Fig. 53) is compared with Strand's later image of a railroad yard (Fig. 59).

In several of the O'Keeffe portraits, Stieglitz came closest to the kind of objectivity that characterized Strand's Wall Street (Fig. 29), for example, which avoids emotion inimical to the perceived reality. No stories are told, no sentimental or romantic attitudes are suggested and no philosophical stance is assumed. The emotion springs from the scene itself and is consistent with it, a quality also apparent in a number of Stieglitz's portraits of O'Keeffe.

In addition to their unusual objectivity, these images suggest other visible cross-fertilizations between Strand and Stieglitz. The photograph, Hands With Thimble, 1920 (Fig. 60), which will be discussed more fully in a subsequent chapter, can be viewed from any side, in the same manner as Strand's Abstraction, Bowls (Fig. 36) and Porch Shadows (Fig. 40). The closely cropped image of O'Keeffe with hands on lapel and collar (Fig. 61) is a translation of what Strand was seeking in Wheel Organization (Fig. 51). By concentrating on the significant hands and head, as Strand had on the wheel and springs, Stieglitz created an image of intense vitality that can stand alone among the many portraits. Its framing and compactness are unusual in

Stieglitz's work and bring to mind similar compositional handling in a number of Strand's street portraits of 1916.

Strand found the final months of duty at the Fort Snelling hospital alternately "stupid" and dully pleasant. Although he had no job or profession to return to, he clearly expected to use his professional training in an income-generating capacity. He was anxious to return to the city, despite the uneasy post-war atmosphere conveyed in letters from Stieglitz and Seligmann. Stieglitz, as noted, was especially uneasy about the meaning of the victory; describing a celebration, he wrote:

There was a great welcome parade the other day--& there is a 'great' Victory Arch in front of the Flatiron. It all reminds me of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning--The arch is the limit--The poor Flatiron . . . how it must suffer. 68

Stieglitz questioned Strand's longing for the city, which he termed "the maddest city that ever happened--mad--soulless--cruelly heartless."<sup>69</sup> Seligmann, with whom Strand had corresponded sporadically throughout the period of his service, was even more graphic in his description of the aimlessness of post-war city life. Speaking of Stieglitz and O'Keefe, he wrote:

They have found a little island of safety in their work--The rest of the world goes chasing soap bubbles, reading newspapers and other fiction, making love and finding it is illusion, cursing Wilson, Republicans and Bolsheviks and drifting to the cave of the Winds. Stieglitz remarked:

"I stand before the mirror and shave and I don't know who it is I am shaving." That's the way I feel, only it extends to eating, drinking, writing, lovemaking, reading and being bored. 70

Strand returned to the "soulless" city at the beginning of August. With Stieglitz and O'Keeffe at Lake George and Seligmann suddenly involved in an active social life from which he was excluded, he found adjustment difficult. Nevertheless, he was determined to get back into photography and with newly purchased equipment began to photograph and to print at the Camera Club again. An opportunity to involve himself in aesthetic matters had already presented itself while he was in the process of being discharged. He had received an invitation from Clarence White's organization, The Pictorial Photographers of America, to submit work to a projected photographic annual modelled on the English publication, Photograms of the Year.

Although he had at first considered accepting, provided Sheeler and Stieglitz were invited, Strand reconsidered and took the opportunity, as he wrote Stieglitz

to say what has been on my mind about White and his associates. When one sees these people expressing piously the hope that their annual will not be inferior to British Photography, stupidity seems to reign supreme. 71

In his response to the invitation, Strand pointed out that his position with the Army prevented him from submitting and added

in all fairness . . . I must say that I find myself not at all in sympathy with either the leadership or values of the Pictorial Workers. Photography or . . . any kind of work is either an expression of a cosmic vision, an embodiment of a life movement or it is nothing--to me. This quality I find only in the work of . . . Charles Sheeler . . . and Alfred Stieglitz. In the Pictorial Workers . . . I find something analogous to the Academy in painting. Their values appear to me to cut no deeper than picture making, an interest in the superficial prettiness of design. 72

Stieglitz's response to Strand's rejection of outdated pictorialism is significant both because it suggests something of the ambivalence which began to characterize his attitude towards Strand's activities and work and for its vitriolic attack on Clarence White. After assurances that Strand's handling of the matter gave him "a great measure of pleasure," Stieglitz asserted his own role as leader:

I am beginning to become more and more conscious of the fact that something real must be done for photography's honest cause. And that I'll have to take the initiative very soon. What form the initiative will take, I have no idea--It's all primarily a question of having a sufficiently large number of AAI examples of work that counts & more than just a couple of people, if possible. I have Camera Work in mind--Perhaps a new publication, less expensive--Perhaps an exhibition. . . . All I know is that the White School of Imitation of Pseudo White--Pseudo Life--Pseudo Art--Pseudo Photography--Pseudo High Class Magazine--Pseudo Photogram Annual--is sickeningly small and stupid--particularly so after White himself had all the advantages given him of a living issue in living forms--Camera Notes--Secession--Camera Work--291. . . . But what is primarily on my mind is photography itself. (Emphasis in original.) 73

The object of this scathing attack was Stieglitz's former associate. White had recently opened his prestig-

ious school in Connecticut after many years of teaching at Columbia University, at his own headquarters on 144th Street in New York and on Georgetown Island, Maine. By 1918, he had become relatively unproductive due to teaching and administrative duties but his own work was responding to the times in more modern but still lyrical conceptions such as The Studio Window (Fig. 62) of 1920. During the early 'twenties, his efforts to encourage student awareness of contemporary ideas resulted in invitations to both Strand and Stieglitz to lecture at the school. Images such as Croton Reservoir (Fig. 63), made just before his premature death in Mexico City in 1925, address the new aesthetic but seem too derivative to project much vitality.

The exchange regarding the Pictorial Photographers signaled Stieglitz's renewed efforts to influence the direction of photography and painting in America. Throughout the 'twenties he often relied on Strand's initiative and vitality for energetic attacks on pictorialism and commercialism. Before the end of the decade, however, it became obvious that Stieglitz was not to again regain his former influence in the photographic scene and that even his activities in regard to painting had been mostly tangential. In time, it became apparent to Strand, too, that his own perceptions and needs in photography had been evolving in a direction antag-

onistic to Stieglitz's concern only with individualism and personal expression.

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 3

1. Dorothy Norman, Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer (New York: Random House, An Aperture Book, 1974), p. 35. Stieglitz is quoted as follows: "It was strange to experience such unhappiness in my homeland . . . to feel no point of contact with anyone or anything."
2. As suggested in a recent article by Donald Knight, "Individual and Mass Identity in Urban Art: the New York Case," Art in America 65 (September-October 1977): 67.
3. William Innes Homer, "Stieglitz, 291 and Paul Strand's Early Photography," typescript, 1975, unpagged, PSA/CCP.
4. Strand referred to these images as products of "my Japanese period." Interview with Paul Strand, 2 July 1975, NYC.
5. Paul Strand to Walter Rosenblum, 21 May 1952, Collection of author.
6. Antony Guest, "The London Salon of Photography: Some Foreign Exhibits," Photographic Journal of America 49 (October 1912): 445: "M. Dubreuil sends . . . examples of the unconventional manner in which he has lately been experimenting. He seems to be searching for fresh ways of seeing and expressing." See also Charles Holme, Colour Photography and Other Recent Developments of the Art of the Camera (London, Paris, New York: The Studio, 1908) for examples of Johnston and McKissack.
7. Paul Strand to Van Deren Coke, 27 March 1968, copy sent by Strand to Walter and Naomi Rosenblum.
8. Arthur W. Dow, "Composition," Photo-Era 5 (May 1913): 235.
9. Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Plea for the Picturesqueness of New York," Camera Notes 4 (October 1900): 91-94.
10. William S. Davis, "The Pictorial Possibilities of New York," Photographic Times 41 (October 1914): 395.

11. Photographers whose urban images were reproduced included John Boultenhouse, William S. Davis, John Wallace Gillies, Blanche Hungerford and William Zerbe. See American Annual of Photography 30 (1916).
12. Alfred Kreymbourg, Troubadour (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925), p. 126. Strand is characterized as "the moody photographer."
13. No catalogue listing exists for this exhibition.
14. Charles H. Caffin, "Paul Strand in Straight Photographs," New York American, March 20, 1916, p.7; Royal Cortissoz, untitled review, New York Tribune, March 20, 1916, p.III-3; "Club News and Notes," Camera Craft 5 (May 23, 1916):205.
15. "News and Notes," American Photography 10 (April 1916):281.
16. Cortissoz, untitled review.
17. Actually, Strand claimed that he continued to do handwork on negatives and prints when necessary. Interview with Paul Strand, 25 January 1976, Orgeval.
18. Alfred Stieglitz to R.C. Bayley, 17 April 1916, ASA/YU. Stieglitz's remark that Strand had not exhibited before was untrue; he merely had not had a solo exhibition.
19. Alfred Stieglitz to R.C. Bayley, 1 November 1916, ASA/YU.
20. Alfred Stieglitz, "Photographs by Paul Strand," Camera Work 48 (October 1916):11-12.
21. Caffin, "Paul Strand in Straight Photographs."
22. Stieglitz, "Photographs by Paul Strand," p.11.
23. Interview with Paul Strand, 15 March 1975, NYC. Strand dated most of the abstractions from memory and claimed that sometimes he made an exposure during the summer and did not print it until the following spring. but this does not alter the facts in regard to the more abstract images.

24. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 28 August 1916, ASA/YU.
25. Alfred Stieglitz to R.C. Bayley, 1 November 1916, ASA/YU.
26. Alvin Langdon Coburn, "The Future of Pictorial Photography," Photograms of the Year 1916 (London: Hazell, Watson & Viney Ltd., 1916), p. 23.
27. For a discussion of the Stieglitz circle's attitude toward abstraction and objectivity see Bram Dijkstra, The Hieroglyphics of a New Speech: Cubism, Stieglitz, and the Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 100-101.
28. Interview with Paul Strand, 25 January 1976, Orgeval. While photographing at Five Points Square, Strand realized that it was noticed that he used a false lens. Only Italian Man and Five Points Square were made with the false lens. (See Appendix I)
29. Attendance at Goldman lectures established in Interview with Paul Strand, 12 July 1975, NYC. Re Bourne, see note 47.
30. Alvin Langdon Coburn, Men of Mark (London: Duckworth & Co., New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1913).
31. Sadakichi Hartmann (Sidney Allan), "How to Make Large Heads," Photographic Journal of America 50 (March 1913):121-22.
32. The blind woman is not a beggar as is sometimes assumed. News vendors of the period were licensed by the city with the badge visible in the image. Interview with Paul Strand, 11 July 1975, NYC.
33. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 28 August 1916, ASA/YU.
34. "Wanamaker's 12th Annual Exhibition," Camera Craft 24(April 1917):4; "1917 Spring Exhibitions," American Photography 11(May 1917):310.

35. W.G. Fitz, "A Few Thoughts on the Wanamaker Exhibition," The Camera 22(April 1918):205. The same ideas were expressed by Van Deren Coke in 1975, see note 6, Chapter 6.
36. "The 1918 Wanamaker Spring Exhibition," American Photography 12(April 1918):231. The White Fence might be compared with The White Gate, Evening by Clarence H. White, in which a similar subject, made the same year, in the pictorialist manner.
37. Paul Strand to Van Deren Coke, 27 March 1968 (see note 7).
38. Alfred Stieglitz to Charles Sheeler, 1 March 1917, ASA/YU.
39. Charles Sheeler to Alfred Stieglitz, 8 March 1918, ASA/YU.
40. "Photographic Art at Modern Gallery," American Art News 16(March 31, 1917):3. The exhibition was titled "Photographs by Sheeler, Strand and Schamberg," and ran from March 26 to April 9. "Notes and Activities in the World of Art," The Sun (New York), April 8, 1917, p.12.
41. Interview with Paul Strand, 6 July 1975, NYC.
42. Record photographs of machinery were reproduced in The Soil 1(December 1916): unpagged following p.36 and (January 1917): unpagged following p.56, to illustrate Robert Coady's thesis that the real American artist was the engineer.
43. Paul Strand, "Photography," Camera Work 49/50 (June 1917):3; also printed in Seven Arts 2 (August 1917):524-26.
44. Ibid., 524.
45. Ibid.
46. Dijkstra, The Hieroglyphics of a New Speech, p. 40.
47. Randolph Bourne to Paul Strand, 16 August 1917, PSA/CCP. Strand's recollection that he introduced

Bourne to Stieglitz may have been incorrect because Bourne roomed with Carl Zigrosser and could have met Stieglitz through him. Interview with Paul Strand, 25 July 1975, NYC. In Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 4 January 1919, PSA/CCP, Stieglitz wrote: "Bourne's death is a great loss to the country. We haven't many with his kind of clear, deep thinking."

48. Paul Strand, "What was 291?" unpublished typescript dated October 1917, PSA/CCP.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 14 August 1917, PSA/CCP.
52. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 30 or 31 July 1917, ASA/YU.
53. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 18 August 1917, PSA/CCP.
54. Georgia O'Keeffe to Anita Pollitzer, 20 June 1917, ASA/YU.
55. Georgia O'Keeffe to Paul Strand, undated 1917, PSA/CCP.
56. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, ASA/YU; Georgia O'Keeffe to Paul Strand, PSA/CCP; Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, PSA/CCP.
57. Paul Strand to Mr. and Mrs. J. Strand, 25 October 1918, PSA/CCP.
58. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 22 October 1918, ASA/YU.
59. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 27 September 1918 and 25 November 1918, ASA/YU.
60. Herbert Seligmann to Paul Strand, 2 November 1918, PSA/CCP.

61. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 10 November 1918, PSA/CCP.
62. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 20 March 1919, PSA/CCP.
63. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 16 April 1919, ASA/YU. Years later, Strand revised his belief that this kind of portrait was possible in still photography. He felt that it needed the dramatic structure of a scenario. Interview with Paul Strand, 22 January 1976, Orgeval.
64. Marius DeZayas, "Photography and Artistic Photography," Camera Work 42/43 (April-July 1913):13-14.
65. Dijkstra, The Hieroglyphics of a New Speech, pp.100-104.
66. Norman, Alfred Stieglitz, p.37.
67. Ibid., pp.75-77.
68. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 28 March 1919, PSA/CCP.
69. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 8 June 1919, PSA/CCP.
70. Herbert Seligmann to Paul Strand, n.d. before 4 June 1919 , PSA/CCP.
71. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 9 August 1919, ASA/YU.
72. Paul Strand to Mrs. A. Shreve, 9 August 1919, copy in ASA/YU.
73. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 14 August 1919, PSA/CCP.

## CHAPTER 4

### FILM WORK DURING THE 'TWENTIES

The New York to which Strand returned as a civilian in 1919 was difficult to adjust to because of a general sense of post-war dislocation. Release from wartime restrictions had resulted in a frenzied desire for material goods and personal pleasures at the same time that inflation and unemployment made the pursuit of these ends difficult. The anti-radicalism, labor unrest, business and government scandals and the illegal activities connected with Prohibition are too well known to need repetition, but it is surprising how little attention has been paid to the effect of an inflationary economy on artists and the art world.<sup>1</sup> Because Stieglitz lived on a fixed income, the inflated dollar affected his ability to purchase materials, re-open a gallery or start a new publication. The unstable economic situation led both Sheeler and Steichen to commercial photography, while Strand was driven to seek an income in portraiture and advertising photography when employment in the field of medical photography proved impossible.

Throughout 1920 and 1921, Strand investigated the

emerging field of free-lance advertising photography, sometimes in the company of Sheeler. Although he produced several jobs for an agency handling ball-bearings and pharmaceutical accounts at the beginning of 1920, he appears to have hesitated about becoming completely involved in product advertising. Both he and Stieglitz had long regarded the business world as 'unclean', by which they meant dishonest and tawdry. However, in the course of making the rounds of agencies, an idea was suggested that seemed both interesting and possible--the production of slow-motion films of athletes in action. According to Strand, the project was so attractive that he and Sheeler investigated the purchase of an imported camera adaptable for slow-motion photography.<sup>2</sup> Although nothing came of this particular idea, the possibilities remained alive for Strand, who wrote: "The athletic phase interests me tremendously--is so really beautiful and the cleanest thing in the country."<sup>3</sup>

Eventually Strand was able to incorporate his admiration for athletic ability into his free-lance film work, but he did not actually realize an income from filming until June 1922, when he acquired an Akeley camera. Shortly before that, he had succeeded in making contact with a group of physicians who wished to form a company to make medical films for training. As a sample, Strand filmed a leg

operation with a rented Pathe camera and followed this with footage of a demonstration tonsillectomy, made with a provisionally acquired Akeley camera in the summer of 1922.<sup>4</sup> When the medical project fell through, an Akeley specialist attached to the Museum of Natural History persuaded Strand to purchase the camera for himself. Although he had no resources of his own with which to underwrite the twenty-five hundred dollar investment, the deal was made possible by an installment arrangement with the company, by contributions from his father and by a small inheritance left him by the recently deceased Nathaniel Meyers.<sup>5</sup>

Strand's first free-lance film income was made while waiting for the medical company to materialize. He photographed the wedding ceremony of a well-known comedian which took place on Long Island, to create a one-reel slapstick comedy in the tradition of the period. The assignment had come through William Kelley of MGM who, with Pat Garyn and Harold McCracken, became Strand's closest associate in the film business and who was responsible for many of his assignments.

From the beginning of his free-lance career, Strand conceived the idea of filming race horses and in 1923 he spent a summer and part of the fall photographing at both Saratoga and Belmont in an effort to interest owners and

trainers in the filmed record of their animals' performance. Eventually he was employed to film a wide range of sporting events, including Ivy League football games, tennis, polo and boxing matches as well as the races at Pimlico and Churchill Downs. In 1923 Strand started what became a yearly assignment--the filming of senior class activities and commencement exercises at Princeton University, which in turn led to assignments to do other Princeton events.

In addition to short takes of sporting and other events for newsreels, Strand occasionally supplied extra footage for feature-length films made in Hollywood. By 1924 he was photographing feature and documentary films, sometimes in their entirety, on the East Coast. Among the documentaries he worked on during the 'twenties were a film on the sewage system of Richmond, Virginia; a public relations film commissioned by Mayor Hague demonstrating the municipal services in Jersey City; a Boys Club film funded by the Rockefeller interests and shot in Ithaca, New York; and a two-reeler on the need for playgrounds, called Where The Sidewalk Begins.<sup>6</sup>

Strand's work on feature films included Johnny Hine's Crackerjack and The Live Wire, and features for Famous Players and MGM. The photography in Crackerjack was recognized as an integral part of the movie, more important even

than the story line in creating mood. An article that appeared in 1925, concurrent with the "Seven Americans" exhibition, which it mentioned, noted the

great demand for those photographers who possess knowledge not only of the mechanics of photography but who have artistic sense as well. It is primarily to these men that the artistic development of the motion picture is due. . . . Included among those photographers<sup>7</sup> whose work is highly lauded is Paul Strand.

Strand had a considerable number of free-lance assignments by the end of 1923 and a year later, more than he wished to handle. After his marriage in 1922, income from movie work, combined with that from Rebecca Strand's jobs, allowed the two to live comfortably but not extravagantly in the family brownstone and to invest in works of art and securities.<sup>8</sup> Film work continued throughout the decade and Strand was one of the first to join the newly created film union in 1925, but by the end of the 'twenties, free-lance film making was shifting to Hollywood. The Akeley camera had become outmoded when newly designed professional equipment was perfected on the West Coast and a smaller 16mm camera was marketed for amateur use. Although continual employment on films had been economically gratifying, Strand had often expressed resentment at the lack of time for still photography. In 1922 and 1923, while he was trying to establish himself, he had still been able to photograph in New York and at Lake George but his

only opportunities in the years following were the vacations of several weeks that he took at the end of summers. Therefore, despite the loss of income which the industry's move to the west represented, he welcomed the chance to return to still photography full time in 1932.

Strand's earliest film with artistic intent was produced prior to his acquisition of the Akeley and under different circumstances from his professional activities, outlined above. It was a product of his association with Charles Sheeler, during a period when Strand was anxious to re-insert himself into the cultural scene and had briefly turned to the Arensberg circle for stimulation when Stieglitz seemed preoccupied with domestic problems. As noted, Strand was already acquainted with Sheeler and the Arensberg circle artists, but although he admired Duchamp, and was outraged at the treatment of his Fountain exhibit at the 1917 Independent show,<sup>9</sup> he did not share their interest in Dada.

In 1919, his main contact with the Avant-garde was Sheeler. Their friendship lasted until 1923, but its most productive period occurred between 1919 and 1921 when they created a short film together. Sheeler had acquired a new French 35mm movie camera--a Debrie<sup>10</sup>--and the two investigated the possibility of making a film which would integrate

their interest in cubism with their excitement about the visual aspects of New York City. They began to shoot in lower Manhattan in early 1920, and continued until at least September, working without scenario or script. In many instances they gained access to the upper floors and roofs of downtown buildings and shot downward, accentuating the rectangular geometry of the city's architecture. They edited the film together but Strand could not recall whether Sheeler had owned a splicing machine or if they had cut it on a rented movieola.

Although now called Manhatta, the film appears to have been originally entitled Mannahatta,<sup>11</sup> with both titles and subtitles taken from several of Walt Whitman's 1861 poems. It opens with a Stieglitz-like approach shot of lower Manhattan from the bay and its debt to both Stieglitz and Coburn is evident throughout, as the camera picks out the ferry, the railroad yards and the windows of office buildings. Nevertheless, the film does not seem derivative. The relationship of the frames to each other and to the titles, the fine sense of movement in the shots of crowds and the sensitivity to shape, pattern and light in every sequence add up to a unique work. Although the city as film subject was not in itself new, in Manhatta, it was seen with freshness and vitality.

At first thought, the abundant sentiment in the Whitman work may seem at odds with Sheeler's cool and somewhat provincial sensibility. Neither the painter's work in general nor his later photograph, Hommage to Whitman, evokes the unruly passion of the poet. Strand's more intense urban outlook does not exactly accord with Whitman's exuberant optimism either, but evidently both artists were inspired to create a work that is alive with expressiveness. Strand indicated that he and Sheeler had attempted to capture

those elements which are expressive of the spirit of New York, of its power, beauty and movement.

The elusive spirit of the place, its essential life . . . . was not to be captured through any artifice of diffusion, photographic trickery or superficial picture making. Neither was it to be found by merely recording haphazard fashion, unrelated places of interest. Restricting themselvs. . . . to the towering geometry of lower Manhattan. . . . the photographers have tried to register directly the living forms in front of them and reduce through the most rigid selection, volume, lines and masses to their intensest terms of expressiveness. 12

This press release written by Strand, mentioned nothing of Whitman, probably because the film had already been retitled New York. the Magnificent. Between the film's completion towards the end of 1920 and its release in the summer of 1921, Strand usually referred to it as the 'scenic', rather than by title, so the relation of poetry to film remains somewhat enigmatic. More than a half

century after it was made, Strand wrote that Sheeler had "proposed that we might make a kind of experimental film about New York to-gether--a silent film carried along by the titles which we took from Walt Whitman's poem," but somewhat earlier he had not recalled who had suggested the idea originally.<sup>13</sup> It is no longer possible to determine at what point Whitman's words were incorporated or how great a part they played in the work, but after the film opened in July at the Rialto Theatre, the connection was developed in a long article in Arts and Decoration. Robert Allerton Parker noted that the photographers "give us the vision of Whitman in plastic poetry. . . . the spirit of Manhattan itself, Whitman's city of the world, Whitman's 'proud and passionate city.'"<sup>14</sup>

The importance of the text as a frame for visual imagery becomes apparent when one compares Manhatta with Robert Flaherty's Twenty Dollar Island, made in 1924-1925 with similar images and theme.<sup>15</sup> Lacking titles, the Flaherty film seems unstructured in comparison and the images of smoke and architecture which were used with telling effect in Manhatta appear in the later work to be endlessly repeated without apparent reason. The total effect is considerably less taut because its visual program is not anchored to a significant text or point of view.

In spite of a highly favorable press,<sup>16</sup> Manhatta/  
New York the Magnificent was not a popular success. This  
 was due to several factors, one of which may have been the  
 preference of New York intellectuals for avant-garde prod-  
 ucts of foreign origin which Parker had noted in his review.<sup>17</sup>  
 Strand himself had prophesied its probable lack of success,  
 which he attributed to the large number of "scenics" being  
 turned out by the newsreel companies for an undiscerning  
 audience.<sup>18</sup>

After its exhibition in the city, the film had an  
 unusual history. Prior to its release, Strand and Sheeler  
 had shown it around, winning the admiration of Arensberg,  
 DeZayas, Duchamp and Stanton Macdonald Wright.<sup>19</sup> It was  
 most probably through the efforts of Duchamp, that a print  
 of the film was dispatched to France. Retitled The Smoke  
of New York, and shown in 1923 at a Dada Festival in Paris  
 in a program that included a Man Ray film, music and verse  
 it was enthusiastically received although its message and  
 imagery were quite at odds with the nihilistic tone of much  
 European Dada production.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, despite the ex-  
 pression of interest in Germany, England and again in New  
 York, the film disappeared from view for about twenty five  
 years.<sup>21</sup>

As brief as this film was, it adumbrated an approach

that Strand returned to in later work in both film and photographic publications. By adhering to a strictly modern visual style, the photographers invested an historical work with contemporary significance. The Whitman texts might have been visualized by selecting historically appropriate symbols from among those still existing in New York--church spires, the slips and wharves of South Street, sailing vessels and period buildings. Instead, in order to project the meaning into the twentieth century, Strand and Sheeler sought images that reflected contemporary life--skyscrapers, girders, the elevated train tracks and railroad yards. Thus the democratic vistas announced in the literary work and implied in the shots of crowds on the ferry and in the streets, became connected with present-day aspirations instead of being thought of as happening in the past.

Sheeler's role in the making of the film, and in the larger context of his relationship to Strand, Stieglitz and photography, is a complex issue. As noted, Strand was not sure exactly who had suggested the film and it is no longer possible (and probably unnecessary) to determine who photographed what. The several stills from the film that have appeared in Vanity Fair<sup>22</sup> were not individually credited, either. One might assume that the images on which Sheeler based paintings, as well as the still photographs he made at

the time that are similar to film footage, reflect his contribution to the film. Some of Strand's contribution can likewise be surmised from the similar still photographs that exist of railroad yards and steamships, and excavations (Fig. 64) made during the same period or earlier. Strand undoubtedly suggested the Wall Street scene of the people hurrying past the Morgan Trust Building, which was filmed from the same spot as his earlier Wall Street. (Fig. 29)<sup>23</sup> Both artists shared the burden of publicizing the film, with Strand writing the release and Sheeler arranging the spread in Vanity Fair.

An undercurrent of competition began to appear with the publication of two spreads about Sheeler in Vanity Fair in early 1921.<sup>24</sup> In addition to reproducing Sheeler's photograph of a downtown office building and his painting, Church Street El (Fig. 65), both articles noted the stimulus of New York architecture for artists, but mentioned neither Strand, the film, nor the fact that Church Street El was based on a photograph. The Vanity Fair layout of stills from the movie did not mention the film, either. Strand must have found the magazine's treatment especially irritating because at the time he considered it to be the best outlet for photography and criticism and would have liked to see his own work appear in its pages.<sup>25</sup>

Strand's mistrustfulness was furthered by Stieglitz's barely concealed irritation at the amount of time and effort the film was taking.<sup>26</sup> Despite this, Strand sought his advice about sending the work abroad with DeZayas. Although Stieglitz himself had already referred to the film as "Sheeler's abstract movie," he now responded that

Paris will know the film as Sheeler's work even if you are originally mentioned. It will be Sheeler and Strand and then Sheeler.<sup>27</sup>

However, the particular issue over which the friendship between Sheeler and Strand ended was unrelated to the film and did not occur until 1923, although somewhat earlier Strand appears to have expressed his belief that Sheeler's values were being traduced by the commercialism of the marketplace.<sup>28</sup> In a review of Stieglitz's exhibition, Sheeler praised the photographer's new work but suggested that the scarcity of platinum paper, brought about by the war, had been beneficial because it had forced Stieglitz to use silver papers which, to Sheeler, were more vigorous in tonality and less "precious" than platinum prints.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the article approved the standardization of photographic materials at a time when both Strand and Stieglitz were incensed by the fact that their choice of materials was constricting instead of expanding.

Stieglitz considered the review asinine,<sup>30</sup> but it

was Strand who attempted to point out, in a letter to The Arts, that platinum paper had nothing to do with preciousness but was used because of its permanence. After suggesting that Sheeler's photographic knowledge was quasi-technical, he added

no one material is the material. One uses whatever is best suited to be expressed and for the intelligent worker the deprivation of any material which Mr. Sheeler looks on as a benefit, is an exceedingly doubtful one. . . . the idea of preciousness is extrinsic and irrelevant. It exists only in Mr. Sheeler's mind and has. . . . little to do with the real values of photography and the Stieglitz photographs in particular. . . . The real meance in the use of materials is not preciousness but standardization, and as . . . many of Mr. Sheeler's own photographs, made exclusively on gaslight papers, make one unpleasantly aware of material first and content second, it is possible that standardization is possible in any material. (Emphasis in original.) 31

In addition to the discussion of materials, Strand suggested that Sheeler was "disingenuous" because in the review the painter had asked: "How long before photography shall be accorded an importance not less worthy than painting or music as a vehicle for the transmission of ideas?" but had not acknowledged the photographic source of his own painting, reproduced in the same issue of The Arts. This work, Church Street E1 (Fig. 65) was used in Forbes Watson's review of Sheeler's paintings, which also did not mention the role of photography in the painter's vision.<sup>32</sup> On Watson's suggestion that the language of the letter consti-

tuted a personal attack on Sheeler, Strand softened the wording, but Sheeler still reacted by accusing him of being Stieglitz's mouthpiece.<sup>33</sup>

One senses more significant disagreements at work in the controversy than merely an argument over platinum paper. After Strand had shown Stieglitz Sheeler's answer to his letter, Stieglitz wrote:

Sheeler's letter to you . . . is proof that Sheeler has something very wrong about me in his make-up. And has had for sometime. What it's all about I don't know.<sup>34</sup>

Despite this disclaimer, Stieglitz must have realized that his enthusiasm for Sheeler's work had passed. Both he and Strand ridiculed the painter's notion that his images "must contain the absolute beauty we are accustomed to associate with objects in a vacuum,"<sup>35</sup> and they took the standardization argument to mean that Sheeler considered photography less important than painting. In a sense, the quarrel over platinum paper was the final event in their growing disagreement over the nature of photography as it applied to personal expression and to commerce.<sup>36</sup>

With the exception of Manhatta, Strand's film work during the 'twenties was pursued solely for economic reasons. Nevertheless, the experience gained in this commercial enterprise, as well as that associated with Manhatta, was significant in preparing the way for his ventures in expressive

film-making during the following decade. It is doubtful that he would have been in a position to express the political and social ideas of Redes and Native Land without the ten years experience filming a wide range of subjects under a variety of conditions.

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 4

1. According to Paul Sann, The Lawless Decade (New York: Crown Publishers, 1957), p. 17, in 1919 the pre-war dollar was worth 45 cents in terms of buying power. Stieglitz noted his "ever increasing emptiness of purse" in Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 19 July 1921, PSA/CCP, one of a number of similar complaints in this and succeeding years.
2. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 3 August 1921, ASA/YU, indicates that he and Sheeler inquired about a French camera (cost 3,000 dollars) which would film at one hundred and thirty times normal speed. The name of the camera was not mentioned.
3. Ibid.
4. Interview with Paul Strand, 24 February 1975, NYC. Strand found the Akeley exceptional because it could follow a moving object smoothly. Among its distinguishing features were a focal plane shutter with large opening giving maximum exposure and chains of centrifugal gears in the tripod head which allowed one to move the camera in any direction with one handle. The magazine held only 200 feet of film. Camera and case of magazines weighed over 90 pounds. In Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz. 11 July 1922, ASA/YU, reference is made to medical films.
5. The inheritance appears to have facilitated the marriage of Strand and Rebecca Salsbury, also. In October 1922, Rebecca Strand gave Strand a cash gift which amortized the camera.
6. Information about commercial film activities from Interview with Paul Strand 24 February 1975, NYC.
7. "Cameraman's Mood, Big Factor in Films That Would Succeed," Variety, March 1925, p.42, undated clipping in Paul Strand Scrapbook, PSA/CCP.
8. The economic advantages of the living arrangements were offset by Rebecca Strand's dislike of the domestic atmosphere in the senior Strand's household. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 6 August 1924, PSA/CCP.

9. See note 5, Chapter 7
10. The Debrrie Parvo "cinematograph" camera was manufactured in France; with the mechanism housed in a wood case it was lightweight--about 13 pounds--held 400 feet of film and cost 1,800 francs. General Catalogue (Paris: J. Debrrie, 1914), in Archives of the International Museum of Photography, Rochester, New York.
11. There is some disagreement about the original title. Richard Shale, who has investigated the matter and has kindly shared his information with me, believes Manhatta to be the original spelling. However, Strand claimed that the title was taken directly from the Whitman poem, in which case it would be Mannahatta; Interview with Paul Strand, 31 March 1975, NYC. As Strand never referred to the film by title in correspondence, and reviews referred to it as New York, the Magnificent, its release title, there is no evidence of the spelling used in 1921. Although in later correspondence, Strand referred to it as Manahatta, I have used Manhatta, the title by which it is currently known.
12. Paul Strand, Press Release for New York, the Magnificent, undated typescript, PSA/CCP. The release noted also that the Whitman titles had been put on the film by the Rialto Theatre, New York.
13. Paul Strand to Richard Shales, 31 March 1975, copy in PSA/CCP. In Paul Strand to Charles Millard III, 13 October 1965, copy in PSA/CCP, Strand wrote: "Who suggested we make some film of New York, I do not recall." Strand recalled the date of the film as 1921, but the film was begun in 1920.
14. Robert Allerton Parker, "The Art of the Camera; An Experimental Movie," Arts and Decoration 15 (October 1921):369.
15. According to the Film Department, Museum of Modern Art, New York, the exact date of the Flaherty film has not been established. Strand refers to it in March 1925 in Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 3 March 1925, PSA/CCP.
16. Reviews of New York, the Magnificent appeared in the following: New York American, July 25, 1921, p.12; New York Herald, July 25, 1921, p.7; Evening Journal,

July 25, 1921, unpagged clipping in Paul Strand Scrapbook, PSA/CCP; Brooklyn Daily Eagle, July 26, 1921, p.17; Morning Telegraph, July 26, 1921, p.5; New York Tribune, July 26, 1921, p.6.

17. The same point in reference to painting had been made somewhat earlier by Willard Huntington Wright, "The New Painting and American Snobbery," Arts and Decoration 7(January 1917):129-30.
18. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 3 August 1921, ASA/YU: "There were six favorable notices. . . . in spite of these I fear we will not be able to distribute it generally. Apparently everybody has been making a reel of New York."
19. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 26 October 1920, PSA/CCP: "So your film is in California. I am glad that Arensburg and DeZayas were so pleased. I am sure the film is way above the usual thing." In Stanton MacDonald Wright to Paul Strand, 5 July 1921, PSA/CCP, Wright prophesied that the film would not have popular appeal.
20. Duchamp suggested a friend to expedite the film's exhibition in Paris according to Marcel Duchamp to Paul Strand, 8 August 1922, PSA/CCP, but it is not clear who made the final arrangements. The film was "applauded and cheered" when shown at the Theatre Michel on 7 July 1923, according to Jane Heap, The Little Review Exiles Number (Spring 1923):27-28.
21. In 1925, a German director, Mayo Wadler, discussed exhibiting the film in Germany. See Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 24 September 1925, PSA/CCP. According to Richard Shale, it was shown in London in 1926. When the negative was acquired by Symon Gould of the Film Arts Guild in 1927, Strand and Sheeler agreed to the deletion of their names from the credits in exchange for 50 percent of the proceeds from distribution. See Symon Gould to Paul Strand, 7 July, 1927, PSA/CCP. A copy of the film was discovered in the National Film Archives of Great Britain in 1950; this appears to have been the print shown in London in 1926.
22. "Manhattan--The Proud and Passionate City," Vanity Fair, April 1922, p.51.

23. Both were shot from the steps of the Sub-Treasury Building, looking across and down to the Morgan Trust Company Building. The scene in the film was most probably shot on 16 September 1920. Strand recalled that an explosion had occurred shortly after they had finished shooting. On that day a bomb exploded in the Morgan Trust Company. Interview with Paul Strand, 28 January 1976, Orgeval.
24. "Cubist Architecture in New York," Vanity Fair, January 1921, p.72, featured a Sheeler photograph of office buildings in lower Manhattan. "Above the Turmoil of New York," Vanity Fair, April 1921, p.47, reproduced Church Street El by Sheeler.
25. After noting that he would much prefer to see his work in Vanity Fair than in Broom, Strand added: "Rosenfeld has a mighty good medium there, despite its cheapness." Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 25 July 1922, ASA/YU.
26. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 21 July 1920, PSA/CCP: "I hope you'll be through with your movie soon so as to have it off your mind. . . . I suppose in my state of physical irritation it was just as well I didn't see it."
27. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 9 August 1920 and 13 September 1921, PSA/CCP.
28. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 16 September 1920, PSA/CCP: "What you write about Sheeler is true. . . . It's really pathetic. New York is certainly a blood-sucker." These remarks suggest that Strand had referred to Sheeler's commercial activities.
29. Charles Sheeler, "Recent Photographs by Alfred Stieglitz," The Arts 3 (May 1923):345-46.
30. Alfred Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, 27 June 1923, ASA/YU: "As I think of Sheeler's article, I feel he certainly was all ass as he wrote it."
31. Paul Strand, "Letter to the Editor, The Arts," typescript, 1 June 1923, PSA/CCP. A letter on the same subject was published in the Sun and The Globe, 27 June 1923, p.20.

32. Forbes Watson, "Charles Sheeler," The Arts 3 (May 1923):335-44. Church Street El reproduced p.344.
33. Forbes Watson to Paul Strand, 13 June 1923, PSA/CCP. Watson suggests that "disingenuousness" is a serious accusation. Charles Sheeler to Paul Strand, 22 June 1923, PSA/CCP: "Any exception that Stieglitz may have taken, through you, to my article, is quite alright." (My emphasis.)
34. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 28 June 1923, PSA/CCP.
35. As quoted in Thomas J. Craven, "Charles Sheeler," Shadowland 8(March 1923):71. Stieglitz and the Strands referred to this statement in several letters viz., Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 26 July 1923; Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 9 July 1923, both ASA/YU; Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 12 July 1923, PSA/CCP.
36. Strand visited Sheeler, whom he had not seen for a number of years, during Sheeler's last illness and presented him with a photograph he had taken in the South of France. After his death, the image was ascribed to Sheeler in Peter Pollack, Pictorial History of Photography (New York: Harry N. Abrams Co., Inc., 1969), p.254.

## CHAPTER 5

### PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE NINETEEN-TWENTIES

In the 'twenties it was less easy to maintain the distinction between art and other kinds of photography as photographs were more widely used for advertising, publicity and illustration. Nearly all photographic images, other than those made by academic pictorialists, were now sharp and distinct, with little or no obvious handwork on negative or print.<sup>1</sup> Within this broad scene, one can discern three main tendencies. One direction reflected the continuation of nineteenth-century romantic idealism. A second trend, the avant-garde, involved both abstraction and technical manipulation and was frequently associated with the expression of Dada and Surrealist ideas. The third current, situated in the mainstream of American visual art of the period, concentrated on objective reality and was concerned with expressing the inherent qualities of 'the thing itself' without sentimentality or narrative.

The romantic idealism that had characterized much early twentieth-century photographic imagery, from the Secessionists to Hine, had become an outmoded style by 1920,

although it still informed the work of Lewis Hine, who continued his efforts to invest humble subject matter with beauty and dignity by emphasizing their humanity. On returning to the United States in 1920 after an overseas assignment with the American Red Cross, Hine had decided to celebrate the qualities of the American working class in photographs.<sup>2</sup> Because his earlier experiences had been mainly in social photography, he began to investigate the realm of art photography in order to have his work exhibited as well as reproduced. Despite an attempt to understand the new aesthetic,<sup>3</sup> Hine's humanism led him to emphasize the individual worker in a series of images devoted to man and the machine (Fig. 66). Although his stylistic solutions are often very inventive, his old-fashioned humanism was (and still is) considered sentimental by many.

With similar intention but considerably less originality, Doris Ulmann, a photographer trained at Clarence White's school, portrayed rural Southerners, stressing their craft traditions and their attachment to the land in occasionally moving, if somewhat stilted, portraits (Fig. 67). Her scope was narrow and her romanticism more marked than Hine's, perhaps because her subjects represented a vanishing aspect of provincial American life which Ulmann admired.

By 1920, Stieglitz had been photographing for nearly

forty years. Because of his deep involvement with modern art, his inherently nineteenth-century romantic vision had been overlaid with a patina of the new aesthetic developments in the visual arts. More precisely, Stieglitz seemed able to integrate modern concepts of picture-making with his basic view that art must express the creative individual's emotional response to life. During the 'twenties, he found the metaphors for his isolation from the photographic and art scene in images of sky and clouds, which he rationalized in a short piece: "How I Came to Photograph Clouds."<sup>4</sup>

Possibly because the object photographed--the sky--was so distant, it dematerialized in Stieglitz's photographic images, becoming an apt embodiment of his feelings at the time. Although there is no doubt that the cloud images (Fig. 68) represent his despair, they have been often misunderstood and their expressive value has been emphasized out of all proportion to the remainder of Stieglitz's great body of work which, as he said, were all "Equivalents" in terms of feeling.<sup>5</sup> While Stieglitz lived until 1946, he was too ill to photograph much after the mid-thirties. The views he made of New York during his last productive years represent a complete integration of inner vision and outer reality in their evocation of the arrogant visual splendor of the city he both loved and hated (Fig. 69).

Coburn and Steichen were the only two Secessionists besides Stieglitz whose work reflected the changes brought about by Modernism. Steichen's career was mainly in advertising photography and will be discussed presently. Although Coburn lived until mid-century, his experimentation with abstract photography was short-lived. Around 1917, influenced by the English Vorticist movement, he produced completely non-objective works, called Vortographs (Fig. 70), using a kaleidoscope-like device attached to the camera. A small group of images made in England after the war--of Liverpool Cathedral under construction--suggest that he was aware of the machine aesthetic in the visual arts but for the remainder of his life he was more concerned with mystic systems of thought than with photography.

Coburn's particular kind of abstract imagery had no American imitators, but an impulse towards radical abstraction and avant-garde manipulation was experienced by a small group of native photographers. In photography, completely abstract images can be obtained in two basic ways. Using the camera to record a portion of the visible spectrum, the photographer can frame, excise, and alter the scale of objects in such a way as to destroy normal relationship and appearance, as Strand did in Porch Shadow (Fig. 40). Or, distorting elements can be added to the camera, as in

Coburn's case. Or, the photographer might actually create that contradiction in terms, the non-objective object, as Francis Bruguière did when he made cut paper shapes and by controlled lighting and camera position suggested an abstract play of light and shadow (Fig. 71). Despite his intention, however, it is often impossible to avoid the strong sense of reality which the camera lens imparts and a number of Bruguière's abstractions suggest an appealing but empty stage set rather than a non-objective play of light and form.<sup>6</sup> Bruguière, a well-known theatrical photographer, was the only American of note to make such images as well as multiple exposures (Fig. 72). In 1928 he left the United States for England, where he devoted himself entirely to experimental work; his images were given large representation in the "Film Und Foto" exhibition held in Stuttgart in 1929.

Abstraction in photography is more easily achieved by eliminating the camera altogether and exposing sensitized paper to varying degrees of light passing through varying densities of material. Photograms--cameraless images--while not strictly photography, appealed to the American artist Man Ray, who experimented with this technique after he took up residence in France in 1920. His images, called Rayographs (Fig. 73), were sometimes abstract, sometimes

surreal, often ironic. Since practically all his work--straight photographs as well as avant-garde images--were produced abroad, his effect on the American scene was minimal despite the fact that several were reproduced in The Little Review and Broom. His work was dismissed by DeZayas, who felt that it consisted of tricks without feeling,<sup>7</sup> and neither Strand nor Stieglitz appears to have expressed any interest in it at all.

In general, cameraless photography did not appeal to American photographers until after Laszlo Moholy-Nagy became associated with the Chicago School of Design in 1937. Surrealist and Dada ideas as exemplified in the work of Hannah Hoch and John Heartfield were of even less concern to native photographers in spite of widespread interest in psychoanalysis in artistic and intellectual circles. Generally speaking, the elements of irony and ridicule, a sense of the bizarre, or intimations of society's irrationality were foreign to the American artistic temperament and vision which was still animated by Positivism during the twenties.

The mainstream style of 'twenties art in America was Precisionism. As has been pointed out, it was not a 'school' and its adherents did not exhibit as a group.<sup>8</sup> In photography, as in painting, iconography and approach var-

ied considerably within a defineable range. Sharp-edged photographic images might concentrate on the object itself, stressing contour and structure, or might emphasize relationships or be concerned with formal design elements. Like the painters of the period, Precisionist photographers might confront the urban milieu with its architecture and machinery or the world of nature, with its rock and floral forms, or both.

West Coast photographers, in particular Edward Weston and Imogen Cunningham, crossed the divide from soft-focus sentimentality to sharply defined and objectively seen imagery at the beginning of the 'twenties. Weston, a well-known Salon prize-winner, photographed the Armco refinery in Middleton, Ohio (Fig. 74) on his way east to show his work to Stieglitz in 1922. His images emphasize the geometry and volume of the huge stacks and piles and are different in both content and style from his previous work, although his dissatisfaction with pictorialism had been developing for some time.<sup>9</sup> Weston was later to note that he had made "great" photographs that day in Ohio, but the significance of industrial America did not interest him.

While it may not have been crucial to his development, Weston's visit with Stieglitz and Strand in 1922 confirmed his new aesthetic direction. The portraits and

views made soon after demonstrate his ability to accommodate the new aesthetic, especially in the simple backgrounds and sharp definition of the expressive heads (Fig. 75). In these images 'the thing itself' is still informed by an interest in human expression and gesture but in later works Weston isolated objects such as an artichoke (Fig. 76) or a bedpan, from their contextual background and carefully lighted them to emphasize design and pattern. The human figure, particularly the nude (Fig. 77) was treated in the same manner. Towards the end of the 'twenties, Weston was able to integrate both concerns; in the Point Lobos landscapes he created imagery in which formal elegance is wedded to respect for the objective character of the landscape.

Like Strand, Weston was critical of many aspects of twentieth-century industrial society, most particularly the debased quality of mass-produced goods and mass-directed culture, but Weston attributed the spiritual morass to city life. His personal solutions--cultism, bohemianism and escape to Mexico--were responses that Strand considered self-indulgent. Strand recalled that on the occasion of Weston's visit in 1922, both he and Stieglitz had similar reservations about Weston's work, although Stieglitz attributed the negative reaction to Strand alone.<sup>10</sup> Stieglitz's pri-

vate comments to Strand somewhat later support Strand's recollection; referring to Weston's debt to himself and Strand, he characterized him as "not creative".<sup>11</sup>

Whether Strand was aware of the work of Imogen Cunningham during the early 'twenties is unknown, but later he felt that her imagery had the same limitations as Weston's, that is, it was decorative. For her part, Cunningham knew of Strand's photographs from Camera Work and thought them "eccentric" and too involved with the cubist aesthetic.<sup>12</sup> Her own work of the period before the 'twenties was embarrassingly sentimental, but a move to San Francisco resulted in new subjects and new vision. She turned to portraits and nature studies, making extreme close-ups of plant and animal forms seemingly divorced from their natural habitat (Fig. 78) in a manner akin to the German photographer Albert Renger-Patzsch.<sup>13</sup> By emphasizing line, shape and texture, plant forms took on an extraordinary aspect to become elegant artifices rather than living organisms.

Although superficially they seem similar to what Strand was doing with machine forms, Cunningham's work seems less concerned with ideas and more with the design qualities of the image. This emphasis on form, despite the sometimes very American subject matter, made both Cunning-

ham's and Weston's photographs stylistically consistent with a number of other entries in the most significant European photography exhibition of 1929, "Film Und Foto", which Weston, in fact, helped organize. In effect, both artists contributed an American version of Neue Sachlichkeit, a style featured in the German section of the exhibition. This concept, exemplified in the work of Renger-Patzsch, emphasized the precise and unambiguous rendition of objects--both organic and manufactured--with great attention given the repetition of pattern and design in nature and artifact.

Of the Westerners, only Dorothea Lange, then a young studio photographer in San Francisco, attempted to integrate the new aesthetic with a statement about the human condition, as in her portrait of a Hopi Indian (Fig. 79), made in 1923. While not as overtly political as her later work was to become, this sharply seen and closely cropped head expresses something of the tragic history of the Indian in America without sentimentality or romanticism. Her work of the time was unknown to Strand and Stieglitz because until the 'thirties she was mainly involved with studio portraiture.<sup>14</sup>

Understandably precisionist photographers in the East were more concerned with machine forms and urban geometry

than their West Coast counterparts. Aside from Strand and Sheeler, whose 'twenties work will be discussed presently, the most interesting East Coast Precisionist of the time was Paul Outerbridge, who noted his interest in Strand's early work in diary entry of 1923.<sup>15</sup> He created spare still-lives and abstractions from ordinary objects such as cracker boxes, crankshafts and telephones (Fig. 80). His studies of nudes and a small group of New York views suggest his considerable feeling and his ability to handle the Precisionist aesthetic but after several years as a photographer for Conde Nast publications, he went abroad to live. When he returned in 1929, he became involved with the Carbro color process and never realized the strong potential of the early work.

Towards the end of the decade and into the early 'thirties, the Precisionist abstract aesthetic began to characterize illustrative photography and even the work of conservative pictorialists displayed its influence. Among those who emphasized geometric form and machined objects were the photo-journalists Margaret Bourke-White (Fig. 81), Lewis Hine (Fig. 82), William Rittase, Thurman Rotan and Ralph Steiner (Fig. 83). Pictorialists whose images showed awareness of Precisionist ideas were Henry Hoyt Moore (Fig. 84), Edward Dickson and Ira Martin (Fig. 85). Late Pre-

cisionism was best exemplified by the photographs exhibited in "Murals by American Painters and Photographers" at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932; of the twelve photographers shown, nearly all, including Edward Steichen, had chosen industrial or geometric subjects for their entries.<sup>16</sup>

Edward Steichen's work of the twenties is difficult to categorize because the major part was made for commercial use. As a result of his deep interest in modern art, his photographic compositions had become more abstractly conceived and crisper by 1914, an approach further spurred by his activities as a photographer for the Air Services during the War. After giving up painting in the early twenties, he attempted to integrate Jay Hambidge's theory of Dynamic Symmetry with his own concept that all forms in the natural world are visually related.<sup>17</sup> On the whole, photographs based on this principle, such as Shell (Fig. 86), seem to have little effective content and are not especially interesting visually.

When Steichen finally returned to the United States in 1923, he was able to make a commercial connection with the Condé Nast Publishing Company, which assured an outlet (and income) for his remarkable facility and his eye for decorative effect. His ability to quickly grasp character and translate it into appropriate plastic imagery, first

demonstrated in the 1903 photograph of J. P. Morgan, endowed his 'twenties portraits of celebrities (Fig. 87) with exceptional style and probity, while his incorporation of modern aesthetic ideas into images for fashion, textiles (Fig. 88) and decorative murals was always inventive and visually stimulating. In effect, Steichen brought advertising photography into the modern era during the 'twenties.

It was Steichen's attitude about advertising photography rather than the work itself that irritated Strand and Stieglitz. Although both understood the necessity of earning a living in photography, they deplored Steichen's refusal to separate the aims of expressive and commercial photography. They were especially incensed when, in 1929, Carl Sandburg wrote the text for a book on his brother-in-law's work which rationalized American corporations as new "medicis".<sup>18</sup> Steichen (through Sandburg) suggested that the best art had always been produced under commercial patronage. In an exchange in the *New Republic*,<sup>19</sup> both Paul Rosenfeld and Strand pointed out that the expression of religious ideas and philosophical beliefs, even though supported by the ruling classes of ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy, could not be equated with the sale of products whose sole aim was to make money. Steichen's refusal to acknowledge this crucial difference provided the basis

of the disagreement and may explain why the "Film Und Foto" exhibition, which was organized by Steichen as well as by Weston, did not exhibit work by either Strand or Stieglitz.

In the late nineteen-twenties a new vision in photography was making itself apparent. It derived from the capabilities of a 1914 German invention--the Leica, a camera with small negative size (35 mm), fast lens and rapid film advancement. No two pieces of equipment could be more antithetical in method of operation than the Leica and the view camera. Thirty-five millimeter equipment can be carried anywhere and used under very poor light conditions without tripod--frequently undetected by the subject. Tonal values, spatial relationships and even form and shape may become distorted in the final image but the mechanism can capture fleeting expression and movement and the photographer can recreate ephemeral moments of pain, joy or tension.

Because the small size negative was frequently processed by technicians in a laboratory, small camera usage resulted in a different attitude toward the photographic print, which was no longer regarded as an intrinsic part of the creative process. First marketed around 1925, the small format camera became the equipment of choice in photo-journalism, which was just getting started in Europe

in the late 'twenties. Although its widespread use in America did not begin until the 'thirties--photo-journalists like Margaret Bourke-White were still using Graflex equipment in 1929 to photograph industrial scenes for magazines --Walker Evans's first expressive work was done in 1928 with a 35mm camera.

Another factor in the changing conception of the medium towards the end of the decade derived from increased awareness of popular modes in photography. As the country as a whole became more conscious of indigenous culture, the lack of pretentiousness in popular photography became attractive. Among the first to incorporate these visual references in his work was Walker Evans, who began using the Leica in 1928 to make photographs in New York City. Evans, who had no formal training in photography or any of the visual arts, was repelled by both Stieglitz's aestheticism and Steichen's commercialism. In Strand's Blind Woman he found a compelling image of the artist's self-effacement in relation to his subject, an attitude that represented the way he wished to photograph.<sup>20</sup>

In Traffic, New York, 1929 (Fig. 89) Evans recreated the staccato and anxious atmosphere of the time, just as Strand had invested his New York scenes with the tension and turbulence of an earlier period. Evans' attraction to

bits of lettering and portions of architecture also parallels Strand's interest in these objects except that in Strand's case the inspiration derived from modern Cubism while Evans looked to popular culture rather than high art. Despite wide difference in attitude and style both Evans and Strand believed that the photographic description of reality must be made compelling by a vitalizing insight, which Strand termed understanding and Evans called intuition.

In sum, the work of the outstanding photographers of the nineteen-twenties represented a broad spectrum in regard to both subject matter and treatment, although the major style was unquestionably Precisionism. Furthermore, the previous sharp distinctions between photographs made for aesthetic enjoyment as opposed to those with a commercial or social purpose were becoming less significant. Within this context, Strand's photography represented an effort to maintain aesthetic standards at the same time that the photographer was moving toward greater understanding of the nature of social forces with which he hoped to imbue his work with additional meaning and nuance. This voyage of discovery will be discussed in the following chapter.

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 5

1. Actually, the new fields of advertising and fashion photography required the retouching of negatives to remove flaws and improve the image. The intervention usually was not visible, nor was it meant to make the image look 'artistic'. So-called straight commercial photography may have more hidden handwork than even pictorial photographs.
2. In Elizabeth McCausland, "Portrait of a Photographer," Survey Graphic 27(October 1938):503, Hine is quoted as follows: "I wanted to do something positive. . . . why not do the worker at work? The man on the job."
3. After seeing the 1921 exhibition of Stieglitz's work, Hine noted Stieglitz's "fatalism, humanity, affirmation and belief in himself." Lewis W. Hine to Frank A. Manny, 18 February 1921, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library. See also Note 17, Chapter 2.
4. Alfred Stieglitz, "How I Came to Photograph Clouds," Amateur Photographer and Photography (London) 56(September 19, 1923):255.
5. Ibid., "Through clouds to put down the philosophy of my life." Also, as quoted in Norman, Alfred Stieglitz, p.161: "What is of greatest importance is to hold a moment, to record something so completely that those who see it will relive an equivalent of what is being expressed."
6. Sadakichi Hartmann, "Letter to Francis Bruguière," as quoted in James Enyeart, Bruguière, His Photographs and His Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p.77. Hartmann suggested that the abstractions revealed "too much the knife, the cut, the sharp incision."
7. Marius DeZayas to Alfred Stieglitz, 3 August 1922, ASA/YU.
8. Milton W. Brown, The Modern Spirit (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1977), p.52. (Essay on photography by Naomi Rosenblum, pp. 76-78.)

9. Ben Maddow, Edward Weston (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, Inc., 1973), p.37.
10. Ibid., p.44.
11. Ibid., Stieglitz is quoted as having told Weston that Strand did not think highly of his work although Strand recalled that both he and Stieglitz had shared the same opinion about Weston. Interview with Paul Strand, 25 July 1975, NYC. See also, Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 2 September 1928, PSA/CCP.
12. Maddow, Weston, p.38.
13. Albert Renger-Patzsch is the best-known German exponent of the new realism, or Neue Sachlichkeit. His photography is known in the United States mainly through the publication, Die Welt ist Schön (Munich: K. Wolff, 1928).
14. According to Milton Meltzer, Dorothea Lange: A Photographer's Life (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, forthcoming July 1978), the photographer and her husband, Maynard Dixon, stayed in a cottage on the Luhan property in 1930 while Strand was there also, but they did not meet.
15. Graham Howe, "Paul Outerbridge, 1896-1958," Creative Camera (London) 163(January 1978):23.
16. Murals by American Painters and Photographers (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1932). Photographer participants were Abbott, Bratter, Duryea and Lochner, Gerlach, Lynes, Little and Levy, Rittase, Rotan, Simon, Sheeler, Steichen, and Swank.
17. For Steichen's discussion of his search for an underlying discipline see Edward Steichen, A Life in Photography (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1963) unpagged. For a discussion of early twentieth century art theory, see Milton W. Brown, "Twentieth Century Nostrums: Pseudo Scientific Theory in American Painting," Magazine of Art LXI (March 1948):98-101.
18. Carl Sandburg, Steichen, The Photographer (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929), p.53.

19. Paul Rosenfeld, "Carl Sandburg and Photography," New Republic 61(January 22, 1930):251-53; Paul Strand, "Steichen and Commercial Art," New Republic 62(February 19, 1930):21. In Van Wyck Brooks, An Autobiography, (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1965), p.261, the author misses the main point when he notes that "the trouble was that Steichen had broken the unwritten code . . . by using photographs in advertising."
20. Walker Evans (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1971), p.11.

## CHAPTER 6

### STRAND'S PHOTOGRAPHY: 1919-1932

From 1920 until 1932, Strand's activities included film-making (discussed in Chapter 4), still photography and critical writing. Although an artist's precepts about art and experience are inseparable from his imagery, for the purpose of clarity I have attempted to isolate Strand's ideas, and to consider them within the context of his critical writing after first discussing his still photography. Therefore, this chapter will be concerned with the range and extent of his imagery, followed by one dealing with his published and unpublished critical writing and the concepts embodied therein.

Strand produced a considerable body of still photography in New York City between 1919 and 1924, despite time-consuming work in free-lance film during the last two of these years. In some cases he returned to themes that he had confronted before his army service, photographing still-lives, street views and machinery with new equipment and

greater insight into formal problems. In other cases, he treated a perennial subject--the portrait--in a new way. He also began to contend with completely new subjects in the forms of nature--rocks, leaves, tree growth--problems in which he became more interested towards the middle of the decade. Following his return from the Army, Strand made no further images as abstract as the group he had photographed at Twin Lakes in 1916, but the formal understanding he had gained from that experience informed all the images of the twenties.

His first extended body of work after returning was a series of still-lives. These were undoubtedly made in an attempt to take up where he had left off photographically. Also, as he wrote Stieglitz in 1919, the project represented an opportunity to test newly purchased equipment on a photographic problem with which he was already familiar:

I've been photographing everyday for the past four days, trying out the protar on some still lifes--the first since those in Camera Work. Ransacked the kitchen for bowls, eggs, platters. . . . a real adventure using portrait film and have really gotten quality and plasticity that the earlier things never dreamed of having. 1

Strand's desire for new equipment must be attributed in part to his experiences photographing medical subjects in the Army. The new lenses gave him increased sharpness and definition as well as greater flexibility in regard to posi-

tion--all qualities derived from his involvement with scientific photography. (Strand's equipment and procedure will be discussed in Appendix I).

In photography as in painting, still-life is an especially aesthetic genre in that it involves the artful arrangement of objects removed from functional context. As a consequence of Strand's desire to treat this material objectively, a sense of disharmony in the image occasionally results as attention to formal design and interest in objective description create tension between objectivity and aesthetics. Stieglitz avoided the problem altogether, but photographers such as Cunningham, De Meyer, Outerbridge, Sheeler, Steichen and Weston handled the complexities of photographic still-life with varying degrees of success. In fact, Sheeler's photograph, Zinnia and Nasturtium Leaves of 1915 (Fig. 90) was reproduced in Vanity Fair to indicate that a traditional painting subject could be effectively handled in photography.<sup>2</sup> In photographs, drawings and paintings made during the 'twenties, Sheeler often used materials similar to those Strand selected for his still life arrangements--black bottles, white pitchers, objects with smooth surfaces--but Sheeler's composition is both simpler and more spatially logical. His careful disposition of volumes and tonalities exude an aura of tranquillity that

is completely at odds with the restlessness one senses in Strand's still-lives.

In view of the written evidence about his photographic activities in 1919, Strand's still-life photographs as previously noted, present a dating problem. At present, all still-lives are dated 1915 and 1916; I have endeavored to show that those assigned to 1915 by Strand should be dated 1916. On observation the still-life images seem to separate into two groups, but despite this and the previously cited letter, none can definitely be assigned to 1919. In one group, the shapes create an almost abstract image, with reference to texture and contour minimal, as in Abstraction--Bowls (Fig. 37) or Abstraction--Cups and Oranges (Fig. 38). In addition, the image may be turned in any direction. The edges are not sharp and the tonal values are regulated so that there is little strong contrast in contiguous areas. In the other group, which includes images such as Black Bottle (Fig. 91, presently dated 1915), the entire picture space has been similarly used to create interesting shapes and patterns, but there is considerably less interference with the reality of the objects portrayed. The forms appear to have been delineated with a sharper lens and there is more contrast in tonal values.

In view of Strand's experiences with medical photog-

raphy it would be logical to suggest that the more strongly defined still-lives are those referred above, and were made in New York in 1919 and not at Twin Lakes in 1916, except for the fact that in one image, the table on which the black jug stands, appears to be placed on the grass. It is possible that some 1919 still-lives were made at Twin Lakes and some in the city or that the images made in Strand's New York house no longer exist, although the photographer was not in the habit of destroying work unless there were important reasons. However, until further evidence presents itself, the dating of Strand's still-lives must remain uncertain.

After 1919, Strand made no further still life photographs other than those he found in situ. Instead, he turned to objects that had no such artistic pretensions and that conveyed more contemporary meanings. This direction, which had been forecast in 1917 when he photographed the automobile wheel, was given impetus by the award of first prize in the 1920 Wanamaker Competition for a group of five images, two of which were machine subjects--Wire Wheel (Fig. 92) and Motor. The modernity of both treatment and subject was recognized by a critic who realized that aesthetically conceived images of machines were unprecedented in photography:

A new form of art seems to be arising in the photographic world in which pictures are neither copies of paintings or merely portraits.

3

Aside from the previously mentioned commission to photograph ball bearings for advertising purposes in 1920, the purchase of an Akeley camera in the summer of 1922 afforded Strand the first real opportunity to photograph machine forms on his own expressive terms. His immediate inspiration was his pleasure in the exquisite craftsmanship of the apparatus, which he compared with the poor quality of George Eastman's mechanism:

I wish you could have seen the camera . . . because it is really a piece of craftsmanship--a fine piece of machinery quite different from anything our friend George makes.

4

Using an 8 x 10 recently purchased view camera, Strand photographed both exterior and interior surfaces of the Akeley, employing a mixture of artificial and natural light in half-hour exposures<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 93). The following year he made similar images of the machine tools in the Akeley shop, to which he had access as the owner of the camera.

The influence of the machine images of Picabia and Schamberg has been discussed earlier, but it should be emphasized that before Strand, no photographer had made straight, close-up compositions of machine forms. Aside from their originality, however, these images are remarkable for their concentration on 'the thing itself' while

at the same time suggesting a complex of related ideas. As Van Deren Coke pointed out in reference to the earlier

Wheel Organization:

Strand emphasized the essential nature of the mechanism . . . he drew attention to the repetition of . . . forms so that they implied motion. . . . As a symbol, the car's mechanism was also made to stand for the motive power of the automobile and the automobile stand for the machine age. 6

The machine photographs demonstrate conclusively that Strand had integrated the formal lessons learned from experimentation with abstraction with his sense of the heightened reality of the object--a feeling he had first displayed in the 1916 street portraits. In Strand's machine images, reality seems both more palpable and less commonplace than it does in ordinary experience.

Two machine photographs were included in a group exhibition of the work of members of the Camera Club in September 1922. In her review, Elizabeth Luther Cary remarked that the exhibition

contains nothing more interesting than the quiet challenge by Paul Strand to the sentimentalists who abound in the art of photography as in all other arts.

Mr. Strand, working with a machine, chooses a machine for his subject and deliberately, intelligently turns it into a work of art by selecting from its qualities those that arouse aesthetic feeling. 7

A review by Floyd Vail in The Camera made a similar point, noting that a commonplace object had become "infused with appeal because of the design, linear beauty and extraor-

dinary craftsmanship."<sup>8</sup> The Cary review also suggested Strand's relationship to cubism, not in the organization of space, but in the presentation of textures:

The kind of tactile stimulus Picasso attempted to give by pasting bits of sandpaper and cloth to the surface of his canvases, Mr. Strand succeeds in giving more naturally and simply. We are at once aware of the tough fibre of the belt, the corrugations of the metal chain, the polish of smooth metal and the dull glow<sup>9</sup> of painted wood.

In the same year, four machine images (and one cityscape) appeared with an article by Strand in Broom, to be discussed presently. A number were included in Strand's section of "Seven Americans" in 1925 and in his exhibition of 1929.

It should be pointed out that Strand associated the mechanical object with the city and modern industrial life. He made no such images on trips to Maine, Colorado, New Mexico or Mexico, although he himself used the automobile to travel in several of these places. In fact, the one negative that Strand saved from a group made at Lake George (see Chapter 8) was of a buggy formerly used by the Stieglitz family. This image might be considered symbolic of Strand's sensitivity to the relationship of country to metropolis and past to present, an awareness that is one of the distinguishing features of the machine images and informs them with significance beyond the merely decorative.

Despite Strand's much earlier interest in machine imagery, however, it is Charles Sheeler who has been most closely identified with industrial photography in America during the 'twenties. Sheeler had expressed a desire to photograph "industrials" for the Army in 1918;<sup>10</sup> after his application was refused he appears not to have made any mechanical or industrial images until 1927, when he received a commission, through a friend at the N.W. Ayer Company, to photograph the Ford Motor Company installation at River Rouge.<sup>11</sup> The results catapulted Sheeler into fame as America's pre-eminent industrial artist, "the first . . . to consistently idealize the industrial subject in photographs and paintings."<sup>12</sup> Unlike Lewis Hine's images of industrial subjects made at about the same time (Fig. 66), Sheeler did not engage the problem of the worker's relation to the machine. His images (Fig. 95) suggest the sleekness and power of large scale industry and constitute a visual demonstration of his faith in the progress of the American system. In comparison, Strand's photographs of machine parts emphasize the craftsmanship, skill and beauty of which the machine is capable, without taking a position in reference to the industrial power of American capitalism.

Strand made his first close-ups of nature in August 1920, when he and Seligmann vacationed in Nova Scotia for

about ten days.<sup>13</sup> His previous photographs of landscape, made at Bay Shore, Twin Lakes, in Europe and in the West, were concerned with atmospheric effects rather than structure, specificity or definition. Now rock formations were probed for the shapes that would reveal their essential qualities. By coming in very close and excluding background irrelevancies, he was able to integrate his pre-war experiments in abstraction with an outlook that stressed the reality of this organic material. Despite the sharply realistic detail and texture, made possible by using an 8 x 10 view camera on a tripod, Port Lorne Rock (Fig. 96) retains abstract qualities in that the object has no identifiable position or size in space, and its relationship to ground, sky or other configurations is minimal. At the same, it is not merely decorative. Unlike many of the images of Cunningham and Weston which also omit scale and position, Strand's nature photographs do not stress pattern and texture as pleasing entities in themselves. Strand's attention to objective form and to relationships forces us to become aware of certain essential attributes of the object portrayed. In 1921, when the photographer spent a number of weekends at Twin Lakes he was able to continue his interest in the nature close-up, this time concentrating on a mullen plant (Fig. 97). This image projects a sense of its re-

lationship to the natural world while still creating an exceptional impression of the texture and structure of the plant more sharply than the earlier rock.

Aside from machine images and portraits, Strand's greatest interest in the early 'twenties continued to be views of the city. Before his trip to Nova Scotia, he already had returned to familiar places, among them the Wall Street area, Morningside Heights and the Hudson River waterfront. In nearly all cases, Strand processed the film as he went along in order to check both exposure and composition. When compared with the pre-war New York views, these images reveal significant differences in both composition and intent. In addition to greater emphasis on geometric form, few of the 'twenties photographs include human figures in the kind of interrelationship with architecture seen in Wall Street (Fig. 29). In order to express the essence of modern life without sentimentality or with, in his own words "acidity",<sup>14</sup> he concentrated on geometry and structure rather than on people.

To Strand, post-war New York represented a confusing ambience of tension and hostility at the same time that he relished the visual grandeur and enjoyed the intellectual stimulation the city offered. Along with others of the Stieglitz group, his was an elitist view of the 'common man'

and he was critical as well of the commercialism, lack of craftsmanship, dishonesty in business and sporting events, and the hypocrisy in both politics and human relations which he and Stieglitz associated with the city.<sup>15</sup> In avoiding human form and expression, his photographs of the city can be seen as expressing his awareness of the disregard by modern urban society for human needs and actions, as well as his own feelings of tension.

The photograph, Truckman's House (Fig. 98) is the same scene as an earlier image taken from a similar vantage point--the West Side viaduct over 125th Street. Strand emphasized the advancing imprint of mechanization by the repeated geometric forms of the metal garage roofs that have taken the place of the original horse sheds.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the small vestiges of the earlier era--the wagon and greenery--are hemmed in by structures above and below and the printed elements--a formal device taken over from the cubists--suggest the power of the printed word on modern life.

Similarly The Court (Fig. 99), made from the windows of the Meyer's apartment, suggests the constrictions of city life in which individuals have no experience of nature, little air, no vistas--only oppressive masonry. In The Docks (Fig. 100), the situation becomes almost unfathomable in

the suggestion of mysterious structures that have a life of their own but no apparent function. As a personality, Strand was neither sentimental, pessimistic nor satirical; therefore he did not seek out maudlin, bizarre or distorted aspects of existence, but found expression for his sense of the tense dissonances of modern urban life in the city's structures.

Strand and Charles Sheeler were the only two photographers of significance who focussed on the urban landscape during the early twenties, although Sheeler's photographic output of city subjects was small compared with Strand's. Strand had been confronting this thematic material since at least 1914, slowly shaping an aesthetic consonant with the expressive nature of the subject matter. Sheeler's New York images served as a basis for the shots in the film, but the reverse is more probable. Sheeler's stills (Fig. 101) of New York may well have been made while the two were seeking locations for the movie. As a New Yorker, Strand would have been more familiar than Sheeler with the downtown area and it is certain that for the Wall Street sequence they returned to a location that Strand had previously used.<sup>17</sup>

In common with many photographers of the time, Strand made portraits both for himself and, less frequently, on commission. He considered the problem especially chal-

lenging because it was so commonly attempted and so poorly achieved. He conceived of the portrait, both graphic and photographic, as an expression of character rather than as a record of physical appearance. As he put it: "It must be more than a likeness because (the viewer) can't judge if it is a likeness."<sup>18</sup> Aside from a few early portraits of family and friends, he had this concept in mind whenever he made portraits, starting with the previously discussed early street images.

For a number of reasons, Strand did not continue with street portraiture in the 'twenties. In a conversation in 1975, he suggested that he had stopped making such portraits because the technique was "foolish and nerve-racking as people became more knowledgeable about the camera,"<sup>19</sup> but since he used it again to photograph in the streets of Mexico, France and Italy, other reasons must be considered more important. The avoidance of street portraiture in the 'twenties may have derived from the same feeling that had led Strand to photograph the cityscape without people--a sense that the human face unless distorted in some way softened the acid impact of the city's image. Another factor may have been his desire to emulate the kind of human portrait that Stieglitz had been working on since 1917--an extended personal statement about a particular individual

rather than a more socially conceived portrait of anonymous people.

Strand's friendship and marriage with Rebecca Salsbury, whom he met in 1919, enabled him to become involved with a project of this nature. Beck, whom Strand may have known slightly at the Ethical Culture School,<sup>20</sup> was an athletic, outdoor type of keen intelligence. She was the daughter of Nate Salsbury, the promoter of the Buffalo Bill Western Show and although she spent her adolescent and young adult years in New York, she had never lost her yearning for the West. She had been trained as a playground teacher but was unemployed when Strand met her and seemed to have no defined vocational or artistic aspirations. Shortly after they met, Strand began to urge her to paint; eventually she became adept at glass painting and pictorial embroidery. Through her relationship with Strand, Beck met Stieglitz and O'Keeffe; her sharp wit, intelligence and devotion endeared her to Stieglitz who photographed her frequently in 1922 and 1923. The relationship lasted for about ten years until the end of 1932--when Strand left for Mexico and Beck remained in Taos.<sup>21</sup>

Strand's portraits of Beck followed the pattern that Stieglitz had initiated in his photographs of O'Keeffe. Starting in about 1920, he photographed her in varying po-

sitions, and with different expressions (Fig. 102) and was at first so intent on the project that he ordered a steady-ing device so that Beck would not be able to move.<sup>22</sup> Eventually, he chose not to exhibit the images together or even to discuss them. One reason was that he did not wish to appear too imitative of Stieglitz, but it is true also that he later revised his estimate of the value of the extended portrait.<sup>23</sup> It is possible as well, that after the breakup of the marriage, Strand found the images too painful to contemplate.

When Strand's portrait of Beck is compared with Stieglitz's of O'Keeffe, the profound differences in approach between the two photographers becomes apparent. These are especially evident in the photographs of hands, although they can be felt in the facial images as well. In Hands with Thimble (Fig. 60), Stieglitz's conception of O'Keeffe (and womanhood) is symbolized in the sensuousness and elegance of the curves of the fingers against the rich darkness of the background fabric. The sensation created actually transcends the objects photographed as one forgets that the hands belong to someone or that they are capable of domestic activity, as the thimble might suggest. The image has been turned ninety degrees from the way it was photographed but actually may be looked at from any angle, which further

loosens it from a realistic context.

On the other hand, while Strand's image of Beck's hands (Fig. 103) also has been revolved from the way it was photographed, the sense of the real object remains. One is aware of the roughness of the palms, the strength of the fingers and the grain structure of the skin. Although the ungraceful position of the hands, which occupy the entire picture space, might be read as an expression of Beck's forthright character, it is obvious from the attention given skin texture and bone structure that Strand was as much interested in projecting the reality of the object as in expressing the psychological complexities of Beck's personality or of his relationship with her.

Although there are very handsome images among them, Strand's portraits of Beck seem to be the least moving of the portraits he made during the 'twenties. One reason may have been his inability to be completely objective, as he was when photographing other personalities of the circle--Hartley, Lachaise (Fig. 104), Marin and Stieglitz. These portraits are both visually arresting and intensely alive at the same time that they are objective and despite being posed, they recall the vibrancy of the early street portraits. On the other hand, the photographs of Beck suggest a reticence and a desire to please that must have provoked a cer-

tain tenseness in her.<sup>24</sup> In sum, the nuances that inform Stieglitz's O'Keeffe portrait are missing and Strand's images of Beck seem somewhat forced and less interesting, in comparison.

Before the turn of the century, pictorialists had become interested in photographing the nude. Despite the prudery that often dogged their efforts in this country, it was generally agreed that the photographed nude was acceptable if posed and treated like an etching or drawing. This meant usually, but not always, using the female figure,<sup>25</sup> selecting the pose carefully in order to obscure or soften certain portions of the body and photographing with soft-focus lenses in order to further diminish the realistic portrayal of the anatomy. Direct hand intervention on the negative, most conspicuous in the work of Frank Eugene, was frequently used to insure that the forms would not be clearly defined. In addition to Eugene, by 1920 Brigman, Cunningham, Outerbridge, Steichen, Stieglitz, Struss, White and Weston had all created images of nudes that were influenced to a certain extent by the unwritten code against complete realistic display, although within this boundary varying degrees of sentimentality and originality were still possible.

Given the more lenient moral climate of the 'twenties,

it is not surprising to find a number of photographers drawn to further experimentation with the nude image. Weston produced a large body of work in which he explored the nude human body as he would a landscape. Stieglitz made a great many photographs of O'Keeffe and of Beck in the nude in his effort to encompass the elusive idea of womanhood. Cunningham, Outerbridge and Sheeler each created a number of modern-looking but discreet compositions using the female nude body, while Brugiere and Man Ray experimented with the nude female figure in the creation of multiple images and other manipulations. However, there are few extant images of the nude by Strand--a fact that is inconsistent with his stated interest in the subject matter and with his efforts to approach the representation of the human body with the same sense of reverence for its structure, specificity and tactile qualities that he found in the literary work of D. H. Lawrence.<sup>26</sup>

In Strand's case however, one must take into account the fact that he did not have his own darkroom. Despite changes in the moral climate for the 'bohemian' artist, nudity and sensuality still retained sinful connotations among the middle class professional people who constituted the membership of the Camera Club of New York. This was especially true when sexual organs were represented in a

factual manner, with no attempt to soften their delineation. Because Strand was obliged to do all of his processing at the Club, he became involved in an unpleasant episode in 1920 when his negative of a nude male, photographed frontally, was removed from the communal drying racks and declared indecent. In answering the Club's objections, Strand pointed out that other members, Steichen included, had processed photographs of nudes in the Club darkroom and that he had merely treated this subject matter in the same manner as he had the automobile wheel.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, he was censured, and until he was able to build himself a darkroom in Taos in 1930, he was extremely careful about becoming involved with the Club over morally unacceptable images.

Strand's still photography of the early 'twenties were both original and distinctive. Few photographers had his technical command, commitment to the medium, or expressive power, but because of the continual demand for free-lance film work, he found less and less time for still photography in 1923 and 1924. By 1925, he badly needed a respite. Writing to Stieglitz from Ithaca, where he was shooting a film for the Boys Club, he noted that even during the summer there had been no let-up and although he did not physically require a vacation from commercial shooting, psychologically, "I think I do. And I would like to set up

the still camera, if only to see an 8 x 10 image on the ground glass."<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, at the suggestion of Isabel and Gaston Lachaise, the Strands decided to spend four weeks in August at Georgetown Island, Maine, putting up at a local inn. For the first time since 1921, Strand had an opportunity to investigate thoroughly the forms of the natural world in the same objective manner as he had machinery and city architecture. Using the large view camera with a 16½ inch and sometimes a 24 inch lens, he photographed rock formations again--this time along the coast--and the flora of the inland woods, often setting out very early to catch the dew and avoid high bleaching sunlight. He frequently photographed in Isabel Lachaise's flower garden, examining the structure and formation of foliate matter such as Garden Iris (Fig. 105).

The opportunity to work without interruption in this setting enabled Strand to solve the problems associated with wind movement of grasses and growth. Because observation showed him that plants always returned to the same position held before being blown, he avoided blurring in the long exposures by opening and closing the shutter as many as four or five times. However, although its presence often can be felt in the rock images made in Maine, Strand did not pho-

tograph the sea in these years because he did not have a hand camera and did not consider the 8 x 10 view camera the best apparatus to stop the movement of the ocean.

As he began to do frequently in his travels in the late 'twenties, Strand arranged for the use of a hotel bathroom, in order to develop negatives as he went along, and test both his exposures and his eye. He worked fairly steadily through August, 1925, but only two images of rocks from that year were included in his 1929 exhibition.<sup>29</sup> Others may possibly exist, but in this case, too, there appear to be inaccuracies in the dating. Although several of the films may have been ruined when Strand's knapsack with camera and plateholders fell into the sea, after he returned to New York he indicated that he had made "ten fine prints."<sup>30</sup> In later years however, Strand forgot altogether that he had visited and photographed at Georgetown Island in 1925, and ascribed all Maine images to 1927 and 1928. It is likely that some of the rock and floral photographs need the same attention to accurate dating as the still-life images require. Unfortunately, Strand kept no day-books, diaries or record books so dates must be reconstructed from letters and catalogues in which specific images were mentioned and from notations on the backs of images which in themselves are not always accurate.

At Georgetown Island, the Lachaises were extremely hospitable in helping the Strands acclimate themselves. Strand found the visual material interesting enough to return in 1927 and 1928 for a number of weeks in late August and September and even briefly considered purchasing property.<sup>31</sup> During the last of their summers there, a number of Stieglitz circle people drifted to the Island from various places along the Maine coast, among them Hartley, Rosenfeld and Marin. In addition, other artists who lived on the Island--the Zorachs and Bertram Hartman--made the summer one of comradeship and good feeling, with picnics at the beach and social gatherings at the Lachaise home. For the first time in a number of years, Strand felt that the 291 spirit was again in evidence, although Lachaise himself had never really been a member of the circle.

The Georgetown Island photographs have a lyrical quality that is different from Strand's earlier images of natural forms. Compared with the flinty Port Lorne Rock (Fig. 96), Rock by the Sea (Fig. 106), suggests the graceful undulation of the waves without sacrificing the sense of the actual obdurate material. Cobweb in the Rain (Fig. 107) and Fern in the Rain (Fig. 108) each create a cosmos from a tiny portion of reality. In Strand's earlier images of both machines and nature, the emphasis had been on 'the thing

itself' but the Georgetown nature photographs intimate process and change as well as material fact. At the time, aside from Weston, Strand was the only photographer to create such complex images of the physical appearance of nature but while Weston demonstrated an extraordinary ability to relate the diverse visual elements pictorially, Strand's work intimated ongoing natural processes as well.

It is apparent that in these images nothing is being forced into pre-existing aesthetic programs. In 1928, Rosenfeld, who for the first time was moved as well as admiring of Strand's work, wrote the photographer:

I want to tell you with what a good feeling about the photographs I came away from Georgetown Island. . . . none of them gave me a sense of unrewarded strain. . . . nearly all of them seemed to me living with vigorous, independent life. 32

At the same time, in a letter to Stieglitz, he suggested that he found Strand impressive

despite the doggedness and suspension with which he protects himself against conditions. I do feel the possibilities of a powerful modern in him at present and I look forward eagerly to a show of his work. 33

Strand's friendship with the Lachaises resulted in several portraits of Gaston Lachaise made during the summer of 1927. (Fig. 104) Lachaise was working on the large female figure with outstretched arms, which Strand photographed along with several pieces of his smaller sculpture. They

were used to illustrate a piece on Lachaise in Creative Art. The portraits are particularly expressive of the sculptor's determined character, a quality Strand admired and which he ascribed in part to Isabel Lachaise's insistence that her husband provide her with a middle-class style of living despite his poorly paid vocation. Strand wrote a glowing tribute to Lachaise's work for the Second American Caravan and Lachaise supplied the catalogue foreword for Strand's 1929 exhibition. However, by the end of the summer of 1928, some of the bloom had vanished from the domestic felicity of the Lachaises and both Strands began to feel that the demands made by 'Madame' Lachaise were unreasonable and were causing the sculptor considerable anxiety.<sup>34</sup>

The Strands had first considered spending their vacation in 1926 in Europe, but decided finally on a trip to the West, in part because of Strand's curiosity about the Western landscape and in part because Beck wished to return to the ranch country she had known as a child. Beck Strand, who had been working steadily as a medical secretary had begun to do free-lance typing for Rosenfeld, Lee Simonson and for a few physicians. Between the income from her work, from Strand's film assignments and from investments, they had become comfortable enough to consider foregoing summer jobs to spend three months in Colorado and New Mexico, a

decision strengthened by Strand's bout of jaundice and Beck's health and family problems in the spring of 1926.

The Strands traveled west by train with large camera equipment and enough chemicals to set up a simple darkroom. At Estes Park, which they reached in July, he photographed tree roots and stumps, making close-ups that are similar in style to the work of the previous summer at Georgetown Island. However, the harsh, twisted forms of Tree Stump (Fig. 109) and Blasted Tree project a sense of uneasiness which may derive as much from the couple's personal situation as from the objective reality of the landscape. These tree images were made at a time when Beck, who had been in ill health for months, was convinced that her condition was chronic. In comparison the images Strand made later at Mesa Verde (Fig. 110), after their fears had been assuaged by a visit to a Denver Physician, are interesting but somehow less compelling expressions. On the whole, Strand felt that the Western trip, which included two weeks at Taos and Santa Fe, was a liberating experience for artists from the East and he recommended it to Stieglitz for O'Keeffe and Marin.

In addition, Strand's Western experiences resulted in a new concept of photographic activity although it is not clear whether this notion originated as early as 1926, as

Strand later claimed it had. Briefly, this conception, which will be elaborated on in the next section, revolved around ideas expressed in Edgar Lee Master's long poem, Spoon River Anthology, which had been published just prior to the First World War, and re-issued in 1924. The Masters work attempted to reveal the unappetizing truths of American small town life as opposed to its deceptively normal appearance; it tried also to weave together the lives of the inhabitants of the mythical Spoon River by showing the interdependence of persons and the cross currents of thought which characterized provincial American life.

Eventually Strand was able to translate this literary program into a visual one, but in 1926, when he claims to have first conceived of the poem as a framework for visual imagery, he was not yet ready to photograph the necessary elements that would fulfill the requirements of this concept--the old timers, Indians, abandoned stores and mines and the church interiors that might constitute a unified visual statement about life in the Southwest. He also was not ready to tackle what he came to consider the essential aesthetic problem in landscape--the pictorial integration of sky and ground--for he made almost no long views of the countryside. Despite the limitations of his own photographic efforts, however, Strand felt that his work of 1926

was far better than the "trashy, utterly commonplace picture making" he saw around him in the art colonies of Santa Fe and Taos.<sup>35</sup>

Strand did not return to the West until 1930, although Beck and O'Keeffe traveled to Taos together in 1929 for a four month stay at one of Mabel Luhan's cottages. He remained in the East that year in order to fulfill his Princeton filming obligation and to take advantage of any free-lance film photography that was available during the summer as the field in general was not very active. In addition, O'Keeffe's stay at Taos left Stieglitz alone during the summer; because the circle of friends felt responsible for his well-being they took turns, Strand included, visiting at Lake George.

There was no question of photographing at Lake George (see Chapter 8) so when Beck returned in September, the Strands, perhaps recalling Nova Scotia, traveled to the Gaspé by car. They stayed at inns and hotels in Percé, Rivière au Reynard and Trois Rivières photographing for a month. In this area of barren fishing villages, where people barely sustained themselves by drying cod and cutting timber, Strand claimed that the Spoon River idea presented itself more urgently as a way of recreating the objective reality of the simple yet communal village life. Using a

4 x 5 Graflex camera (which he sold towards the end of the following year), Strand photographed elements of his village portrait--houses, sheds, boats and sea--but made no portraits of people so a unified visual program along the lines of "Spoon River" again remained unrealized. However, the Gaspé experience did provide Strand with his first opportunity to work on the problem of integrating land and sky (or foreground, middle and distant areas) in a rural setting.

As a group, the Gaspé images create a telling sense of place, physically and psychologically, in the same manner as the earlier photographs of New York. Village on the Gulf of the St. Lawrence (Fig. 111), made from the car, evokes the austere yet purposeful life of this primitive enclave, while other views of towns and beaches suggest the bleakness of existence in this French Canadian backwater. In 1936, Strand returned to the Gaspé with his second wife, Virginia Stevens. On this occasion he more nearly approached the realization of a portrait of a village because he photographed people as well as nature and artifact.<sup>36</sup>

In 1930, after the Akeley camera had been replaced by friction head equipment and the free-lance film industry had shifted to the West Coast, Strand again found it possible to devote three months to still photography. This time when

he arrived in Taos, Beck, O'Keefe and Marin were already there, creating a sense of continuity with the 291 spirit. Both Strands had learned to drive prior to the summer at Georgetown Island; having a car in New Mexico enabled the photographer to explore the countryside around Taos for visual material and to take advantage of approaching storms to rush to nearby structures and photograph them under various light conditions.<sup>37</sup> Strand established a darkroom in the Luhan cottage in order to print and develop as he went along. During this summer, the Strands provided Ansel and Virginia Adams with temporary shelter, a circumstance which afforded Adams an opportunity to see Strand negatives at close range. Adams claimed afterwards that the experience of seeing negatives of such sharpness and tonal range was instrumental in his decision to devote himself entirely to photography.<sup>38</sup>

The Strands returned to Taos in July 1931 and stayed again in one of Mabel Luhan's cottages until September. In regard to his own work, Strand was beginning to feel that he had "gotten more into the spirit of the country so that the photographs are simpler, more direct."<sup>39</sup> The following year, when he and Beck arrived in April and remained until November for the longest period of still photography since the beginning of the 'twenties, he continued to work on

landscape problems. As he had in the Gaspé, Strand considered the pictorial unification of sky and ground a major challenge in that the horizon line tended to divide the image in two and frequently the sky area was empty of configurations that related to the lower portion of the picture. In a series made at Rinconada (Fig. 112) and at Abiquiu, he worked out solutions to this problem by finding cloud formations and sky tonalities that meshed visually with those of the land areas, to create a unified pictorial entity.

But Strand's Western landscapes are more than visually pleasing compositions. They distill the essential quality of a vast and silent terrain in which individuals seem somewhat out of place in the drama of unspoiled nature. A new element in Strand's work, or, perhaps more accurately, an old one that had again become important, was his reawakened interest in the quality of natural light. The sense of specificity engendered by particular light qualities had been submerged for a number of years when his main concern was to reveal structure and detail in close-up images. In the Gaspé to an extent, but more profoundly in the West, Strand's use of light created an enveloping atmosphere that gives both land and structures a dramatic yet palpable reality.

In addition to the problem of unifying land and sky, Strand began to look for structures that suggested the traditions and life of the area--particularly abandoned edifices and native architecture, buildings which seemed to encompass their own particular history (Fig. 113). For example, in order to photograph the rear buttress of the church at Ranchos de Taos (Fig. 114), which Strand did on a number of occasions, the removal of a basketball stanchion was necessary and considerable time and effort was spent having this done.<sup>40</sup> It is difficult to imagine this church, which was painted by O'Keeffe (see Chapter 7) and photographed by Adams (and countless amateurs as well) as a play area for children because in Strand's image it appears as an iconic reflection of beliefs that have deep roots in the native soil. His determination to express these perceptions necessitated the trouble of removing the offending forms.

Despite his awakened interest in history and tradition and their reflection in nature and artifact, Strand still had to stop short of portraying native life with completeness. As an outsider, he found Indian customs not only difficult to photograph, but in the process of being corrupted by tourists who came to the region to see the last vestiges of 'real' ceremonies. Strand had been interested in photographing indigenous Americans since 1922, when he

had offered his services to the Heye Foundation, but despite a number of attempts to interest persons influential in Indian affairs, he was unsuccessful. Strand felt that without sponsorship he would be unable to break through native hostility; this concept led him always to seek official or friendly sponsorship in all the localities where he eventually photographed.

For all its interesting inhabitants, Taos was a provincial colony of displaced Easterners and Europeans. It was full of disagreeable squabbles, such as the well-publicized one between Mabel Dodge Luhan, Frieda Lawrence and Dorothy Brett. Strand soon recognized that these literary and artistic types did not represent traditional village existence with roots in a significant past, so Taos became mainly a base of operations from which he explored the countryside and to which he returned to develop and print, but whose social life he neither photographed nor enjoyed.

Towards the end of 1932, Strand realized that there was little more he wished to do there, photographically. In December, after his application for a Guggenheim Foundation Grant had been turned down, he motored to Mexico City with a Taos friend, Susan Ramsdell and her son, while Beck remained in Taos. Strand took with him his equipment and supplies, as well as a group of platinum prints which he

intended to exhibit in the Mexican capital. In addition, he wished to investigate the possibility of finding a social use for his photography in one of the democratic cultural programs being run by the Mexican government.

Stylistically, Strand's work of the twelve years between 1920 and 1932 is consistently Precisionist in its emphasis on objectivity, clarity and sharpness. Beyond that, both his photographs and his writings convey his growing faith that nature and artifact are subject to controlling laws. After the early dissonant images of the city, Strand turned to machinery and in the elegant curves and steely surfaces of wheels, camera, lathes and presses, he expressed his conviction that the machine could be made to serve creative ends. His first photographs of nature were expressions of the wonder of form and structure in the organic world, but after 1925 his nature photographs reveal his interest in processes as well as objects. This led to images of growth, decay and change in which ephemeral moments in nature's cycle are transmuted into permanent monuments to her complexity. Almost without exception, Strand's photographs of the 'twenties express his conception of organism and artifact as comprehensible and comely and his sense that the imprint of man and nature remains imbedded in objects for all time.

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 6

1. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 22 November 1919, ASA/YU.
2. "A Painter's Solution with a Camera," Vanity Fair, May 1920, p.80.
3. "Unusual Photos at Wanamaker Exhibition," unidentified and undated clipping in Paul Strand Scrapbook, PSA/CCP.
4. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 3 and 4 July 1922, ASA/YU. In an interview with Paul Strand, 15 March 1975, NYC, Strand said: "I opened it [the Akeley] up to load it and saw how beautiful it was inside, so I said I have to photograph it." Strand usually referred to the Akeley as the starting point of his interest in machine images although he had previously made photographs of wheels and motors. See also Robert Katz, "Talks Between Paul Strand and Robert Katz," August 1962, Typescript in PSA/CCP.
5. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 14 August 1922, ASA/YU.
6. Van Deren Coke, "The Cubist Photographs of Paul Strand and Morton Schamberg," One Hundred Years of Photographic History (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico, 1975), pp.36-40.
7. Elizabeth Luther Cary, "The World of Art: Recent Pictorial Photography at the Camera Club Exhibition," New York Times Book Review and Magazine, September 10, 1922, p.10. Stieglitz sent the review to Strand with the following note: "Lucky for you that she had no idea how close you are to '291'. Otherwise she would not have written as she did." Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 12 September 1922, PSA/CCP.
8. Floyd Vail, "The Camera Club Exhibition," The Camera 26(October 1922):534.
9. Cary, "Recent Pictorial Photography."
10. Charles Sheeler to Alfred Stieglitz, 4 September 1918, ASA/YU.

11. Susan Yeh, a doctoral student at the Graduate Center, CUNY, was kind enough to share her information about the origin of Sheeler's commission for the Ford Motor Company.
12. Martin Friedman, Charles Sheeler (New York: Watson Guptill Publications, 1975), p.65.
13. The date of the Nova Scotia trip has been incorrectly published in the past due to Strand's faulty memory. Herbert Seligmann has corroborated the date as 1920 in a letter to the author, 8 July 1977.
14. Rebecca Salsbury to Paul Strand, 27 December 1920, PSA/CCP: "I have been thinking about . . . your need for sharpness--acidity, as you call it."
15. Strand's attitude towards people en masse is suggested by the following: "I wonder, when I see the people in the streets--all looking collectively about as intelligent as a cow--what they are feeling." Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 11 July 1922, ASA/YU. This contempt was shared by others of the circle, e.g., Paul Rosenfeld, "Stieglitz," Dial 70 (April 1921):407, in which he refers to those pictured in the Steerage as "nose-picking men and ape mothers."
16. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 14 August 1922, ASA/YU: "I visited the viaduct . . . the house which was a truckman's is now surrounded by many tin garages--progress. So I photographed that again."
17. See Note 23, Chapter 4.
18. Interview with Paul Strand, 26 February 1975, NYC.
19. Interview with Paul Strand, 8 March 1975, NYC.
20. Rebecca Salsbury graduated from Ethical Culture School in June, 1911. She had been active in class politics and sports. After graduation, she continued to support the school through activities on the Alumni Committee, and to correspond with members of the faculty and former students.
21. Rebecca Salsbury Strand married William James in Taos, New Mexico in 1937. Although she destroyed

letters from Strand, she left her collection of Strand photographs and her Stieglitz papers to the Alfred Stieglitz Archive at the Beinecke Library, Yale University, and a collection of works to the University of New Mexico Art Museum, the Museum of International Folk Art and the Museum of New Mexico.

22. Strand was so intent on making sharp portraits of Beck that he ordered a headclamp through Stieglitz, which he, Beck and Stieglitz referred to as the "iron virgin." Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 3 and 4 July 1922; 25 July 1922, ASA/YU; Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 12 July 1922, PSA/CCP.
  
23. Interview with Paul Strand, 1 June 1975, NYC. Strand noted that he did not wish to exhibit Beck's hands and heads because he felt "too vulnerable and intimidated by Stieglitz." In Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 1 November 1922, ASA/YU, Stieglitz wrote that his own portraits of Beck were "entirely different from his things of you." See note 63, Chapter 3.
  
24. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 15 July 1922, ASA/YU, in which Beck's naturalness in sitting for Stieglitz is compared with her stiffness for Strand.
  
25. J.M.B.E., "A Note on Some Open-Air Nude Studies," Amateur Photographer and Photographic News 52 (July 6, 1910): 20-21, suggested "pictorial treatment of nude boyhood," as a possibility in summer months.
  
26. Interviews with Paul Strand, 10 March 1975; 6 June 1975, NYC; 26 January 1976, Orgeval. Strand's interest in D.H. Lawrence is indicated by the numerous references to his writing in the correspondence between the Strands and by the fact that they acquired a complete collection of Lawrence's work, now housed in the Strand Foundation Library, New York City. Strand corresponded with Lawrence regarding attempts by an American dealer to sell him a pirated version of Lady Chatterley's Lover. See D.H. Lawrence to Paul Strand, 18 March 1929, PSA/CCP.
  
27. Interview with Louis Davidson, Camera Club of

New York, 20 December 1977. Davidson, at 86 is the oldest Club member; he remembered Strand from the 'twenties. See also "Minutes of the Camera Club," 26 April 1920, International Museum of Photography, Rochester, N.Y.

28. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 19 July 1925, ASA/YU.
29. In later years Strand did not remember that he had visited Georgetown Island first in 1925; consequently, he dated all the Georgetown Island images either 1927 or 1928. In addition to two works dated 1925, which were included in his 1929 exhibition, he referred to his stay in Maine in Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 4 September 1925, ASA/YU.
30. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 28 September 1925, ASA/YU.
31. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 2 September and 9 September, 1927, PSA/CCP.
32. Paul Rosenfeld to Paul Strand, 4 September 1928, PSA/CCP.
33. Paul Rosenfeld to Alfred Stieglitz, 28 September 1928, ASA/YU.
34. Regarding Isabelle Lachaise's attitude, see Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, n.d., May 1929, PSA/CCP: "She must be making him crazy. . . . don't blame you for wanting to keep away this summer."
35. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 20 September 1926, ASA/YU.
36. Due to the limited time spent there, the Gaspé negatives were not developed when taken. On both trips, Strand used a changing bag and did not process until he reached New York. Because of this, Strand claimed that the negatives were poor and he had difficulty printing the Gaspé images. Interview with Paul Strand, 12 June 1975, NYC.
37. According to Strand, several of the images of the Ranchos de Taos church were the result of seeing

an oncoming storm, jumping in the car with his equipment and driving the twelve miles from Taos. Interview with Paul Strand, 28 January 1976, Orgeval.

38. Nancy Newhall, The Eloquent Light, vol. 1 (San Francisco: The Sierra Club, 1963), p.62. Rebecca Strand had met Ansel Adams in Taos in 1929 and had conveyed to Strand Adams' suggestion that he try a hand-made photographic paper available from Dassonville. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 8 May 1929, PSA/CCP.
39. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 22 August 1931, ASA/YU.
40. Interview with Paul Strand, 28 January 1976, Orgeval. Strand enlisted the help of Carlos Chavez, whose Spanish was more fluent, to convince the town schoolmaster to remove the stanchions. When this effort failed, they found the young boy who had put them up and the three--Strand, Chavez and the youngster--removed them.
41. This was Strand's first application. In all, he applied four times but never received the award.

## CHAPTER 7

### STRAND'S WRITING ON PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

After the demise of Camera Work in 1917, the medium of photography had no outlet for discussion of aesthetic and philosophical ideas or for the superior reproduction of visual images. On the whole, photography magazines were oriented towards either an amateur or commercial audience. Although a number of serious journals engaged in critical discussion of the visual arts, neither Strand nor Stieglitz believed that enough importance was given either photography or the painting of the 291 circle. Among the smaller periodicals, the Dial, Broom and Secession were concerned with culture in the United States and abroad, while The Little Review at first barely acknowledged the existence of the native product. The Arts and Art and Decoration ignored photography and tended to be conservative in aesthetic taste. While concerned with American culture, neither the Freeman, the Nation or the New Republic had the space to devote to frequent polemical discussion on the arts. With regard to reproduction, both Vanity Fair and The Little Review used photographic illustration, but the quality was

unexceptional; despite this, Strand considered Vanity Fair the liveliest periodical of the time.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the paucity of outlets, however, the philosophy of the Stieglitz group was kept before the public by the combined efforts of a number of the literary adherents and by Strand. Sherwood Anderson, Waldo Frank, Marsden Hartley, Louis Kalonyme, Paul Rosenfeld and Herbert Seligmann wrote letters, articles and books about the importance of American art as reflected in the work of the Stieglitz circle artists and in Stieglitz himself. As a photographer, Strand was considered especially qualified to deal with the visual arts; he wrote essays on Marin, O'Keeffe and Lachaise, as well as on Stieglitz and photography. The comprehensive approach to culture by the Stieglitz circle set them apart from other critics in that they attempted to relate cultural manifestations in various media and to point out their essentially 'American' elements. In the main, they championed expressiveness over merely formal excellence and were anti-Dada and anti-Futurist in their conviction that rational control of the machine was both necessary and possible.<sup>2</sup>

Strand had fewer channels open to him than the literary figures and therefore made full use of the letter when he could not persuade editors to print longer pieces. He

rarely accepted a returned essay without questioning the reason for rejection or offering to rewrite so that it might be used. Between 1921 and 1924, fifteen of his letters and articles appeared in print (Appendix III); afterwards he wrote less frequently for publication.

His first letter, printed in January 1921 in the Freeman, was an attack on Walter Pach's art criticism which had been appearing in that journal.<sup>3</sup> In arguing against the subjective nature of his evaluations, Strand cited Pach's lack of support for contemporary American artists, including Demuth, Dove, Hartley, Lachaise, Marin, Nadelman and Sheeler. Pach's response to the issue of subjectivity was to accuse Strand of the same, arguing in effect that objective criticism did not exist. Strand's rejoinder,<sup>4</sup> also printed, tried to explain the nature of objectivity as that which takes into account the interrelationship of all cultural activities of a period rather than merely expressing the critic's prejudices. He cited Rosenfeld and Frank as exemplars of this approach in the fields of music and literary criticism. In April, the Freeman printed another Strand letter critical of Pach;<sup>5</sup> this time an attack on a favorable review of the Society of Independent Artists' Exhibition. Strand pointed out that despite their so-called democratic objectives, the Society had refused to exhibit

the Duchamp Fountain in 1917, and suggested that they still continued to emphasize artistic personalities rather than creative work.

In the same winter, 1921, coincident with Stieglitz's exhibition of his own work at the Anderson Galleries, Strand wrote "Alfred Stieglitz and A Machine", which was at first privately printed and later included in an issue of mss.<sup>6</sup> This article maintained that with the exception of David Octavius Hill, all nineteenth century photographers had wished to disguise the fact that their images had been made by a machine, therefore denying that an art created by science required a new vision. Strand credited Stieglitz with being the first to understand the camera's aesthetic implications:

He fought for the machine. . . . for its unique potentiality of registering the objective world directly, through the science of optics and the chemistry of silver and platinum, translated into tonalities beyond the reach of any human hand. . . . Photography became for him a great impersonal struggle. . . . This machine was a despised and rejected thing. It became a symbol of all new and young desire. . . . Photography became a weapon . . . a means of fighting for fair play for all those who want to do anything honestly and well. Stieglitz was affirming life. . . . He has examined our world of impulse and inhibitions, of reaching out and withdrawal. . . . These photographs are the objective 7 conclusions of that inquiry.

The ideas expressed in the article are an elaboration of those set forth in the earlier piece printed in the Seven Arts, with greater attention now paid to Stieglitz's role

in creating a living image with a machine. All of Strand's writing on photography is concerned with the idea that an image produced mechanically does not have to be a mechanical statement; the artist can use the new means to make an image full of feeling and expressive of contemporary life if only he acknowledges the special character of the medium. In this article, Strand did not comment on the specifically American nature of the development of photographic art, an idea he touched on in later pieces, but Stieglitz himself made this point rather cryptically in the Foreword to the catalogue of the exhibition for which "Alfred Stieglitz and a Machine" was a critique.<sup>8</sup>

Strand's essay was highly praised by a number of writers, among them Sherwood Anderson and Frank.<sup>9</sup> The latter requested several copies for articles on American culture that he was preparing for the Nouvelle Revue Française and the Neue Merkur. Although Strand's piece was excised from Frank's article in the French journal, it was used in the German publication in September 1921.<sup>10</sup> Because of the acclaim from respected literary figures, as well as his small successes in placing letters in periodicals, Strand considered devoting more time to writing criticism and briefly contemplated working on a book on the aesthetics of photography.

Towards the end of 1921, an article by Strand, "American Water Colors at the Brooklyn Museum", was printed in The Arts. This permitted him to again discuss the omission of American painters from major exhibitions. After congratulating the Museum for attempting an historical survey of native water color painting, he pointed out that by omitting Demuth, O'Keeffe, Sheeler and Walkowitz from the exhibition, "the dominant note is one of superficiality rather than profound feeling."<sup>11</sup> The criticism of the Museum's selection by an outsider evoked a reply from Carl Sprinchorn, which was published along with an editorial disclaimer of Strand's position.<sup>12</sup> Sprinchorn accused Strand of writing propaganda for the Stieglitz 'clique', although as Strand pointed out in his rejoinder, O'Keeffe was the only artist he had mentioned who could still be considered part of the circle.<sup>13</sup>

In all his polemical writing, Strand was at pains to make clear that his was a factual argument based on the objective record and that his adversaries were unwilling to discuss issues but preferred indulging in innuendo and personal insult. However, Strand's tone, clear and matter-of-fact on aesthetic matters, frequently conveyed an edge of arrogance in reference to personalities. He chastised Hamilton Easter Fields for his gratuitous addition to the

Sprinchorn letter, reminding him that it was incumbent upon an editor to permit the writer of the article to speak for himself, and added

The outstanding fact which glares forth. . . . is that any honest discussion is neither possible nor desired, either by you or by him. You are both too busy resenting what I said to begin to think about it, much less 14 answer it seriously.

Whatever the merits of Strand's argument, the tone of this and other letters could hardly endear a photographer to the art establishment whose ideas he wished to change.

The Brooklyn Museum piece had ended with a discussion of Marin's position in American watercolor painting. Strand enlarged on this theme in a long article, a shortened version of which finally appeared in Art Review, emphasizing the American character of Marin's work and comparing it with that of Davies, Kent, Prendergast and Zorach who, according to Strand, had "sought to evade the realities of their particular milieu" and were therefore "fugitives from the hot flux of life around them," involved mainly with personal idiosyncrasy or technique.<sup>15</sup> Strand returned to this theme again in 1928, when in answer to Waldo Frank's charge in the New Republic that Marin was an escapist artist, he pointed to the artist's "apocalyptic penetration of the spirit of the place."<sup>16</sup>

In his art criticism, as in his essays on photogra-

phy, Strand's concern was for the artists' relationship with the world around him; artists who ignored the significance of reality or sidestepped it for the world of imagination evoked his contempt. In this context, it is interesting to note that the two painters of the circle about whom he wrote were the two most closely concerned with expressing their experiences with the world of objects. Despite a personal fondness for Hartley and an admiration for Dove, Strand did not discuss their more expressionist work, although he did own several examples.

Strand worked on a similar article on the paintings of O'Keeffe in the winter of 1922-23 and began his campaign to place it in March. In addition to discussing O'Keeffe's significance, he addressed the problem of women artists, noting that:

The weakness of women's creativity. . . . cannot be attributed to any fundamental lack or basic inferiority but is to be traced back. . . . to her. . . . more or less fixed position in the world in which man had by far greater opportunity for diverse experience. 17

Strand underlined the essentially American quality of O'Keeffe's vision which he felt was characterized by the precision and cleanness of line, the purity of color, and the unorthodox approach to visual reality at the same time that it embodies spiritual values.

The effort to place the O'Keeffe piece began with the

Nation. When it was turned down as unimportant, Strand wrote the editor, asking:

What. . . has The Nation done in the last year to further the development of indigenous painting, as one phase of American culture in which it pretends to be interested? What has it printed that would indicate that you or any of the editors have followed that development and are competent to pass judgment on the im-<sup>18</sup>portance or unimportance of any part of it?

Later, Strand engaged Kenneth Burke of the Dial in a similar argument, including also the question of adequate re-production of works of art. Finally, Strand concluded that

all the so-called liberal and radical journals betray the same weakness of editorial perception. . . in regard to plastic work and criticism. . . because editors are primarily literary in mind and training. They do not begin to devote the time necessary to develop the quite different kind of sensibility involved<sup>19</sup> in visual perception.

Besides the Dial and the Nation, Strand tried to interest The Arts, the New Republic and Shadowland, but the article finally appeared in Egmont Aren's Playboy in August 1924.<sup>20</sup> For reasons that will become evident, relations between O'Keeffe, Stieglitz and the Strands were somewhat altered by that time and the painter neither commented upon nor acknowledged the appearance of the piece, although Strand had also written letters to the press calling attention to O'Keeffe's exhibition in 1923.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time that Strand was trying to place the O'Keeffe article, he became embroiled in an argument with

the editors of the Freeman over a piece by Willard Huntington Wright, entitled "A New Art Medium", which was one part of a series explaining the modern movement in the plastic arts.<sup>22</sup> A rejoinder to Wright's article that compared modern art with Bolshevism had been written by Arpad Gerster, who died shortly after its publication.<sup>23</sup> When the editors suggested that it would be unfair to the departed Dr. Gerster to print Strand's counter argument, the photographer ridiculed the notion and suggested that his rights were denied by not receiving a forum for his opinion in the Freeman.<sup>24</sup> Actually, it was Strand's intemperate language to which editor Suzanne LaFollette objected; when Strand adjusted the wording, his letter was printed in the April issue. In partial support of Wright's theories, and in answer to Gerster, Strand again emphasized the objective nature of modern art which was concerned with the world of observed reality, and he noted that:

A aesthetically meaningful color, which dominates and yet combines with "outline, design and contour" without destroying them has . . . . been achieved in the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe. . . . any discussion of color that does not start from the basis of what exists is<sup>26</sup> vaporous, unrealistic and without meaning.

In 1922, an opportunity further to develop the theme he had discussed in "Alfred Stieglitz and a Machine" presented itself when Broom requested an article. In this

new piece "Photography and The New God",<sup>27</sup> Strand expanded on his earlier exposition of the relationship between photography and modern life by suggesting that because science had become the "new God," people had become indifferent to its capacity for evil as well as good. Since artists had traditionally recognized these alternatives, contemporary society must look to the artist of the machine--the photographer--for guidance on how the machine (or science) might be controlled. Although Strand might disavow such a notion, his argument for the humanization of science was not entirely dissimilar to that of Lewis Hine. During the same period, Hine was seeking to demonstrate photographically that in relation to the machine, "the human spirit is the big thing, after all."<sup>28</sup> Despite significant differences in aesthetic approach, both philosophical positions were informed by a belief in the controllability of science for human good, a concept not basically different from that of the Europeans, Fernand Leger and Enrico Prampolini.<sup>29</sup> In the same context it is interesting to note that Dorothea Lange, defending documentary photography in 1952, used a similar argument when she wrote that it was "within the power of the photograph to. . . help make the machine more an agent of good than of evil."<sup>30</sup>

In "Photography and the New God", Strand mentioned

only one historical figure whom he regarded as having made an important aesthetic contribution to the medium--David Octavius Hill, a Scottish painter-turned-photographer, who worked in Edinburgh in the mid-eighteen forties. In its historical aspect Strand's article is inaccurate both about the history of the medium and about the relation of painting to photography. It is obvious that neither Stieglitz nor Strand were aware that Hill worked with a collaborator, Robert Adamson, whose contribution is attested by the fact that after the latter's death, Hill's images were undistinguished in technique and expressive quality. In addition, the photographs which Strand praised so highly for their intrinsic photographic qualities were profoundly influenced by Hill's experience with pose and illumination in painting. Of even greater interest, in view of Strand's emphasis on "objectivity", is the fact that the Hill-Adamson portraits are idealizations--albeit within the limits possible in photography. The nature of the early apparatus as well as accepted precepts in painted portraiture resulted in the portrayal of only the most serious and enduring aspects of the sitters' characters.

In writing on photography, Strand did not find it necessary to consider historical interrelationships of the various branches of the visual arts or to concede that

Stieglitz himself had been strongly influenced first by German genre painting, then by Barbizon ideas and later by Whistlerian style. Furthermore, Strand appears to have had a rather limited conception of the history of the medium prior to the activities of the Linked Ring in London, the Photo-Club of Paris in France and the Secession in the United States, since he never discussed the early French photographers, the work of Eugene Atget<sup>31</sup> or the images of Julia Margaret Cameron or Peter Henry Emerson. Aware only of American photographers who were working in so-called 'art' photography, he ignored Riis and Hine and appears to have been ignorant of the images of the West created by photographers such as O'Sullivan and Jackson. Consequently, the historical underpinnings of Strand's arguments carry little conviction today.

As an exposition of a philosophy of photographic art, the article is still worthwhile. Strand was the only photographer of significance who attempted to give public literary as well as visual form to his conception of the medium and to its role within the machine aesthetic of the third decade. He linked the artists' inner vision with the material reality of the world before his eyes, which he considered "the objectivity which the photographer must control and cannot evade." Since the camera can "hold, in a unique

way, a moment," it can do what "the human hand and eye through an act of memory cannot do."<sup>32</sup> Both Strand and Stieglitz realized that the camera's ability to capture the essence of a moment was one of its most distinguishing modern features, but they both believed also that the moment should be expressive of more profound meaning than merely a haphazard slice of time.

Towards the end of the article, Strand again discussed the American theme that he had alluded to in the articles on Marin and O'Keeffe. Although aware of European reflections on the importance of the machine, he asserted that:

the deeper significance of a machine, the camera, has emerged here in America, the supreme altar of the new God. . . . We have it (the machine) with and upon us with a vengeance. . . . the New God. . . . must be humanized lest it in turn dehumanize us. 33

The Broom article was accompanied by five of the photographer's works. Although Harold Loeb, the publisher, had no direct connection with the Stieglitz group, Broom was an important outlet for Strand's imagery and ideas because it was not associated entirely with Dada or Futurist ideas, as was The Little Review. Strand's invitation to write may have come about through his long-standing friendship with Nathaniel Shaw, who was editor briefly in 1921, but the article was not actually requested until Lola Ridge had taken

over the editorship. Loeb had wished to use photographs in the publication for some time, noting:

I am sure Stieglitz will not take it on. He prefers to photograph objects that make little or no contribution on their own. . . . Paul Strand, however, is doing just what I want. <sup>34</sup>

Strand was anxious that the half-tone reproductions be the best possible and Loeb postponed the article until he could arrange to have better plates than those that had been produced in Rome made in Germany. When they appeared, the quality was as mediocre as Strand had predicted, and he refused to send anything further to Broom.<sup>35</sup> Although he attempted several times to force publishers to think about the quality of reproduction, no journal of the 'twenties was in any way comparable to Camera Work either in aesthetic format or technical excellence, despite the fact that Broom and The Little Review made some effort toward these ends.

In 1923 Strand received an invitation to address the Clarence White School of Photography which maintained a regular schedule of lectures during the season. As previously noted, White had long ago split with Stieglitz and had helped found the Pictorial Photographers of America, but in the early 'twenties he made an effort to present the new aesthetic in photography to his students. Strand called his lecture "Modern Photography"; when White ne-

glected to have it printed for wider distribution, Stieglitz urged Strand to prepare it for publication and submit it to Photo-Miniature and Photo Era. The American magazines refused it but it appeared in the British Journal of Photography,<sup>36</sup> prefaced by a disclaimer from the editors who were still oriented towards pictorial photography. A discussion of the article was scheduled for the Pictorial Group of the Royal Society of Photography and a precis of the discussion was printed in a later issue of the Photographic Journal.<sup>37</sup>

"The Art Motive in Photography", as the piece was now called, is probably the best known of Strand's writings on photographic aesthetics because it has been quoted so frequently. Despite its more leisurely exposition and more lucid style, the theme and development are essentially those of "Alfred Stieglitz and a Machine" and "Photography and The New God". In an effort to convince an audience of pictorialists, both at the Clarence White School and at the Royal Society, Strand chose to emphasize the intrinsic difference between photographic vision and that oriented to handwork. He noted that

the camera machine cannot evade the objects which are in front of it. No more can the photographer. He can choose these objects, arrange and exclude before exposure, but not afterwards. . . . When he does select the moment, the light, the objects, he must be true to them.<sup>38</sup>

Reaction by students at White's school is unknown, but the discussion at the Royal Society indicated that Strand's main point about the unique quality of photographic vision was lost on amateur pictorialists. One discussant contended that Strand was in error in supposing that the same standards did not apply to all art and another questioned Strand's use of the term "living organism" to describe the expressive quality of a work of art.<sup>39</sup> While reaction to the article may have been a factor, it is more likely that Strand's decision to stop writing shortly afterwards was dictated by the press of commercial assignments. In addition, the constant unpleasantness and resentment which had accompanied his efforts to find public forums for his ideas had begun to irritate. When Stieglitz suggested that Strand submit something to Mencken's new publication, the Mercury, Strand preferred to use his rare free time for photography instead. Although he had previously claimed, in answer to Sheeler's letter, that Stieglitz did not need a "mouthpiece," this decision left only Seligmann, Rosenfeld and Kalonyme to keep the Stieglitz circle doings before the public towards the end of the 'twenties.

During the late spring and summer of 1922, another opportunity to address the question of expressive photography seemed possible when Stieglitz, O'Keeffe, Strand and

Rosenfeld decided to devote an issue of mss to photography.<sup>40</sup> The format was a repeat of one that Stieglitz had used in Camera Work 47, which had featured "What is 291?", a selection of the opinions of prominent individuals of varying professions.<sup>41</sup> Stieglitz's fondness for this format is reflective in some measure of his approach in photography as well. Both the O'Keeffe portrait and the cloud series are attempts to understand reality by examining it from a number of vantage points--essentially the aim in both Camera Work 47 and mss.

Invitations to contribute an essay in answer to the question "Can a Photograph have the Significance of Art?" were sent out, over O'Keeffe's signature, to thirty-one musicians, writers, artists and film makers. Among them were Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Benton, Sheeler, Marin, Charles Chaplin, Walter Lippman and Ernst Bloch. Strand's role in the enterprise was at first unclear, finally he was regarded as the editor and did no writing other than follow-up letters to several of the contributors. Final selections were made by Stieglitz, O'Keeffe and Strand and in September, Seligmann offered to work on a bibliography of photographic articles from Camera Work and to help produce the issue in lieu of writing about photography itself.<sup>42</sup>

Responses to the invitation varied, with Chaplin's

agent answering that the film director was too busy--a response that was printed as received. Lippman suggested that the image was its own answer to the question and Pennell wrote that "mss is more inane, artless and vulgar in its appearance than I could have imagined."<sup>43</sup> Sheeler refused to participate because he considered the camera and not the pen the medium for expressing ideas about photography.

Of the articles received, Bloch's, Hutchins Hapgood's and Waldo Frank's were entirely about Stieglitz. Painters Thomas Benton, Oscar Bluemner and Kenneth Hayes Miller and critic Thomas Craven hashed over the difference between graphic and photographic art with varying degrees of clarity. The level of writing was banal when it wasn't incomprehensible, as Stieglitz acknowledged when he wrote: "That was some essay (S.A. sorry attempt) George F. Of hatched. If printed, one ought to apologize."<sup>44</sup> Although he found other contributions more entertaining, he agreed with Beck, who did all the clerical work, that the selections were heavy handed and needed the leaven of humor which unfortunately was not forthcoming.

The project seems finally to have had little purpose other than to keep Stieglitz's name afloat and to occupy him for the summer, since it did not address itself to any of the contemporary trends in photography. Perhaps, too, it

was an unconscious attempt on Stieglitz's part to counter-balance Strand's growing stature as a photographer and critic, a situation which will be discussed presently. Strand contributed to one last venture of a similar nature --America and Alfred Stieglitz-- but only to the extent of submitting a rewritten version of "Alfred Stieglitz and a Machine".<sup>45</sup> Despite his later view that this sort of compendium reflected the kind of egocentricity he deplored, Strand himself used a similar format when he selected and organized the materials for a monograph of his work in the late 'sixties.<sup>46</sup>

Although his articles on photography naturally embody his philosophical attitude toward the medium, Strand never wrote directly about his own work and refused to do so when he was asked in 1931 by Samuel Kootz to contribute to a projected book on modern American photographers. After insisting that he would not be part of a book that excluded Stieglitz, Strand added:

It seems to me that my attitude is implicit in my photographs. . . . the worker in any medium seldom says anything revelatory about the essential spirit of his or her work....Artists tend. . . . either to think out loud about their technical problems, which sounds important to many who so take them to be the end-all of a work of art, or pressed for 'meaning', the artist frequently effects some romantic philosophy--some elaborate and misleading rationalization. . . . the creative process involves a balance between conscious and intuitive elements and a critical analysis of the art-

ist's own spirit by himself upsets the balance.<sup>47</sup>

The letter to Kootz is free from the heaviness that sometimes characterized Strand's attempts to explain photography as a synthesis of art and science or to deal with creative consciousness and objectivity. It is his most lucid expression of his belief that art is about life:

It seems to me to be the business of the critic and not the artist to get through the latter's work directly at the artist's essential attitude not toward his medium but towards the world--life itself. When I look at a painting, a photograph, hear music, read a book, all that interests me is what living meant or means to the person who made the thing--not so much how, but why, they made it; whether the thing made is a product of their own vision, their own particular truth--If so, what are the essential qualities of that vision and to what extent have they been embodied. 48

This is an extension of Strand's earlier statement that

Photography, or any other medium, is either an embodiment of a life movement, or it is nothing--it derives from the infinite complexity of life itself. 49

As he wrote Kootz, Strand's ideas are apparent in his images. His earliest works of consequence--the New York portraits and scenes--establish his interest in people and their environment, while the machine photographs not only reflect his awareness of the industrial nature of society, but signal his acceptance of the machine as a force for social good. Through the close-up, the photographs of nature and artifact reveal his interest in the underlying structure and relationships of the material world. What

did not appeal to Strand is equally apparent from his images. There are no photographs of exhibitionism, eccentricity or mindless violence. (The so-called brutality of the New York portraits was mainly the reaction of critics unused to non-sentimental realistic photography.) Strand almost never photographed ephemeral expressions or momentary occurrences. Although he was aware of the distortions of which the human mind is capable, he seldom acknowledged that the irrational and ugly might become the stuff of art. In his work there is little overt humor and no frivolity, although visual puns sometimes amused him.

To a faith in rationalism and a belief in the artist as the giver of "life"--both nineteenth century viewpoints --Strand grafted a modern conception of the photographic medium as a synthesis of art and science--a way of bridging the gulf between two modes of thought and feeling in modern society. While still in the Army, he had remarked on the indivisibility of the artistic and scientific spirit and during the 'twenties he elaborated this idea;

What is the relation between science and expression?  
Are they not both vital manifestations of energy,  
whose reciprocal hostility turns the one into the des-  
tructive tool of materialism and the other into a  
anemic phantasy? Must not these two forms of energy  
converge before a living future can be born of both? 50

Strand never regarded the making of photographs or any art

object as an elitist activity. He esteemed creativity highly, but felt that it was not limited to artists but referred to the inventive and craftsman-like solution to any problem, manual, scientific and expressive. In his view, work, trial and error, understanding the process and its limitations rather than flamboyant accident or divine inspiration were required to produce expressive images.

Strand's basic philosophy remained the same throughout his life but towards the end of the 'twenties his ideas on how photography might embody his beliefs began to change. Instead of focussing on random individual objects as vehicles for ideas and feelings, he envisioned a wider horizon or, more accurately, a deeper projection into what lay behind material appearances. As noted, this conception revolved around the Edgar Lee Masters' poem, Spoon River Anthology, which in turn may have coincided with Strand's desire to create a social history through portraiture. In certain respects, the concept is an elaboration of Stieglitz's idea for an all-encompassing portrait of an individual, except that it has been broadened to embrace historical and sociological relationships and consequences as well as psychological states.

"Spoon River" was taken as symbolic of the pervasive sham of American small-town life, with the contrast be

tween appearance and reality one of its most important elements. However, Strand construed it somewhat differently; rather than emphasizing the falsity of appearances, the poem suggested to him that what was not immediately visible to eye or lens--history, traditions, sensibilities--might be made apparent through what the photographer selected. Furthermore, through the accretion of images of person, place and thing, the photographer might recreate the particularity of life and encompass in a group of images a sense of the past and its meaning for the present.

Although the idea may have occurred to Strand as early as he recalled<sup>51</sup> it was most probably around 1930 that he began to see "Spoon River" as a program that would free him from having to make casual and fortuitous visual statements. Strand's awakening to the importance of historical understanding became apparent in his one critical piece of the time also--review of Heinrich Schwarz's book, David Octavius Hill,<sup>52</sup> in which Strand criticized the omission of both Atget and Stieglitz from the author's evaluation of the significant figures in the history of the medium. The need for an underlying structure in his thinking and in his photography, which appears to have resulted from a recognition of the social issues brought to the fore by the Depression, is to be discussed more fully in Chapter 8.

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 7

1. See note 25, Chapter 4.
2. Waldo Frank was the most outspoken proponent of this view. See Waldo Frank, "For a Declaration of War," Secession no.7 (Winter 1923): 5-14.
3. Paul Strand, "Aesthetic Criteria," The Freeman 2 (January 12, 1921):426-27.
4. Paul Strand, "The Subjective Method," The Freeman 2 (February 2, 1921):498.
5. Paul Strand, "The Independents in Theory and Practice," The Freeman 3 (April 6, 1921):90.
6. Paul Strand, "Alfred Stieglitz and a Machine," (New York: Privately Printed, 1921). Also mss. 2 (March 1922): 6-7.
7. Ibid., p.7.
8. Alfred Stieglitz, An Exhibition of Photography by Alfred Stieglitz, Anderson Galleries, New York, February 9, 1921: "I was born in Hoboken. I am an American. Photography is my passion. The search for Truth my obsession."
9. Sherwood Anderson to Paul Strand, 11 March 1922; Waldo Frank to Paul Strand, n.d.; Marianne Moore to Paul Strand, 13 September 1921; all PSA/CCP.
10. Alfred Stieglitz to Waldo Frank, 7 October 1921, ASA/YU: "One copy of the Neue Merkur came. . . splendid translation. . . . I did regret that the revue cut out Strand." Frank had wished also to show the piece to Amy Lowell to convince her of the aesthetic possibilities of photography. Waldo Frank to Paul Strand, n.d., PSA/CCP; Waldo Frank, "Das amerikanische Jahr," Neue Merkur 5 (September 1921):155-69.
11. Paul Strand, "American Water Colors at The Brooklyn Museum," The Arts 2 (December 1921):149.
12. Carl Sprinchorn, "The Forum," The Arts 2 (January 1922):254-55.

13. Paul Strand, "The Forum," The Arts 2 (February 1922):332-33.
14. Ibid., p.333.
15. Paul Strand, "John Marin," Art Review 1 (January 1922):23. The original MS (PSA/CCP) was reduced from 26 typewritten pages.
16. Paul Strand, "Marin Not an Escapist," New Republic 55 (July 25, 1928):255.
17. Paul Strand, "Georgia O'Keeffe," typescript, 1923 PSA/CCP.
18. Paul Strand to John Macy, 24 March 1923, PSA/CCP.
19. Paul Strand to Dr. J.S. Watson, Jr., 9 May 1923, PSA/CCP.
20. Paul Strand, "Georgia O'Keeffe," Playboy 9 (July 1924):16-20.
21. Paul Strand, "Sometimes a Week Elapses before Criticisms are Published," The Sun, January 21, 1923, unpagged clipping in Paul Strand Scrapbook, PSA/CCP. See also Henry Tyrell, "Exhibitions and Other Things," The World, February 11, 1923, p.M11.
22. Willard Huntington Wright, "The Future of Painting," (in 3 parts) The Freeman 6 (November 22, 1922):255-57; (November 29, 1922):279-80; (December 6, 1922):303-04.
23. Arpad Gerster, "A New 'Art' of Color," (in 2 parts) The Freeman 6 (February 21, 1923):567-69; (February 28, 1923):592-94.
24. Paul Strand to Suzanne LaFollette, 16 March 1923, PSA/CCP.
25. Paul Strand, "The New Art of Color," The Freeman 7 (April 18, 1923):137.
26. Ibid.
27. Paul Strand, "Photography and the New God," Broom 3 (November 1922):252-58.

28. Lewis W. Hine to Florence L. Kellogg, 17 February 1933, Survey Associates Papers, Social Welfare History Archives Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
29. Fernand Leger, "The Aesthetics of the Machine," The Little Review (Spring 1923):45; Enrico Prampolini, "The Aesthetic of the Machine and Mechanical Introspection in Art," Broom 3(August 1922):235-37.
30. Dorothea Lange, "Photographing the Familiar," reprinted in Photographers on Photography, Nathan Lyons, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p.69.
31. According to Strand, he first saw Atget's work at the Wehye Gallery in 1927. Interview with Paul Strand, 6 July 1975, NYC. Although Berenice Abbott thinks that it was not until 1936 that she showed Atget prints to Strand at her studio, Strand mentions Atget first in 1931, indicating that her memory is not reliable either. Berenice Abbott to author, 5 September 1977.
32. Strand, "Photography and the New God," p.256.
33. Ibid., p.257.
34. Harold Loeb, The Way It Was (New York: Criterion Books Inc., 1959), p.123.
35. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 25 July 1922, ASA/YU: "I . . . dropped in at Wehye's and saw the latest copies of Broom. Pretty bad, the half-tones execrable. . . . he must try to get better reproduction. . . . I look for a slaughter." On the other hand, Loeb believed the Strand photographs were beautifully reproduced, Loeb, The Way It Was, p.142.
36. Paul Strand, "The Art Motive in Photography," British Journal of Photography 70(October 5, 1923):613-15. Stieglitz felt that the piece, with very little revision, "would stand as quite a little masterpiece." Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 15 November 1923, PSA/CCP.
37. "The Art Motive in Photography: A Discussion," Photographic Journal (London) 64 (March 1924):129-32.
38. Strand, "The Art Motive in Photography," p.612.

39. "The Art Motive in Photography: A Discussion," p.130.
40. "Can a Photograph Have the Significance of Art?"  
mss 4(December 1922): entire issue.
41. "What is 291?" Camera Work 47(dated July 1914,  
published January 1915): entire issue.
42. Herbert Seligmann to Alfred Stieglitz, 27 September 1922, ASA/YU.
43. Joseph Pennell to Paul Stran, 26 July 1922,  
PSA/CCP. (Entire correspondence concerning this issue  
of mss in PSA/CCP.)
44. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 13 July 1922,  
ASA/YU.
45. Waldo Frank et al., America and Alfred Stieglitz  
(Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1934),  
pp.281-85.
46. Paul Strand: A Retrospective Monograph, The Years  
1915-1968 (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture Inc., 1971).
47. Paul Strand to Samuel Kootz, 11 September 1931,  
copy in ASA/YU.
48. Ibid.
49. Paul Strand to Board of Trustees, Camera Club  
of New York, 23 April 1920, copy given to Walter  
Rosenblum by Paul Strand.
50. Paul Strand, "Alfred Stieglitz and a Machine,"  
and "Photography and the New God."
51. Interview with Paul Strand, 18 March 1975, NYC.
52. Paul Strand, "A Picture Book for Elders: David  
Octavius Hill, Master Photographer," Saturday Review  
of Literature 8(December 12, 1931):32.

## CHAPTER 8

### STRAND AND STIEGLITZ

The nature of the relationship with Stieglitz was a decisive element in Strand's activities during the 'twenties. On his return to New York after almost a year in the Army, he naturally sought to renew the former friendship which he considered his only link to the vitality and communal spirit of 291. At the time, Stieglitz appeared to offer the sole opportunity for intelligent discussion of art, literature and photography, including even the technical problems associated with the medium. The Camera Club, which Strand had rejoined in order to use the darkroom, was as conservative as ever. The association with Sheeler, discussed previously, was probably rewarding because they worked together, but it is doubtful that Sheeler's inarticulateness appealed to Strand or that the Arensberg circle interested him greatly. Furthermore, Sheeler's ambivalent attitude toward the medium became more pronounced as the painter tried to commercialize his photography resulting finally in an attitude that was antithetical to Strand's

beliefs.

However, a number of very real problems made a return to the former relationship between Strand and Stieglitz impossible. In the first place, Strand was no longer a neophyte and Stieglitz was no longer in a position of power. He was, in fact, immersed in domestic difficulties, at odds with his wife and child and committed to supporting O'Keeffe on a shrinking income. Economic and psychological problems left him drained, with little time or incentive to reconstitute the '291' spirit. In addition, O'Keeffe was not particularly at ease with Strand, although eventually she learned to accept his presence at Lake George. The relationship was further complicated by the fact that Rebecca Salsbury became exceptionally devoted to Stieglitz after she and Strand were married in 1922.

At first Strand was so desirous of re-establishing the former relationship of protégé and mentor that Beck thought it necessary to warn him against hero worship:

Aren't you absorbing too much of Stieglitz? Don't envy him. No man's life parallels another exactly and you have enough personality of your own not to envy anybody.

From time to time throughout the 'twenties Beck found it necessary to assure Strand that his efforts and accomplishments were worthwhile on their own merit. Nevertheless,

Strand continued to regard Stieglitz in the same way, showing him photographs and articles, discussing projects, performing commissions and evaluating photography almost entirely in terms of Stieglitz's accomplishments. For his part, Stieglitz may have realized that without gallery or publication, Strand's advocacy was needed to keep their common beliefs, as well as Stieglitz's name, before the public.

Stieglitz's need for a public forum was enormous, and his restiveness in its absence led him to urge on Strand, Seligmann, Rosenfeld and (briefly) Waldo Frank, projects that satisfied this desire. Although frequently blind to aspects of his own character, Stieglitz was well aware of his craving for a public.<sup>2</sup> On one occasion, after urging Strand to work on an article on photography, he added:

I do miss a medium like Camera Work. There is really so much that ought to be recorded and go before the people. But with labor conditions and conditions generally, I don't see any chance. . . at all in that line.<sup>3</sup> And still I haven't. . . given up hope.

Stieglitz mourned 291 and Camera Work until 1925, when he was able to rent space for the Intimate Gallery.

Strand's struggle for economic independence and professional stature, discussed previously, created a strong need on his part also to keep alive the memory of 291. As he wrote Stieglitz:

I think often of 291 these days. . . . it is still the one clear thing, the one hope upon which one can think with pleasure and a sense of gratitude to the beauty of life. <sup>4</sup>

to which Stieglitz replied:

Yes, 291--It was clean. . . . an incredible performance. When I look back--I don't see how it ever could have happened. And happening, could have existed in concrete form for so many years. I wonder, will I ever grow up? <sup>5</sup>

Although the shared memory of 291 created a strong bond, the relationship was complicated by Stieglitz's difficulty in acknowledging a shift of roles. He still regarded himself as the younger man's 'father' although Strand's experiences and critical acclaim had obviously made him more of an equal.<sup>6</sup> At times he seemed envious of Strand's accomplishments and disparaged his achievements; on other occasions he was supportive and full of suggestions. Frequently he made critical remarks, which he then withdrew upon further consideration. He was especially temperamental with regard to Strand's expressive photography but was full of encouragement in helping him establish himself as a commercial film photographer. The correspondence between Stieglitz, the two Strands and others of the circle is a barometer of Stieglitz's alternations between hope and despair, support and disparagement. Also, these letters document the fact that Stieglitz in his late

fifties had become aged and sick, isolated from the main figures and movements in photography and nourished more by memories than by objective fact.

As he aged, Stieglitz seemed to believe increasingly in his own powers of will and intuition, and less in rational discourse and argument. He was convinced that Strand and others should divine his thoughts without his giving them literal or verbal form. After 1920, he wrote little of intellectual or aesthetic significance regarding photography--the forewords to his catalogues were mostly short, cryptic statements. When Strand proposed that he write about the experience of 291, Stieglitz wondered if he could ever do so, because it had assumed the aspect of a "dream".<sup>7</sup> Instead, he dictated parables and anecdotes which emphasized his own almost mystical powers which were transcribed by Beck or Seligmann.<sup>8</sup> Although he chafed at having no gallery, he did not respond to DeZayas' suggestion that he participate in an exhibition contrasting the work of the Secessionists and the Moderns or to invitations to participate in other initiatives.<sup>9</sup> His letters to Strand are often full of irritable descriptions of his technical problems with photographic processing, but rarely deal with photography as such; they allude much more frequently to literature than to the visual arts. In time,

Stieglitz's dislike of American commercialism and its reflection in New York City became even more pronounced, and he appears as one who has lost all hope for the future.

A particularly difficult element in the friendship must have been Strand's boundless energy in the face of Stieglitz's physical lassitude. Writing from Lake George in 1920, Stieglitz noted:

I continue to bask in my specialty: unadulterated laziness. . . without a thought in any part of my anatomy. . . . I suppose you, on the contrary have been hard at it, with how much passion I can't tell. <sup>10</sup>

A month later, he made an effort to soften his criticism:

The Shaw portrait must be first class. And if, as you say, you have 15 good negatives, why you are to be congratulated. But I am sure you are going ahead rapidly. My being so unkindly "critical" has borne fruit. It's hard for me to be unkind. Most people would laugh at that as I know they feel I just wallow in it--exalt in hurting. How often I wish I could be indifferent and nice. <sup>11</sup>

The summer of 1921 was difficult for Stieglitz because of the sale of a portion of the family property at Lake George, including the mansion, Oaklawn. Stieglitz, O'Keefe, his mother and other family members and guests now occupied a farmhouse and various outbuildings. Although they no longer had direct access to the Lake, the household was still staffed by a cook and local help. Both Stieglitz and O'Keefe were in poor health and the economic depression of 1921 was an additional constant source of

worry. In mid-summer Stieglitz wrote Strand:

Basically conditions are rottener than ever. . . . it does seem as if there never would be any peace for one of my kind. I build and I build--only to find--oh hell<sup>11</sup>  
--it takes all my will not to cave in. <sup>12</sup>

The fact that Strand might come into a small inheritance on the death of his uncle, occasioned the following comment from Stieglitz:

I do hope that Strand finally finds some means of getting cash so that he can get the full experience of the experiment--if it's in him to get a full experi-<sup>13</sup>  
ence.

At the same time, when Seligmann referred to Strand's photographs as "all dressed up in technical mastery with no place to go,"<sup>14</sup> Stieglitz replied that it was no mean achievement to be the master of a process and "the rest may still come."<sup>15</sup>

Stieglitz seemed more at peace with himself in 1922 and his letters to Strand were less destructive. In part, this may have been due to his involvement with the photographic issue of mss, discussed previously. Another factor in his improved outlook probably was his friendship with Rebecca Salsbury. Although he had met her earlier, she and Stieglitz became more companionable when she spent part of the summer of 1922 at Lake George. He found her genuinely devoted to him and a vigorous and original spirit who was helpful around the estate, was a proficient typist and sten-

ographer and a fine model for photography. Her letters and her presence seemed consistently to buoy his spirits. After her first vacation at Lake George, Stieglitz wrote, thanking her for her promptness in executing a commission:

I have more than one "Beck". . . . Perhaps the prints will tell you a few things not so clear to you now. I haven't felt so pleased for a long time. <sup>16</sup>

Stieglitz did not hesitate about photographing Beck<sup>17</sup> but he considered Strand's attempts to make still images at Lake George an affront. His possessive attitude in regard to photographing on his property first manifested itself in 1922, when he commented on Strand's activities in a letter to Rosenfeld:

He photographed like one possessed, shooting right and left, forward and backward, upward and downward and in <sup>18</sup> directions not yet named.

In 1923, Strand's photographic activities at the Lake property seemed especially trying for Stieglitz, whose summer had begun on the same note of exhaustion as previously. In addition to continuing financial worries, the influx of guests at the farm had sent O'Keeffe off to Maine in mid-summer and again in September. Beck, a guest during her absence, was aware of Stieglitz's concern about the property:

Things are drawing to an ominous close and my heart aches for Stieglitz--A conversation. . . has made him realize that this will probably be his last year on the hill--his 50th year. . . . This combined with Georgia's going away, proving that she doesn't need the place or

love it, settles the thing. . . . He has seen it coming for years. . . . Another 291. . . . he looks old<sup>19</sup> and tired and lonely.

These were the circumstances surrounding Stieglitz's photograph of the aged, gelded farm horse which he titled Spiritual America. In his usual fashion, he externalized an inner sense of inadequacy and enlarged the implications of the image by appending a symbolic title. During the same summer he made many images of clouds, which he referred to as "gruesome things--but life as I see it. . . . It's a gruesome business in spite of its lovely moments."<sup>20</sup>

It was in this tense atmosphere that Strand, staying with O'Keeffe and Stieglitz at Lake George during July in order to be near the Saratoga Race Track, attempted to photograph a barn and old buggy on the property. Stieglitz evidently communicated his displeasure in a verbal tirade.<sup>21</sup> Although he later wrote Strand that he was glad that some of the photographs had turned out because "for three years every year I have been making exposures of the two barn and buggy and never got what I was after"<sup>22</sup> he was in fact implying that Strand was demanding too little of himself. When Seligmann and Rosenfeld saw the completed prints they both denounced them as "merely beautiful technical achievements."<sup>23</sup> Stieglitz wrote Seligmann that he hoped Strand would not think that he was behind their critical attitude

and added:

I haven't seen his barns, but I know I was amazed at his trying them the way he did--and I told him so. He didn't seem to understand, Beck even less. . . I am sorry for Strand. I wonder will he ever get what I tried to impress on him. I can't forever keep teaching the ABC and that CAT doesn't spell dog. <sup>24</sup>

Strand and Beck felt that the attacks were unjustified but in deference to Stieglitz, Strand destroyed all but one of the Lake George negatives.<sup>25</sup> His devotion to the older man continued, but the incident and others of a similar nature involving O'Keeffe as well, initiated a psychological and artistic withdrawal on the part of both Strands. During August of 1924, Beck, vacationing again at Lake George, kept aloof from involvement in the household, although she spent part of each day with Stieglitz.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Strand's film assignments had become so pressing that with the exception of a few weekends at the Lake, he took no vacation at all in 1924 and did not visit Stieglitz again during the summer until 1929.<sup>27</sup>

Realizing Stieglitz's growing worry and despair, both Strands made a number of efforts to find financial support and new projects for him. In 1923 they suggested that several wealthy benefactors be approached to subscribe to a fund that would allow Stieglitz to keep the Lake property or to use it in any manner he wished.<sup>28</sup> The idea was similar to Stieglitz's efforts in behalf of Marin, who also was ex-

periencing money problems. Stieglitz had circularized a group of friends, asking that they contribute six hundred dollars over a three year period which would allow Marin to work unconcerned at his painting. In exchange, the Friends of Marin would be entitled to water colors double the value of their subscription.

As it developed, the Strands' suggestion was not necessary in 1923, but it was reactivated on a casual basis in 1925 when they, Rosenfeld and others donated money to cover the yearly rental on the room that became the Intimate Gallery. Again in 1929, a similar plan was put into effect to sustain An American Place, although Stieglitz was of two minds about opening yet another gallery during such financially unstable times. According to Strand, he spent the summer of 1929 soliciting about thirteen thousand dollars and searching for space for the new enterprise; after the Crash had made several pledges worthless, O'Keefe and Dorothy Norman raised enough to make up the difference.<sup>29</sup>

Beck Strand herself helped Stieglitz through some difficult economic as well as psychological periods. She had a small income from secretarial jobs and her mother was occasionally generous with cash gifts. This enabled her to buy photographs from Stieglitz nearly every year. In 1928, she, Rosenfeld, David Schulte, Alma Wertheim and an anon-

ymous donor, purchased twenty-two of Stieglitz's photographs and gave them to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the first gift of Stieglitz's work to that institution and the origin of their collection of photography.<sup>30</sup>

Although he was as convinced as ever of the need for a gallery devoted to American art,<sup>31</sup> by 1929 Strand must have realized that a new 291 was no longer possible. Stieglitz had become too tired, too parochial in outlook and too embittered to attract the youthful vitality needed for its resurrection. In consequence, although he still felt concern for the older man, Strand became more receptive to ideas concerning community in the arts that originated elsewhere. Of special importance was his association with Harold Clurman which had begun in 1928 and which led to an interest in Strand's part in social and political questions, including even an urge to vote for the first time in many years.<sup>32</sup>

These new perceptions were sharpened in Taos in 1931 and 1932 when the 291 spirit seemed to be revived by new friendships and by ongoing discussions on art and social problems, topics which the Depression had made urgent. Among others, Strand met Carlos Chavez, a distinguished Mexican composer who was shortly to make it possible for Strand to work in Mexico, and Henwar Rodakiewicz, a fledg-

ling film maker who became his companion on explorations of deserted mining towns and who later worked with him in Mexico on Redes. Susan Ramsdell, an immunologist from Texas, and Philip Stevenson, novelist and playwright, were especially interested in political theory and included Strand in their frequent discussions. Others with whom he developed close friendships were Ernie O'Malley, a former Commander in the Irish Republican Army who was working temporarily in Taos, Ella Young, an Irish poet and mystic from the West Coast, and Elizabeth McCausland, whose position as critic for a New England newspaper made a year-round friendship possible.

Although the Strands were not financially affected by the Depression and at first appear to have been barely aware of breadlines and apple-sellers, they did feel the general out-of-jointedness of the times. With his usual determination to surmount personal moods, Strand attempted to understand the social and political forces that were allowing American society to fall apart. On the basis of discussions of Marxism and socialist ideas among the Taos group, he began to take a greater interest in the effects of history on the architecture and artifacts of the Southwest, as though by looking into the past, he might find explanations for the present.

The result of this new awareness was only gradually apparent in Strand's photography. It did not take the form of creating 'people's art', either in the sense of simplifying the meaning of his images so that they might be readily understood, or of photographing material with an overt social message. Strand endeavored to find a unifying concept that would bind together the varieties of experiences and objects he photographed, in the same manner that an underlying principle of society explains the seemingly fortuitous and accidental. The previously mentioned "Spoon River" idea appeared to be a concept that might illuminate and relate artifact and natural form in terms of a central theme. In his earlier work, Strand had wished to express the vital qualities in matter in order to endow his art with meaning; now he began to conceive of meaning in an ideological as well as spiritual sense.

Elizabeth McCausland's relationship with Strand was of prime significance in developing his new awareness, in part because she was one of the few from Taos who also returned East for most of the year. She frequently visited New York theaters and galleries and her involvement in the arts provided a common ground for their association. In addition, McCausland was extremely articulate and enjoyed discussing both intellectual, aesthetic and psychological matters.

She kept in close touch with Strand by letter, reviewed his 1932 exhibition for her paper and privately printed an appreciation of his work.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, she helped Strand understand Stieglitz in the light of new conceptions about the role of the artist in society by advancing an impersonal analysis of Stieglitz's character. McCausland compared Stieglitz to Romain Rolland's archetypal romantic hero, Jean Christophe, for whom

the tumult and turmoil of life is one half the equation, the order, calm and peace of art is the other. That is, failing to control and order his life, Stieglitz can control and order his art. It is . . . his other world to which he can travel when the world of here and now grows too distressing and unsatisfactory. (Emphasis in original.)

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Despite a personal distaste for Stieglitz's intolerance, McCausland helped Strand see the older man as a product of his age and background and perhaps helped prevent the insensible rage that often attaches to a former idol in whom one no longer has faith. In their frequent discussions of the role of the artist in society, she and Strand weighed the anarchic freedom characteristic of the United States against the submergence of individualism in more socially organized nations such as the Soviet Union. In the main, their exchanges centered on the hopelessness and despair felt by many of their acquaintances--Stieglitz and Seligmann for example--as opposed to their own need to

believe "in a free society, organized to permit each individual free development and yet cooperating on the basis of mutual advantage."<sup>35</sup> McCausland especially emphasized her belief that the exploitation of the artist, against which Stieglitz had fought, was no different from the exploitation and humiliation suffered by scientist, scholar and worker, whose dilemma he had ignored.

After Strand met Clurman at the Intimate Gallery in 1928, they became close friends. The Group Theater, which Clurman helped establish in 1931, seemed to Strand to be an evolution of the 291 idea because it was a communal activity creating an art expression reflective of the central meaning of American experience at the time. Rather than expressing only the superficial appearances of life, the Group sought to comprehend society's role in producing the conditions of existence, thereby enabling its actors to embody this understanding in the creation of their roles. Both Strand and Stieglitz were members of the Group Associates, an organization that supported the Theater's activities between 1932 and 1934, but in addition, the Group afforded Strand a physical setting in both its New York and summer quarters where he could seek discussion, friendship and the excitement of watching the creative process unfold. In contrast, the atmosphere at An American Place must have

seemed ascetic and morbid.

In the summer of 1929, when both Strand and Stieglitz were alone in the East after Beck and O'Keeffe had left for Taos, Strand took Clurman to visit at Lake George. During their stay, which Clurman recounts in his autobiography,<sup>36</sup> he received a vivid sense of the older man's despair. Having none of Strand's emotional attachments or memories, Clurman was less favorably disposed than Strand with respect to Stieglitz's personality, although he was surprisingly perceptive about the quality of his creative achievement.<sup>37</sup> At this time and afterward, Clurman attempted to convince Strand that the irrational outbursts, the bitterness and the corrosive criticism with which Stieglitz had attacked his work had been brought on by envy parading as helpfulness. He noted that Stieglitz had responded to his own piece on Strand in Creative Art by assuring Clurman that had he seen Stieglitz's work first, he would not have written so favorably about Strand.<sup>38</sup>

The Strands' decision to leave New York for Taos in 1932 evolved from several factors. As noted, free-lance film business had virtually ended on the East Coast. Strand desired a place to work at still photography where he would be undisturbed by personality or financial problems and away from the city that in his mind had become associated

with crisis and catastrophe. Beck, also exhausted by the tensions associated with living in New York, preferred the West. The decision was finally forced by Stieglitz's indifference to the Strands' joint exhibition in 1932.

Clurman, concerned with the effect of Stieglitz's behavior on Strand, wrote after their departure:

The day I was with Stieglitz, the main burden of his talk was that you had misunderstood his criticism. That because you were so superb a photographer--your prints better than his in many respects--he felt it his duty to counteract glib praise from unqualified people by testing your work by the severest standards and thereby stimulate you to deeper efforts. . . . Your instinct to break off was a right one. Unless you can be close to Stieglitz without being absorbed by him, as Marin can, he is not healthy. 39

Although "break" was not how he wished it described,<sup>40</sup> Strand's westward move represented the parting of the ways. It was his recognition that Stieglitz had become 'the master builder' and that his own creative future could no longer be involved with concepts he considered outworn and egocentric. The fissures that had appeared in the mid- twenties had become gulfs too great for sentiment to bridge. Undoubtedly, the emotional difficulties in which Strand and Beck found themselves at the time, also contributed to the dissolution of the relationship. As Strand became more concerned to endow his work with social meaning and was beginning to consider how his photography might be of more social use, Beck found it impossible to shake free from feelings of self-

doubt, aimlessness and despair. The marriage began to dissolve in the strain of psychologically and socially incompatible attitudes.

After Strand had left for Mexico at the end of 1932, Beck was particularly troubled and wrote Stieglitz of her yearning for the "warmth and understanding of the old days,"<sup>41</sup> to which he answered:

Yes. It was a great, great pity that there should have been any misunderstanding or misunderstandings between any of us. I see very clearly how they all came about. I am much alone and have much chance to see straight beyond all my personal feelings and without fuzzy edges and above all without my theories about life or anything else. . . .I am ever conscious of your more than kindness to me . . . and I don't forget the many years of Paul's loyalty not only to me personally but to something beyond us all--to the idea and the idea is as alive as ever. 42

Many years later, Strand summed up his experience with Stieglitz as follows:

The day I walked into the Photo-Secession 291 in 1907 was a great moment in my life. . . . but the day I walked out of An American Place in 1932 was not less good. It was fresh air and personal liberation from something that had become, for me at least, second-rate, corrupt, meaningless. 43

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 8

1. Rebecca Salsbury to Paul Strand, 8 June 1920, PSA/CCP.
2. Stieglitz was under the impression that he gave of himself unstintingly and was probably shocked to read the following in Waldo Frank to Alfred Stieglitz, 31 July 1923, ASA/YU: "I feel that you are incapable of a relationship of equality with anyone. You demand that in some way the other person accept your ascendancy before you function in serving him, understanding him, enlightening him, in helping him." (Emphasis in original.)
3. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 27 July 1920, PSA/CCP.
4. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 3 August 1921, ASA/YU.
5. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 4 August 1921, PSA/CCP.
6. Alfred Stieglitz to Waldo Frank, 26 November 1920, ASA/YU: "Strand has matured. . . . my 'babies' are producing good work."
7. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 24 August 1920, PSA/CCP: "As for myself writing about '291', I wonder will I ever feel like doing it. . . . often it all seems like a dream."
8. Herbert Seligmann was introduced to Stieglitz by Strand sometime around 1916. Following graduation from Harvard, he was a newspaper reporter and Press Officer for the NAACP. He was a useful publicist for Stieglitz, as well. See "A Photographer's Challenge," Nation 112 (February 16 1921):268; Alfred Stieglitz Talking: Notes on Some of His Conversations, 1925-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1966).
9. Marius DeZayas to Alfred Stieglitz, 25 February 1921, ASA/YU. See also Norman, Alfred Stieglitz, p.168.
10. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 9 August 1920, PSA/CCP.

11. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 16 September 1920, PSA/CCP.
12. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 4 August 1921, PSA/CCP.
13. Alfred Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, 20 August 1921, ASA/YU.
14. Herbert Seligmann to Alfred Stieglitz, 28 September 1921, ASA/YU.
15. Alfred Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, 2 October 1921, ASA/YU.
16. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 28 October 1922, ASA/YU.
17. Stieglitz made a great number of studies of Beck, clothed and in the nude, during the summers of 1922 and 1923. She purchased a few and several were given her as gifts.
18. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Rosenfeld, 4 October 1922, ASA/YU.
19. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 14 September 1923, PSA/CCP.
20. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 14 September 1923, PSA/CCP.
21. In recalling the incident, Strand erroneously believed that it had occurred in 1920 or 1921. He remembered Stieglitz saying: "You have no right to make photographs here. It is part of my life." Strand claimed that he had come to understand the objection because he felt somewhat the same way about his own property at Orgeval. Interview with Paul Strand, 26 March 1975, NYC.
22. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 15 October 1923, PSA/CCP.
23. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 27 November 1923, ASA/YU.

24. Alfred Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, 13 November 1923, ASA/YU.
25. Interview with Paul Strand, 26 March 1975, NYC. One negative remains in the Strand Estate Collection.
26. Rebecca Strand refers to the "fuss" with O'Keefe in several letters written from Lake George during August 1924. See Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 8 August and 10 August 1924, PSA/CCP.
27. Strand first visited Lake George in 1919. He returned in 1920, spent considerable time there in 1922 and 1923, visited for a few weekends in 1924 and did not return again until 1929, when he appears to have remained there for much of July and to have visited briefly with Clurman on another occasion. He looked on the 1929 visit as an obligation, undertaken without "any particular pleasure." See Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 5 June 1929, PSA/CCP.
28. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 18 September and 19 September 1923, PSA/CCP.
29. Strand felt that his efforts in behalf of An American Place had not been fully appreciated: "Having raised more money than anyone else, no one said a word." Interview with Paul Strand, 24 March 1975, NYC. See also Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 22 October 1929, ASA/YU: "Where did you get the notion that I didn't fully realize (and fully appreciate) the activities of Paul and yourself in connection with the new rooms idea?" The following were among the contributors: the DeWalds, the Normans, Rosenfeld, Dr. Stieglitz, Flora Straus, the Strands, Jacob Strand. See Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, n.d. [1929] ASA/YU. See also Norman, Alfred Stieglitz, p.193, for a general discussion of events.
30. William M. Ivins, Jr., "Photographs by Alfred Stieglitz," Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin 27 (March 1969):336-37. Strand later believed that the purchase price should have been given the Museum in order to force them to purchase photographs. Interview with Paul Strand, 26 January 1976, Orgeval.
31. Terming European art "passionless," he felt that

the Stieglitz circle artists might "become a nucleus, if all can work together--from which other things might grow." Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 3 October 1929, ASA/YU.

32. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, n.d. after 10 September 1928 , ASA/YU: "I confess to an impulse to vote that I haven't had for some years."
33. Elizabeth McCausland, Paul Strand (Springfield, Mass.: Privately Printed, 1933).
34. Elizabeth McCausland to Paul Strand, 8 April 1932, PSA/CCP.
35. Elizabeth McCausland to Paul Strand, 31 March 1932, PSA/CCP.
36. Harold Clurman, All People Are Famous (New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974), pp.56-59.
37. Referring to Stieglitz's earlier photographs of New York, Clurman wrote: "They are N.Y. seen by Stieglitz, which doesn't mean a distortion or a falsification but an interpretation so complete that the result, like a perfect marriage, is altogether justified." Harold Clurman to Paul Strand, 30 March 1934, PSA/CCP.
38. Clurman, All People Are Famous, p.58.
39. Harold Clurman to Paul Strand, 21 November 1932, PSA/CCP.
40. Interview with Paul Strand, 12 March 1975, NYC and 24 January 1976, Orgeval. Strand did not consider his actions a "break" because he continued to correspond with Stieglitz from Mexico and later from the Southwest. He visited occasionally when he was in New York and contributed to America and Alfred Stieglitz. He attended Stieglitz's funeral service and spoke at the Memorial Meeting for Stieglitz held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1947.
41. Rebecca Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 19 December 1933, ASA/YU.

42. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 22 December 1933, ASA/YU.
43. Paul Strand to Rebecca James, 13 December 1966, copy in PSA/CCP.

## CHAPTER 9

### EXHIBITIONS: 1925-1932

After 1922, Strand's photographs were exhibited infrequently, due mainly to his disinclination actively to seek exposure or to allow his work to be shown in any context of which he disapproved. Strand recalled that he had never looked for a gallery:

I never had the same yearning as other painters and photographers to show my work all the time. I always took the opportunity when it came, but I never asked anyone for a show. <sup>1</sup>

His attitude may explain why he was not included in two important group shows held in the late 'twenties, but leaves unanswered the question concerning the few exhibitions he was given at Stieglitz's galleries. Others of the circle were shown frequently, but Strand's first individual exhibition after 1916 took place thirteen years later--in 1929 at the Intimate Gallery.

Strand's photographs were included in "Seven Americans", however, the exhibition Stieglitz arranged at the Anderson Galleries in March 1925.<sup>2</sup> It displayed the work of the gallery regulars--Dove, Hartley, Marin, O'Keeffe, Stieglitz and Strand--with the addition of Demuth. The show's signifi-

cance was made explicit in the catalogue, which contained short pieces by several writers and artists emphasizing the uniquely American character of the work. With exceptions, each artist hung his or her own work, Strand being given a space slightly separated from the others.<sup>3</sup> He hung five New York scenes, three photographs of leaves (actually mullens) and ten photographs of machines, but it is no longer possible to determine precisely which images were included because neither the catalogue nor the reviews referred to the works by specific title.

"Seven Americans" received wide coverage in the daily and art press despite what one critic perceived as the "bally-hoo" of the catalogue.<sup>4</sup> Strand's work was ignored completely by Edmund Wilson and Royal Cortissoz and dismissed in a sentence by reviewers for the Nation and International Studio.<sup>5</sup> Henry McBride mistakenly attributed Strand's photographs to Stieglitz in his somewhat equivocal comments on the photography.<sup>6</sup> Articles in the World, the Christian Science Monitor and The Arts agreed with the Brooklyn Daily Eagle that, compared with Stieglitz's work, "Strand's photographs in their different way are equally beautiful."<sup>7</sup> Somewhat later, an unsigned review in the Dial attempted to show that the machine was an acceptable subject in art by noting:

We welcome the power house in the drawing room when we examine his [Strand's] orientally perfect combining of discs, parabolas and verticals--when we perceive the silver flexibility of skin or the depth of tone upon the anaconda like curves of central bearings,

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a comment whose style led Stieglitz to wonder if Marianne "Moore was imitating herself."<sup>9</sup>

Attendance at the exhibition was excellent, convincing Stieglitz and his intimates--Strand and O'Keeffe mainly--that another gallery might prove successful. Accordingly, after delays caused by Stieglitz's illness, the Intimate Gallery was opened in a room in the Anderson Galleries building in December 1926, with a Marin exhibition. Whether the enterprise would have been financially possible without contributions from the Strands, the DeWalds, the Liebmans and others seems doubtful. Stieglitz maintained a full exhibition schedule, hanging seventeen shows between December 1926 and March 1929, despite continuous health problems. Of the regulars, he showed Marin and O'Keeffe four times, Dove twice, Hartley, who was abroad until 1929, once, Strand once and himself not at all.

Strand's inclusion in the 1925 exhibition presented the opportunity to see his work in relation to that of other members of the circle. His own imagery appears to have little in common with that of Marin and Dove, despite the high esteem in which he held their work during the 'twenties.

Marin's water colors, especially those of the Maine coast (Fig. 115) are concerned with ephemeral effects--sunlight, storms and tossing seas--while his city views evoke a distinct sense of disequilibrium. Nevertheless, Marin's extraordinary ability to weld sky and ground together into a pictorial unity must have had important lessons for Strand, who did not begin to deal with the problem until 1929.

Superficially Dove's work of the period may appear to have a greater affinity with Strand's vision in that both sought to simplify the data of the objective world in order to evoke a fresh response. Indeed, in 1922, Dove made a painting of a Gear (Fig. 116) which is not dissimilar to a Strand machine photograph in composition and intent. However, Dove's work is infused with imagist symbols, as in Fog Horns (Fig. 117), in which the repetition of muted shapes and colors suggest muffled sound and foggy atmosphere. This tendency, which easily can become playful and even cute, was totally foreign to Strand's character and art.

Much closer parallels exist between the work of O'Keeffe and Strand, and the question of influence is a complex one. After her visit to New York in 1917, when she first became aware of Strand's work, O'Keeffe's painting style underwent modification.<sup>10</sup> Her Texas water colors of 1917 (Fig. 118) are almost completely abstract, with flowing, wavering forms

that evoke the light and space of the Southwest without description or specificity. After her move to the city, her compositions were organized so that the forms seem often to continue beyond the edges rather than being contained within the frame. Although the lack of specificity continued, her delineation of shape became much more crisp, while the gradual value changes from dark to light suggest something of the manner in which the photographic print registers black, white and grey tones.

While O'Keeffe continued her interest in abstract imagery into the mid-'twenties, she began also to paint landscape and close-up views of organic matter in a more recognizable manner. Dark Abstraction (Fig. 119) as well as the more recognizable Black Iris (Fig. 120) are suggestive of the close-up views that Strand made of plant life in 1921. Furthermore, several of O'Keeffe's city views can be related in framing, format and point of view to the camera's vision and one might even guess that the sunspots in The Shelton with Sunspots (Fig. 121) are those reflected by a lens rather than the human eye. O'Keeffe was one of the few artists of the period who painted objects in different states of being, as in an open and closed clamshell, a conception more natural to photography than to traditional painting.

In addition to considerations of style, there is a strong parallelism between Strand and O'Keeffe in their choice of subject. Both were interested in enlarged floral and foliate forms and in similar architectural and structural details, sometimes even using an identical motif, as in the painter's Ranchos Church (Fig. 122) of 1930 and the photographer's image of the same structure made somewhat later. The cross-fertilization between Strand and O'Keeffe, as well as the relation of her work to the camera image generally, is apparent but the exact details of this connection need further investigation.

Evidently in the spring of 1926 Stieglitz was considering a Strand exhibition, which did not materialize.<sup>11</sup> The next year, after Strand had shown him the photographs made in the West, Stieglitz affirmed his faith in the work and remarked that several were "truly alive, beyond the tangible,"<sup>12</sup> but still hesitated to arrange an exhibition. In spite of his pride, Strand discussed the matter with Stieglitz at the end of 1927 and was assured that "my interest in you is as great as it is in Marin or Georgia--or anyone. I feel that counts more than anything else--it does with me."<sup>13</sup> An exhibition appears to have been in Stieglitz's mind for the fall of 1928, but Strand urged him to put it off when Stieglitz again became ill and it was not mounted until

March 1929.

The reasons for Stieglitz's hesitancy in giving Strand a show are difficult to explain because they do not seem to be based on any practical reasons. Although Strand's pre-occupation with earning a living during the 'twenties restricted the amount of time he could devote to still photography, lack of work does not seem to have been a problem. He had more than the eighteen images shown in "Seven Americans" and, not having had a solo exhibition since 1916, he could have shown earlier work in addition to new images from Maine and Colorado. Therefore, Stieglitz's reluctance appears to have been based on personal reasons that are intimated rather than specified in the correspondence among the circle friends.

From 1923 on, Stieglitz had experienced growing frustration at his own inability to handle the psychological tensions arising from his relationship with O'Keeffe and from recurring ill health. The situation made him miserable and cut him off from former friends. In comparison with Strand's vigorous and active life, Stieglitz was at times reduced to having "no thoughts, no ideas, no yearnings."<sup>14</sup> As a consequence, he became more completely involved with his physical and emotional state and less with the world of objects and experiences.

If any one moment can be said to indicate the parting of the philosophical ways between Strand and Stieglitz, it is contained in a letter Stieglitz wrote Seligmann in 1928, after the latter had criticized Strand's work as derivative and lacking in emotion:

As for Strand's proofs--I'm hoping he'll find adequate paper to see his perfect negatives in perfect form as photographs. That is an idea--a clear one--thoroughly realized. And back of the idea there must be something more than a formula. I do hope he has a few really living things--living in the big sense. Whether passion is necessary to produce such a thing or not, all I know is that no half or three-quarter erection will puncture a real virgin. . . . I do know that Strand has not realized as yet the significance of his mount--or his papers etc. etc. And without that he'll never do what he thinks I am doing. Everyday I am learning something new. And that means that I am constantly thinking and experimenting even when I am not actually photographing. Of course, there may be other roads, but I want them shown to me before I believe there are. 15

Aside from the inferred dislike of Strand's work, it is obvious from the letter that Stieglitz had substituted mystical essences as the content of art and life, while Strand was still concerned with expressing ideas and feelings derived from objective facts and conditions. In addition, the letter is a display of spleen and an attack on Strand's artistic virility that Stieglitz would never have made directly. It indicates a corrosive envy that went beyond photography, if indeed it was concerned with it at all.

Seligmann had long served as a sounding board for such

eruptions on Stieglitz's part, often inviting a reaction by comments on the spiritual aspects of Strand's photography. This seems to have been especially the case after Beck accused him of being Stieglitz's acolyte,<sup>16</sup> but despite his equivocal role, he maintained a semblance of friendship with the Strands which came to an end over political disagreements during the 'forties.

It is evident too, that Stieglitz's demands on Strand in relation to the quality of his photography were exceptional. The others of the circle were expected only to produce new work in order to be given exhibitions. Although Stieglitz always hoped for excellent quality, he showed Marin's work even when he felt it was not as good as in previous years. Of Strand's photography, he wrote Beck:

I hope for photography's as well as his own sake that his work is of such caliber that he'll have made good not only for himself but for me. . . . And I don't doubt he has. 17

Finally, thirty-one of Strand's prints were exhibited at the Intimate Gallery. The majority were from negatives made in Maine during the three visits to Georgetown Island and environs and five were from the West. Stieglitz evidently made no effort to provide the catalogue Foreword; after Strand had "stewed" about it for several weeks, it was written by Lachaise. In terming the work expressive of

"the persistent life within these bits of the universe," Lachaise emphasized the connection between objective reality and the inner spirit in precisely the manner Strand desired.<sup>18</sup> Stieglitz purchased a print for O'Keeffe and others were bought by DeWald and Mrs. Liebman.<sup>19</sup>

Reviews appeared in several dailies and in The Arts and the New Yorker, with all reviewers citing the masterful sense of composition and the feeling for texture as Strand's great contribution.<sup>20</sup> A longer piece, accompanied by four reproductions appeared in the fall in Creative Art. This article, written by Clurman, developed the thesis that Strand isolated his subjects from context as well as from sentimental and romantic concerns. Clurman emphasized the "solitariness" and "inexorability" of the images and termed the photographer "hopeless without despair."<sup>21</sup> A half-year earlier, Clurman had confessed to being "still half a barbarian in the plastic arts"<sup>22</sup> and it seems that he was still unsure of the visual message in Strand's work. While there is no question that the images made texture, structure, pattern and tactile quality incredibly apparent, many suggested the processes of growth, decay and change as well. Rather than being contextually isolated, Garden Iris (Fig. 105) suggests the rich moist soil from which the plant springs and intimates the pleasures of a cool, well-

kept garden. Strand's reaction to Clurman's article is not known but Beck considered it the best piece yet written on his work and Strand's relationship with the author remained warm.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, an article by Lola Ridge, which appeared in Creative Art in 1931, stressed the relationship of the imagery to reality rather than its isolation and hopelessness.<sup>24</sup>

Stieglitz offered Strand another exhibition in 1932 at An American Place, in which he would show jointly with Beck, who had been working on glass paintings in the Southwest for several years. Strand recalled that he acquiesced only for Beck's sake; her work had never been exhibited and he did not wish to deny her the opportunity. The two Strands framed and hung one hundred works; Stieglitz neither helped with the installation nor provided a catalogue.<sup>25</sup> Although Beck's work received little comment, the photographs were reviewed in the New York Times, the New York Sun and in the Springfield Republican and Sunday Union by Elizabeth McCausland and the show was mentioned in The Arts.<sup>26</sup> The Times article pointed to the sense of history projected by images of abandoned mining towns--a perception that undoubtedly gratified Strand who, as indicated, was moving towards an expression in which history and tradition would play a more compelling role.

Strand's work was shown in only one group show that took place at the end of the 'twenties despite the fact that several major American and European exhibitions were devoted to modern art and the machine image. He was not represented in the 1926 exhibition, "Modern Abstract Art", perhaps because he was in the West when Katherine Dreier organized the show.<sup>27</sup> Nor was he represented in the "Machine Age Exposition" of 1927, although his machine images of 1922 forecast the emphasis of that show with uncanny accuracy.

The major photographic exhibition of the decade took place in Stuttgart, Germany in 1929, when the Deutschen Werkbund asked representatives of several countries to submit work for a comprehensive exhibition of modern trends in photography. As previously noted, Steichen and Weston organized the American section of "Film Und Foto" and included the major creative photographers working in the modern vein with the exception of Stieglitz and Strand. As curious as this omission appears, it is perhaps understandable in regard to the personalities involved.

Whether Strand was aware of the exhibition is difficult to determine; nothing in his papers and correspondence refers to it. However, in spite of its absence, Strand's work was cited in the German Annual of Photography 1930.

Without mentioning the exhibition, the article addressed the question of the style known as Neue Sachlichkeit by noting that "the new objectiveness is neither new nor objective."<sup>28</sup> It credited Strand's work, as seen in Camera Work in 1917 and in Broom in 1922, with having prepared the way for the new movement by focussing on novel subject matter at the same time that it broke with old-fashioned concepts of picture-making.

In 1931 Julien Levy wished to inaugurate his new gallery with an exhibition of American photography, which was to include the work of Käsebier, Sheeler, Steichen. Stieglitz, Strand and White.<sup>29</sup> According to Strand, Levy announced his participation before apprising him, resulting in Strand's insistence that Levy purchase two works if he wished to borrow others for the show. Levy was so irritated by the episode that he characterized Strand as arrogant and devoted several pages of his memoirs to an interpretation of the incident.<sup>30</sup>

By the beginning of the 'thirties, the situation in creative photography had changed considerably. The question of photography as art had become irrelevant. As Strand was to note somewhat later:

It's a stupid question. You might as well ask, is painting art? The answer is 'No'. . . there is no intrinsic merit in materials, but the artist can use them so they

project an experience.

31

Photographers were working in a wide variety of styles, using thirty-five millimeter as well as larger formats to make expressive statements, often with publication as well as exhibition in mind. They were able to find exhibition facilities in galleries and clubs, if still not in major museums. Even that wall had been breached when both the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired collections of Stieglitz's work. Concurrent with the exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery, there were four other shows of photography, which the critic for the New York Times, Katherine Grant Sterne, recognized as

the machine age art par excellence. The moving picture and the snapshot mark the tempo of our times. . . . The 'well-dressed room' in the year 1931 is decorated with plates by Moholy-nagy, Strand and Atget. . . . they express the state of mind that substitutes the shingle for the pompadour, the vitamin for the viand, gin for burgundy and Hemingway for Henry James. 32

Eight years earlier, Stieglitz had noted that "photography appeals to the consciousness of today," although unlike Sterne, he suggested that compared with graphic art it was not "greater, just different in kind."<sup>33</sup> In view of his long years of devotion to publicizing the expressive role of photography, it is surprising to find that the greater exposure and new interest in the medium took place completely outside Stieglitz's orbit. Of the sixty-one exhibitions

held at An American Place after Strand's 1932 show, Stieglitz exhibited his own photography twice and gave one exhibition each to Ansel Adams (1936) and Eliot Porter (1938-39). He ignored the work of established figures of Strand's generation--Bruguiere, Cunningham, Weston--as well as that of the younger photographers just coming up--Bourke-White, Evans, Steiner. He appears to have been uninterested in the new work of the Farm Security Administration photographers or in Berenice Abbott's views of New York as he was in the old-fashioned humanism of Hine and Ulmann, who were still working during the 'thirties. In sum, one must conclude, as Strand himself did at the time, that Stieglitz had lost interest in all but his own work, and possibly to a great extent in that, too.

REFERENCE NOTES: CHAPTER 9

1. Interview with Paul Strand, 2 July 1975, NYC. Strand felt that museums and galleries considered artists to be free entertainers and recalled that when he visited the Albright Gallery in the mid-twenties and asked to see the collection of photographs, he was shown to the basement where they were stacked and covered with dust. Later, when the Albright Gallery approached him for a loan for an exhibition, he denied the request because he felt they had not demonstrated a respect for photography.
2. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 4 March 1925, ASA/YU.
3. Interview with Paul Strand, 2 July 1975, NYC. Strand suggested that the physical separation of his work from that of the other exhibitors may have accounted for the fact that he was not mentioned in Edmund Wilson's review. However, Wilson may have been taken around the gallery before the work even was hung, according to Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 4 March 1925, ASA/YU.
4. Deogh Fulton, "Cabbages and Kings," International Studio 81(May 1925):144.
5. Royal Cortissoz, "291: Mr. Alfred Stieglitz and his Services to Art," New York Herald Tribune, March 15, 1925, p.IV-12; Glenn Mullin, "Alfred Stieglitz Presents 'Seven Americans'," Nation 120(March 18, 1925):577-78; Edmund Wilson, untitled review, New Republic 42(March 18 1925):97-98.
6. Henry McBride, "The Stieglitz Group at Anderson's." Evening Sun, March 14, 1925, p.13: "Mr. Stieglitz concentrates all his soul upon some amazing photographs of machines."
7. Forbes Watson, "Seven American Artists Sponsored by Stieglitz," The World, March 15, 1925, p.M5; "In the Galleries," Christian Science Monitor, March 20, 1925, p.5; "Seven Americans," The Arts 7(April 1925):229-31; Helen Appleton Read, "Alfred Stieglitz Presents 7 Americans," Brooklyn Daily Eagle, March 15, 1925, p.11; Margaret Breuning, "Seven Americans," Evening Post, March 14, 1925, p.11; "Talk of The Town," New Yorker, March 28, 1975, p. 17.

8. "Comment," Dial 79(August 1925):178.
9. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 22 July 1925, ASA/YU.
10. Paul Strand to Alfred Stieglitz, 30 or 31 July 1917, ASA/YU; Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 18 August 1917, PSA/CCP.
11. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 12 March 1926, PSA/CCP.
12. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 30 May 1927, ASA/YU.
13. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 18 December 1927, PSA/CCP.
14. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 3 July 1927, ASA/YU.
15. Alfred Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, 8 October 1928, ASA/YU: "adequate paper" refers to the fact that Strand was dissatisfied with the quality of imported platinum paper.
16. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, 13 August 1923, PSA/CCP. In his several articles on photography, Seligmann did not mention Strand's work. In an interview with the author in 1976, he referred to Strand as "overrated."
17. Alfred Stieglitz to Rebecca Strand, 27 September 1926, ASA/YU.
18. Gaston Lachaise, "Paul Strand, New Photographs," (New York: The Intimate Gallery, 1929).
19. Alfred Stieglitz to Paul Strand, 5 May 1929, PSA/CCP. Prints were 250 dollars each. In addition to Stieglitz, a purchase was made by Mrs. Liebman, who had acquired Wheel Organization in 1918.
20. Dorothy Lefferts Moore (D.L.M.), "In the New York Galleries," The Arts 15(April 1929):264; Henry McBride, "The Paul Strand Photographs," New York Evening Sun, March 23, 1929, p.34; "Photo Art: Many Experiments

- Enliven Current Exploits," New York Times, March 24, 1929, p. X-13; Murdock Pemberton (M.P.), "The Galleries," New Yorker, March 30, 1929, p.80.
21. Harold Clurman, "Photographs by Paul Strand," Creative Art 5(October 1929):735-38.
  22. Harold Clurman to Paul Strand, 20 July 1928, PSA/CCP.
  23. Rebecca Strand to Paul Strand, n.d. June 8 , 1929, PSA/CCP.
  24. Lola Ridge, "Paul Strand," Creative Art 9 (October 1931):312-16.
  25. Interview with Paul Strand, 7 July 1975, NYC.
  26. Edward Alden Jewell, "Art in Review: Film Overtones," New York Times, April 16, 1932, p.13; Henry McBride, "Attractions at the Galleries," New York Sun, April 16, 1932, p.10; Elizabeth McCausland, "Paul Strand's Photographs Show Medium's Possibilities," Springfield (Mass.) Sunday Union and Republican, April 17, 1932, p.E6; Catherine Bauer, "Photography: Man Ray and Paul Strand," Arts Weekly 1(May 7, 1932):193.
  27. Alfred Stieglitz to Waldo Frank, 29 September 1926, ASA/YU.
  28. Peter Panter, "Das Deutsche Lichtbild," The German Annual of Photography 1930 (Berlin: Robert und Bruno Schultz, 1929), p.2.
  29. American Photography Retrospective Exhibition (New York: Julien Levy Gallery, 1931). The catalogue did not give the dates of the exhibition, other than the opening on November 2, and did not list the works. Reviewed by Katherine Grant Sterne, "The Camera: Five Exhibitions of Photography," New York Times, December 6, 1931, p.XX-18. According to Strand, Levy bought two landscapes for 250 dollars each and Strand loaned him 3 or 4 additional works. Interview with Paul Strand, 7 March 1975, NYC.
  30. Julien Levy, Memoirs of An Art Gallery (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), p.48. Levy's reconstruction

of the event contains several errors of fact (e.g., the description of Strand's apartment) which suggests that it is probably more self-serving than objective.

31. Etna M. Kelley, "The Legendary Paul Strand," Photography (London) 6(March 1938):14.
32. Sterne, "The Camera: Five Exhibitions of Photography."
33. Alfred Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, 9 August 1923, ASA/YU.

## EPILOGUE

In Mexico in 1933, Strand was able to realize his desire to make a photographic commitment to a purposeful goal. Surprisingly, his interest in the unfolding political struggle among peoples seeking to change unjust circumstances took place away from the urban setting that had been so important in his early work. Although this shift in interest had become apparent earlier, the reasons can only be surmised as Strand himself never discussed them. However, it seems evident that he felt that city dwellers had become estranged from the basic nature of communal existence due to the pressures of urban life in modern society. He regarded the passion and sentiment he discerned in the relationship of villager to land and community as more significant than the alienation frequently engendered by urban living.

The vehicle for Strand's most politically-oriented statements was the motion picture which, with the exception of a small group of stills made in Mexico and at the Gaspé, engaged him for ten years. First under the aegis of the Ministry of Education of the Government of Mexico from 1933 to 1935, and later as President of Frontier Films from 1937

to 1942, Strand and his associates created a group of documentary films that were concerned with the social and political realities of the times. In their synthesis of re-enacted episode and actual newsreel footage, and by using trained actors along with non-professionals, these films created a unique fusion of the real and the fictive.

The first of the films, Redes (shown in the United States as The Wave), recreated a strike situation among the underpaid fishermen of the Mexican village of Alvarado; later Frontier Film productions were concerned with political events in Spain and China and with the predicament of people in a rural area of Appalachia. Strand's most important filmic activity of the time was his work on Native Land, which he produced, co-directed and photographed. This film was based on the LaFollette Committee hearings in the United States Senate concerning anti-union activity among the nation's major industrial corporations.

When the onset of the Second World War made it difficult to continue producing films critical of internal activities, Strand turned again to still photography. However, at this point he was unwilling to assume the role of photographer in search of serendipity. Reaching back to his earlier concept of a village portrait, he attempted to integrate this idea with his more recent experiences in

motion pictures. In works using text and image, and through sequencing, tempo and selection, he sought to embody in permanent printed form an intangible yet palpable sense of time, place and way of life.

Although earlier a portfolio of his Mexican images had been issued in gravure reproduction, Time in New England, a collaboration with Nancy Newhall in 1945 and 1946, was the first of these books. Despite disappointing reproduction, it convinced Strand of the role that such publications might play, provided the photographer exercised control over the technical as well as the expressive aspects. Although he continued to make work available for exhibitions after his large "Retrospective Exhibition" at the Museum of Modern Art in 1945, Strand became greatly more interested in publications as a way to reach a wider audience than the relatively few who frequented art galleries or museums.

In 1950, as a protest against the constricting political climate in the United States after the Second World War, and because he wished to be free to photograph wherever he desired, Strand took up residence in France. During the following twenty-five years, he photographed in France, Italy, the Hebrides Islands, Egypt, Ghana, Roumania and Morocco. With the exception of the last named two, a publication was realized for each country. However, these

books are not travel books nor merely expositions of conditions, but efforts to evoke, through word and image, the infinite complexity and enduring specificity of human social life. At the same time, Strand's long-standing interest in the forms and structures of nature remained intense, resulting in hundreds of photographs of organic matter and plant life, most of which have yet to be published. In writing of these images in 1975, the year before he died, Strand demonstrated the unwavering persistence of his beliefs:

The material of the artist lies not within himself nor in the fabrications of his imagination, but in the world around him. The element which gives life . . . is the relationship of the artist to the content, to the truth of the real world. It is the way he sees this world and transforms it into art that determines whether the work of art will become a new and active force within reality to widen and transform man's experience. The artist's world is limitless. It can be found anywhere, far from where he lives or a few feet away. It is on his doorstep.

Paul Strand's achievement should not be overlooked or its importance denied because he worked in a medium which until recently has been considered less significant than traditional artistic means. He was one of the few American artists of the twentieth century to successfully integrate the formal codes of cubist aesthetics with a reverence for the sanctity of matter. This vision enabled him to invest Precisionism with intense vitality and passion, a legacy of

his association with both Lewis Hine and Alfred Stieglitz. At the same time he was able to embody his concern for organism, artifact and activity in an aesthetic framework that elevated his statements from documents of record to expressions of profound conviction. Strand's formal understanding became an inextricable part of his effective statement--a statement that is unique in American visual art.

## APPENDIX I

### EQUIPMENT AND PROCESSING

Strand's attitude toward photographic equipment and processing was a reflection of his need to understand and represent the nature of the objective world. He used large format, but flexible, apparatus with a variety of slow lenses; this arrangement allowed him to previsualize the composition and the value scale of the final image. Aside from the ubiquitous Brownie he had been given as a child and rarely used, his first work was done with a  $6\frac{1}{2}$  x  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inch view camera borrowed from Nathaniel Meyers and fitted with a Smith lens. Sometime before the spring of 1911, Strand purchased a  $3\frac{1}{4}$  by  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inch Adams Idento camera, with a Ross Homocentric lens, which he took with him to Europe, along with an Identoscope and film. After his return, he acquired another English camera of the same film size, an Ensign, which answered his need for portability and definition. Around 1920 he began to use an 8 by 10 inch Korona view camera, with which he worked for the major portion of the decade. He made the Gaspe pictures of 1929 with a 4 by 5 inch Graflex camera but sold it the following year and acquired a 5 by 7 inch Graflex instead. He masked the ground glass to what he considered a more interesting pro-

portion: 5 by 6 1/8 inches. With their ground glass, their bellows extensions, and in the view camera, swings and tilts, these cameras, used on a tripod or in the hand, gave Strand the flexibility he required to compose undistorted images from a variety of angles and positions.

To these basic boxes Strand added an assortment of lenses that further enlarged his ability to make sharp, undistorted images. In addition to the Ross lens he also used a Cooke process lens, a 6½ inch Goerz wide angle lens and a 16¼ inch f6.3 Tessar. For still-life work Strand purchased a three-element Protar. He used a 12 inch Goerz f6.8 with the Graflex. An extra piece of equipment of significance was a 3 inch Square Cooke prism which he used with a 9½ inch Aldis Anastigmatic f6.3 lens. This had been purchased in Willoughby's in 1916 and rebuilt by Archinal with concealing flanges after Strand discovered that his barrel lens, attached to the side of the camera, deceived no one. After 1916 Strand did not use the prism lens again until 1933, when he made street portraits in and around Mexico City. Later, in the 'fifties, he used it in France and Italy for the same purpose.

Strand's acknowledged technical ability in regard to processing was mainly the result of his experiences at the Camera Club of New York. Although Hine had believed that

technique and processing were integral parts of photographic activity, instruction in darkroom practice at ECS had been rudimentary. At the Camera Club, Strand learned to make lantern slides and from them, enlarged negatives, and to print on all the available papers, including platinum. He mastered the carbon and bichromate processes as well, although he seems not to have used them after 1914. Platinum was the paper of Strand's choice but after the outbreak of the First World War he was forced to use Satista and Palladium when Eastman stopped manufacturing the platinum stock, until he began ordering it from the Platinotype Company in England through their agent, Willis and Clemens. As he noted in his answer to Sheeler's charge of preciosity, platinum was the most permanent of photographic materials; in addition it had a long tonal range and a richer warm color than the sepia-hued Palladium. By adding potassium bichromate to the standard developer, Strand could control tonal contrast more decisively. During the early 'twenties he recoated the English platinum stock with additional salts in order to prevent the paper from solarizing, until he was able to convince the Platinotype Company to add more metal salts to their product

During the period under discussion, Strand regarded the photographic print as unique artifact, despite the fact

that theoretically the negative might be endlessly replicated. This attitude was consistent with his conception of photography as an expressive endeavor and of the photographer as a creative individual. Strand regarded the photographic print as the result of an experiment with materials and ideas and suggested that duplication--the production of identical prints--should not be demanded of the photographer any more than a scientist is expected to repeat experiments once he has solved a problem. Although he regarded photography as a bridge between science and art, Strand chose to ignore the mass-production implications of the process and to concentrate on the single unique image as the important product. This conception allowed the photographer, if he wished, to make additional prints in which the expressive content might be altered by changes in contrast, tonality, paper surface and size. Strand was adamant about the dangers of what he called "mechanicalization", perhaps because his career began at a time when the mechanical nature of the camera and the scientific aspect of the process prevented many observers from admitting that the photographic image might have the same expressive power as the older hand-made arts. Until quite late in his career, Strand made only contact prints because he valued the sharp definition which is lost in the enlarging process. Since

platinum paper can be printed only by contact, small negatives such as those made with the Ensign, were enlarged by the lantern slide projection method before being printed.

However, the problem of multiple printing of a single negative was not a pressing one for art photographers during the 'twenties. There was no great demand for single original prints and the sale of portfolios of original work was extremely limited. Strand usually made one or two prints from a negative and occasionally he reprinted the image at a later date. In the late thirties, when he faced the problem of reaching a larger audience with his Mexican images, he turned naturally to the same mechanical printing process that had been used by both Stieglitz and Coburn --flat-bed gravure printing. This choice represented Strand's intention to separate art from artifact, and yet retain as much quality as possible in the mechanical product.

Interestingly, the gravure process is itself partway between an automatic and a craft method in that it allows the photographer, the plate-maker and the printer to intervene at various points in the process in order to alter the final print, while at the same time the mechanical press by-passes the tedium associated with endlessly repetitive darkroom work. Later in life, Strand made serious efforts

to improve photographic reproduction by standard letter press and offset printing processes in order to insure that the quality of his work would not be corrupted by the fact that it had been mass duplicated for a large audience.

Although Strand's attitude toward the duplication aspects of the medium changed little over a period of almost fifty years, he eventually began to reconsider some of his fixed positions in regard to printing. When he started to use a smaller camera again in the 'sixties, he revised his ideas about enlarging. A more significant reconsideration occurred when O'Keeffe informed him that it had been Stieglitz's desire to insure that his negatives would not be printed by others and that she was prepared to deface them, a course which Strand denounced as a reflection of egocentricity. Eventually, his attitude towards the publication of portfolios of original prints changed, too. In the last year or so of his life, he was persuaded to produce four portfolios and an edition of three prints of earlier work and he worked with a young printer to achieve what he considered a quality surrogate for his own work. In spite of their technical excellence, these portfolios represent the "mechanicalization" against which he fought for most of his life.

## APPENDIX II

### EXHIBITIONS OF STRAND PHOTOGRAPHS

#### Group Exhibitions

- 1910 "Annual Members' Print Exhibition," Camera Club of New York, April.
- 1911 "Annual Members' Print Exhibition," Camera Club of New York, April.
- 1912 "London Salon," (London) September.
- 1914 "Group Exhibition," Ehrich Gallery, New York, January.
- 1917 "Three Photographers," Modern Gallery, New York, March.
- "Twelfth Annual Exhibition of Photography," John Wanamaker, Philadelphia, March 1 to 17 (First Prize).
- 1918 "Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of Photography," John Wanamaker, Philadelphia March 4 to 16 (Second and Fifth Prizes).
- 1920 "Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of Photography," John Wanamaker, Philadelphia, March 1 to 13 (First Prize for Group of Four Photographs).
- 1922 "Members' Exhibition," Camera Club of New York, September.
- 1925 "Seven Americans," Anderson Galleries, New York, March 9 to 28.
- 1931 "American Photography Retrospective," Julien Levy Gallery, New York, November.
- 1932 "Photographs by Paul Strand, Paintings by Rebecca Strand," An American Place, New York, April.

Individual Exhibitions

- 1916 "An Exhibition of Photographs of New York and Other Places," The Gallery of the Photo-Secession, New York, March 13 to March 28.
- 1929 "Paul Strand, New Photographs," The Intimate Gallery, New York, March 19 to April 7.

APPENDIX III

PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND LETTERS BY PAUL STRAND: 1917-1931.

- 1917 "Photography." Camera Work 49/50 (June):3-4; Seven Arts 2 (August):524-25.
- 1921 "Aesthetic Criteria." The Freeman 2 (January 12): 426-27.
- "The Subjective Method." The Freeman 2 (February 2): 498.
- "The Independents in Theory and Practice." The Freeman 2 (April 6):90.
- "Alfred Stieglitz and A Machine." New York: Privately printed, 1921; reprinted in mss 2 (March 1922):6-7; reprinted in part in Frank, Waldo. "Das amerikanische Jahr." Neue Merkur 5 (September 1921): 155-169.
- "American Watercolors at the Brooklyn Museum." The Arts 2 (December):148-152.
- 1922 "John Marin." Art Review 1 (January):22-23
- "The Forum." The Arts 2 (February):332-33.
- "Photography and the New God." Broom 3 (August): 252-58
- 1923 "News of Exhibits: Sometimes a Week Elapses Before Criticisms are Published." The Sun, 31 January.
- "Letter to the Editor." Printed in Tyrell, Henry. "Exhibitions and Other Things." The World, 11 February.
- "The New Art of Color." The Freeman 7 (April 18):137.

- "Photographers Criticized." The Sun and The Globe,  
27 June, p.20.
- "The Art Motive in Photography." British Journal of  
Photography (London) 70 (October 5):613-15.
- 1924 "Georgia O'Keeffe." Playboy, July, pp.16-20 .
- 1928 "Marin Not an Escapist." New Republic 55 (July 25):  
254-55.
- "Photographs of Lachaise Sculpture." Creative Art 3  
(August):xxiii-xxvii.
- "Lachaise." Second American Caravan.A. Kreymbourg ed.  
New York: The Macaulay Co., pp. 650-53.
- 1930 "Steichen and Commercial Art." New Republic 62  
(February 19):21.
- 1931 "A Picture Book for Elders." Saturday Review of  
Literature 8 (December 12):372.



Fig. 1 Alfred Stieglitz  
The Terminal, 1893



Fig. 2 Alfred Stieglitz  
Steerage, 1907

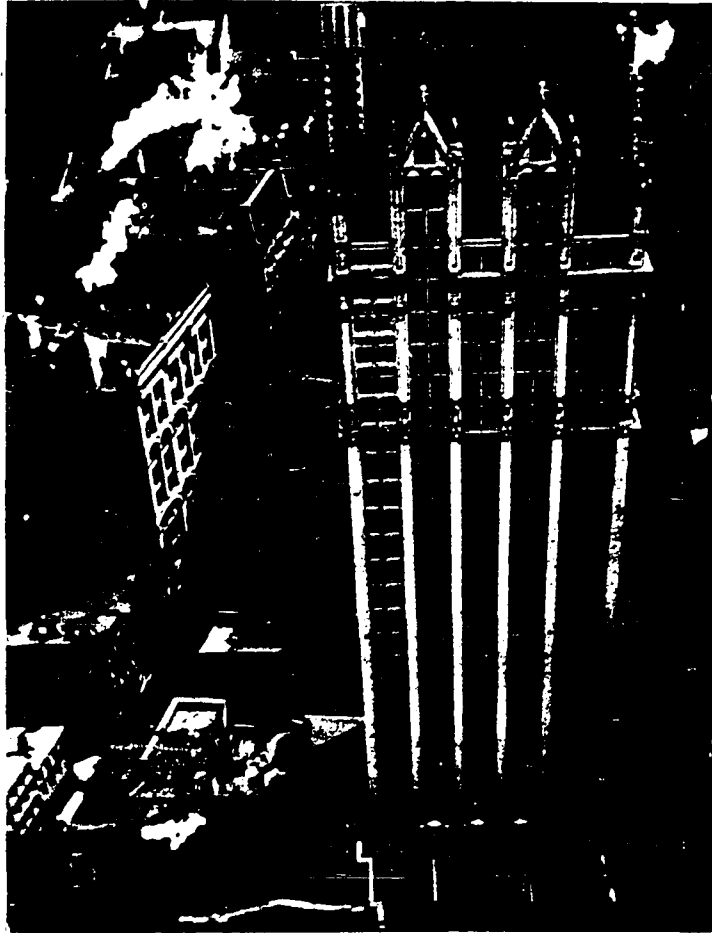


Fig. 3 Alvin Langdon Coburn  
House of a Thousand Windows,  
1912



Fig. 4 Karl Struss  
Lower New York: Water Street  
and the Brooklyn Bridge  
Tower, 1910



Fig. 5 Jacob Riis  
Bandit's Roost, New York, 1888



Fig. 6 Frances Benjamin Johnston  
Factory Worker,  
Lynn, Mass., 1886



Fig. 7 Frances Benjamin Johnston  
Students at Work on the Stairway,  
Hampton Institute, 1899



Fig. 8 Lewis W. Hine  
Ellis Island Madonna, 1905



Fig. 9 Lewis W. Hine  
Bowery Mission Breadline, 2 a.m., 1907



Fig. 10 Arthur Hewitt  
Cowboys of the Skies,  
c. 1908



Fig. 11 Paul Strand  
Two Horses, 1911

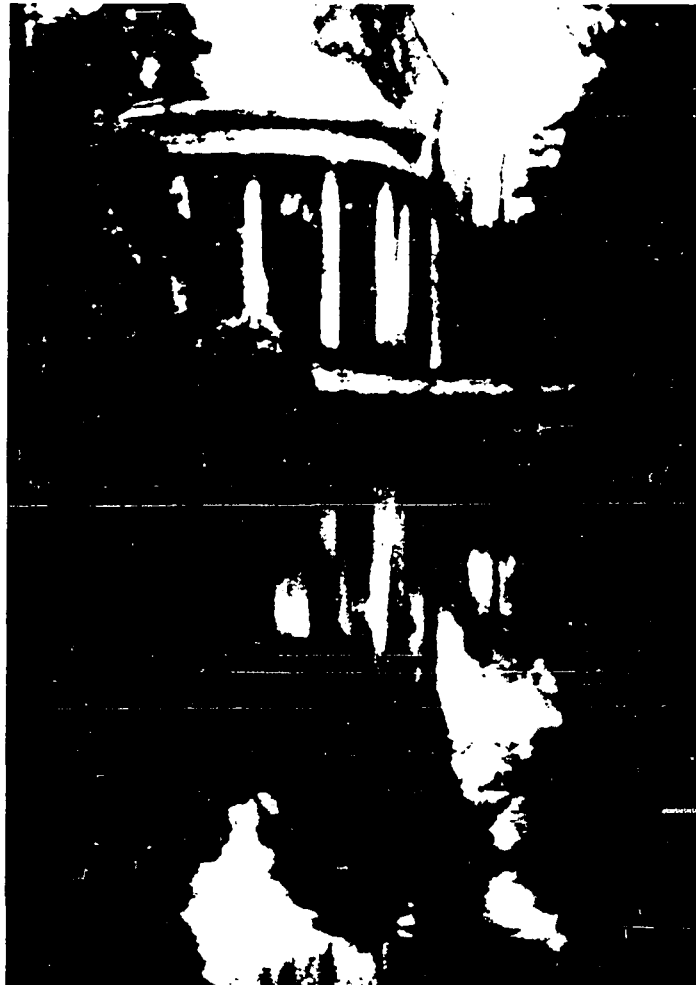


Fig. 12 Paul Strand  
The Temple of Love  
(The Garden of Dreams),  
1911



Fig. 13 Paul Strand  
Central Park, 1913



Fig. 14 Paul Strand  
Landscape, Twin  
Lakes, Conn., 1913



Fig. 15 Paul Strand  
River Neckar, 1915



Fig. 16 Paul Strand  
Grand Canyon, 1915



Fig. 17 Alvin Langdon Coburn  
The Great Temple, Grand Canyon, 1911

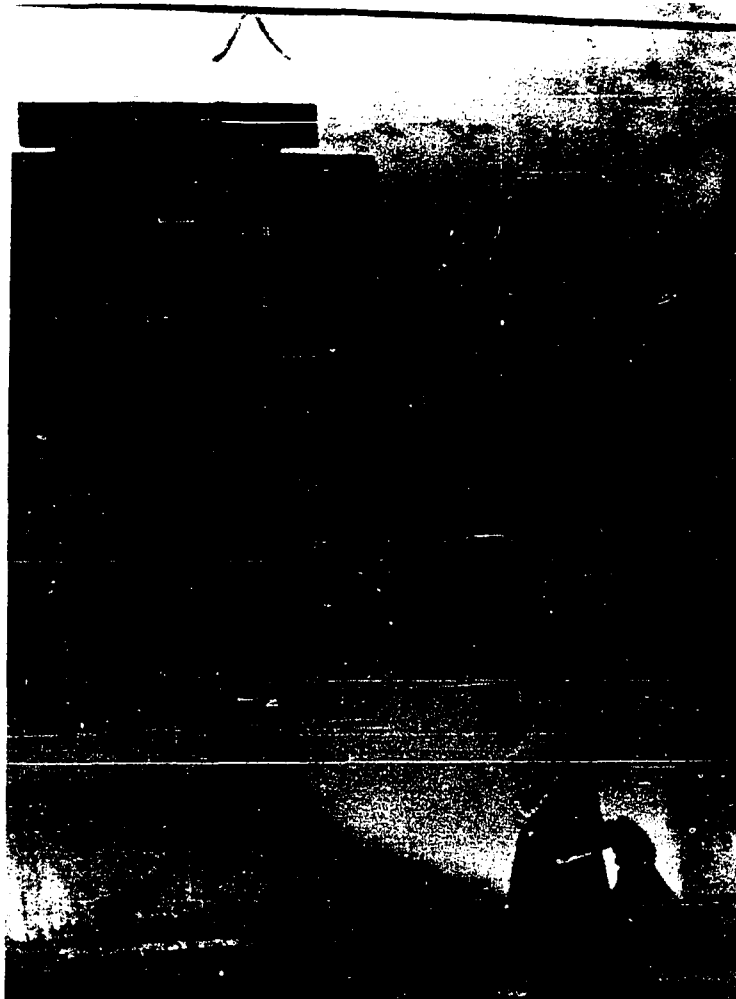


Fig. 18 Paul Strand  
New Orleans, 1915



Fig. 19 Paul Strand  
Telegraph Poles,  
Texas, 1915



Fig. 20 Paul Strand  
Central Park, 1913



Fig. 21 Paul Strand  
Riverside Drive, 1914



Fig. 22 Paul Strand  
Morningside Park, 1914

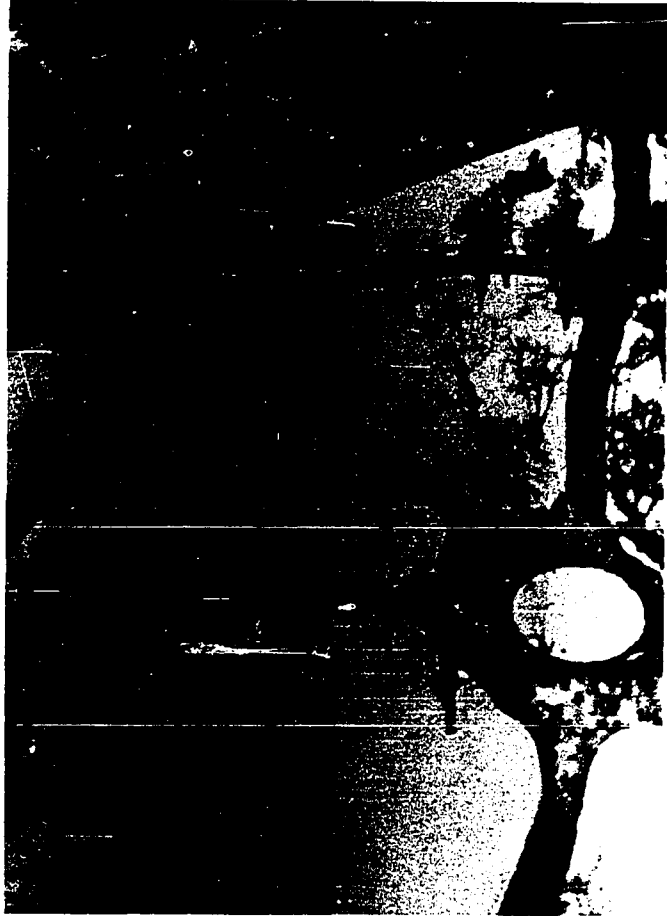


Fig. 23 Alvin Langdon Coburn  
The Octopus, 1912



Fig. 24 Karl Struss  
East Side Promenade, 1912

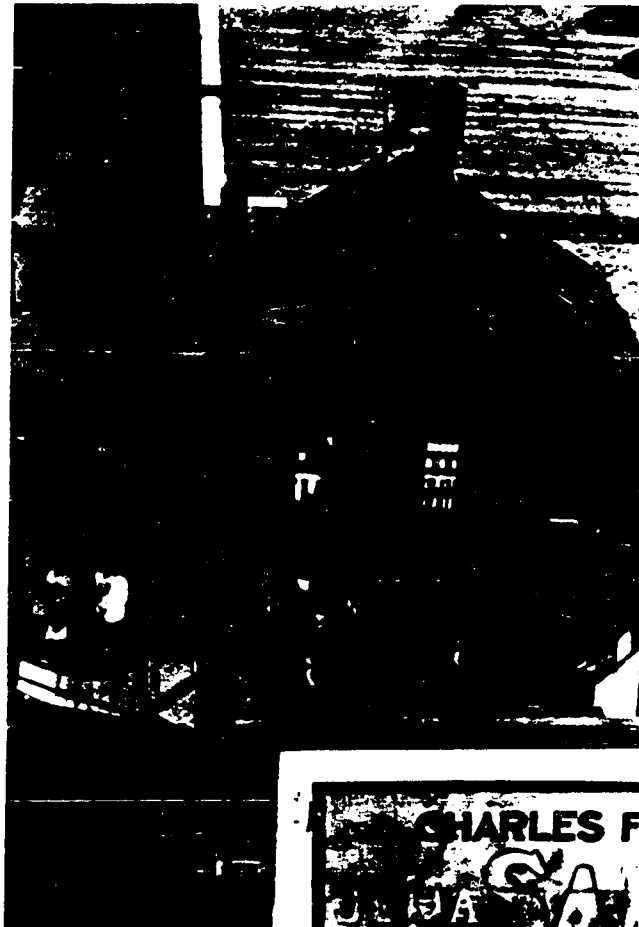


Fig. 25 Paul Strand  
From the Viaduct,  
New York, 1915



Fig. 26 Paul Strand  
Shadows--Under The El,  
New York, 1915

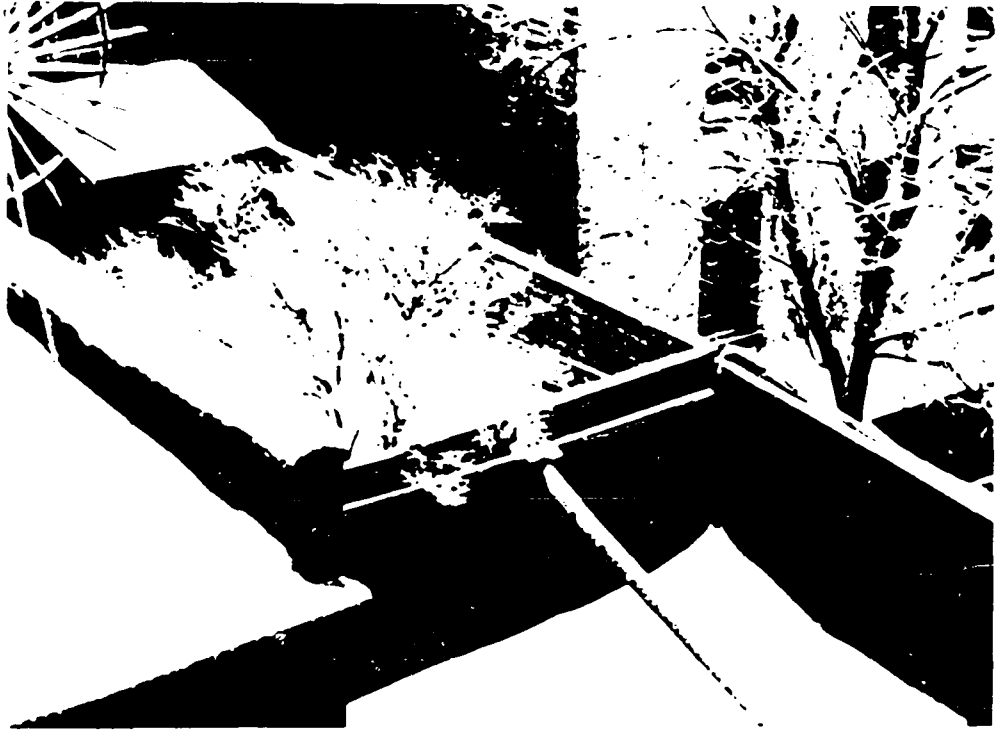


Fig. 27 Paul Strand  
Snow, Backyards, New York, 1915



Fig. 28 Paul Strand  
83rd Street and West End Avenue,  
New York, 1915

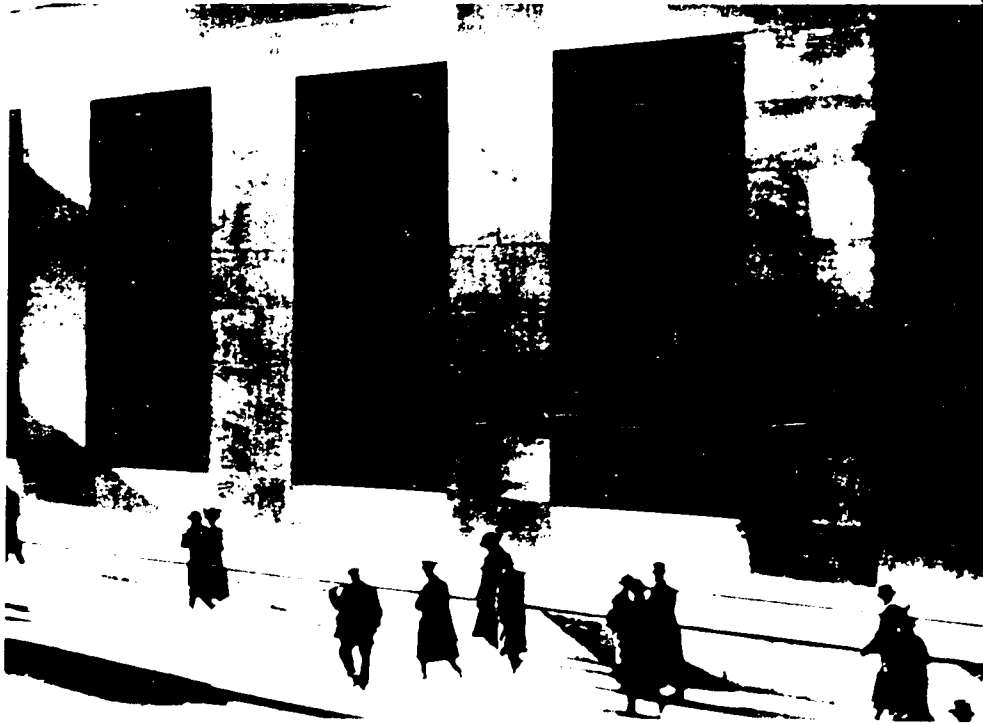


Fig. 29 Paul Strand  
Wall Street, 1915



Fig. 30 Paul Strand  
42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, 1915



Fig. 31 Paul Strand  
Sailboats at Bayshore, 1914

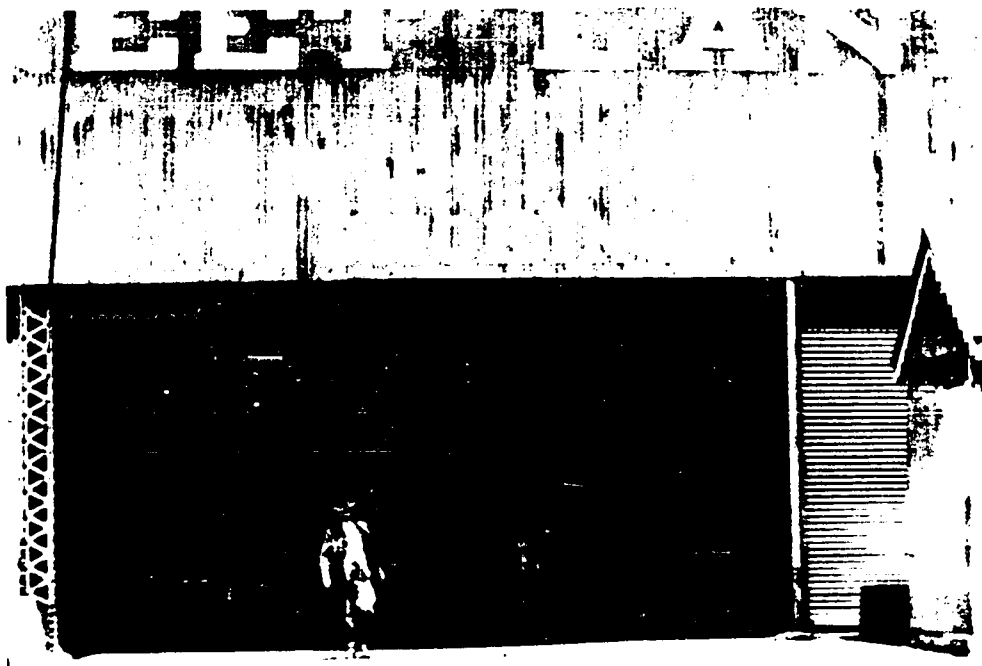


Fig. 32 Paul Strand  
Hudson River Pier, 1914/15

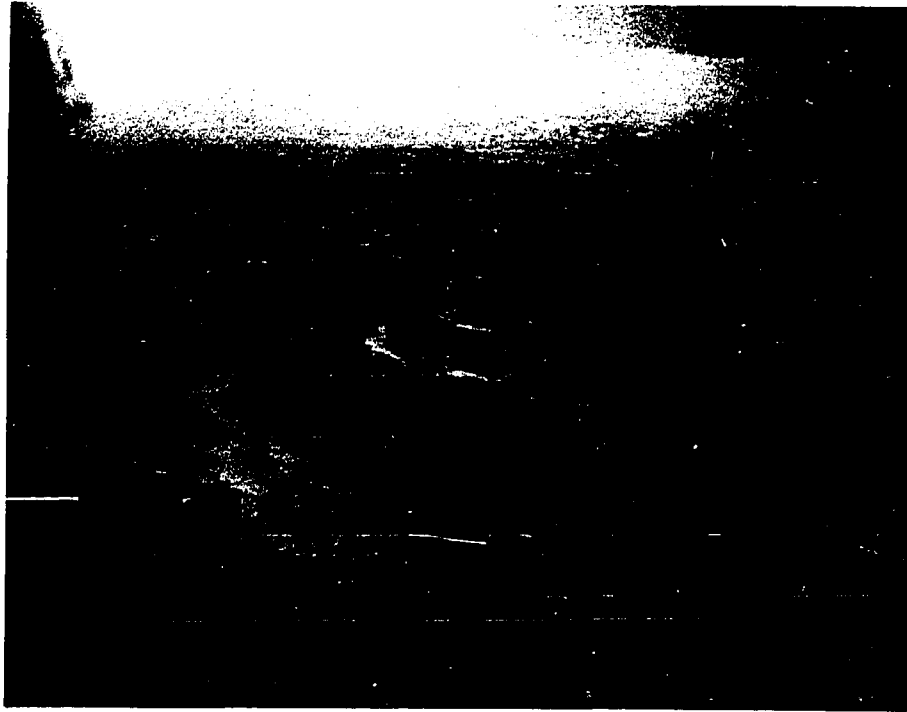


Fig. 33 Paul Strand  
The Maid of the Mist, 1915



Fig. 34 Paul Strand  
Portrait, Twin Lakes, Connecticut  
c. 1914

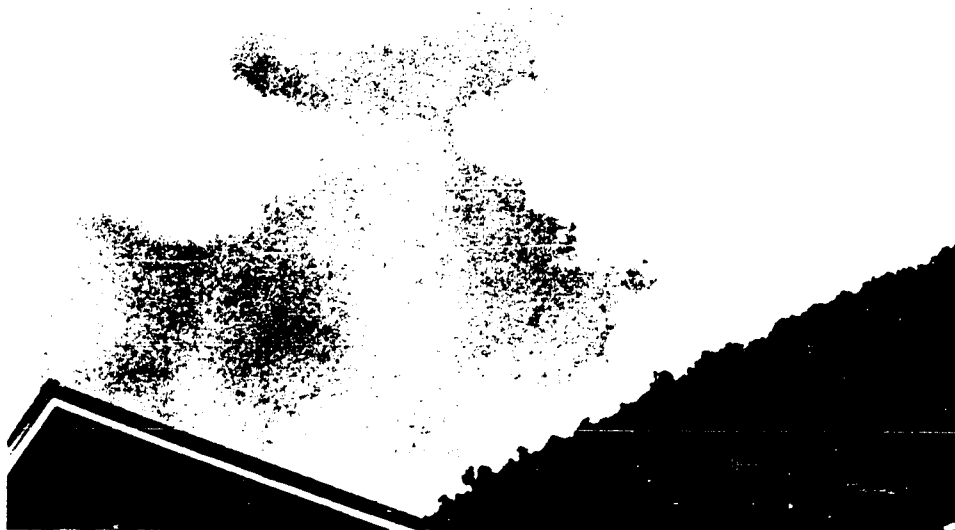


Fig. 35 Paul Strand  
Sky and Ridge Pole, Twin Lakes, 1916



Fig. 36 Paul Strand  
Porch Shadows, 1916



Fig. 37 Paul Strand  
Abstraction--Bowls, 1916



Fig. 38 Paul Strand  
Abstraction--Cups and Orange, 1916

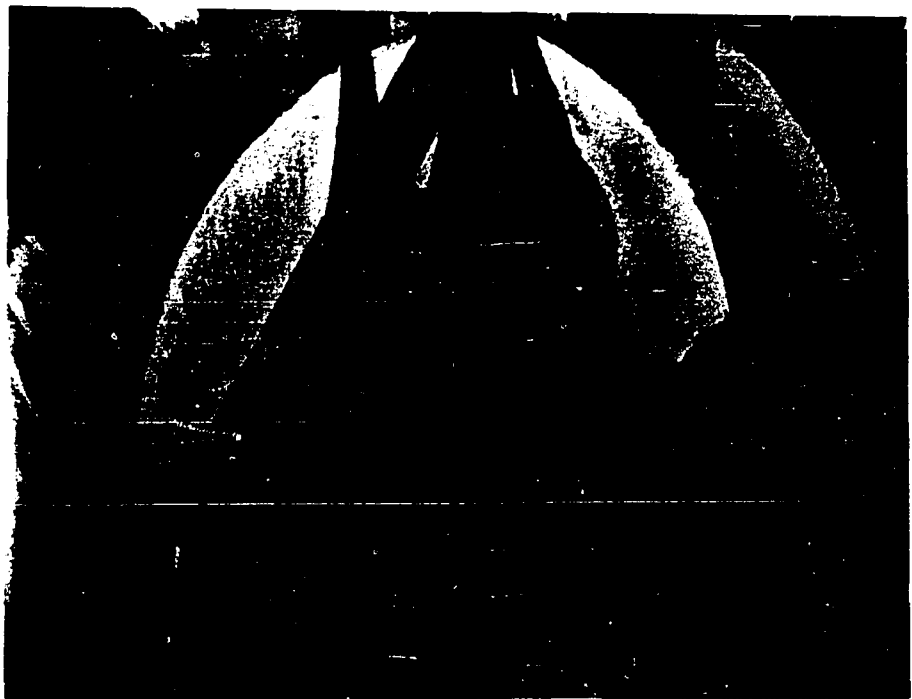


Fig. 39 Arthur Dove  
Plant Forms, 1916  
Pastel on canvas,  
17 1/4 x 23 7/8 inches,  
Whitney Museum of American  
Art, New York



Fig. 40 Marsden Hartley  
Movement, No. 2, 1916  
Oil on canvas,  
23 x 19 inches,  
Wadsworth Atheneum,  
Hartford, Connecticut



Fig. 41 Alfred Stieglitz  
Venetian Boy, 1887



Fig. 42 Lewis W. Hine  
Jew From Russia, Ellis  
Island, 1905



Fig. 43 Lewis W. Hine  
Lunchtime, 1915

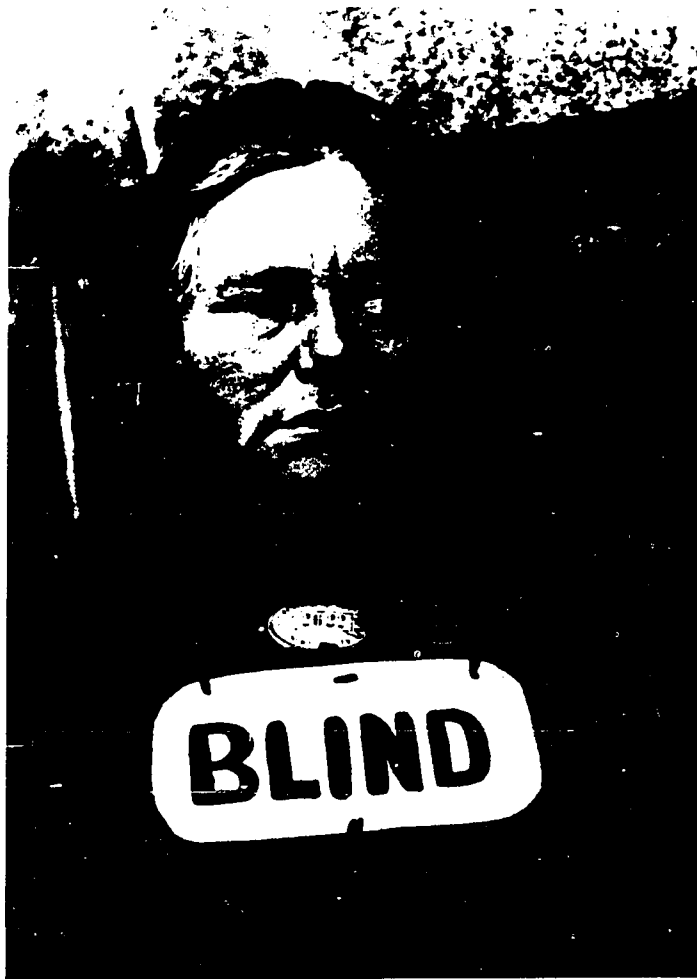


Fig. 44 Paul Strand  
Blind Woman, 1916



Fig. 45 Alfred Stieglitz  
Marsden Hartley, 1915

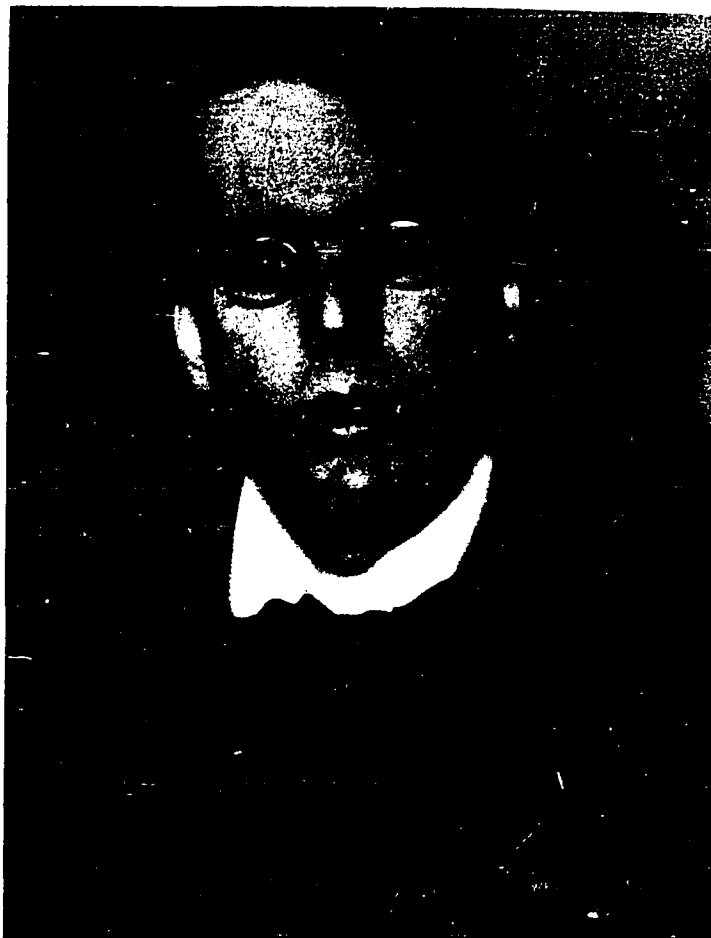


Fig. 46 Alvin Langdon Coburn  
William Butler Yeats,  
Dublin, 1908



Fig. 47 Baron De Meyer  
Mrs. Wiggins of Belgrave  
Square, 1913



Fig. 48 Paul Strand  
Man With a Bowler, 1916



Fig. 49 Paul Strand  
Five Points Square, 1916



Fig. 50 Paul Strand  
Washington Square Park,  
1916



Fig. 51 Paul Strand  
Wheel Organization  
(Automobile Wheel), 1917

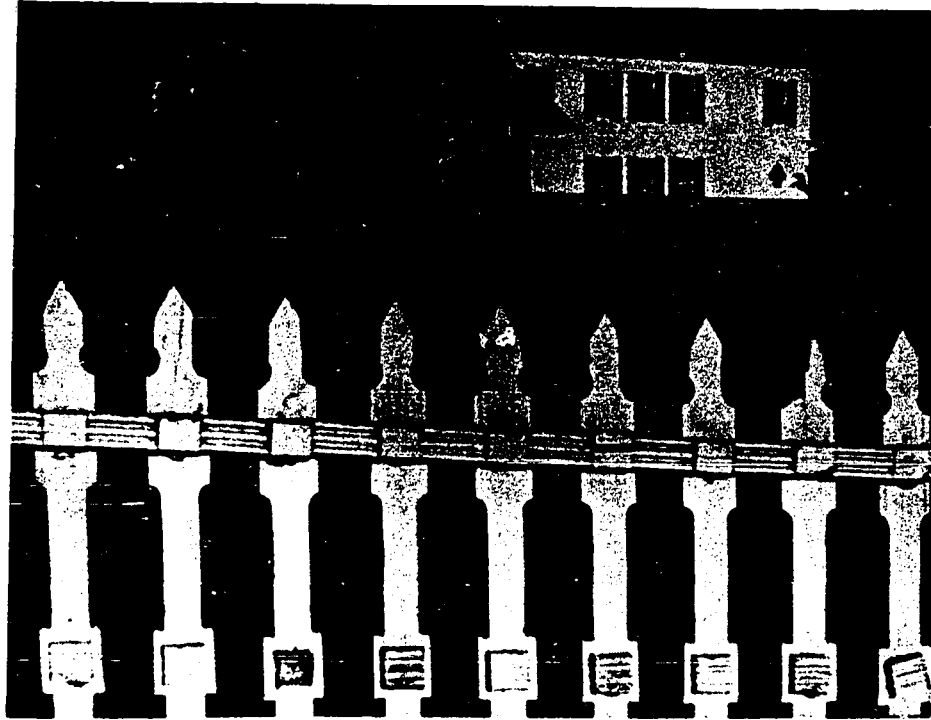


Fig. 52 Paul Strand  
The White Fence, 1916



Fig. 53 Alfred Stieglitz  
Hand of Man, 1902

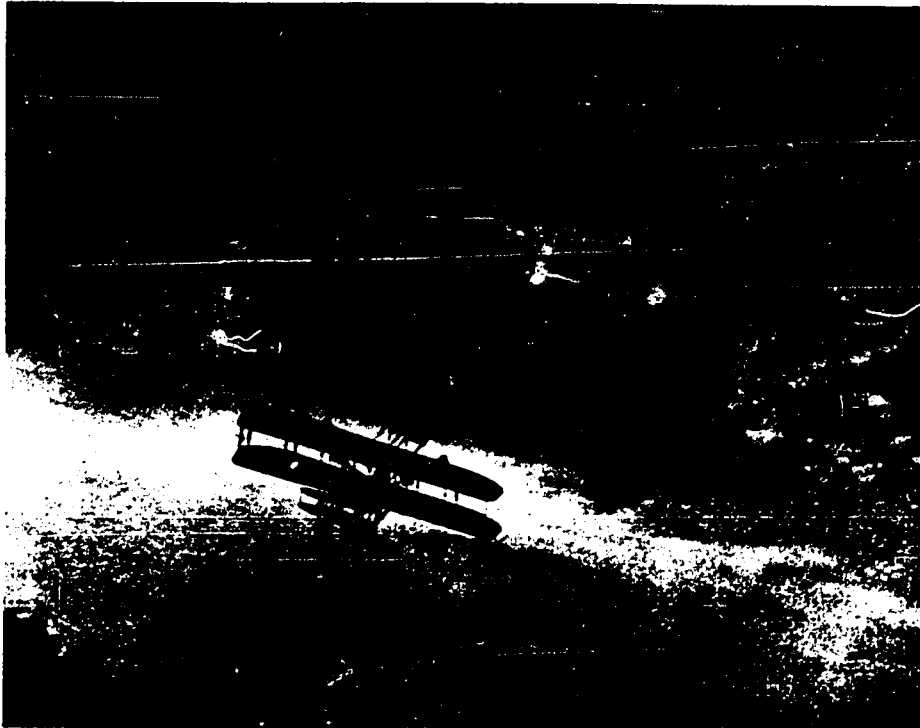


Fig. 54 Alfred Stieglitz  
The Aeroplane, 1910

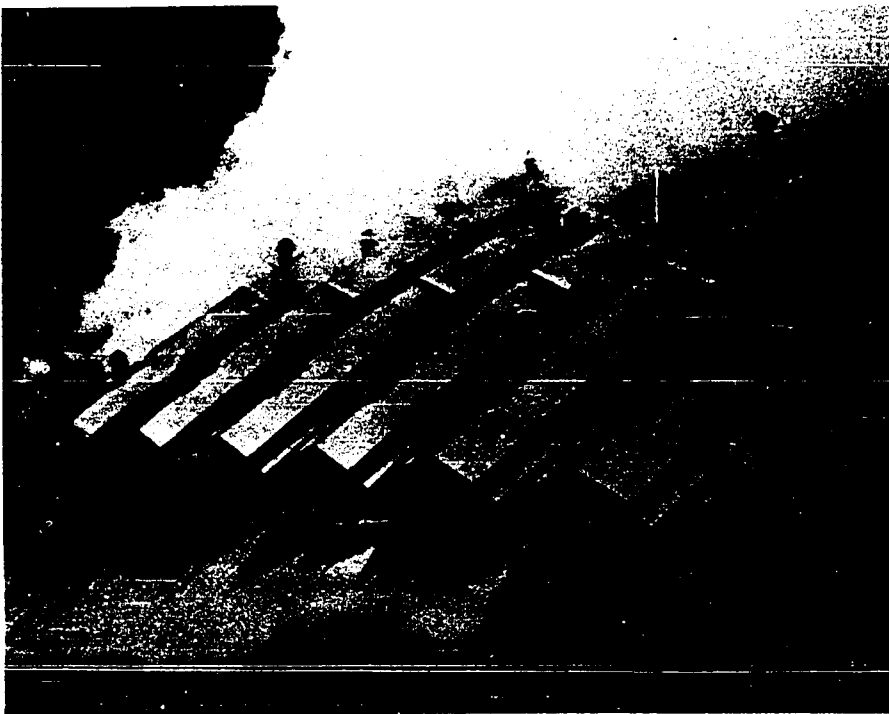


Fig. 55 Alvin Langdon Coburn  
Station Roofs, Pittsburgh, 1910

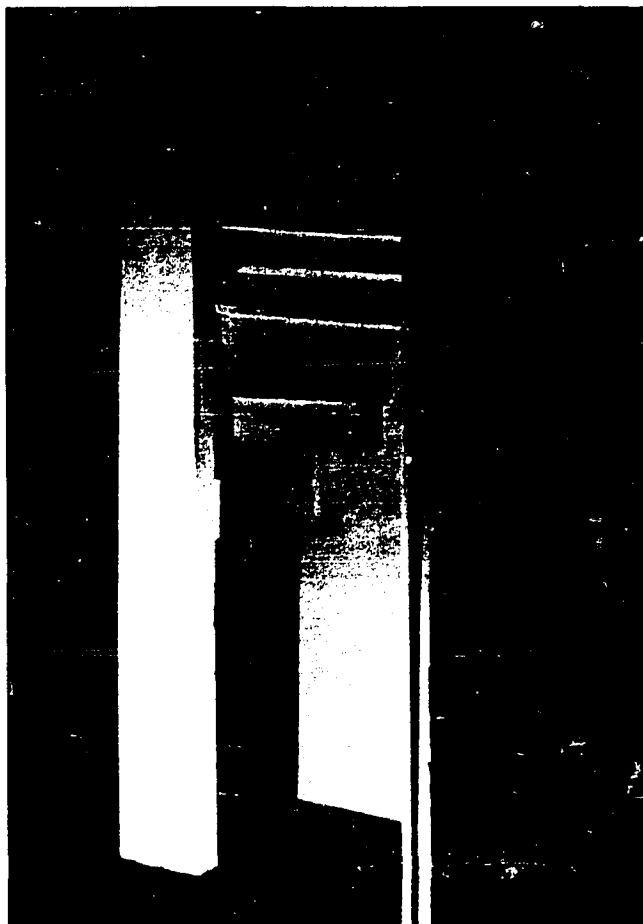


Fig. 56 Charles Sheeler  
Doylestown Staircase,  
1915

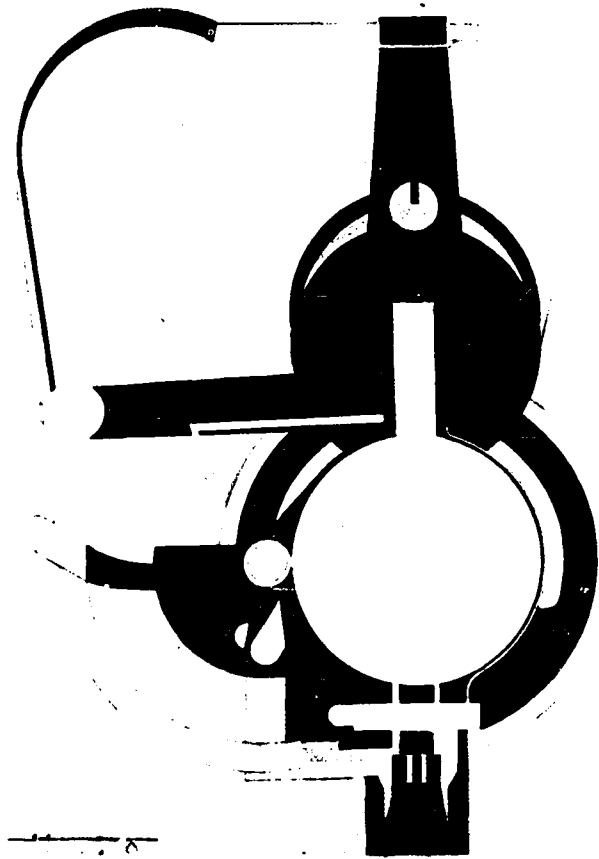
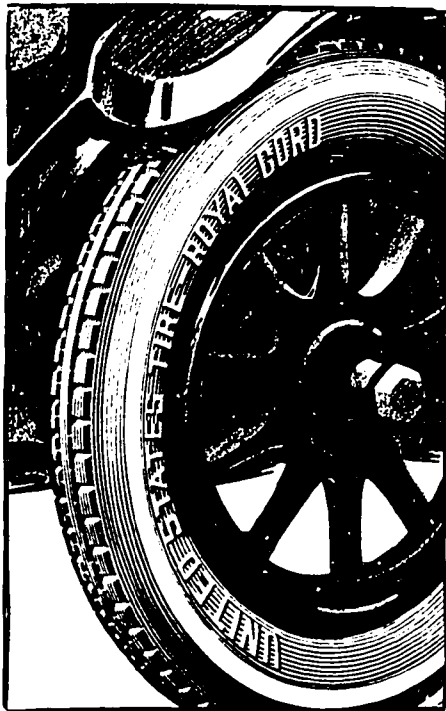


Fig. 57 Morton L. Schamberg  
Machine, 1916  
Oil on canvas, 30 x 23  
inches. Yale University  
Art Gallery, New Haven,  
Conn.



One hardly likes to risk saying the obvious—  
but you may have noticed how many car owners  
measure all tire values by the worth of



**U. S. Royal Cords**

Unknown Advertisement: U. S.  
Royal Cords, Vanity Fair,  
1920

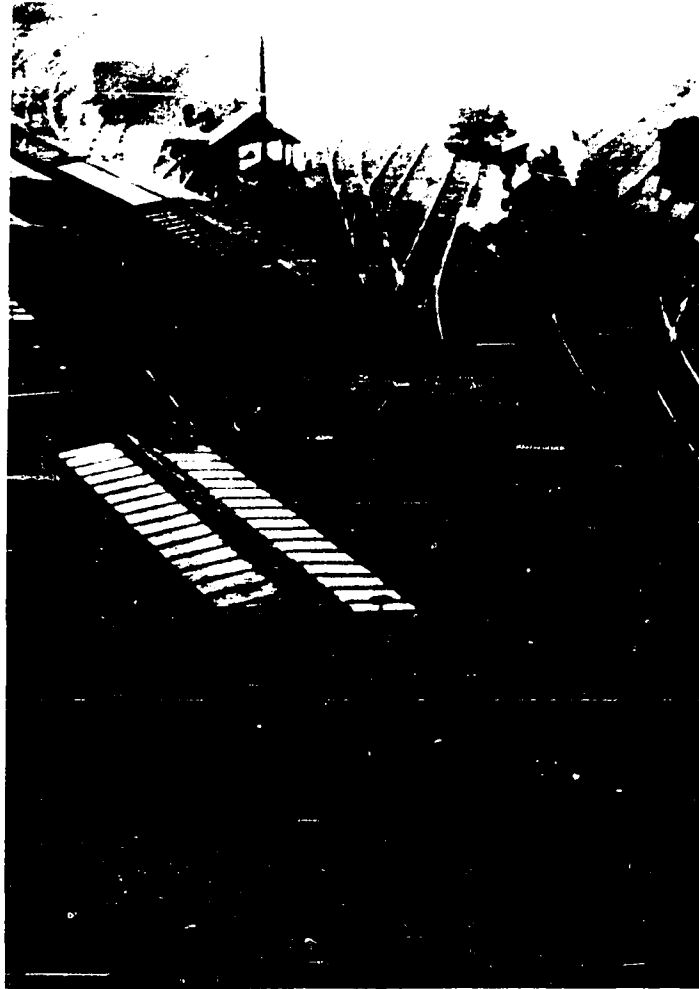


Fig. 59 Paul Strand  
Railroad Siding, New  
York, c. 1914

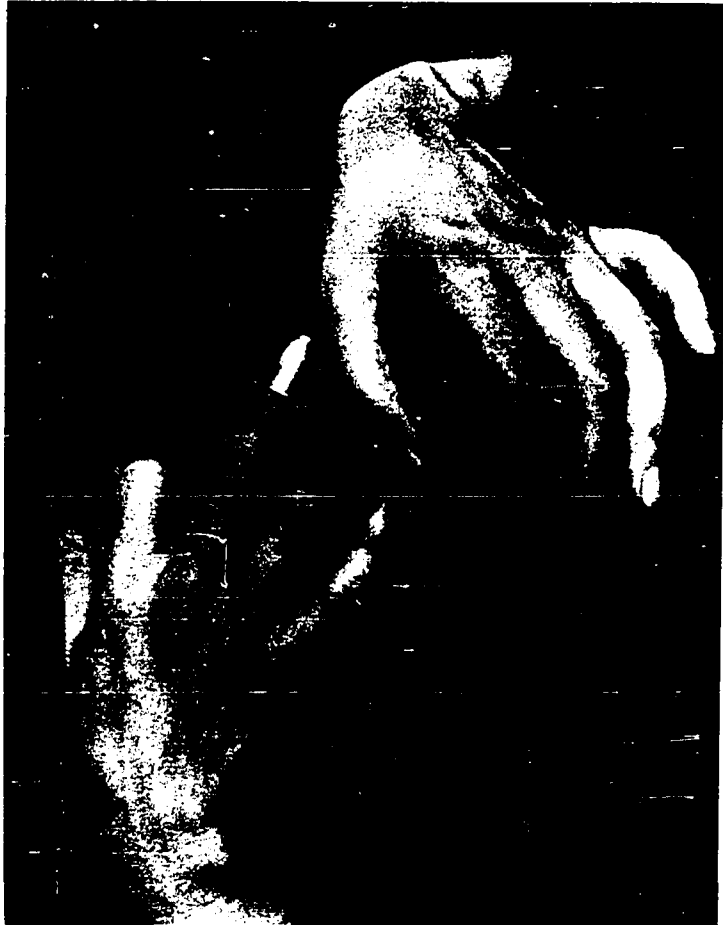


Fig. 60 Alfred Stieglitz  
Hands with Thimble, 1920



Fig. 61 Alfred Stieglitz  
A Portrait: Georgia  
O'Keeffe, IV, 1918



Fig. 62 Clarence H. White  
The Studio Window, 1920



Fig. 63 Clarence H. White  
Croton Reservoir, 1925

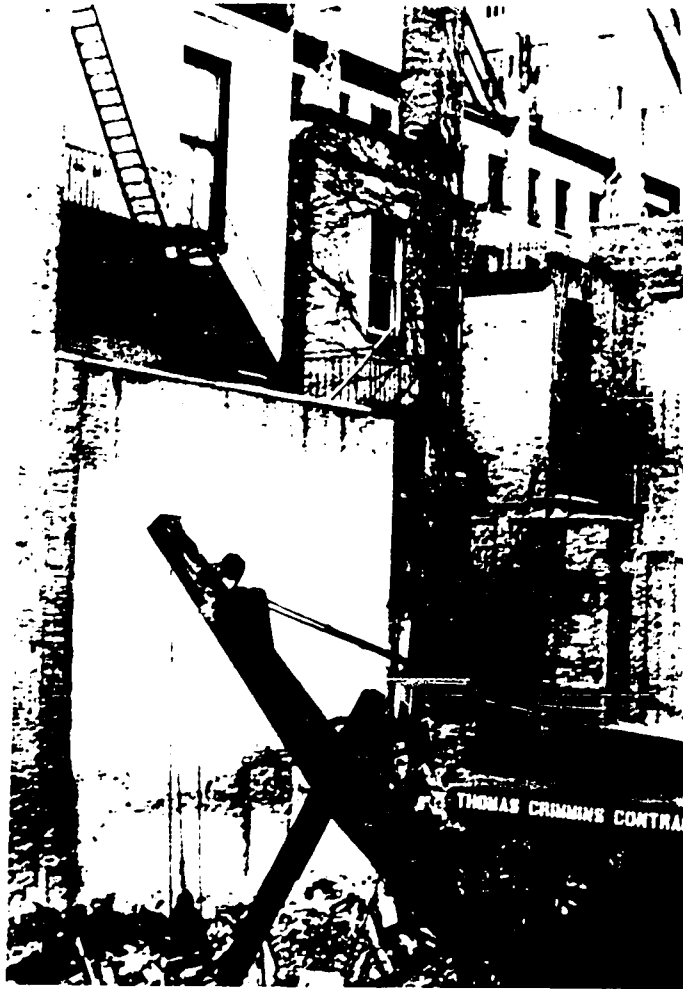


Fig. 64 Paul Strand  
Demolition, New York  
1917

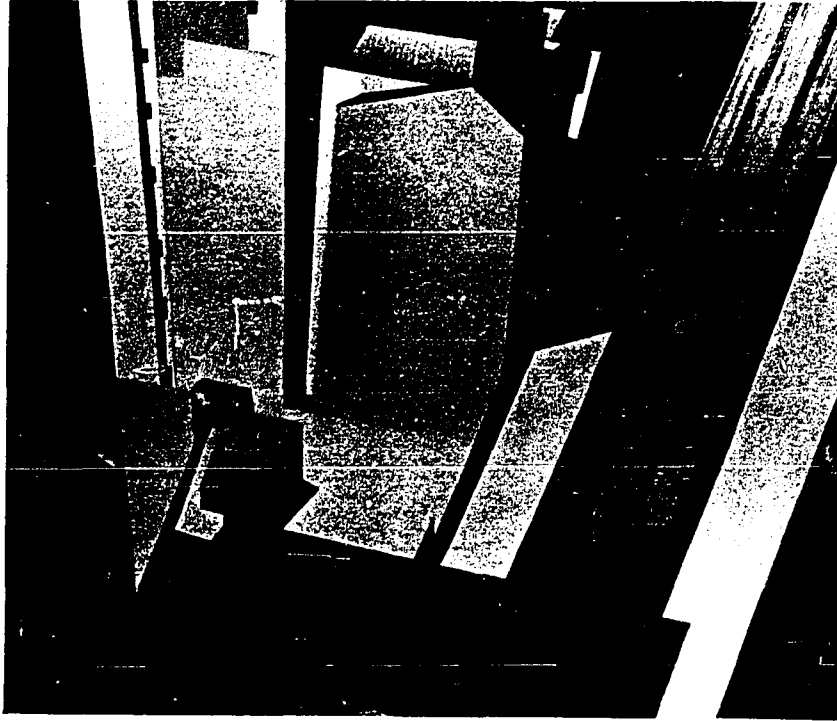


Fig. 65 Charles Sheeler  
Church Street El, 1920  
Oil on canvas,  
16 1/8 x 19 1/8 inches,  
Collection: Mrs. Earl Horter,  
Philadelphia

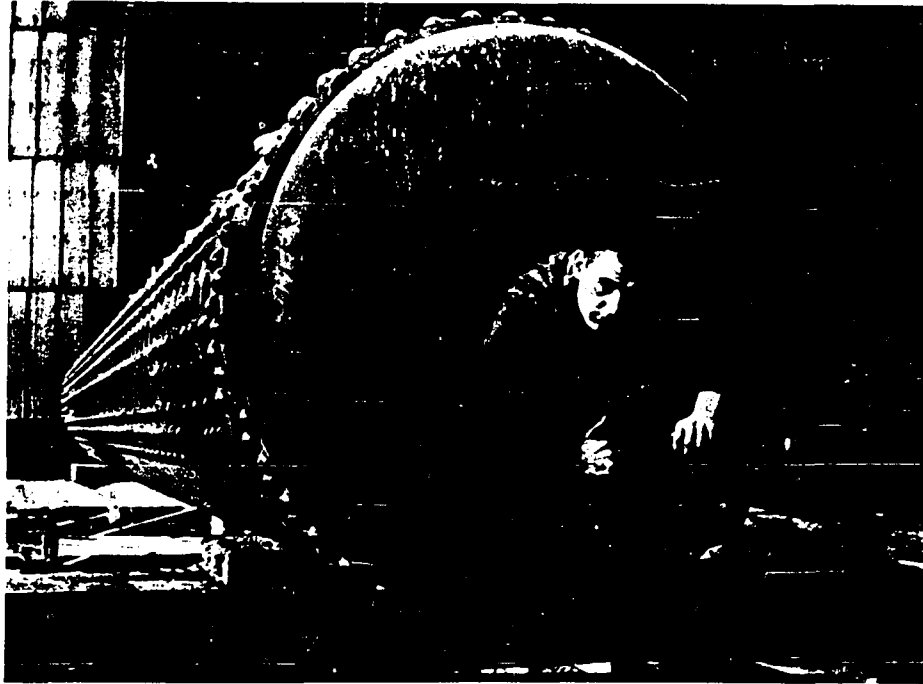


Fig. 66 Lewis W. Hine  
Man and Turbine, c. 1925



Fig. 67 Doris Ulmann  
Rural Southerner, c. 1930



Fig. 68 Alfred Stieglitz  
Equivalent, 1926



Fig. 69 Alfred Stieglitz  
View From The Shelton  
1932

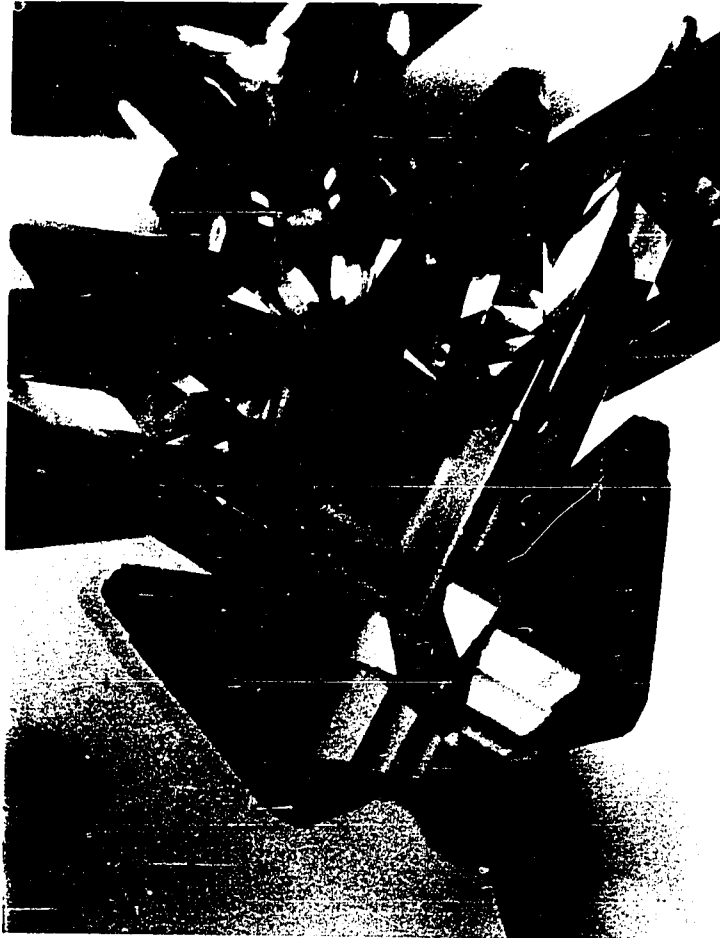


Fig. 70 Alvin Langdon Coburn  
Vortograph, 1917

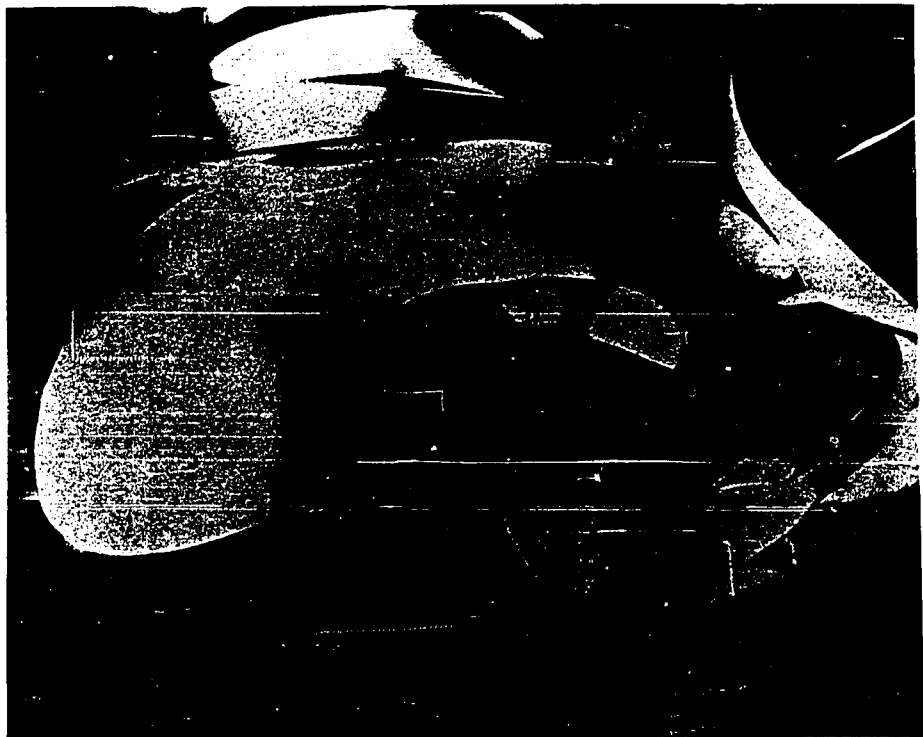


Fig. 71 Francis Bruguière  
Cut Paper Abstraction,  
c. 1925



Fig. 72 Francis Bruguière  
Multiple Exposure, 1925

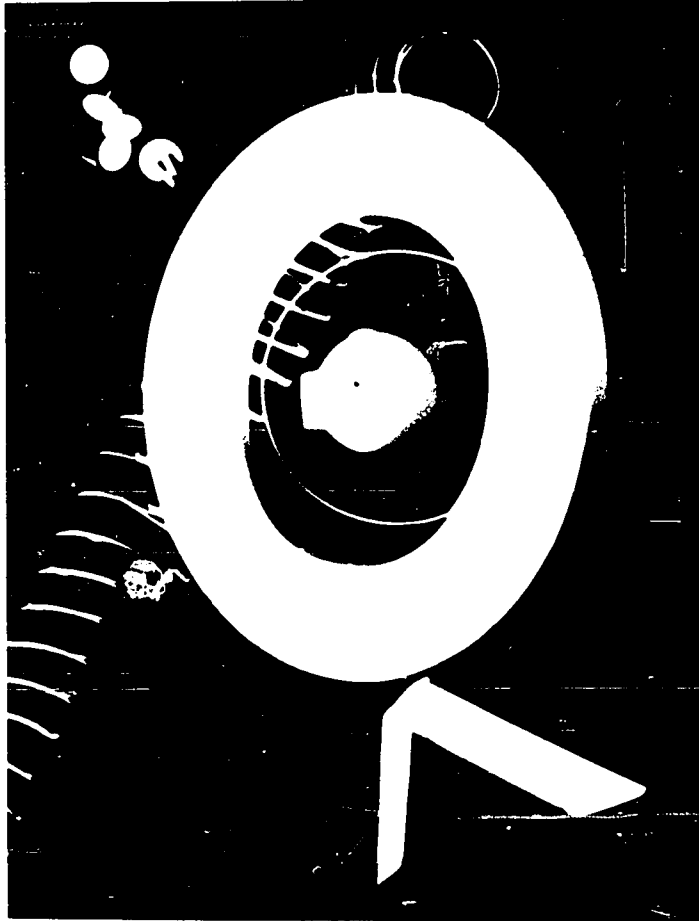


Fig. 73 Man Ray  
Rayograph, 1922

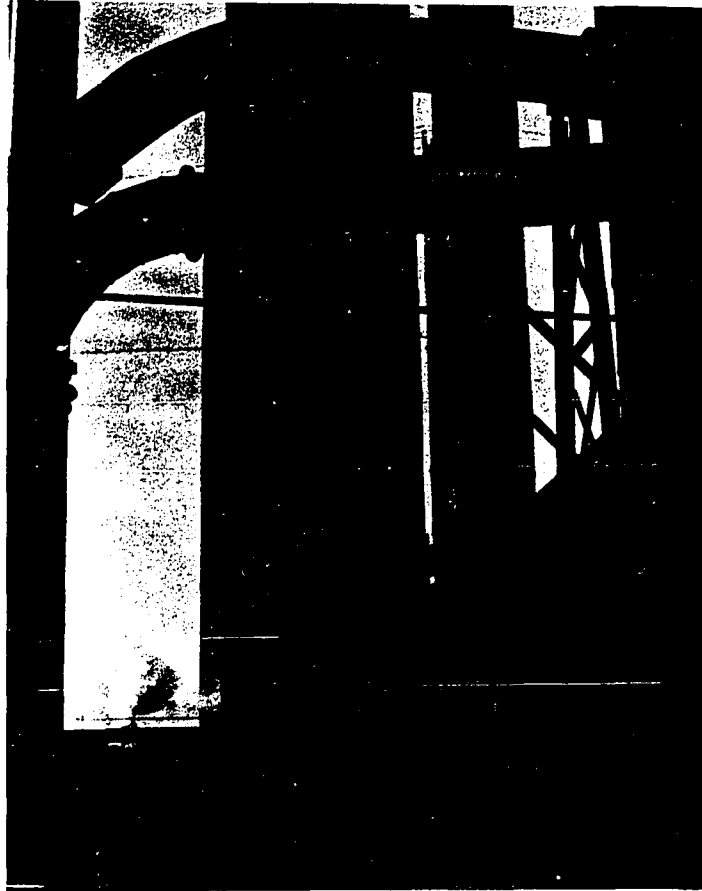


Fig. 74 Edward Weston  
Armco Refinery, Ohio, 1922



Fig. 75 Edward Weston  
The Sharpshooter, Manuel  
Hernandez Galvan, 1924



Fig. 76 Edward Weston  
Artichoke--Halved, 1930

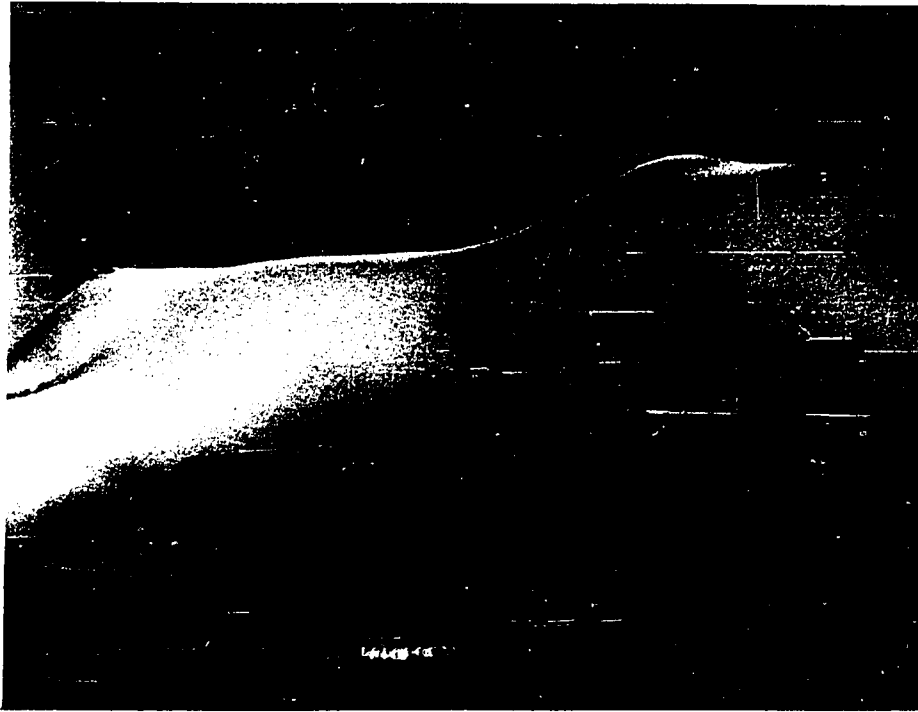


Fig. 77 Edward Weston  
Nude, 1925

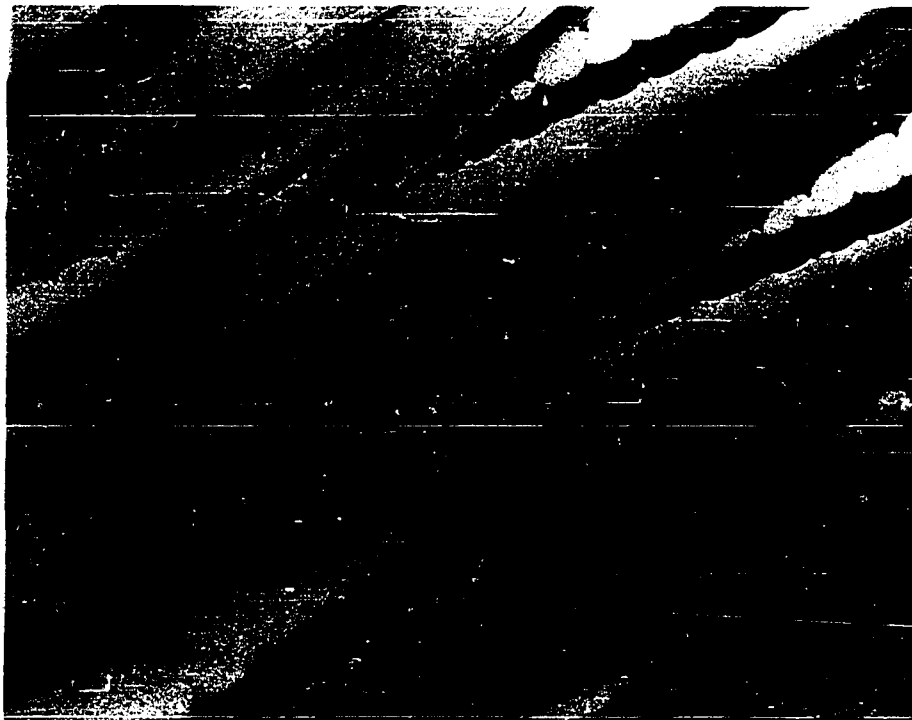


Fig. 78 Imogen Cunningham  
Agave Design, c. 1929



Fig. 79 Dorothea Lange  
Hopi Indian, 1923



Fig. 80 Paul Outerbridge  
Telephone, 1922

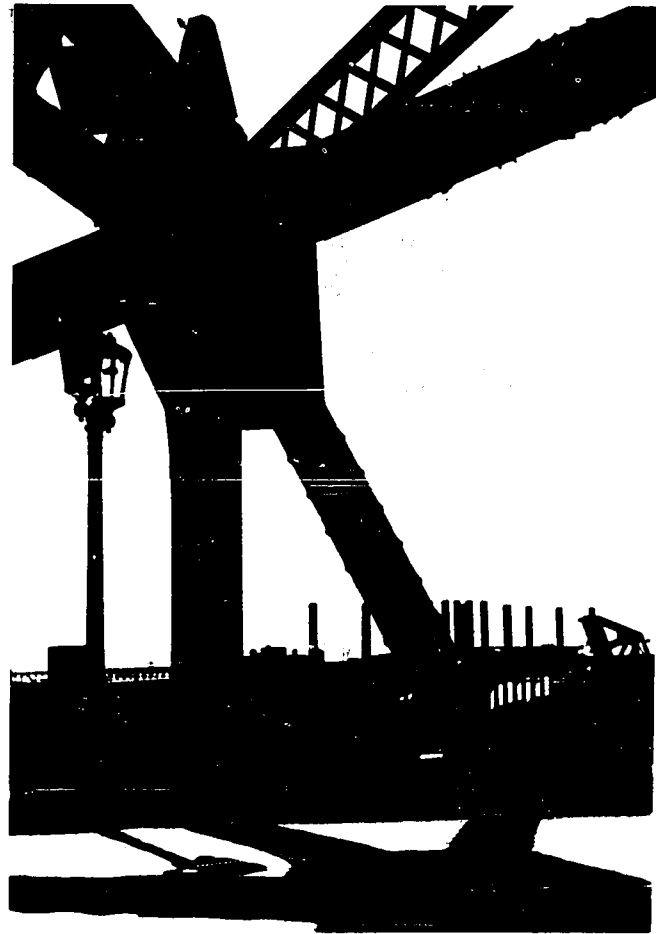


Fig. 81 Margaret Bourke-White  
High Level Bridge,  
Cleveland, 1929



Fig. 82 Lewis W. Hine  
Empire State Building  
Construction, 1931

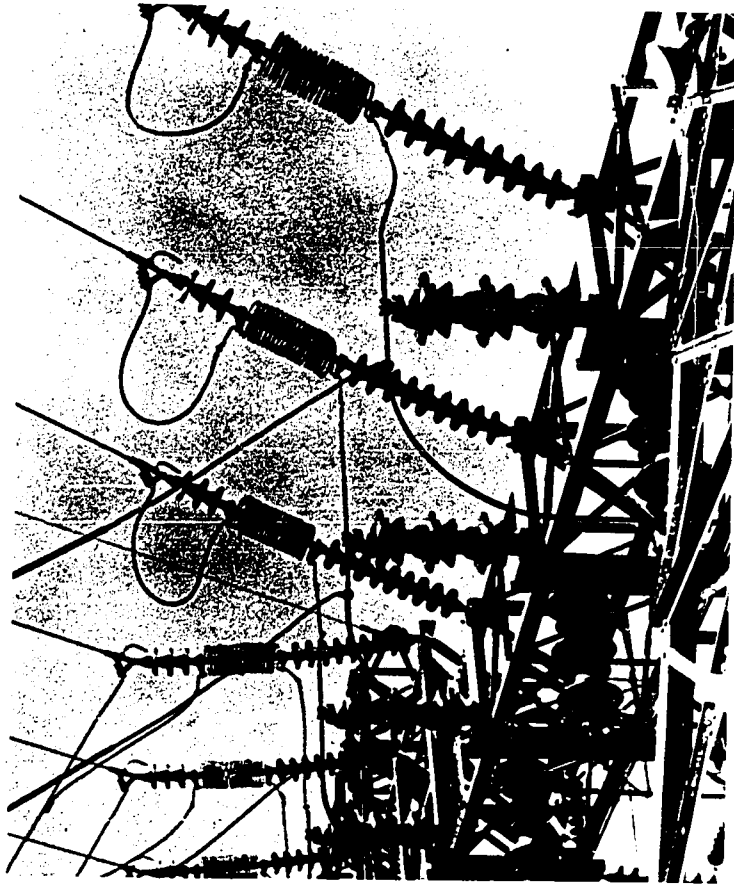


Fig. 83 Ralph Steiner  
Wires, c. 1929



Fig. 84 Henry Hoyt Moore  
The Bridges, New York, 1930

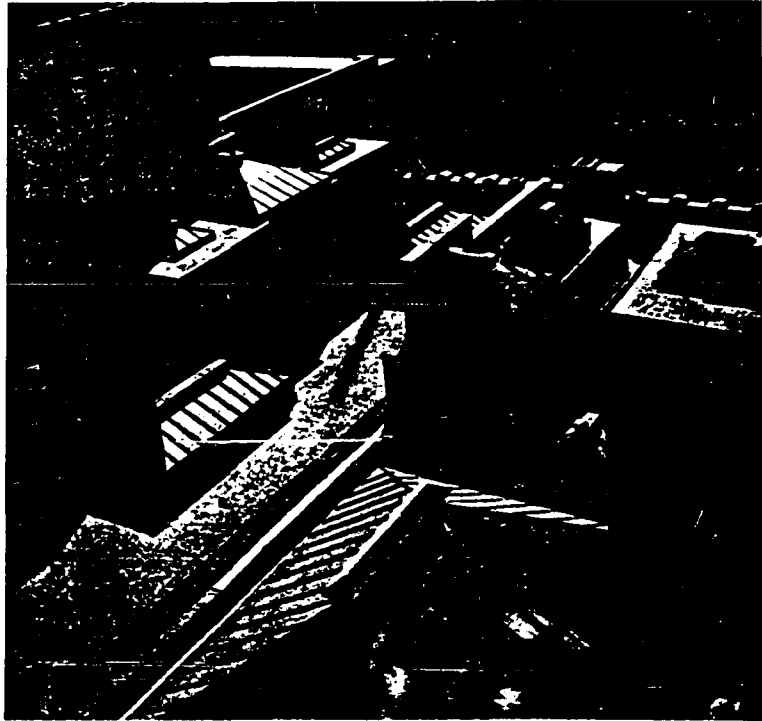


Fig 85 Ira Martin  
Morning Sunlight, c. 1930



Fig. 86 Edward Steichen  
Shell, c. 1921

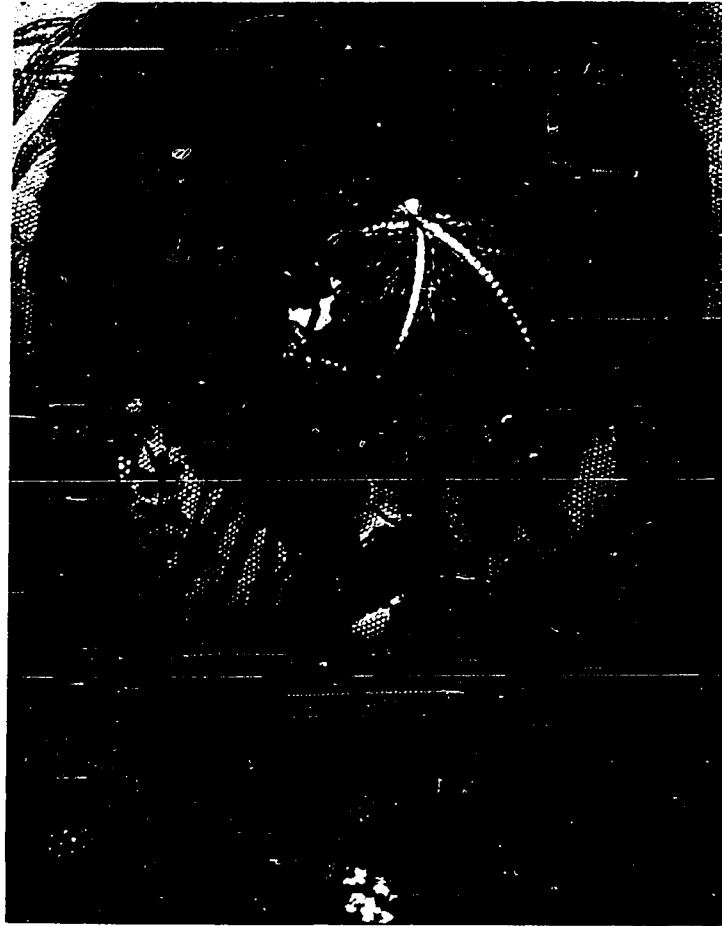


Fig. 87 Edward Steichen  
Gloria Swanson, 1924

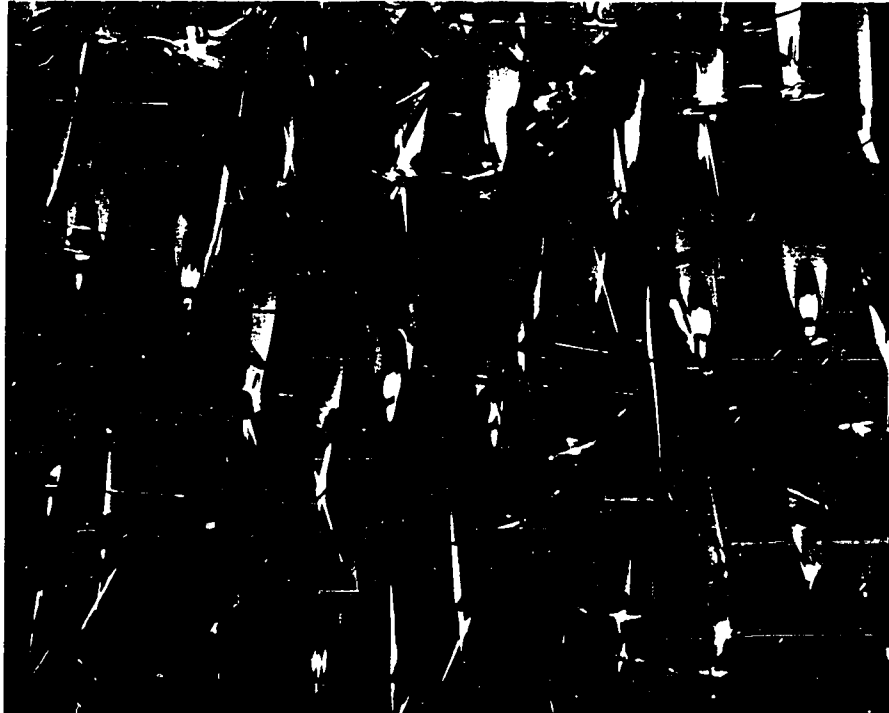


Fig. 88 Edward Steichen  
Spectacles (Fabric Design for Stehli  
Silk Co.), 1927



Fig. 89 Walker Evans  
Traffic, New York, 1929

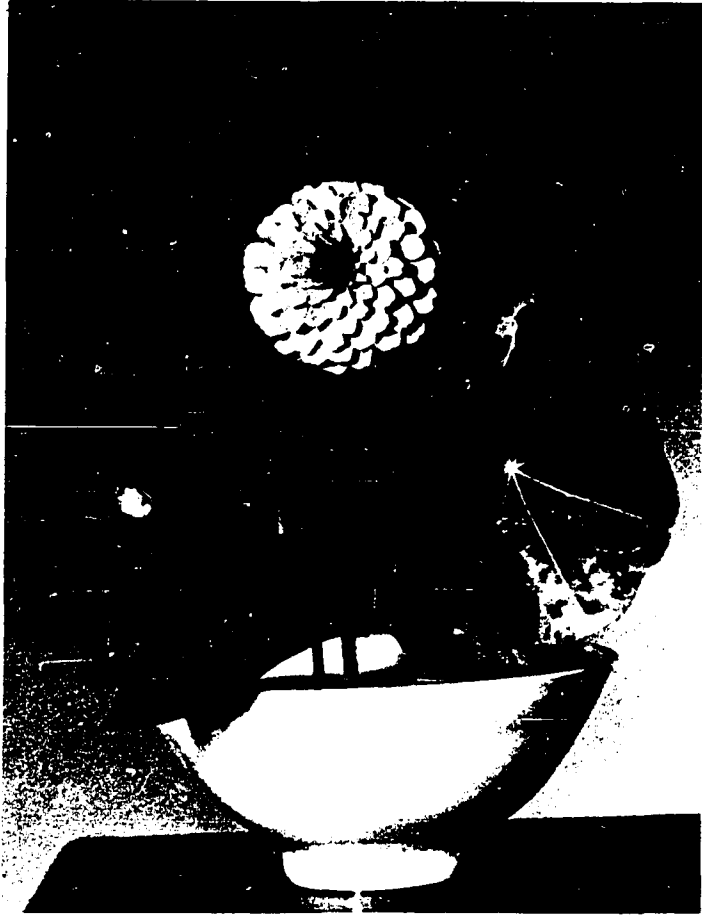


Fig. 90 Charles Sheeler  
Zinnia and Nasturtium  
Leaves, 1915



Fig. 91 Paul Strand  
Black Bottle, 1916 (?)



Fig. 92 Paul Strand  
Wire Wheel, 1918



Fig. 93 Paul Strand  
Double Akeley, 1922



Fig. 94 Paul Strand  
Lathe, Akeley Shop, 1923

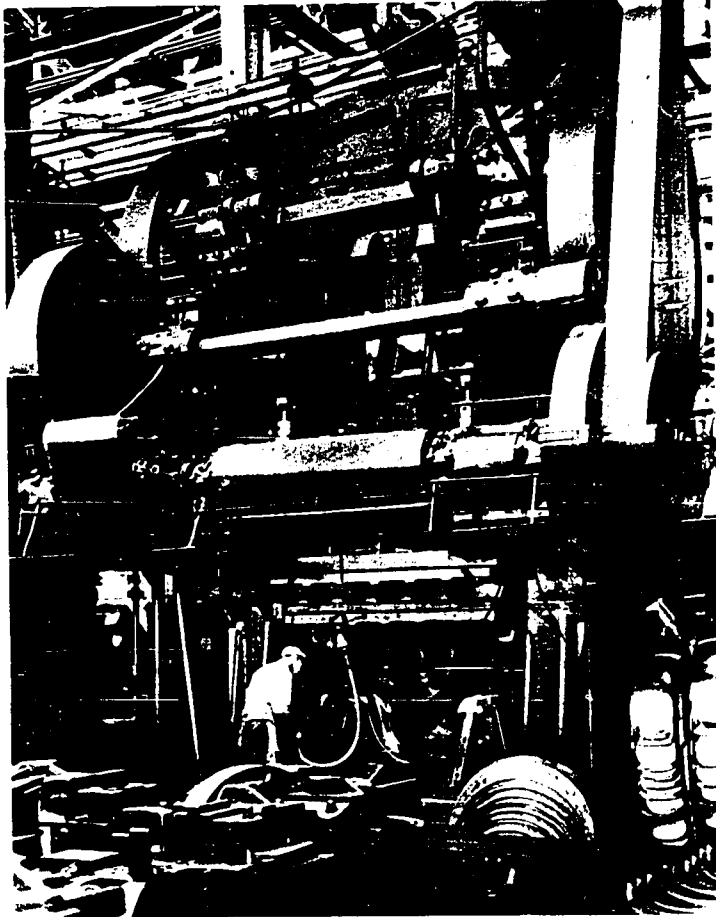


Fig. 95 Charles Sheeler  
Ford Motor Plant, 1929



Fig. 96 Paul Strand  
Rock, Port Lorne, 1920



Fig. 97 Paul Strand  
Mullen, 1921

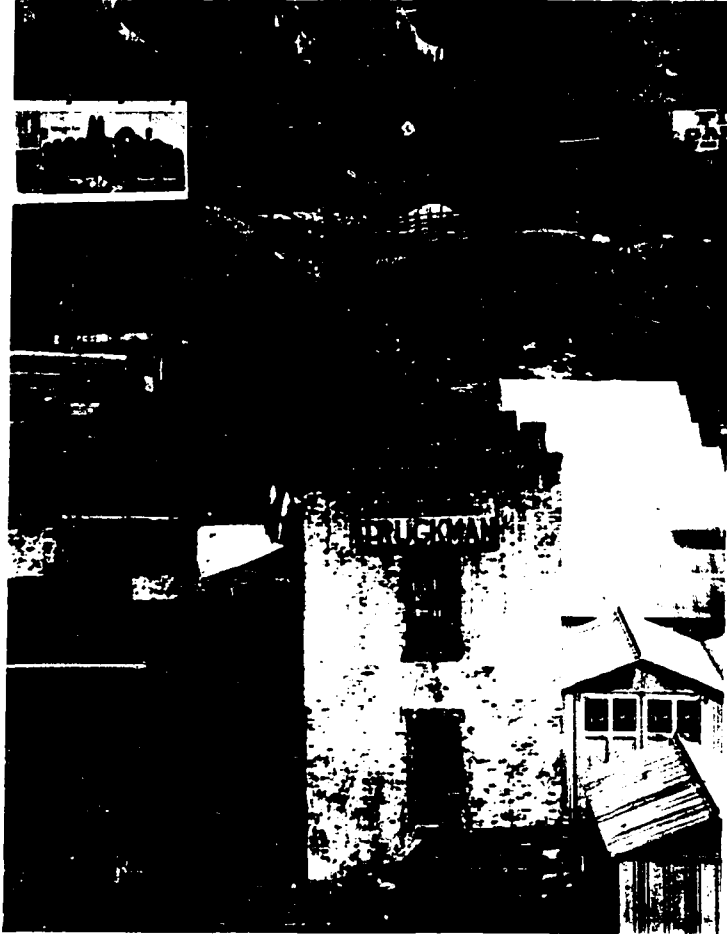


Fig. 98 Paul Strand  
Truckman's House, 1920

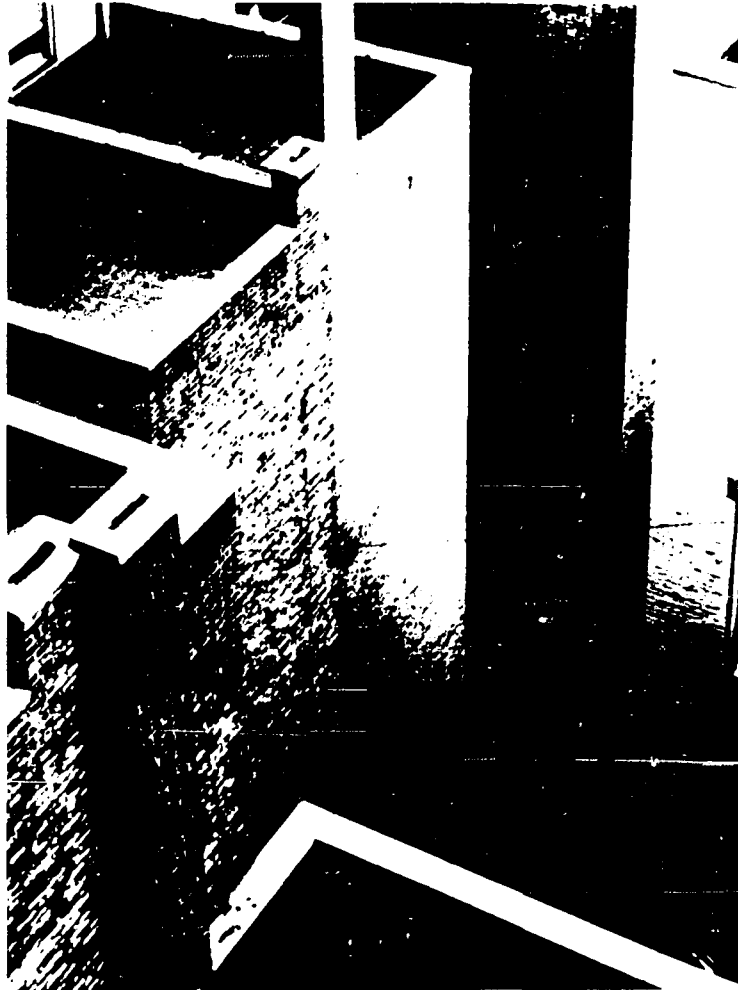


Fig. 99 Paul Strand  
The Court, 1924



Fig. 100 Paul Strand  
The Docks, 1922

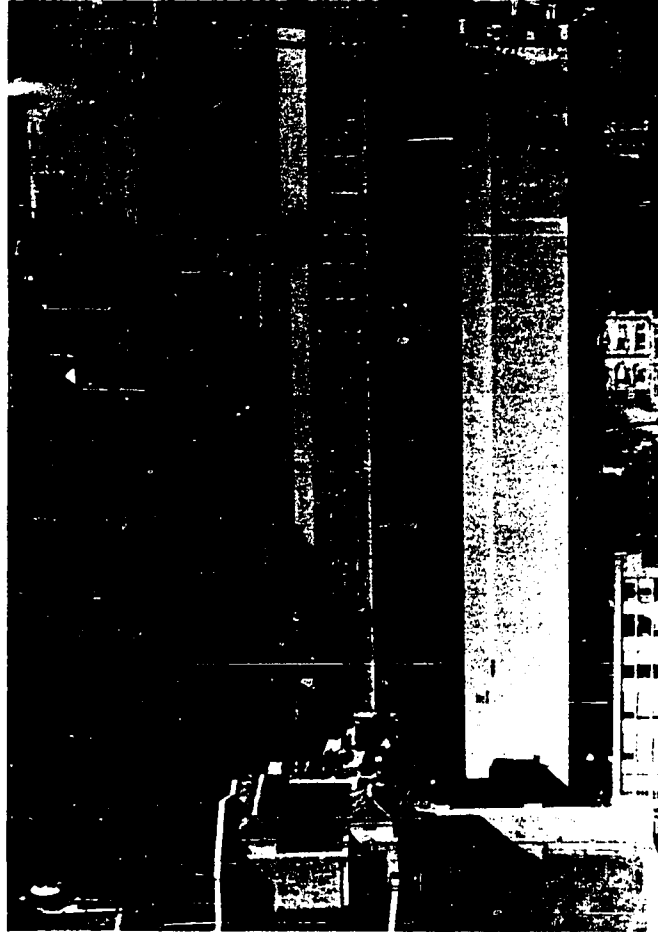


Fig. 101 Charles Sheeler  
New York, 1920



Fig. 102 Paul Strand  
Portrait of Rebecca, 1923



Fig. 103 Paul Strand  
Rebecca's Hands, 1923



Fig. 104 Paul Strand  
Portrait of Lachaise, 1927



Fig. 105 Paul Strand  
Garden Iris, 1928

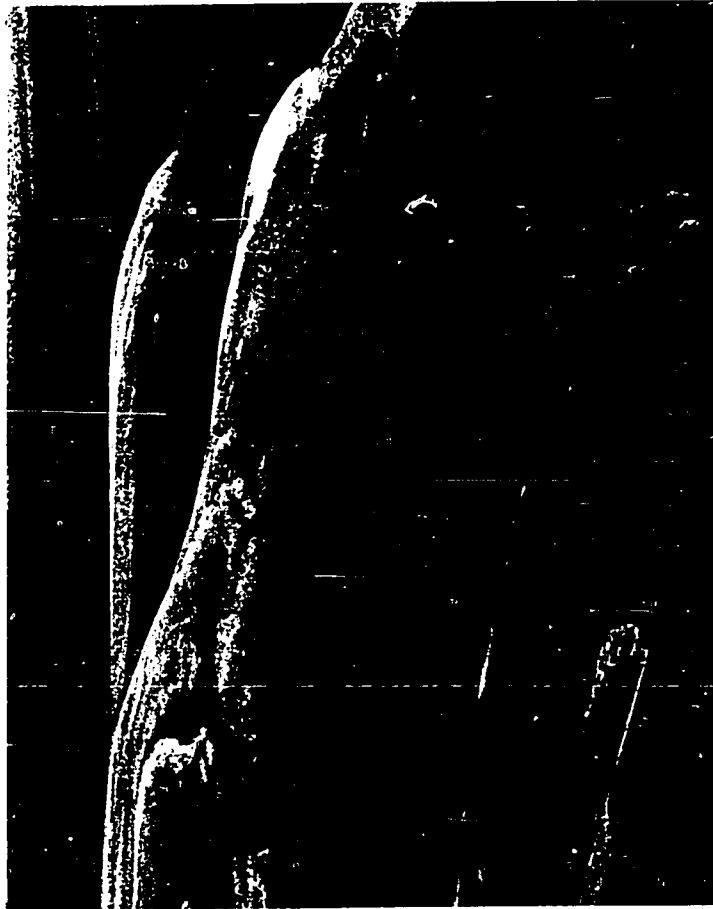


Fig. 106 Paul Strand  
Rock by the Sea, 1925



Fig. 107 Paul Strand  
Cobweb in the Rain, 1927



Fig. 108 Paul Strand  
Fern in the Rain, 1927



Fig. 109 Paul Strand  
The Stump, Colorado, 1926



Fig. 110 Paul Strand  
Mesa Verde, 1926



Fig. 111 Paul Strand  
Village on the Gulf of the Saint  
Lawrence, 1929



Fig. 112 Paul Strand  
Rinconada, 1931



Fig. 113 Paul Strand  
Ghost Town, Red River,  
1930

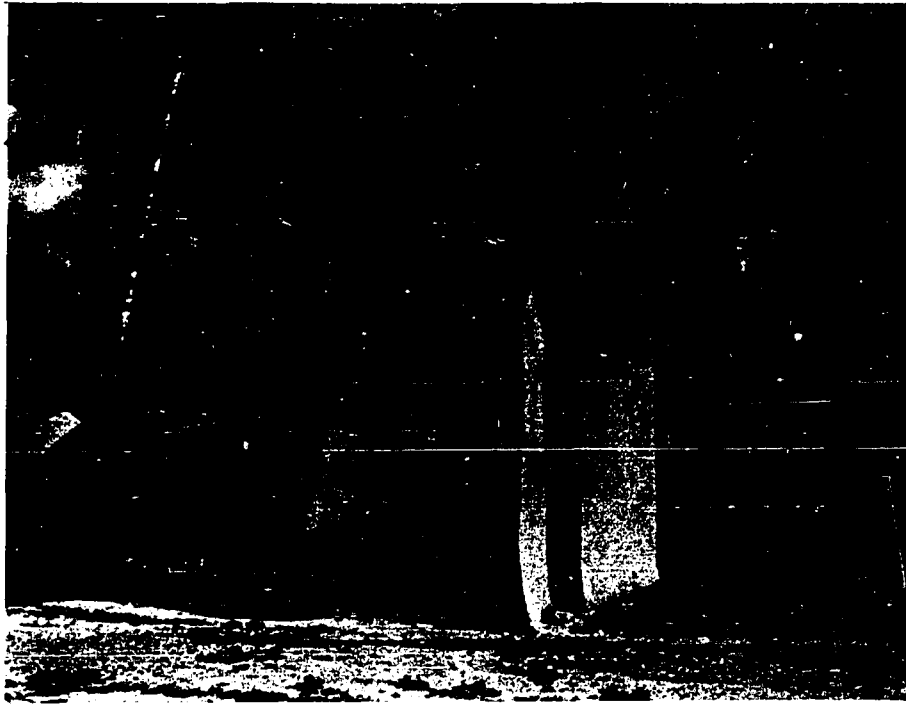


Fig. 114 Paul Strand  
Ranchos de Taos Church, 1931



Fig. 115 John Marin  
Cape Split, 1921  
Watercolor, 16¼ x 19¼  
Collection: Walter and Naomi Rosenblum



Fig. 116 Arthur Dove  
Gear, 1922, Oil, 22 x 18  
inches, Terry Dintenfass  
Gallery, New York City

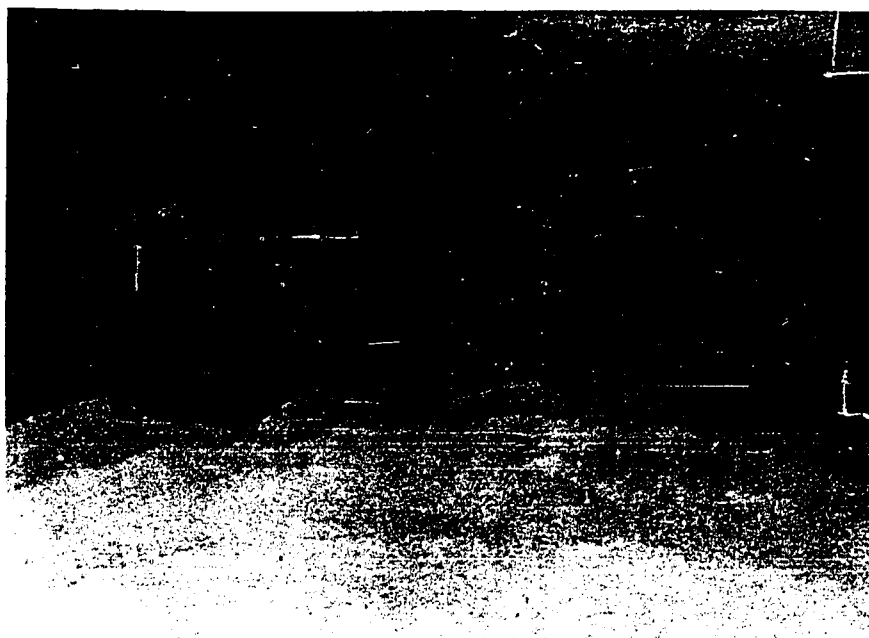


Fig. 117 Arthur Dove  
Fog Horns, 1929  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 26 inches  
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center,  
Colorado

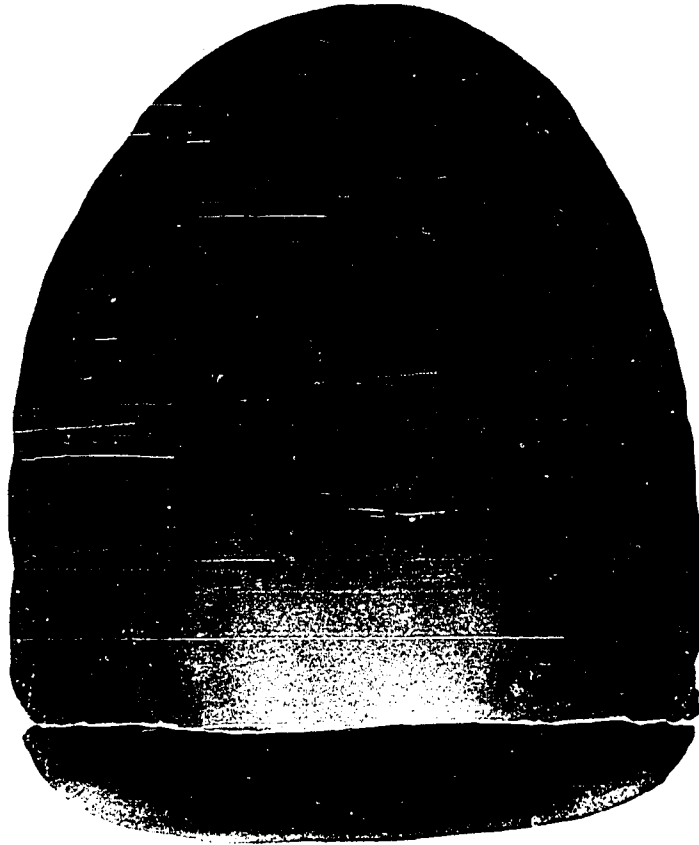


Fig. 118 Georgia O'Keeffe  
Evening Star, No. 4, 1917  
Collection: Georgia  
O'Keeffe



Fig. 119 Georgia O'Keeffe  
Dark Abstraction, Oil on  
canvas, 24 7/8 x 20 7/8  
inches, City Art Museum of  
St. Louis, Mo.



Fig. 120 Georgia O'Keeffe  
Black Iris, 1926  
Oil on canvas, 36 x 30  
inches, Metropolitan Museum  
of Art, New York



Fig. 121 Georgia O'Keeffe  
The Shelton with Sun-  
spots, 1926. Oil on  
canvas, 48 5/8 x 30 5/8  
inches. Collection:  
Inland Steel Company

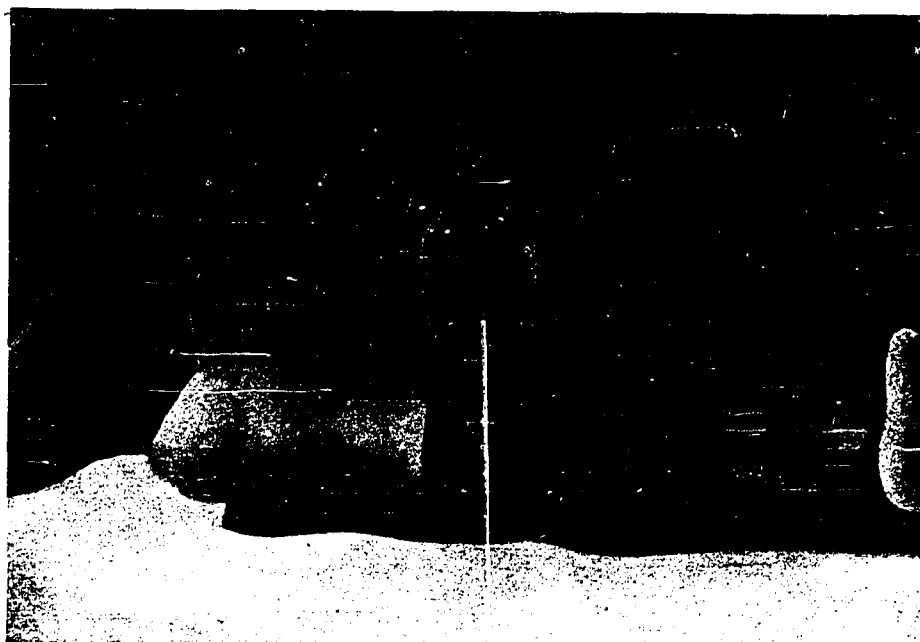


Fig. 122 Georgia O'Keeffe  
Rancho Church, c. 1930  
Oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 16 1/8 inches  
Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

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