

Nadar (Gaspard-Felix Tournachon)

French, 1820-1910

Nadar must be ranked not only among the greatest photographers of the 19th c., but as one of the great personalities of his age. Caricaturist, journalist, novelist, balloonist, propagandist for heavier-than-air flight, friend of almost every notable French writer, artist, journalist, and socialist of the Second Empire (many of whom he photographed), Nadar was a paragon of enthusiasm, energy, and productivity.

The son of a printer, Nadar was born in Paris and attended a lycee in Versailles. In 1838, the family moved to their native Lyon where, after the death of his father, Nadar began his journalistic career by writing drama criticism for a Lyonnais newspaper. Within a few years Nadar returned to Paris and embraced enthusiastically the poor but spirited world of Second Republic bohemia. In his memoirs written 60 years later, Nadar listed among his various jobs of this period poacher, smuggler, clerk, peat seller, and secretary. It was, however, journalism that became increasingly his means of support, and throughout his life he continued regularly to produce a stream of essays, reviews, short stories, articles, and books. During the 1840s Nadar wrote for numerous revues and newspapers, punctuated in 1848 by his enlistment in the Polish Legion - a feckless band of Polish exiles and French sympathizers who set out to liberate Poland - only to be arrested in Germany and sent back to France.

By the end of the 1840s, he had taken up caricature, which he produced for humorous journals, signing his work "Nadar." After a brief stint in debtor's prison and a subsequent trip to London to visit the Great Exhibition, Nadar launched the project he called the Pantheon Nadar, a planned series of lithographic caricatures illustrating the 1000 most prominent personalities of the day. It is possible that the Pantheon project led Nadar to take photographs as aids to making the caricatures, but by 1854 he had set up his younger brother Adrian Tournachon as a photographer. Shortly thereafter, Nadar himself set up a studio on the roof of the house he shared with his mother and divided his time between his brother's studio and his own. As Nadar's photographic fortunes prospered, his brother's appear to have been eclipsed. In fact, Nadar initiated a lawsuit to prevent Adrian from using the name Nadar commercially. By 1860, Nadar had opened a new, sumptuously appointed studio on the Boulevard des Capucines, a building that had earlier provided space for the photographic studios of Gustave Le Gray and the Bisson Freres. Emblazoned across the front was the signature "Nadar" (he had a natural gift for publicity and self-promotion) and to his studio flocked the stellar lights of French arts and letters.

Although Nadar remained a photographic entrepreneur for most of his long life, his passion for the medium and his experimentation with it lasted a scant 10 years. It was during that initial period that he made the first photographs with artificial light, descending into the sewers and the catacombs of Paris with magnesium flares. These forays took place in 1861. The magisterial portraits he produced from the mid-1850s through the mid-1860s are notable for their ability to convey the sitter's personality, the ease and naturalness of the pose, and the clear but subtly orchestrated lighting. Nadar typically chose three-quarter views, often hiding the hands so that the full force of the portrait was conveyed by the face, the expression, and the position of the seated body.

By 1863, Nadar's capacity for boundless enthusiasm had shifted to the then visionary idea of heavier-than-air flight. His studio became the official headquarters of "The Society for the Encouragement of Aerial Locomotion by Means of Heavier than Air Machines," with Nadar as president and Jules Verne as secretary. To publicize the idea, Nadar launched a funding drive which subsidized his giant hot-air balloon, "Le Geant." It was in fact from a hot-air balloon that Nadar had made in 1858 the first aerial photographs. In 1870, during the siege of Paris, Nadar also used a balloon to bring out the mail from the beleaguered city. Ruined



financially in 1871, Nadar gave up the studio on the Boulevard des Capucines and more or less turned over the running of the business to his son Paul, who became a fairly successful commercial portraitist. Although Nadar's interest in photography waned, he remained actively involved with the Parisian art world and in 1874, the First Impressionist Exhibition was held in his studio. Four years later, he helped organize a large exhibition of the work of the caricaturist Honore Daumier, a close friend who had died penniless. His last photographic innovation was the development of a photo interview with the centenarian scientist Michel Chevreul, "The Art of Living for 100 Years," which was photographed by his son Paul and published in the *Journal Illustré*.

Eugene Atget

French, 1857-1927

Jean Eugene Auguste Atget, among the first of photography's social documenters, has come to be regarded as one of the medium's major figures. His images of Paris are perhaps the most vivid record of a city ever made.

Atget was born in Libourne, near Bordeaux, France, and was raised by an uncle from an early age after the deaths of his parents. He became a cabin boy and sailor and traveled widely until 1879 when he entered the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts in Paris. He studied there for two years and became an actor with minor roles in repertory and touring companies, but although he was talented, he was never successful. During this period a relationship developed between Atget and the actress Valentine Delafosse, with whom he lived for the rest of his life (she eventually became his photographic assistant). Together they were able to make a poor living for a number of years, but it became clear that Atget had no future as an actor. In 1897 he tried his hand as a painter and was again unsuccessful. He started to photograph the next year at the age of 40.



Atget took no portraits per se, but he did photograph street characters: peddlers, garbage collectors, road workers, and so on. His friend Andre Calmette wrote that Atget set out to photograph "everything in Paris and its environs that was artistic and picturesque."

In recording the daily appearance of a rapidly changing Paris, Atget made methodical surveys of the old quarters of the city. He was to make over 10,000 photographs of this immense subject in the next 30 years using obsolete equipment: an 18 X 24 cm bellows camera, rectilinear lenses, a wooden tripod, and a few plate holders.

Atget operated a small commercial photography business called "Documents pour artistes" and sold his carefully cataloged images to stage designers, art craftsmen, interior decorators, and painters (Braque, Derain, and Utrillo, among others), and to official bodies such as the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque de la ville de Paris, the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, and the Musée Carnavalet. However, few of his clients appreciated his artistry.

The quiet, even understated, appreciation of a subject's beauty in Atget's work has led many to consider him naive, a primitive. In truth, his work is marked by a purity of vision, a refusal of painterly rhetoric, and a deceptive simplicity.

One of Atget's earliest admirers was the young Ansel Adams, who wrote in 1931: "The charm of Atget lies not in the mastery of the plates and papers of his time, nor in the quaintness of costume, architecture and humanity as revealed in his pictures, but in his equitable and intimate point of view. . . . His work is a simple revelation of the simplest aspects of his environment. There is no superimposed symbolic motive, no tortured application of design, no intellectual ax to grind. The Atget prints are direct and emotionally clean records of a rare and subtle perception, and represent perhaps the earliest expression of true photographic art."

In 1920 Atget sold 2500 negatives relating to the history of Paris, a large portion of the work he had been accumulating for two decades, to the Caisse National des Monuments Historiques. He described these photographs as "artistic documents of fine sixteenth- to nineteenth-century architecture in all the ancient streets of old Paris. . . historical and curious houses, fine facades and doors, panellings, door-knockers, old fountains, period stairs (wood and wrought iron), and interiors of all the churches in Paris (overall views and details)." With the help of the considerable sum he received for this body of work, Atget was able to devote more of his time to photographing with increased dedication and historical awareness those subjects to which he felt closest. Many of his most beautiful images were made during his last years.

In 1926 Atget's neighbor Man Ray published (without credit) a few of Atget's photographs in the

magazine *La revolution surrealiste*. This marked the beginning of the important surrealist appreciation of his work. Berenice Abbott, a student of Man Ray's, was impressed by Atget's photographs in 1925, and has been responsible for rescuing his work from obscurity and preserving his prints and negatives, which she acquired upon his death in 1927. She has written: "He will be remembered as an urbanist historian, a genuine romanticist, a lover of Paris, a Balzac of the camera, from whose work we can weave a large tapestry of French civilization."

Atget's work was included in the important modernist exhibition "Film und Foto" in Stuttgart in 1929. The first book of his images was published in 1931. The Abbott Collection is now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Atget was the subject of a major retrospective at the Museum in 1969 and of a series of retrospectives there in the early 1980s.

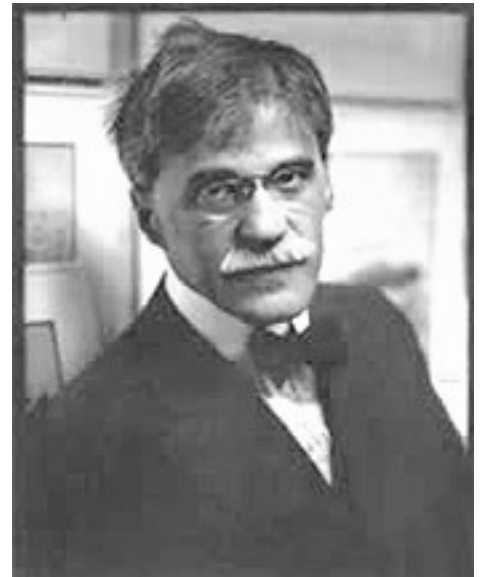
Alfred Stieglitz

American, 1864-1946

Had Alfred Stieglitz never taken a photograph in his life, he would still be numbered among the most significant influences in American cultural life in the period before the World War II. As editor of the now legendary magazine *Camera Work*, as proselytizer for the art of photography, and as director of the 291 gallery and, later, The Intimate Gallery and An American Place, Stieglitz was among the first to introduce the art of the European and American avant-garde to the American public while simultaneously championing, publishing, and exhibiting much of the best photography of the period. Nevertheless, it is Stieglitz's body of photographic work which has firmly established his place among 20th c. artists.

Stieglitz's career spanned more than 50 years and bridged 19th- and 20th-c. styles in photography. Born in Hoboken, New Jersey, Stieglitz studied mechanical engineering in Berlin, Germany. Even while an engineering student he was drawn to photography, and in the 1880s he traveled throughout Europe taking pictures. At the age of 24 he received first prize in a British photographic competition judged by P. H. Emerson, the first of the 150 medals he was to receive in his lifetime. In 1889 Stieglitz returned permanently to New York where he began exhibiting his own work extensively and writing on photography - predominantly on the movement now known as Pictorialism, whose influence pervaded his early work. Pictorialism had originated in France and England (where its major practitioners were loosely organized into a group called The Linked Ring, which conferred honorary membership on Stieglitz). When, in 1902, Stieglitz formed the Photo-Secession group and opened the first of his galleries, the American photographers he exhibited were more or less influenced by Pictorialist tenets. These included the application of Aestheticism and Symbolist styles borrowed from the fine arts, and the use of the gum bichromate and glycerin printing processes, soft focus, and retouching of the negative or positive to achieve painterly or graphic effects. In his own work Stieglitz soon came to reject retouching and other forms of manipulation, often choosing to photograph in rain, mist, or snow to create the desired softness of effect as well as to demonstrate that vision was more important than condition or equipment. Among Stieglitz's most celebrated photographs of this period are "Paula" (1889), "The Terminal" (1893), and "The Steerage" (1907).

In the same year that he established the Photo-Secession, Stieglitz began publishing the quarterly *Camera Work*, which continued until 1917 and featured hand-tipped photogravures, criticism, and reproductions of the work of vanguard artists. In 1908, Stieglitz began exhibiting painting and sculpture at his 291 gallery. Exhibitions included the works of Matisse, Cezanne, Rodin, Braque, O'Keeffe (whom he was to marry in 1924), and primitive African artisans. His own work evolved progressively toward "pure" photography, a direction confirmed by his recognition of Paul Strand, whose photographs comprised the last two issues of *Camera Work*. Writing in 1922, Stieglitz stated: "My aim is increasingly to make my photographs took so much like photographs [i.e., rather than paintings, etchings, etc.] that unless one has eyes and sees, they won't be seen - and still everyone will never forget having once looked at them." That same year Stieglitz began his extended series of cloud photographs, which he termed "equivalents" and of which he wrote: "[They] are equivalents of my basic philosophy of life." Later he was to describe all his work as "equivalents" - a Symbolist notion which Stieglitz was effectively able to translate into photographic expression.



After the closing of 291 and the termination of Camera Work, Stieglitz opened the Intimate Gallery (1925-1929) and An American Place (1929 until his death in 1946), in which he exhibited principally painting, sculpture, and graphic work, and occasionally photography. His work of this later period includes portraits, hundreds of studies of Georgia O'Keeffe, photographs of Lake George (where Stieglitz summered), clouds, and New York City views.

Edward Steichen

American; 1879-1973

Photographer and curator Edward Steichen was one of the most prominent and influential figures of 20th c. photography. During his long career he worked in a variety of styles in black-and-white and in color; his subjects ranged from portraits and landscapes, to fashion and advertising photography, to photography of dance and sculpture. His early work demonstrated a mastery of soft-focus Pictorialism, yet after the first World War he became a proponent of "straight" photography and the New Realism. Steichen's entire body of work is noted for a highly developed sense of design. As a curator at New York's Museum of Modern Art, for 15 years Steichen was responsible for many important exhibitions, including The Family of Man.

Steichen was born Eduard Jean Steichen in Luxembourg. His family came to the United States in 1881 and settled in Hancock, Michigan; in 1889 they moved to Milwaukee. Steichen's early interest in art was encouraged by his mother. He attended the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where he was introduced to important contemporary works of art. At age 15 Steichen began a 4-year lithography apprenticeship at Milwaukee's American Fine Art Company. From 1894 to 1898 he worked under Richard Lorenz and Robert Schode at the Milwaukee Art Students League. He began to photograph in 1895, but continued to pursue his career as a painter for the next 20 years.

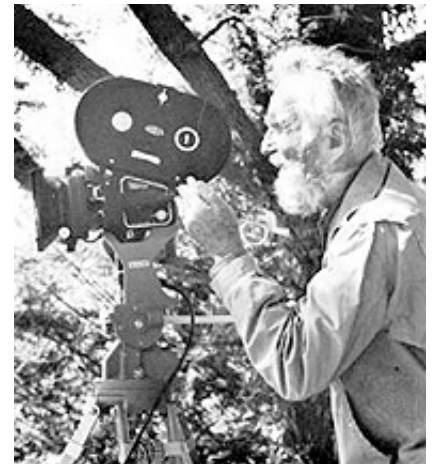
Steichen's photographs received their first public showing at the Second Philadelphia Salon in 1899. The following year (in which he became a naturalized American citizen), Steichen received encouragement from Clarence White, who prompted Alfred Stieglitz to purchase three Steichen prints.

While in Paris at this time Steichen was deeply impressed by the work of Rodin, of whose work and person he would create many extraordinary images. Thirty-five Steichen photographs were included in F. Holland Day's The New School of American Photography exhibition in London and Paris in 1901. Steichen was elected to the Linked Ring at this time. In 1902 he became a founding member of the Photo-Secession and designed the cover of its journal, Camera Work, in which his work often was reproduced in the coming years. Steichen's first one-man show of photographs and paintings was held at La Maison des Artistes in Paris the same year. In New York Steichen helped Stieglitz open the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession ("291") at which Steichen exhibited regularly.

Steichen began experimenting with color photography in 1904 and was an early user of the Lumiere Autochrome process. He returned to Paris in 1906 and was responsible for selecting work to be exhibited by Stieglitz in New York. Among the artists whose work he sent on were John Marin, Picasso, Matisse, Brancusi, Cezanne, and Rodin.

In 1910 thirty-one Steichen photographs were exhibited at the international Exhibition of Pictorial Photography in Buffalo, which was curated by Stieglitz. The following year Steichen made his first fashion photographs, but he began devoting much of his time to painting. In 1913 Stieglitz wrote of the double issue of Camera Work devoted to Steichen's photographs: "Nothing I have ever done has given me quite so much satisfaction as finally sending this Number out into the world."

As commander of the photographic division of the Army Expeditionary Forces in World War 1, Steichen became acquainted with aerial photography, which required a new precision. He became chief photographer for Conde Nast Publications in 1923, publishing regularly in Vogue and Vanity Fair for the next 15 years, being based in New York. He was also employed as an advertising photographer by the J. Walter



Thompson Agency. Among Steichen's sitters during these years were his brother-in-law Carl Sandburg, Greta Garbo, Charles Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, and H. L. Mencken. Steichen's relationship with Stieglitz was strained over issues concerning commercial and advertising work to which Stieglitz objected. Steichen believed that his fashion and other commercial photography could be raised to the level of art.

In 1938 Steichen retired from commercial photography. He became Director of the U.S. Naval Photographic Institute in 1945, was placed in command of all combat photography, and was discharged in 1946 with the rank of captain. During the war years Steichen organized the Road to Victory and Power in the Pacific exhibitions for the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. From 1947 to 1962 Steichen was director of the Department of Photography at the Museum. He did no photographic work of his own during these years, but was responsible for nearly 50 shows, including the Family of Man (for which he selected images from over two million photographs and which became the most popular exhibition in the history of photography as well as a best-selling book), The Bitter Years, and the Diogenes with a Camera series.

In 1961 Steichen was honored by a one-man show of his photographs at the Museum of Modern Art. The Edward Steichen Photography Center was established at the museum in 1964. In 1967 Steichen wrote, "Today I am no longer concerned with photography as an art form. I believe it is potentially the best medium for explaining man to himself and to his fellow man." Steichen died in West Redding, Connecticut, shortly before his 94th birthday.

Edward Weston

American, 1886-1958

Edward Weston is renowned as one of the grand masters of 20th c. photography. His legacy includes several thousand carefully composed, superbly printed photographs which have influenced photographers around the world for 50 years.

Photographing natural landscapes and forms such as peppers, shells, and rocks, using large-format cameras and available light, Weston produced sensuously precise images raised to the level of poetry. The subtleties of tone and the sculptural formal design of his works have become the standards by which much later photographic practice has been judged. Ansel Adams has written:

"Weston is, in the real sense, one of the few creative artists of today. He has recreated the matter-forms and forces of nature; he has made these forms eloquent of the fundamental unity of the world. His work illuminates man's inner journey toward perfection of the spirit."

Edward Henry Weston was born in Highland Park, Illinois, and raised in Chicago. He attended Oakland Grammar School and received his first camera, a Bull's-Eye #2, from his father in 1902. He began photographing in his spare time in Chicago parks while working as an errand boy and salesman for Marshall Field and Company. In 1906 Weston traveled to California where he worked as a door-to-door portrait photographer. From 1908 to 1911 he attended the Illinois College of Photography, spending his summers in California working as a printer in photographic studios.

Weston operated his own portrait studio between 1911 and 1922 in Tropic, California. He became successful working in a soft-focus, Pictorial style, winning many salon and professional awards. After viewing an exhibition of modern art at the San Francisco World's Fair in 1915, Weston became more and more dissatisfied with his own work. By 1920 he was experimenting with semi-abstractions in a hard-edged style.

In 1922 Weston traveled to New York City, where he met Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, and Charles Sheeler. His photographs of the ARMCO Steelworks in Ohio at this time marked a turning point in his career. These industrial photographs, similar to work by Sheeler, were true "straight" images: unpretentious, and true to the reality before the photographer. Weston later wrote, "the camera should be used for a recording of life, for rendering the very substance and quintessence of the thing itself, whether it be polished steel or palpitating flesh."

In 1923 Weston moved to Mexico City where he opened a studio with his apprentice and lover Tina Modotti, of whom he made important portraits and nude studies over several years. Through Modotti, who fast became an accomplished photographer in her own right, Weston became friendly with artists of the Mexican Renaissance including Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco, all of whom encouraged his new direction. In 1924 Weston abandoned the use of soft-focus techniques entirely and started his precise studies of natural forms. He



returned to California permanently in 1926 and began the work for which he is most deservedly famous: natural-form close-ups, nudes, and landscapes.

Weston opened a San Francisco studio with his son Brett in 1928. The following year he moved to Carmel where he began photographing in the Point Lobos area. He organized with Edward Steichen the American section of the 1929 Stuttgart Film und Foto exhibition at this time. In 1932 Weston was a founding member of the f/64 group of purist photographers along with Ansel Adams, Willard Van Dyke, Imogen Cunningham, and Sonya Noskowiak. The Art of Edward Weston, a book of nearly 40 photographs, was published the same year.

Weston photographed for the WPA Federal Arts Project in New Mexico and California in 1933. He was the first recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for Photography in 1937, photographing extensively in the West and Southwest in 1937-1938. Two years later, he provided illustrations for an edition of Whitman's Leaves of Grass from photographs made in the South and East.

A major retrospective of 300 prints of Weston's work was held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1946. Weston began experiments with color photography the following year, and was the subject of a film, The Photographer, by Willard Van Dyke.

Weston's work of the late 1940s was hampered by Parkinson's disease. He took his last photographs in 1948 at Point Lobos. During the next 10 years of progressively incapacitating illness, Weston supervised the printing by his sons, Brett and Cole, of his life's work. His Fiftieth Anniversary Portfolio appeared in 1952. Three years later, eight sets of prints from 1000 Weston negatives were produced. Weston died in Carmel in 1958.

Man Ray

American, 1890-1976

Man Ray was an American Dadaist photographer and film director. Born Emmanuel Radnitzky in Philadelphia, while also being a painter, object-maker, and avant-garde film maker, he is best known as a surrealist photographer, producing his first significant photographs in 1918.

He was living in New York City, and with his close friend Marcel Duchamp formed the American branch of the Dada movement, which began in Europe as a radical rejection of traditional art. After a few unsuccessful experiments, and notably after the publication of a unique issue of New York Dada in 1920, Man Ray stated that "Dada cannot live in New York" and in 1921 went to live and work in the Montparnasse quarter of Paris during the era of great creativity. It was there that he fell in love with the famous French singer, Kiki (Alice Prin), often referred to as Kiki de Montparnasse, who later also became his favorite photographic model.

With Jean Arp, Max Ernst, André Masson, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso, he was represented in the first Surrealist exhibition at the Galerie Pierre in Paris in 1925.

For the next twenty years in Montparnasse, Man Ray revolutionized the art of photography. Great artists of the day such as James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Jean Cocteau and numerous others posed for his camera. In 1934, famous surrealist artist known for her fur-covered tea cup, Méret Oppenheim posed for Man Ray in what became a very well-known series of photographs depicting the surrealist artist nude, standing next to a printing press. Together with the surrealist photographer Lee Miller — who was his lover and photography assistant at the time — he invented the photographic technique of solarization. Man Ray is also known for creating a technique using photograms he called rayographs.

Later in life, Man Ray returned to the United States, where he lived in Los Angeles, California for a few years. However, he called Montparnasse home and he returned there where he died on November 18, 1976 and was interred in the Cimetière du Montparnasse, Paris, France. His epitaph reads: "Unconcerned, but not indifferent."

Paul Strand

American, 1890-1976

Paul Strand, one of the towering figures of American 20th c. photography, was born in New York City, the only child of parents of Bohemian-Jewish descent. He first became interested in photography as a student



at the Ethical Culture School under the influence of Lewis Hine. It was Hine who introduced Strand to Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo Secession Gallery in 1907. In the next few years Strand was exposed both to the new abstract painting and sculpture exhibited by Stieglitz - works by artists such as Picasso, Braque, and Brancusi - and also to the photography of such 19th c. masters as Hill and Adamson and Julia Margaret Cameron, and such contemporary photographers as Edward Steichen. Strand became a self-employed commercial photographer after graduation and a brief European trip. He began his own photographic work on the side, experimenting with soft-focus lenses, and generally working in a pictorialist style. During this period, he exhibited at both the New York Camera Club and the London Salon.



In the years 1915-1917, Stieglitz and Strand were in close contact. It becomes difficult to distinguish who influenced whom, but when at the end of this period Strand produced a body of sharp-focus work, including somewhat abstracted still-lives of kitchen bowls and cityscapes, Steiglitz was prompt to recognize the breakthrough this work represented. The last two issues of *Camera Work* were devoted to the most recent work of Strand, and Stieglitz gave Strand a one-man show at the 291 gallery. In an essay he wrote in 1916 Stieglitz said: "Strand is a young man I have been watching for years ... without doubt the only important photographer developed in this country since [Alvin Langdon] Coburn... He has actually added some original vision to photography." Strand became known as an advocate of the new realism called "straight" photography.

After a brief stint as an Army Medical Corps x-ray technician in World War I, Strand was employed as a freelance motion-picture cameraman, photographing sports and medical films, and collaborating with Charles Sheeler on the short film *Mannahatta*. In 1925, Strand was one of the photographers represented in the *Seven Americans* exhibition at the Anderson Galleries, and in that year he began his renowned series of close-ups of vegetation and other natural forms.

The 1930s was a period of political concern and activism for Strand; he was an advisor to the Group Theatre in New York, visited the Soviet Union (where he met Sergei Eisenstein and other key Russian avant-garde artists), worked on the film *The Plow that Broke the Plains* in the U.S., and was active as a producer for Frontier Films on many projects. During this period Strand also worked in Mexico and gathered images for his work *The Mexican Portfolio*, published with hand-pulled gravures in 1940. It was not until 1943 that Strand ceased his film production and returned to still photography full-time.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, mounted its first full-scale retrospective of a contemporary photographer with the work of Strand in 1945. In 1946-1947 he collaborated with Nancy Newhall on the classic *Time in New England*, in which excerpts from various texts were joined with Strand's emblematic images of New England's artifacts, architecture, and regional attributes. In the 1950s and 1960s he traveled throughout France, Italy, Egypt, and Ghana, producing a series of photography books: *Un Paese* (1954), *Tir a 'Mhurain: Outer Hebrides* (1968), *Ghana: An African Portrait* (1976). He closely supervised the second printing of *The Mexican Portfolio* in 1967. In 1971, the Philadelphia Museum of Art honored Strand by organizing a major retrospective, and a two-volume monograph of his work from the years 1915-1968 was published by Aperture. He received numerous other awards and honors in the last two decades of his life: Honor Roll of the American Society of Magazine Photographers (1963), David Octavius Hill Medal (1967), Swedish Photographers Association and Swedish Film Archives Award (1970) and major retrospectives at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Los Angeles Country Museum (1973). His last years were spent working in close collaboration with his third wife, Hazel Kingsbury. He died after a long illness in 1976 at his home in Orgeval, France.

An impeccable printer whose photographs are typified by great richness and sensuousness of surface detail, Strand was one of the major forces of photographic modernism. Embracing a variety of subject matter in his work - landscapes, portraits, still-lives, architecture, and abstraction - his photographic production was consistent in its concern for formal relationships, its respect for the subject depicted, and an innate classicism.

Berenice Abbott

American, 1898-1991

Like many other aspiring young artists of her generation, and with no notion of becoming a photographer, Berenice Abbott left New York for Paris in 1918, intending to become a sculptor. For two years she traveled between Paris and Berlin, the world centers of contemporary art, finally settling in Paris and becoming a photographic assistant to Man Ray. By 1925 she was a professional portrait photographer. Her photographs of this period—including many of the major art and literary figures of the 1920s (Cocteau, Duchamp, Gide, Joyce, Mauriac, etc.) are characterized by careful lighting, a natural quality of pose and expression, and the formal clarity and precision that Abbott has always claimed as her goal.



Paris was as rich in emigre photographers as it was in artists, those photographers including Brassai, Glséle Freund, André Kertesz, Germaine Krutl, and Man Ray. It was, however, the photography of 70-year-old Eugene Atget that struck Abbott with the force of revelation and that seems to have furnished her with a sense of aesthetic ancestry and a clear direction for her future work. Describing Atget's photographs, years later Abbott wrote: "Their impact was immediate and tremendous - a sudden flash of recognition - the shock of realism unadorned." After Atget's death in 1927, Abbott purchased (aided by the dealer Julien Levy) the thousands of negatives and prints from his meager estate. Until their sale in 1968 to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, she functioned as a virtual curator of the Atget material, printing, publishing, and exhibiting it.

While the "realism unadorned" of Atget's work provided Abbott with a formal prototype, the overall subject of Atget's photography - an encyclopedic documentation of Old Paris and its environs - may have suggested to her the value of such a record. Returning to New York in 1929, she embarked upon a similar project, photographing in a systematic, precise, and detailed fashion the rapidly changing fare of New York City. Attentive to both the smallest details and the largest architectural configurations, recording individual shop windows or canyons of skyscrapers, Abbott found an inexhaustible subject in the urban landscape. For four years she supported the project herself, working for magazines such as *Fortune* and *Life* and teaching photography at The New School for Social Research in 1934. In 1935 the project, now entitled "Changing New York," became an official documentation supported by the Works Project Administration of the Federal Art Project (WPA). In 1939 a selection of the photographs was published as a book under the same title.

Abbott had occasionally photographed scientific subjects for *Life* magazine; however, by the 1950s her understanding of how scientific principles could be photographically illustrated expanded into a commissioned project for the Physical Science Study Committee. This resulted in an exhibition ("The Image of Physics") and in three secondary school books on physics illustrated with Abbott's photographs.

Abbott's next major project was a photographic documentation of U.S. Route No. 1, running from Maine to Florida. It was in the course of this photographic project that Abbott discovered Maine, to which she subsequently relocated.

An aesthetic of modernist realism stamped all of Abbott's work, from the early Paris portraits to the massive collective portrait of New York City to the graphic and inventive scientific photography of the 1950s. For Abbott "speed and science" constituted both the essence of photography and the essence of the 20th c.; for all the art inherent in her pictures, it was in a single-minded pursuit of those qualities that Abbott created her impressive body of work.

Ansel Adams

American, 1902-1984

Throughout his long and prolific career, Ansel Adams created a body of work which has come to exemplify not only the purist approach to the medium, but to many people the definitive pictorial statement on the American western landscape. He was also strongly associated with a visionary sense of the redemptive beauty of wilderness and the importance of its preservation. The prestige and popularity of his work has been enhanced by the extraordinary technical perfection of his photography and his insistence on absolute control of the photographic processes.

Born in San Francisco, Adams manifested an early interest in music and the piano, an interest which he

initially hoped to develop into a professional career. In 1916 he took his first photographs of the Yosemite Valley, an experience of such intensity that he was to view it as a lifelong inspiration. He studied photography with a photofinisher, producing early work influenced by the then prevalent pictorialist style. Each summer he returned to Yosemite where he developed an interest in conservation. These trips involved exploration, climbing and photography, and by 1920 he had formed an association with the Sierra Club. In 1927 his first portfolio was published, *Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras*. In 1928 he married Virginia Best and began to work as an official photographer for the Sierra Club. His decision to devote his life to photography was influenced by his strong response to the straight photography of Paul Strand, whom he met in 1930. Adams's first important one-man show was held in 1931 at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, and in the same year his work was exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution. The



following year Adams and several other California-based photographers, notably Edward Weston and Imogen Cunningham, founded Group f/64. For Adams and Weston especially, the f/64 philosophy embodied an approach to perfect realization of photographic vision through technically flawless prints. Despite this, Adams never decried experimentation as such, and he himself used a variety of large-format and miniature cameras.

After meeting with Alfred Stieglitz in 1933, he began a gallery in San Francisco, the Ansel Adams Gallery. The first of his books dealing with the mastery of photographic technique, *Making a Photograph*, was published in 1935. Meanwhile, Adams had impressed Stieglitz so much that an important one-man exhibition of his work was shown at *An American Place* in 1936.

During the following two years Adams moved into the Yosemite Valley and made trips throughout the Southwest with Weston, Georgia O'Keeffe, and David McAlpin. His photographs accompanied the 1938 publication of *Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail*. Having met Beaumont and Nancy Newhall in New York in 1939, the following year Adams, along with McAlpin, assisted in the foundation of the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). With the arrival of World War II, Adams went to Washington, D.C., where he worked as a photomuralist for the Department of the Interior. During this time he began to develop a codification of his approach to exposure, processing, and printing - the zone system. In effect, this system aimed at previsualization of the final print from a given set of conditions. Work from a wartime photo essay on the plight of interned Japanese-Americans was exhibited at MOMA in 1944 under the title *Born Free and Equal*. During 1944-1945, Adams lectured and taught courses in photography at the museum. This teaching was followed by the establishment of one of the first departments of photography at the California School of Fine Arts (later the San Francisco Art Institute) in 1946.

Following his award of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1948 to photograph national park locations and monuments, there were five productive years of important photographic work. The first of numerous portfolios, *Portfolio 1: In Memory of Alfred Stieglitz*, was issued in 1948, and in the same year he began to publish technical volumes in the *Basic Photo Series*. Throughout 1950 he made trips to Hawaii, Alaska, and Maine, and in that year *Portfolio 2: The National Parks and Monuments* was issued.

In 1953 he collaborated with Dorothea Lange on a Life commission for a photo essay on the Mormons in Utah, and in 1955 he began a photography workshop in Yosemite. *Portfolio 3: Yosemite Valley* was published by the Sierra Club in 1960.

In each of his images Adams aimed to modulate the range of tones from rich black to whitest white in order to achieve perfect photographic clarity. He also developed a knowledge of the techniques of photographic reproduction to assure that the quality of any reproduced work might approach as closely as possible the standard of the original print.

In 1962 Adams moved to Carmel, California, where in 1967 he was instrumental in the foundation of the Friends of Photography, of which he became president. A retrospective show of his work, 1923-1963, was exhibited at the de Young Museum, and in 1966 he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In the late 1970s his prints sold to collectors for prices never equaled by a living American photographer. By that time Adams had given up active photography to devote himself to revising the *Basic Photo Series*, publishing books of his life's work, and preparing prints for a variety of exhibitions.

Unmasking a Chameleon of the Lens By KEN JOHNSON

PEOPLE who know photography revere Andre Kertesz as one of the medium's great practitioners, a modernist innovator whose snapshot aesthetic influenced artists from Henri Cartier-Bresson and Brassai to Robert Frank and Gary Winogrand. But he never achieved the kind of popular name recognition that artists like Cartier-Bresson, Edward Steichen, Walker Evans and Ansel Adams did. Tellingly, his most famous photograph, the austere luminous image of the door and vestibule of Piet Mondrian's studio, is better known for its subject than for who took it.

That Kertesz has not been overexposed is a good thing right now, for that makes his retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Art here that much more wonderfully revelatory. The show was organized by Sarah Greenough, head of the museum's photography department, and it is accompanied by an excellent catalog that provides an unusually illuminating biography of the artist, the first half by Ms. Greenough and the second half by Robert Gurbo, curator of the Andre and Elizabeth Kertesz Foundation.

One reason for Kertesz's relative lack of recognition has to do with style. He did not develop an instantly identifiable photographic template that would turn every situation into another Kertesz. Going through the 116 prints in the exhibition, you may observe something chameleonlike about him: not that he mimicked the styles of others, but in the sense that he adapted photographically to different kinds of worldly realities.

Another of his most widely reproduced pictures is *Satiric Dancer* (1926), the zany surrealistic image of a young woman in a little dress and high heels, kinetically reclining on an oval love seat next to a severely modernist marble sculpture of a torqued male torso on a side table. It looks more like a Man Ray than something the author of *Chez Mondrian* could have made. And that is not to mention the unfortunate series of nudes reflected in distorting mirrors that Kertesz made in 1933, which, though unlike anything else he ever made, are still among his best-known creations.

Many of his pictures capture the incongruities of time and space that are so definitive of the modern metropolitan experience. In the amazing *Meudon* (1928), the view down a narrow street opens up to a high aqueduct, across which charges a locomotive belching smoke. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit with eyes shadowed by his low hat brim approaches carrying a large flat package wrapped in newspaper. In its sinister mystery, it is like something dreamed by de Chirico.

Kertesz's conjunctions of disparate realities can be slyly comical, socially critical and sad all at once: for example, the image from 1928-30 of a man with amputated legs - presumably one of the many disabled World War I veterans who populated European cities at the time - hawking flowers as a young businesswoman with a briefcase hurries down the subway stairs. But Kertesz did not make overtly political or historically topical pictures. That he is not identified with events like the Great Depression or the Spanish Civil War may be another reason he has flown under the radar of popular consciousness.

What distinguishes Kertesz's work is not a particular visual style or signature subject matter, but its emotional resonance. Undoubtedly Kertesz was a great formalist, but in his most persuasive pictures, form is put to the service of feeling. In their catalog introduction, Ms. Greenough and Mr. Gurbo get this just right. Kertesz, they write, sought not the decisive moment when an external action completed an intriguing formal arrangement, but the instant when the world was infused with personal meaning.

They continue: Working more from his heart, he explained, you don't see the things you photograph, you feel them.

Kertesz was an unabashedly sentimental symbolist, and many of his pictures have what seems an almost naive quality. *Lost Cloud* (1937), in which a little cotton puff of a cloud hovers in an otherwise empty sky next to a soaring Empire State Building, is a good example. He made the picture shortly after he and his wife moved to the United States and his new professional opportunities were not working out. In the catalog, Mr. Gurbo notes that Kertesz identified with the little cloud. The photographer once commented that it touched him when he saw it because it didn't know which way to go. It would be a mistake, however, to believe Kertesz's claims to have been only an amateur and to overlook the intensely cultivated sophistication it took to produce pictures of such seemingly naive charm.

Kertesz started taking photographs as a teenager in Budapest, where he was born in 1894, using a cam-

era that made 4.5-by-6-centimeter glass negatives. The eye-straining contact prints on view - most not much bigger than a large postage stamp - have the aura of old-world antiques. Yet these velvety dark-gray cityscapes, landscapes, portraits and outdoor studies of the artist's brother capering about nude also evince the searching eye of someone who, if not born a photographer, was fiercely determined to become one.

The most extraordinary of the works from this period is the 1917 image of a male swimmer underwater, viewed from above. His head is bent down so that his white body appears decapitated even as it seems to streak like a ghost through the pellucid water and the woozy tracery of reflected light.

In 1925 Kertesz moved to Paris to seek his fortune. He changed his name from Andor to Andre and soon penetrated the city's cosmopolitan art world. He depended on other Hungarian artists for professional and social support, but he also met and photographed some of the moment's most glamorous personalities, including Chagall, Colette, Sergei Eisenstein and, of course, Mondrian.

And he made some of the most memorably poetic pictures of Paris ever, including *Clock of the Academie Francaise* (1929), in which the black numerals of an antique clock face are layered over a bird's-eye view of the city. His work was praised by critics and published in the most fashionable magazines.

Buoyed by his success in Paris, Kertesz responded with high hopes to the offer of a job as a fashion photographer in New York, and he and his wife sailed for America in 1936. Unfortunately, the move precipitated a midlife crisis that would last 25 years. His new job did not pan out - he was not an exciting fashion photographer - and other efforts were not warmly embraced. His submissions to *Life* magazine were rejected, and he was not included in *The Family of Man*, the giant landmark photography exhibition that Steichen organized at the Museum of Modern Art in 1955.

While his wife, Erzsebet, built up a business in perfumes, he worked at a decently paid but otherwise thankless job making pictures of celebrity homes for *House & Garden* magazine.

He exhibited and published his personal work here and there, but those occasions were too few and far between to sustain a high-profile career, and Kertesz became a forgotten man. Always thin-skinned and irascible, he watched bitterly from the sidelines as artists like Cartier-Bresson and his fellow Hungarian Brassai - who both, he believed, appropriated his innovations - became famous.

Then, in the early 1960s, the tide turned. Determined to resurrect his career, Kertesz quit his job with *House & Garden* and began a concentrated campaign of self-promotion. Except that he was in his late 60s, his timing could not have been better. A new interest in and a market for fine art photography were burgeoning; John Szarkowski, then head of the Museum of Modern Art's photography department, loved his work and included him in exhibitions.

A new generation of photographers began rediscovering him. By the mid-1970s, he was exhibiting and being lionized all over the world.

The beauty of the story is that Kertesz never stopped making compelling new work. There are images shot from the windows of his 12th-floor apartment overlooking Washington Square that are as formally delicate and poetically captivating as any pictures he ever made.

In an image from 1962, a man in a dark overcoat and hat stands looking at a partly broken park bench. Shot when Kertesz accompanied a friend to visit a young woman in a sanitarium, it is an epiphany of piercing bittersweetness.

Another picture, made in 1980 in the Tuileries Gardens on a visit to Paris, also features an empty park seat, this time a curvy metal armchair bathed in sunlight. Nearby a joyful little girl, perhaps 4 or 5 years old, is caught in the act of running while a dark male figure leaves the picture to the left. Here, knowing that Kertesz's wife of 44 years had died just three years before, you may read the empty chair as a sign of her absence. But it is splashed by sparkling light, the dark figure of grief is leaving the scene and the dancing little girl with the laughing eyes tells us that the artist's creative spirit is still alive.

Near the end of his life - he died in 1985 - Kertesz acquired an SX-70 Polaroid camera and immersed himself in experimenting with it. These last square little pictures are the only color prints in the show. In one, a hand hovers over the knob of a yellow cabinet, hesitating, one can't help thinking, to open the door to an uncertain future. In another, the artist's shadow stretches across the space of a comfortably cluttered room like a spirit not quite ready to leave the material world.

Andre Kertesz is at the National Gallery of Art, on the National Mall between Third and Seventh Streets NW, Washington, (202) 737-4215, through May 15.

Nadar

Baudelaire
1856-58



Sarah Bernhardt
1865



Doré
1854



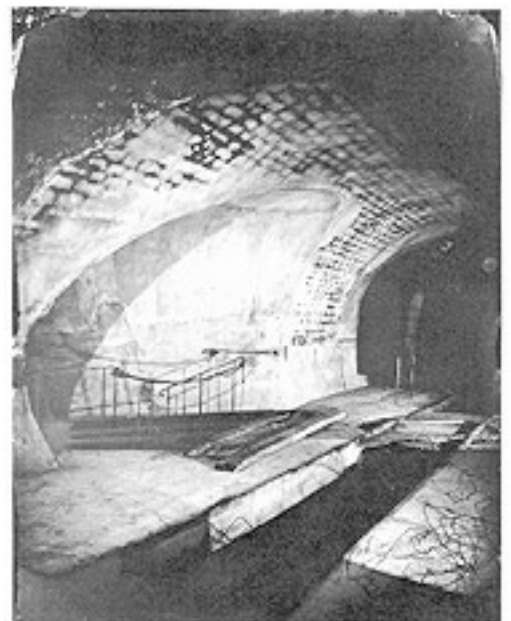
Georges Sand
1877



*The
Catacombs
of Paris*
1861-62



*The Sewers of
Paris,*
1864-65



Atget

*Joueur
d'orgue
(organ
grinder)
1898-99*



*Marchand abat-jours
(lampshade salesman)
1899-1900*



*Ragpicker
1899-1900*



*Rue du Maure
c. 1908*



*Montmartre,
maison de
musette
1923*



*Shop, avenue des
Gobelins
1925*



Stieglitz

*Spring
Showers,
New York
1902*



*Flatiron Building
1903*



*The Steerage
1907*



*From the Back-
Window, "291"
1915*



*Georgia
O'Keeffe
1918*



*Dancing Trees
1922*



Steichen

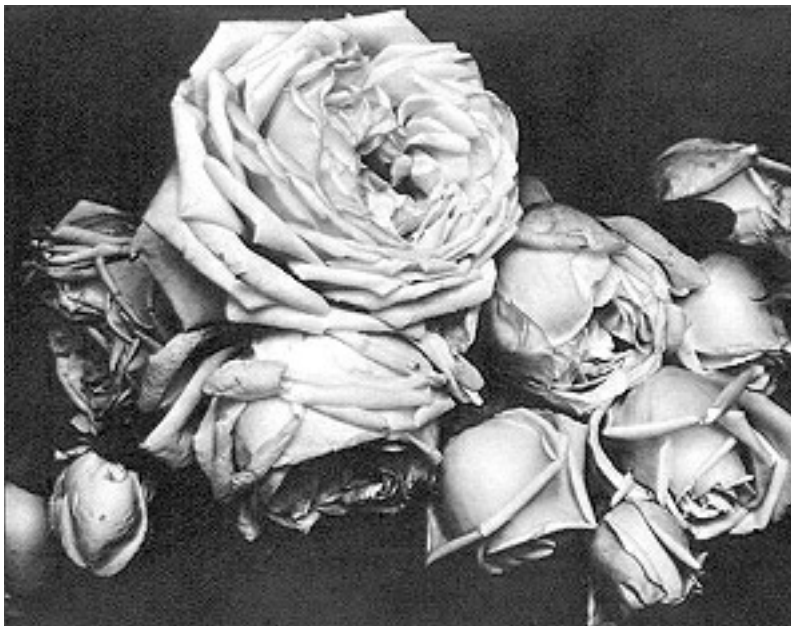
The Flatiron
1905



Portrait of Miss Sawyer
c. 1914



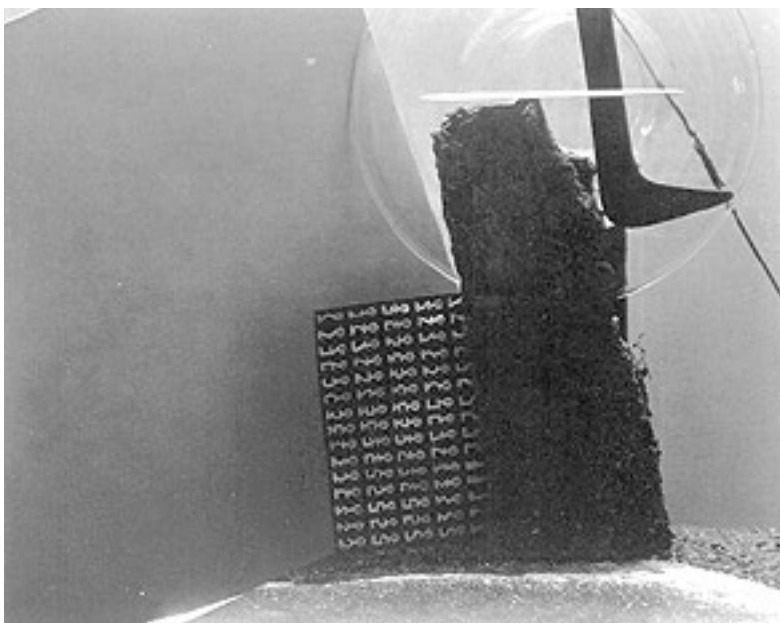
Heavy Roses
1914



Gloria Swanson
1924



Time-Space Continuum
c. 1920



The Maypole
1932



Weston

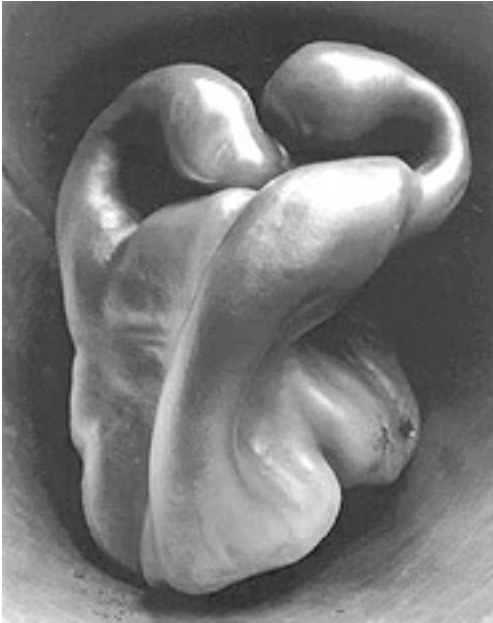


*Excusado
1925*

*Pepper No. 30
1930*



*Shells
1927*



*Grass
Against
Sea
1937*



*St. Roch
Cemetery,
New
Orleans
1941*

*Woodlawn
Plantation,
Louisiana
1941*



Man Ray

Surrealist self-portrait



Portrait with cigarette

Modernist self-portrait



Kiki with mask

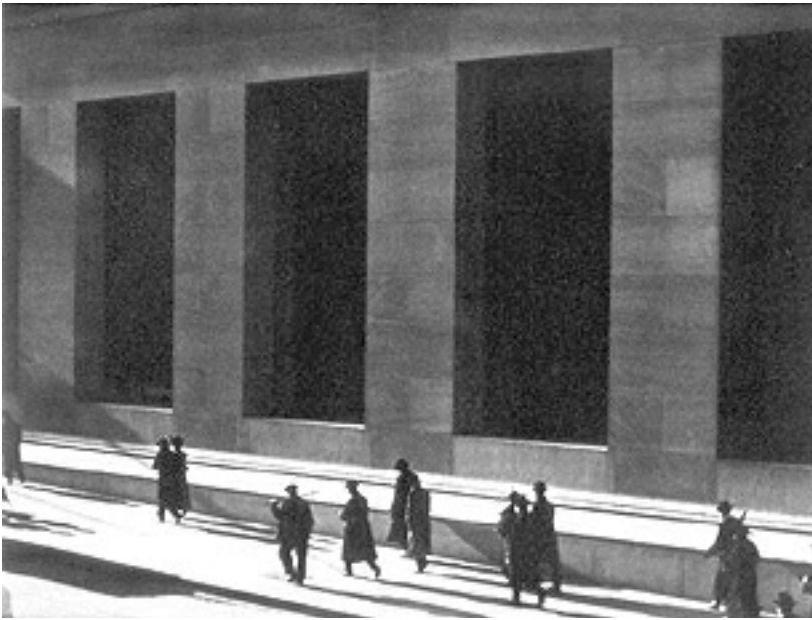


*Rose Selavy
(Marcel
Duchamp)*



Tears

Strand



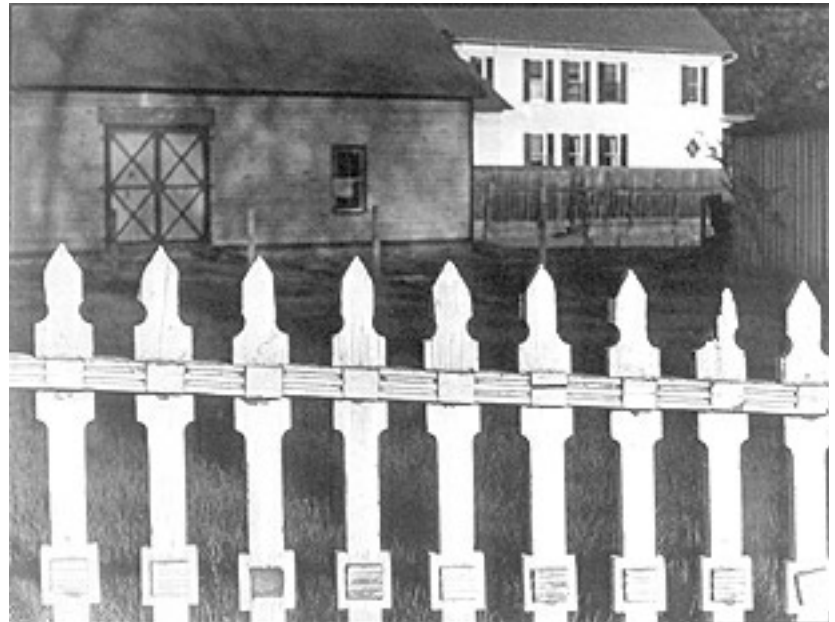
*Wall
Street
1915*



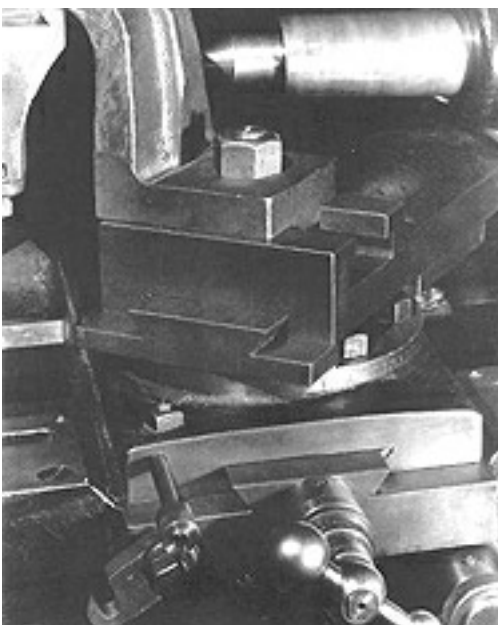
*Blind
1916*



*Portrait,
Washington
Square
Park
1916*



*White
Fence
1916*



*Lathe
No. 3,
Akeley
Shop,
New
York
1923*



*The
Family,
Luzzara,
Italy
1953*

Abbott



*James Joyce
1928*

*El at Columbus
Avenue and
Broadway
c. 1935-39*



*Bread Store, 259
Bleecker Street
c. 1935-39*



*St. Mark's
Church:
Skywriting
Spiral,
East 10th Street
and Second
Avenue
c. 1935-39*



*Court of the
First Model
Tenements in
NYC,
361-365 East
71st Street
c. 1935-39*

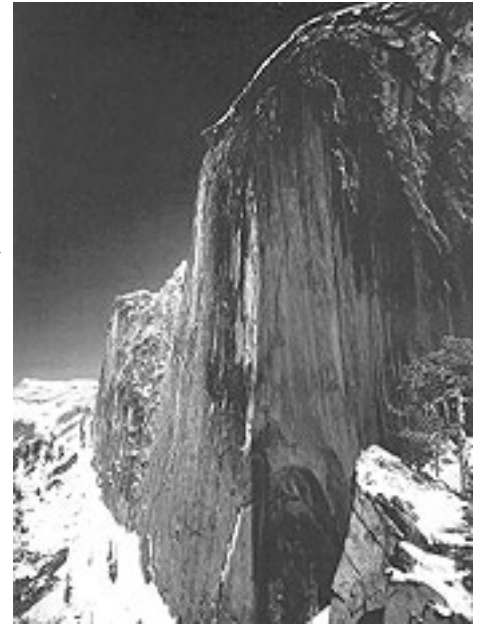


*William Goldberg
c. 1935-39*

**Ansel
Adams**



*Bridal Veil
Fall,
Yosemite
Valley
c. 1927*



*Monolith, The Face of
Half Dome,
Yosemite Valley,
California
c. 1927*



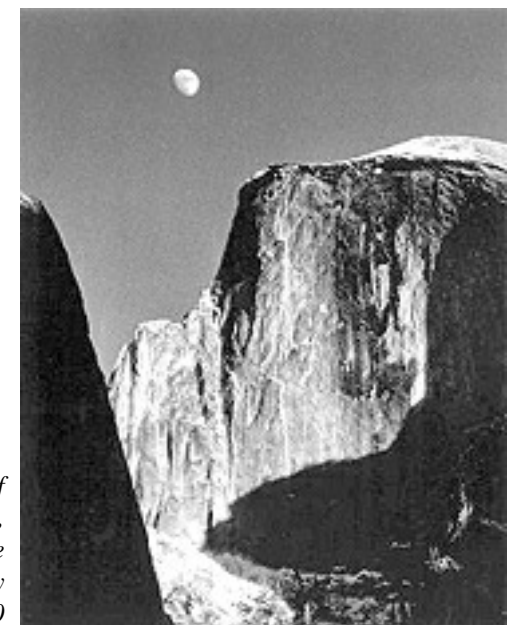
*Clearing
Winter
Storm,
Yosemite
National
Park
c. 1937*



*Oak Tree,
Snowstorm,
Yosemite
National
Park
1948*



*Mount
Williamson -
the Sierra
Nevada,
from
Manzanar,
California
1945*



*Moon and Half
Dome,
Yosemite
Valley
1960*

Kertész

Wandering Violinist, Abony, Hungary 1921



*Displaced
People
1916*



*Meudon, Paris
1928*



*Poughkeepsie,
New York
1937*

*The White Horse,
New York
1962*



*New York
1966*

