THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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ABSTRACT PHOTOGRAPHY OF MANY TYPES TO BE SHOWN AT MUSEUM

"Abstraction in Photography," an exhibition of photographs organized by Edward Steichen, will be on view on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from May 2 through July 4. Mr. Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, has selected 150 photographs, both in color and black and white, by 75 photographers, to illustrate abstract images ranging from the scientific document to contrived arrangements and from mechanical pattern to organic design. The abstract phase exhibited as part of "In and Out of Focus," shown at the Museum in 1948, and in the "Color Photography" exhibition in 1950, is expanded in this survey, in some cases utilizing later work by the same photographers.

The present exhibition follows the Museum's Korean war exhibition, just terminated, with a definite intention of contrasting the reality of sensitive reportorial photography of the impact of war on human beings with the scientist's penetrating camera findings through microscope and telescope, coupled with a record of the work of photographers concerned with evolving another reality by probing into the realm of the abstract.

The historical survey of abstract photography presented begins with Matthew Brady's famous photograph of the silhouette of Richmond's ruins in 1865 and then the chronophotography studies of Marey's made between 1883-1886. Shadowgraph images by Coburn and an abstraction by Strand, published in 1917, shadowgraphs and montages by Schad, 1918, are followed by Man Ray "Rayograms," Moholy-Nagy "Photograms," Stieglitz "Equivalents" and prints by the Westons, Sheeler, Evans, Adams, Steiner, Tina Modotti, Steichen and others who produced abstractions in the 1920s.

In the recent work, which makes up most of this exhibition, there are numerous, purely scientific photographs with resulting incidental abstractions; there are images by photographers interpreting scientific subjects; and there are photographs of a purely inventive intent and

light drawings without resource to camera. These various approaches sometimes overlap and impinge.

The exhibition juxtaposes examples wherein the accidental parallels the intentional. A greatly enlarged scientific photograph of chemical crystals producing an exciting irregular geometric pattern is shown with a picture taken looking up into a radio transmitter tower where the photographer found an unusual geometric pattern in an engineer's design.

A series beginning with a naturalistic color photograph of the parallel tree trunks of a grove of aspens continues the theme of vertical parallels in work by different photographers ending in a completely abstract design.

To supplement this exhibition Mr. Steichen will present a selection of experimental motion picture films, including films by the Whitney Brothers, Douglas Crockwell, Len Lye and Jim Davis. They will be shown in the museum auditorium at a date and evening to be announced later.

The exhibition poses a number of questions about the visible influence of the modern arts on much of even the most precisely realistic
photography, as well as the relationship of modern science and technology to all contemporary art.

Mr. Steichen comments on the exhibition as follows:

"The term 'abstraction' used here in connection with photography is hardly more than a convenient handle with which to tag a wide range of intelligent artful experimentation as well as the significant creative achievements.

"The discipline of an enforced objectivity in laboratory photography is countered by the creative control of selection exercised by the photographer. The aesthetic factor in the scientific photograph is read or imagined into it by the observer. The creative photographer initiates the aesthetic factor.

"A cloud chamber photograph showing disintegration and conversion under bombardment of one hundred million electron volt neutrons from the giant University of California cyclotron and a photograph of a fragment of a wall by Frederick Sommer, both represent a reality and both convey a feeling of immutable force and power that goes beyond the actual facts of the photographs. In the one, this feeling is incidental to facts portrayed; the other originates in the perception and creative ability of a major American artist in photography."

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SURF 1940
    Ansel Adams
1.
    Diana & Allan Arbus
                                      CITY BIRD
2.
    Eugene Atget
                                      SIDE SHOW c. 1900
3.
    Ballistic Research Laboratories, (Spark photograph of a projectile)
4.
      Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.
    Ferenc Berko, Aspen, Col.
                                      (Solarization - two figures)
5.
                                      5 small color transparencies
    Lee Blodget, Berkeley, Cal.
                                       (Dark hole in stone)
6.
     Erwin Blumenfeld
                                       (Abstraction - elongated profile)
7.
       11
               11
                                           11
                                                   - bas-relief nudes)
                                      RUINS OF RICHMOND 1865
    Mathew Brady
8.
                                      (Frost on window)
9.
     Joseph Breitenbach
                11
                                      (Still life with grapes)
10.
    Alexey Brodovitch
                                      BALLET: CHOREATIUM 1935
BALLET: LES NOCES 1935
       11
                                      BALLET: TRICORNE 1935
       20
                39
11.
     Edward Brown
                                      (Circus)
                                      "Il est rare..."
12. Francis Bruguiere
    Harry Callahan, Chicago
                                      (Grasses in snow)
                                      ICE - series of 5
       11
               17
                                       (Lights abstraction in reds & white - color
                                                        " many colors - printon)
       -
               99
                                      10 small color transparencies
                                       JAIPUR OBSERVATORY
14. Henri Cartier-Bresson
           11
                  17
       11
                                                  11
                                       AN EYE ON THE MUSEUM 1947
       11
              11
15. Alvin Langdon Coburn
                                      "Vortograph" 1917
                                      ERUPTING VOLCANO
16. Marjory Collins
    Carlotta M. Corpron, North
                                      FLUID RHYTHM
     Denton, Texas
Carlotta M. Corpron
                                      FLUID LIGHT: WINDS BETWEEN THE WORLDS
    Konrad Cramer, Woodstock, N.Y. SYMPALMOGRAPH
18.
19.
    Ralston Crawford
                                       (String and piece of glass)
                                       (Locomotive wheels - negative)
20. Bernard Davis
                                       3 color transparencies
21.
     James E. Davis, Princeton, N.J.LIGHT REFLECTIONS
                                      8 small color transparencies
    Howard Dearstyne,
      Williamsburg, Va.
    Dow Chemical Co., Midland, Mich. ELECTRON MICROGRAPH SHOWING ZINC OXIDE SMOKE
23.
" " " POLYTETRAFLUORETHYLENE PARTICLES Mag. 50,000x
24. Edward H. Dwight, Cincinnati (Factory window - #2)
25. P. Dyer, A. Gattiker & C. F. Powell AN "ATOMIC EXPLOSION"
       University of Bristol
26. Charles Eames, Venice, Cal.
27. Harold E. Edgerton, M. I. T.
                                       (Rocks - negative)
                                       CRACKING GLASS
     Martin Elkort
                                       2 small transparencies - color
28.
     Walker Evans (Fortune)
                                       (Painted hand on fence)
29.
       11
               11
                                       (Gas) 1929
        11
               11
                                        (Demolition of Fulton Fish Market)
        11
               11
                                       (Red Barn)
     Thomas J. Farkas, Sao Paulo,
                                       (Rushing water)
       Brazil
     Louis Faurer
                                       (Black automobiles)
32. Robert Frank
                                       (Folding chair)
33.
                                       (Merry-go-round horses' heads)
     Charles Gellis
     Edward Gollob, Philadelphia
34.
                                       (Solarized landscape)
     William Grigsby
                                        Shells in sand)
                                        (Ice on rock)
36.
    Thomas Guarino
                                       (Crackled paint)
                                       DIATOMS Microphotograph
     Pat Harris, San Francisco
38.
     Fritz Henle
                                       (New York lights)
     A. von Hippel & H. F. Merrill, LICHTENBERG FIGURE
39.
        M. I. T.
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2 color transparencies
   Yuichi Idaka, Chicago
40.
41. Herbert R. Isenburger, St. John AVIATION SPARK PLUG INSULATORS
      X-ray Laboratory, Califon, N.J.
    Herbert R. Isenburger
                                     GAMMA RAY PHOTOGRAPH
42. Lotte Jacobi
                                   (Abstraction)
                                   (Light filtering through boards) (color)
   Andrew Karabet
43.
44.
    Erich Kastan
                                   (Plastic abstraction)
45. Gyorgy Kepes
                                   (Abstraction)
      11
            11
                                         17
   Jeannette Klute, Rochester
                                   DERIVATION (Apple & pear) (color)
46.
                                               (Orange, avocado & banana) (color)
   John B. Kuiper, Chicago
                                   (Verticals & white circles)
47.
48. Arthur Lavine
                                   4 color transparencies
49. Gita Lenz
                                   (Door handle & cracked glass)
50. Richard Litwin
                                   (Reflections: 5th Avenue at 49th Street)
51. George Platt Lynes
                                   (Sepia tone abstraction)
52. R. C. Lucas (Sculptor)
                                   From a series: STUDIES OF EXPRESSION 1865
      Lent by George Eastman House, Rochester
53.
    Jack Manning
                                    5 color transparencies
54. E. J. Marey
                                   CHRONOPHOTOGRAPHY - ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENT 1883-86
                                   a. MOVEMENTS OF LIQUID
                                   b. REPEATED IMAGES OF BIRD IN FLIGHT
                                   c. LIGHT TRACING FLIGHT OF BIRD
                                   d. IMAGES OF RUNNER REDUCED TO A SYSTEM OF BRIGHT
                                   e. FENCING
                                                                           LINES
                                   f. STRIKING WITH CANE
   W. M. Massey, Jasper, Ala.
                                   (Fire escapes)
    Leo C. Massopust, Milwaukee, Wis. HYDROQUININE CRYSTALS
     19 11
                          17
                                   SALICYLIC ACID & CALCIUM CARBONATE
                          **
                                   POTASSIUM DICHROMATE CRYSTALS
     11 11
                          11
                                   SALICYLIC ACID
    Sol Mednick
                                   (Black & grey abstraction)
                                   (Photogram - industrial) (Ochre & black)
58. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy
                                   BERLIN WIRELESS TOWER 1928
                                   PHOTOGRAM
59. George Montgomery, Boston, Mass(Splash on pavement)
                                   LIGHT DRAWING 1940
60. Barbara Morgan
    Laszlo Moholy-Nagy
                                    (Design in colored plastics) (color)
61. National Advisory Committee for
                                     End-section view of model airfoil installation
     Aeronautics, Official Test Photographs
62. Naval Ordnance Testing Station MODEL TORPEDO ENTERING WATER
63. Fritz Neugass
                                   LOOKING UP INTO RADIO TRANSMITTER TOWER
    Isamu Noguchi, (Portfolio)
                                   JAIPUR OBSERVATORY
65. Alan Palmer, San Francisco
                                   (Corrugated glass) (color)
                                   6 small color transparencies
                                   (Iron rail & shadow)
    Sally Perls
67. Edison Pettit, Yerkes Observa- SOLAR PROMINENCE Height of prominence: 280,000
      tory, Univ. of Chicago
68.
    Eliet Porter, Santa Fe, N.M.
                                    (Birch logs and leaves) (color)
                                   (Rocks with lichen) (color)
ARCTIC TERN
                    11
                    11 11
                            11 11
            17
                    11
                       12 91 11
                                   ASPENS
    Dr. Wilson Powell, University Cloud chamber photograph - University of Califor-
      of California
                                     nia cyclotron
                                   TORSO 1923
70. Man Ray
                                   RAYOGRAPH 1922
     11
71. Ben Rose
                                    (Dancer)
                                    (Wires)
                                   BLUE PRINT PHOTOGRAM FOR MURAL DECORATION
72. Rauschenberg-Weil
73. Arnold Sadow
                                    (Verticals and dots)
74. Ralph Samuels
                                   EARTH PATTERNS
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(Scrap of paper on white)

75. H. Sapiro

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Microphotograph
                                          SCALES OF BODY OF SPHINX (Lepidoptera)
77. Christian Schad
                                          "SCHADOGRAPH" 1918
78. Xanti Schawinsky
                                          (Lights abstraction)
                                          THEME AND VARIATIONS ON A FACE (Walter Gropius)
79. Harry Schulke, Breckersville, (Face in corrugated glass)
      Ohio
go. Robert Sheehan
                                          (Paint on door) (color)
        11 12
11 11
                                          (Electric bulbs on sign) (color)
                                          8 small transparencies (color)
                                         THE OPEN DOOR, DOYLESTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 1915
UNITED NATIONS BUILDING
BEECH BARK
81. Charles Sheeler
      77 11
11 11
82. Irene Shwachman

83. Arthur Siegel, Chicago

"""

(Girl & superimposures) (color)

(Wavy colored lines) (color)

84. Edward Silverman

(Samall color transparencies)

84. Edward Silverman
84. Edward Silverman
85. Stephen Singer
86. Aaron Siskind
                                        3 color transparencies
Black and white transparency
                                          (Rocks)
(Peeling paint)
        11
        11
                11
                                          (Painted metal)
       yril S. Smith, Photomicrograph: COPPER-SILICON ALLOY WITH KAPPA
American Brass Company
BANDS
COLOR IN SPACE 1949
87. Cyril S. Smith,
88. Henry Holmes Smith,
       Bloomington, Ind.
     Henry Holmes Smith
                       er, Prescott, VALISE d'ADAM

" Ariz. CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE BLOOD

" " RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

" ONDINE
                                          GIANT
89. Frederick Sommer, Prescott,
                   11
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          11
                              " " BEATRO SALTADOR ALEGRE
" " THE WALL
TIME_SPACE CONTINUUM
          11
                    11
          11
                   11
90. Edward Steichen
91. Ralph Steiner
92. Alfred Stieglitz
                                           TIME-SPACE CONTINUUM 1919 (color)
                                         LEXINGTON AVENUE 1924
                                         EQUIVALENT 29.50
                                                            31.50
        11
                   11
                                                11
                                                           36.50
        11
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                                                            46.50
        11
                                                            47.50
        11
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                                                            50.50
                                           ABSTRACTION 1917
93. Paul Strand
                                         MOTION PICTURE CAMERA 1923
94. V. & K. Telberg
                                          CATACLYSM
95. Union Carbide and Carbon Research COBALT-BASE ALLOY Magnification: 1,000 Laboratories, Inc. Niagra Falls, Diameters (color)
        N.Y.
96. Roman Vishniac
                                            (Protazoa)
        11
                                            Action of one strong acid and a base on each oth
                                            (Dirt and soap)
                                           WOOD EROSION (1936)
97. Brett Weston
98. Edward Weston
                                           PEPPER 1930
                                           ERODED SANDSTONE 1936
99. J. Winkler, Palmer Observatory, Typical photograph of air jet, flowing upwards
       Princeton, New Jersey
100. William Witt
                                            (Ice)
101. Rose Wolfe
                                            (Glass abstraction)
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103. Yerkes Observatory, University THE MILKY WAY IN SCUTUM, SERPENS & SAGITTARIUS of Chicago

102. ----

X-RAY PHOTOGRAPH OF MAN USING ELECTRIC RAZOR