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 com­
pletely 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 in­
fluence of the modern arts on much of even the most precisely realistic
photography, as well as the relationship of modern science and tech­
nology 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 artistful 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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<td>FLUID LIGHT: WINDS BETWEEN THE WORLDS</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(String and piece of glass)</td>
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<td>(Locomotive wheels - negative)</td>
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<td>Howard Dearstyne,</td>
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<td>ELECTRON MICROGRAPH SHOWING ZINC OXIDE SMOKE</td>
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<td>Mich.</td>
<td>POLYTETRAFLUORETHYLENE PARTICLES Mag. 50,000x</td>
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<td>Edward H. Deitch, Cincinnati</td>
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<td>P. Dyer, A. Gattiker &amp; C.</td>
<td>AN &quot;ATOMIC EXPLOSION&quot;</td>
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<td>F. Powell</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
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<td>Walker Evans (Fortune)</td>
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<td>(Demolition of Fulton Fish Market)</td>
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<td>Robert Frank</td>
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<td>Charles Gallis</td>
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<td>Edward Gollob, Philadelphia</td>
<td>(Solarized landscape)</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>William Grigsby</td>
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<td>(Ice on rock)</td>
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<td>Pat Harris, San Francisco</td>
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<td>A. von Hippel &amp; H. F. Merrill,</td>
<td>LIGHTENBEBG FIGURE</td>
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<td>M. I. T.</td>
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2 color transparencies
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

Light filtering through boards (color)

44. Erich Kastan

Plastic abstraction

46. Jeannette Klute, Rochester

DERIVATION (Apple & pear) (color)

47. John B. Kuiper, Chicago

(Orange, avocado & banana) (color)

48. Arthur Levine

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 LINES
e. FENCING
f. STRIKING WITH CANE

55. W. M. Massey, Jasper, Ala.
HYDROQUININE CRYSTALS

56. Leo C. Massopust, Milwaukee, Wis.
SALICYLIC ACID & CALCIUM CARBONATE

57. Sol Mednick

(Black & grey abstraction)

58. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy

BERLIN WIRELESS TOWER 1928

59. George Montgomery, Boston, Mass (Splash on pavement)

60. Barbara Morgan

LIGHT DRAWING 1940

61. National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Official Test Photographs

62. Naval Ordnance Testing Station MODEL TORPEDO ENTERING WATER

63. Fritz Neugass

LOOKING UP INTO RADIO TRANSMITTER TOWER

64. Isamu Noguchi, (Portfolio)

JAIPUR OBSERVATORY

65. Alan Palmer, San Francisco

(Corrugated glass) (color)

66. Sally Perls

6 small color transparencies

67. Edison Pettit, Yerkes Observatory, Univ. of Chicago

SOLAR PROMINENCE Height of prominence: 280,000 miles

68. Ellet Porter, Santa Fe, N.M.

(Birch logs and leaves) (color)

69. Dr. Wilson Powell, University of California

Cloud chamber photograph - University of California cyclotron

70. Man Ray

TORSO 1923

71. Ben Rose

RAYOGRAPH 1922

(Dancer)

72. Nauschenberg-Weil

(Wire)

73. Arnold Sadow

BLUE PRINT PHOTOGRAM FOR MURAL DECORATION

74. Ralph Samuels

(Verticals and dots)

75. H. Sapiro

EARTH PATTERNS

(Scrap of paper on white)
76. ------ Microphotograph  
77. Christian Schad  
78. Xanti Schawinsky  
79. Harry Schulke, Breckersville, Ohio  
80. Robert Sheehan  
81. Charles Sheeler  
82. Irene Shwachman  
83. Arthur Siegel, Chicago  
84. Edward Silverman  
85. Stephen Singer  
86. Aaron Siskind  
87. Cyril S. Smith, American Brass Company  
88. Henry Holmes Smith, Bloomington, Ind.  
89. Frederick Sommer, Prescott, Ariz.  
90. Edward Steichen  
91. Ralph Steiner  
92. Alfred Stieglitz  
93. Paul Strand  
94. V. & K. Talberg  
95. Union Carbide and Carbon Research Laboratories, Inc., Niagara Falls, Diameters (color)  
96. Roman Vishniac  
97. Brett Weston  
98. Edward Weston  
99. J. Winkler, Palmer Observatory, Typical photograph of air jet, flowing upwards  
100. William Witt  
101. Rose Wolfe  
102. ------  
103. Yerkes Observatory, University The Milky Way in Scutum, Serpents & Sagittarius of Chicago

- SCALES OF BODY OF SPHINX (Lepidoptera)  
- "SCHADOGRAPH" 1918 (Lights abstraction)  
- THEME AND VARIATIONS ON A FACE (Walter Gropius) (Face in corrugated glass)  
- (Paint on door) (color)  
- (Electric bulbs on sign) (color)  
- 8 small transparencies (color)  
- THE OPEN DOOR, DOYLESTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 1915  
- UNITED NATIONS BUILDING BEECH BARK  
- 2 small color transparencies  
- (Girl & superimposures) (color)  
- (Wavy colored lines) (color)  
- 8 small color transparencies  
- 3 color transparencies  
- Black and white transparency  
- (Rocks)  
- (Peeling paint)  
- (Painted metal)  
- Photomicrograph: COPPER-SILICON ALLOY WITH KAPPA BANDS  
- COLOR IN SPACE 1949  
- GIANT  
- VALISE D'ADAM  
- CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE BLOOD  
- RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL  
- ONDINE  
- BEATRO SALTADOR ALEGRE  
- THE WALL  
- TIME-SPACE CONTINUUM 1919 (color)  
- LEXINGTON AVENUE 1924  
- EQUIVALENT 29.50  
- 31.50  
- 36.50  
- 44.50  
- 45.50  
- 46.50  
- 47.50  
- 50.50  
- ABSTRACTION 1917  
- MOTION PICTURE CAMERA 1923  
- CATAclySM  
- COBALT-BASE ALLOY Magnification: 1,000 (Protazoa)  
- (Action of one strong acid and a base on each other)  
- (Dirt and soap)  
- WOOD EROSION (1936)  
- PEPPER 1930  
- ERODED SANDSTONE 1936  
- Typical photograph of air jet, flowing upwards (Ice)  
- (Glass abstraction)  
- X-RAY PHOTOGRAPH OF MAN USING ELECTRIC RAZOR  
- THE MILKY WAY IN SCUTUM, SERPENS & SAGITTARIUS