

ALFRED STIEGLITZ AND THE EQUIVALENT

Reinventing the Nature of Photography

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Exhibition and catalogue prepared by
Daniell Cornell

Yale University Art Gallery
September 3 – November 28, 1999

ISBN 0-89467-084-0

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front cover: Alfred Stieglitz

Equivalent 177A, 1930 (cat. no. 31)

back cover: Emmet Gowin, *Weapons Disposal Site*,

Tooele Army Depot, Tooele, Utah, 1991 (cat. no. 13)

Foreword

One of the great pleasures of directing a university museum is the opportunity to support talented young scholars and curators who are beginning their professional careers through programs such as the Art Gallery's Florence B. Selden Fellowship. While she was alive and fully engaged with this institution, Ms. Selden actively supported the department of prints, drawings, and photographs, both intellectually and financially, through a series of student-organized exhibitions. A generous bequest from Ms. Selden established a curatorial fellowship in 1995 that now perpetuates her interests in art and scholarship. It allows the kind of direct engagement with extraordinary art objects in the museum's collection that Ms. Selden delighted to encourage and wished to continue.

Daniell Cornell, the present Selden Fellow, has organized all aspects of this exhibition and its catalogue. He came to Yale last summer at the same time that I arrived on campus to begin directing the Gallery. It seemed serendipitous that Cornell shared my keen interest in modern and contemporary art, and he quickly involved me in his research and thinking as he began delving through the Gallery's photography collection in the office next to mine. I have taken special pleasure in working with him and in seeing him adopt an outstanding mentor in Richard S. Field, curator of prints, drawings, and photographs, who has overseen our Selden Fellow with great rigor and encouragement.

This exhibition takes advantage of Yale University's distinctive position as one of the world's finest teaching institutions. It brings together the vast research holdings

and a commitment to intellectual inquiry for which the university is renowned. After spending a number of months in our midst, it was Mr. Cornell's idea to combine the remarkable *Equivalent* photographs in the Stieglitz-O'Keeffe archive at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, with images selected from the Art Gallery's rich permanent photography collection, to create a revisionary look at a familiar photographic tradition. The Art Gallery owes a special thanks to Ralph Franklin, the director of the Beinecke, and his wonderful staff, for the generous loans and collegial cooperation that have supported Cornell's research and this exhibition. The quality of the Stieglitz *Equivalent* photographs alone would form the basis for a beautiful display, yet their placement within a theoretical framework, and in physical juxtaposition with other images, sheds new light on the history of photography. Cornell has worked diligently to provide us all with an opportunity for considered and imaginative thought.

As the exhibition demonstrates, it was during the 1920s that Alfred Stieglitz realized his lifelong ambition to create photographs that participated in the avant-garde experiments of other twentieth-century artists, of whom he had been such a tireless champion. In the images that he called *Equivalents*, the great photographic pioneer experimented with creating abstract fields of light and dark that his camera and darkroom techniques made possible. Thereafter, the photographic transformation of events recorded from the natural world into abstract images became one of the twentieth-century's most vital visual

traditions. This exhibition traces that tradition from Stieglitz's early innovations to the creative achievements of our time, surveying the work of numerous photographers who have continued to work within a conceptual framework that is still stimulating unique visual expressions loaded with tantalizingly elusive human emotions.

It is a tribute to Alfred Stieglitz that his photographs continue to speak so powerfully to contemporary viewers.

The range of work represented here also points to a continued visual engagement with the natural world that has made photography one of the most vital areas of interest to museum audiences, scholars, and young artists. Those attending the exhibition and reading this catalogue will find many reasons, both visual and intellectual, to revisit the compelling photographs and ideas represented here. It is my hope that they will have the pleasure of doing so often.

Jock Reynolds
Henry J. Heinz II Director

Acknowledgments

In realizing this exhibition, I feel privileged to have had the support of Jock Reynolds, Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Yale University Art Gallery. His confidence and trust in my abilities allowed me to theorize about these photographs within a context that reflects the philosophic interests animating my own study of art history. I owe a debt as large to Richard S. Field, curator of prints, drawings, and photographs, whose mentoring throughout this project has provided the kind of incisive and informed thinking that I had hoped to find within an intellectual community such as Yale University. His carefully considered reading of earlier drafts gives the current essay its clarity. It is to him, also, that I owe the privilege of being the current Florence B. Selden Fellow in prints, drawings, and photographs, an endowed position which has made much of the funding for this exhibition and catalogue possible.

My approach to photography evinces the genuine and amiable critical discussions with Carol Armstrong, professor of art history at the City University of New York Graduate Center, that have served to deepen the passion I feel for visual analysis. Early in the essay's formation, it was a pleasure to think through the issues of the catalogue with Nanette Salomon, associate professor of art history at the College of Staten Island. Lisa Hodermarsky, assistant curator of prints, drawings, and photographs at the Art Gallery, has been tireless in shepherding me through the many details required in organizing an exhibition, and her sagacious reading of numerous essay drafts has aided me immeasurably. Barbara Folsom's trenchant editing gives the essay its focused and fluid prose.

And, as always, Rudy Rodriguez graciously supported me in the ineffable ways that only the Equivalent can capture.

I am particularly grateful to Patricia C. Willis, Elizabeth Wakeman Dwight Curator of American Literature at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, who enthusiastically supported the idea behind this exhibition and expedited the loan of the Alfred Stieglitz *Equivalent* photographs. Also, Ellen R. Cordes, Maureen Heher, and Gisela B. Noack, all at the Beinecke Library, facilitated with tremendous good will and patience the many requests necessary in preparing Stieglitz's photographs for display. In addition, Sol and Carol LeWitt, with the help of Janet Passehl, graciously accommodated a request for the loan of Sol's photograph, which contributes importantly to the theoretical concept framing the exhibition.

Sloan Wilson produced the elegant design of both the exhibition and catalogue. Here at the Art Gallery, Diana Brownell's consummate matting and framing skills, combined with her perceptive understanding of the exhibition's premise, insured that every photograph would be seen to its optimum advantage. Lynne Addison, Associate Registrar, efficiently oversaw all the loan logistics. Burrus Harlow, Peter Cohen, Clark Crolius, Christopher Mir, David Norris, Kris Sabatelli, and Nancy Valley masterfully installed the entire exhibition. Finally, I am especially pleased to be able to use new frames designed specifically for the Art Gallery's photographic collection, which have been made possible by the Mr. and Mrs. George R. Rowland, B.A. 1933, Fund.

Daniell Cornell
Florence B. Selden Fellow



Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 155B*, ca. 1924–26 (cat. no. 24)

Alfred Stieglitz and the Equivalent

Reinventing the Nature of Photography

Daniell Cornell

I know that there is more of the really abstract in some “representation” than in most of the dead representations of the so called abstract so fashionable now. — Alfred Stieglitz¹

During the course of nine years, from 1922 to 1931, American photographer and New York gallery director Alfred Stieglitz took over four hundred pictures of the sky and clouds.² Experimenting with a Graflex single-lens-reflex camera, he made small, carefully crafted images that were literally visual segments cut out of the skies.³ By emphasizing the abstract fields of light and dark through these black-and-white images, Stieglitz explored the possibilities inherent in photography to create a modern art that would be abstract rather than illusionistically descriptive. He called the earliest of these works *Music* and *Songs of the Sky*, but soon came to prefer the term *Equivalents*⁴ (cat. nos. 22–33). Although it would be inaccurate to attribute the invention of photographic abstraction to Stieglitz alone, his particular notion of it developed through the *Equivalents* has been a central force in shaping one of the major innovations of American photographic practice.

This exhibition traces the course of the Equivalent in the history of ideas that have contributed to the definition of photography in twentieth-century America.⁵ It considers the Equivalent as a photographic mode or genre in order to highlight one arena where the early debates concerning abstraction and reference were developed both practically and theoretically. The Equivalent represents an aesthetic approach that brings together seemingly opposite elements: sharp-focused description and abstraction, objectivity and personal expression. As will be seen, the artists represented in this exhibition vary considerably in their application of these elements, but their work is clearly linked by their common interest in them. The exhibition takes Stieglitz’s *Equivalents*, begun in 1922 and shown in the “Seven Americans” exhibition at the Anderson Galleries in 1925, as its starting point because they represent a defining moment for the notion of the photographic Equivalent.⁶

Stieglitz and Symbolism

Alfred Stieglitz began his career by producing photographs in a style known as pictorialism (fig. 2, *Fifth Avenue, Winter*). Its adherents, primarily organized in a loose association called The Linked Ring in England, assumed that photography shared an aesthetic with the other fine arts, notably painting. Almost from the beginning of its history, photography engendered a debate over the relative value of the medium for documentary versus artistic purposes. As early as 1843 daguerreotypists were being encouraged to use a large lens opening for portraits of persons with wrinkled skin in order to obtain the soft focus characteristic of more flattering portraits by painters.⁷ The invention of combination printing (the use of more than one negative to produce a single print) in the 1850s fueled the debate by giving photographers who desired to emulate painterly effects the ability to manipulate the appearance of reality. At stake, then, was the role of manipulation evident in the photographic image itself, and pictorialists set out explicitly to make images that would have the gestural feel of painting. If photography was to be an art worthy of a status similar to painting, they argued, it must evince the creative hand of artistic intervention.

In place of realistic transcriptions of the world, pictorialists sought to use the camera to record personal feelings and responses. They often attempted to create “evocative and mysterious” images

through the use of simplified arrangements that stressed composition and a soft focus to allow for the play of visual imagination.⁸ In these ways, pictorialism shared in the late-nineteenth-century symbolist aesthetic that sought to evoke subjective experience through form and color (tone, in the case of photography) instead of subject matter alone. Rather than concerning themselves with the exterior world’s visual appearance, which had preoccupied their realist and impressionist predecessors, Symbolist artists focused on interior experience, on emotional states and feelings.⁹ Although still wedded to subject matter, especially the symbolic associations and allegories of narrative, Symbolists did not present those subjects through conventional means.¹⁰ Their work relied on a vocabulary that communicated the affective experience of narratives rather than the allegorical and moral meanings inherent in an illusionistic depiction of them. They used themes more allusively, their depictions serving as the armature for forms and colors, which they assumed were the actual carriers of more intangible qualities that resided in the mysterious realms of spirit and soul.

Symbolists also explored the instability and danger represented by the passionate but repressed side of human motivation and behavior to which the surface descriptions of realism and impressionism gave little attention. To this end, their work relied



fig. 1. Charles Dulac, French, 1865–1898
Le Vent (Terrasse de Vézelay), 1894
Lithograph in green and black on chine collé
Everett V. Meeks, B.A. 1901, Fund. 1991.47.1



fig. 2. Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
Fifth Avenue, Winter, 1896. Photogravure
A. Conger Goodyear, B.A. 1896, Fund. 1976.58

on a visual vocabulary that emphasized the expressive, both in content and form. An image like Charles Dulac's *Le Vent (Terrasse de Vézelay)*, 1894 (fig. 1), is not meant to be a record of a specific place despite the location stated in its title. The lithograph is the fourth in a series of nine images intended to express the mystery and passion of a liturgical text entitled *Cantique des Créatures*. It accompanies the words “spiritus sancte deus.”

However, Dulac's lithograph does more than illustrate a sacred text. It evokes the emotional feelings stirred by the music itself through a symbolic correspondence. In the image, the solitary form of a tree rises in dark silhouette from an even darker shadowed hilltop that is rendered as a mass of black ink. The sky is a confused sea of swirling marks, suggesting tumultuous clouds that may also contain celestial figures caught up in the melange of forms. The emptiness of the terrace steps that mount the hill adds to the feeling of mystery and anticipation. The only light in the print emerges in high contrast from behind the bulk of hill and tree at the center of the composition and seems to be the source of all the energetic activity of nature in the scene. A limited palette of olive green and black, so characteristic of many Symbolist images, creates a dark, murky landscape that serves as a metaphor for the psyche with its forgotten memories, shadowy past, and repressed desires. Through a deeply felt correspondence

between natural forces and internal sensory experience, Dulac communicates the experience of a religious state.¹¹

It is within such a Symbolist aesthetic that Stieglitz's earliest photographs belong. Dulac's lithograph also suggests the kind of artistic conventions that he and the other pictorialists had in mind when they sought to reproduce painterly effects through photographic means. Although it depicts an urban scene rather than a landscape, Stieglitz's early photograph *Fifth Avenue, Winter*, 1896 (fig. 2), represents attitudes toward nature as a symbolic realm that are reminiscent of Dulac's image. In his photograph Stieglitz captures the emotional intensity of the driver struggling with his coach and horses against the natural forces imposed by a blinding snowstorm. But Stieglitz's purpose is more expressive than merely an accurate description of the effect that inclement weather has on the city's streets. The snow gives the image a blurred quality that both conveys the atmospheric effect and feels painterly. Stieglitz uses white in his photograph in a manner comparable to Dulac's use of black. Whiteness dominates the image and threatens to overwhelm the scene. It evokes the subjective emotional state of apprehension and oppression that is associated with winter. In addition, the scene corresponds to Stieglitz's own experience as he was struggling to take the photograph. "My picture," he wrote, "is the result of a three hours' stand during a fierce snow-storm on February 22nd,

1893, awaiting the proper moment."¹² The viewer can imagine him in a heavy overcoat contending with his camera equipment in the middle of the street, much as the dark shape of the pictured driver struggles against the elements.¹³

Seeing Stieglitz's pictorialist photograph of Fifth Avenue in light of Symbolist conventions suggests how closely aligned those two movements were in their aesthetic aims. It also provides one explanation for why Stieglitz found photography to be congruent with the expressive conventions of Post-Impressionism, an important point to make in light of this exhibition of Stieglitz's later photographs from 1922–31. Analyzing his photography in the context of Symbolism suggests an important rationale, found early in Stieglitz's own history, for his interest in recording personal feelings and responses. The *Equivalents*, these highly resonant photographs of clouds and sky, demonstrate the durability of Stieglitz's concerns from his Symbolist beginnings. At the same time, they contribute to a new aesthetic already at work in twentieth-century American photography.

Historical Models for the Equivalent

In the 1920s, Stieglitz reinvented the conventions of symbolic meaning that had preoccupied his earlier photographs by adapting a visual vocabulary from the European avant-garde. Doris Bry discusses

the importance of his personal experiences in the development of that vocabulary. Her biography of Stieglitz identifies five photographic projects of this period all of which are basically related by their shared experimentation with the possibilities of abstraction: “the O’Keeffe portrait; the clouds (*Equivalents*); the Lake George prints; the large portraits; and the large New York prints.”¹⁴ Bry goes on to write: “The Stieglitz photographs of these later years are basically one thing said many ways. Prints of the clouds, landscapes, friends, are closely akin to each other. Their nature is determined more by his feelings at a particular time than by their subject matter.”¹⁵ Bry’s commentary places Stieglitz’s works of the 1920s within the context of avant-garde debates over the role of photography in artistic representation.

Stieglitz himself wrote, in a 1923 article “How I Came to Photograph Clouds,” that his *Equivalents* were not so much about subject matter as they were a summary of his philosophy and all his previous photographic experience:

*I wanted to photograph clouds to find out what I had learned in 40 years about photography. Through clouds to put down my philosophy of life—to show that my photographs were not due to subject matter—not to special trees, or faces, or interiors, to special privileges—clouds were there for everyone.*¹⁶

Thus Stieglitz saw his *Equivalents* as referring back to his earliest photographic interests and at the same

time demonstrating the power of photography itself as an artistic medium. He goes on in the same essay to underscore his emphasis on the medium: “My aim is increasingly to make my photographs look so much like photographs that unless one has *eyes* and *sees*, they won’t be seen.”¹⁷ Stieglitz eventually came to see the *Equivalent* as a photographic mode that extended beyond his own subject matter of clouds and sky to all of art.¹⁸ However, there is much to learn from examining how he understood the photographs to which he actually gave the title of *Equivalent*. They provide, as F. Richard Thomas argues, Stieglitz’s “best rendering of the subjective feelings through the presentation of the objective world.”¹⁹

In Stieglitz’s *Equivalent 155B*, ca. 1924–26 (cat. no. 24), the tempestuously cloudy sky dramatically fills nearly the entire image with an impressive mass of black contoured by brilliant white. The viewer’s orientation, visually higher than is customary in a landscape view, is provided by the evidence of a slip of hill at the bottom edge of the frame. Stieglitz photographs a piece of the world objectively, and yet viewers of this photograph are more likely to be drawn into the subjective feelings of its effects than into an objective understanding of its descriptive recording of a specific place. Even within the small 4 x 5-inch format, it is difficult to escape the sense of power in the gathering of natural forces the image captures. In spite of the knowledge that

this is a depiction of Stieglitz's beloved Lake George region, the image does not feel like it belongs to the genre of landscape. By adopting a vantage point that seems unnaturally high, Stieglitz insistently denied the beholder's position, established through a centuries-long history of Western landscape painting that championed a horizon line. Instead, he created a viewing experience that emphasizes the feelings evoked by the sense of an impending change, which the clouds forecast.

As numerous critics have suggested, Stieglitz used the representational capacity of the photographic medium in order to explore and express his inner thoughts and feelings. He found correspondences between images from the sensate, external world and his more intangible, personal experiences. It would be a mistake to assume that such expressions were analogues for literal feelings that can be easily named. Rather, they insinuate the more nebulous experiences that shape the realm of emotion and feeling itself, giving tangible form to what would otherwise remain ineffable. The inner experiences of viewers that these mood-filled photographs evoke are some of the most psychologically complex because they exist at the threshold of conscious and unconscious perception. Viewers recognize a connection between their own interior states, such as happiness or anxiety, and the experiences generated by these visceral images. However, it is not these specific connections that convince viewers to read these images as ana-

logues of their own experience. Instead, the *Equivalent*s make palpable the realization that such connections exist, and that they lie just beyond the reach of conventional modes of representation. As a result, Elizabeth Kornhauser suggests that these images are "simultaneously abstract and representational."²⁰

Similarly, in her catalogue essay for a retrospective at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., Sarah Greenough explains that Stieglitz's photographs of clouds and sky used "objective reality to record symbolically the subjective thoughts of the artist.... Stieglitz used reality, the clouds, to express truths about himself, to reveal his thoughts and feelings."²¹ Nevertheless, Greenough relies less on the photographs themselves and more on an extensive appendix of writings and correspondence in order to identify more precisely what Stieglitz was expressing in his photographs. Stieglitz himself said of the *Equivalent*s that they were consciously meant to express "something already taking form within me."²² There is an interesting equivocation in Stieglitz's use of "form" in this statement: he seems to suggest that intangible, subjective states in some way take on the formal qualities of a shape. At the same time, the shape of such inner experience finds its exterior analogue—is made physically manifest—in the forms created by the sky and clouds. It is this very slippage that makes the notion of the Equivalent so compelling and yet so difficult to define.

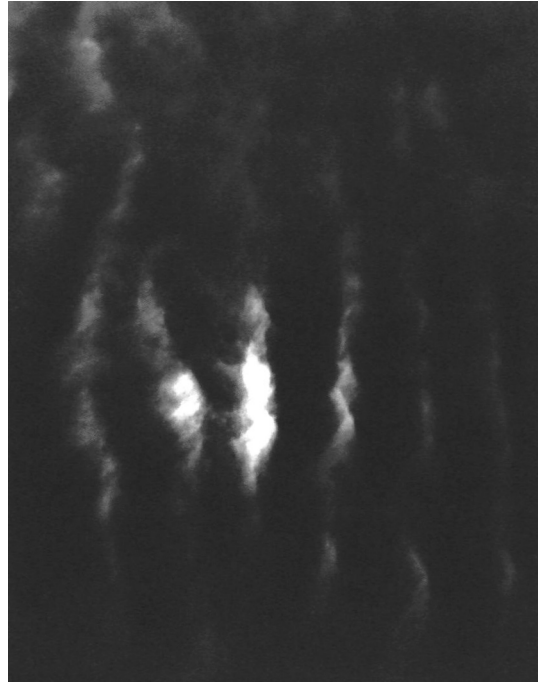
In fact, interpretations of Stieglitz's photographs frequently rely on conflicting assumptions about what is being represented. Amy Ellis, for instance, writes that "Stieglitz believed his 'Equivalents' were not simply images of clouds but evoked a deeper, spiritual meaning."²³ Taking a more skeptical view of the *Equivalents* as expressions of such interior transcendental subjectivity, John Szarkowski argues that Stieglitz "wanted to make the description of the sky and the artistic statement inseparable."²⁴ A photograph such as *Equivalent 171E*, 1925 (cat. no. 26), offers a case in point: turning the sky and clouds into a highly suggestive pictorial space, it can be made to support the oppositional views of either Ellis or Szarkowski.

A dense blanket of clouds covers the entire surface of the image with a subtle range of silvery grays. Barely visible at the very top of the image, the small disc of the sun penetrates the mass of cottony clouds. There is little sense of depth in this image, as these clouds seem to flatten the sky, making it appear as if it were parallel with the surface of the photograph. A reading that follows Ellis's metaphysical interpretation might focus on how the clouds simultaneously block the direct experience of light and offer the material ground through which its display is spread. The overall blanket of clouds gives an impression of opaqueness. The light emanating from the bright disk of the sun at the top of the image, then, suggests traditional associations of

matter infused with spirit. Yet seeing the photograph through Szarkowski's eyes, viewers might focus instead on the more self-reflexive, artistic implications posed by the use of light and shadow to create an overall image. The photograph's broad tonal range suggests how the medium relies on the opposition of brightness and darkness for its effect. Such a reading is buttressed by the twin disks of white and black at the top of the image. Ironically, the dark spot is not created by shadow or opacity as it at first appears, but by an opening in the lit clouds that reveals the sky behind them.

Ultimately, however, the success or failure of the *Equivalents* lies in the responses they evoke in their viewers. Neither of the above interpretations accounts for the feelings of softness and muffledness that the image arouses in my own affective response. The aforementioned readings rely on photography's capacity to be simultaneously abstract and representational. As Greenough writes: "Stieglitz's challenge, and his accomplishment in the 1920s, was to reconcile abstraction and photography, to find a means whereby he could abstractly express himself while still respecting the inherent characteristics of photography."²⁵ But Greenough's assessment, echoed in almost every commentary on these photographs, does little to illuminate how the *Equivalents* actually accomplish this dual feat.

Examining Stieglitz's photographs within the context of a parallel model of equivalency drawn



Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 171E*, 1925 (cat. no. 26)

Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 216E*, 1929 (cat. no. 30)

from early-twentieth-century linguistic theory is instructive for understanding how they function. A founding member of the Russian Formalist group in 1915, linguistic critic and university professor Roman Jakobson proposed a theory of the Equivalent for poetic texts. He promoted his ideas about the functions of poetic language in his 1921 book *Modern Russian Poetry*. However, characteristically of European intellectuals, Jakobson disseminated his ideas primarily through a series of lectures and discussion groups, most notably the Prague Linguistic Circle of 1926.²⁶ Although Stieglitz's letters and papers do not indicate that he was aware of Jakobson's philosophy, the comparison offers a constructive paradigm for reading Stieglitz's visual explorations through a sympathetic, albeit different, mode of representation that also seeks to combine abstraction and reference. For both approaches combine abstraction's retreat from conventions of recognizability with reference's reliance on shared indicators of meaning.

Jakobson shared the concern of fellow Russian Formalists to shift the focus of interpretation away from mimesis and its emphasis on resemblances. The function of literature, according to Jakobson, was not to reflect reality but to make it seem strange. By unhinging our customary perceptions of the world, the literary artist forces readers—or in the case of the visual artist, viewers—to experience what has become habitual with renewed attention. Russian Formalists called the disorientation created by such an estrange-

ment from one's usual perceptions “defamiliarization,” identifying it as the central characteristic shared by all artistic representations. Jakobson's specific theory of defamiliarization and disorientation within Russian Formalism relies on the equivalencies that constitute figures of speech, specifically metaphor and metonymy. A metaphor relies on substitutions of *comparative* relationships, whereas a metonymy relies on substitutions of *contiguous* relationships. Said another way, metaphors transform an object's meaning without changing its context. When a lover complains that the object of his or her affection has “a heart of stone,” the context remains that of the relationship between two people; the complaint is meant to cast light on the dynamic of their relationship. Metonymy, on the other hand, transforms an object's meaning by indicating a different but related context. In the phrase “the pen is mightier than the sword,” the context shifts from the battlefield to the scholar's desk in order to argue the power of persuasion over physical force.

Because metaphor and metonymy pull meaning in different directions, Jakobson contends that they are one of the primary ways to make reality appear strange and to dislocate habitual perceptions. Applied to a visual vocabulary such as Stieglitz's photographs, Jakobson's theory offers a way to consider the mechanisms through which the *Equivalents* create references to a shared realm of internal experiences and yet remain personally evocative.

As previously noted, the conflicting interpretations of Ellis and Szarkowski demonstrate that the meaning of the *Equivalents* often lies in the personal associations of viewers. Some viewers, for instance, might understand Stieglitz's clouds as metaphors for a tempestuous mood through a comparative association with stormy skies, as in *Equivalent 155B*, ca. 1924–26 (cat. no. 24). Other viewers might understand clouds blanketing the sky as a metonymy for spirituality through the contiguous association of clouds with the heavens. In Jakobson's paradigm, it is conflicting metaphoric and metonymic associations that create such unease. As a result, readers and viewers are forced to revise their conventional patterns of understanding.

It is this forced perceptual shift that gives both the verbal and the visual *Equivalents* their emotional, affective power. The perceptual shift described by Jakobson's notion of defamiliarization and disorientation is especially germane to the tension between abstraction and representation that Stieglitz's critics have identified as the heart of his *Equivalents*. Further, these concepts can account for the way in which his photographic series engages both the cognitive and the emotional effects of his images.

Stieglitz's Equivalents

In his *Equivalents*, Stieglitz has depicted the sky and clouds with consummate skill. The subtle range of tones required to capture the complexity of these

forms continues his interest, evident in his earliest pictorialist photographs, in testing the limits of photography as both an accurate recorder of natural phenomena and an expressive medium. In his essay, "How I Came to Photograph Clouds," Stieglitz identified clouds as his lifelong subject:

Thirty-five or more years ago I spent a few days in Murren (Switzerland), and I was experimenting with ortho plates. Clouds and their relationship to the rest of the world, and clouds for themselves, interested me, and clouds which were difficult to photograph—nearly impossible. Ever since then clouds have been in my mind, most powerfully at times, and I always knew I'd follow up the experiment made over 35 years ago.²⁷

This statement illustrates, as Sarah Greenough asserts, that understanding Stieglitz's photographs "for their innovations in style, subject matter, and technique" only captures half of their power. She goes on to write that they "are the manifestations, the visible results, of something larger and more profound, something that permeated and propelled Stieglitz's entire undertaking as a photographer."²⁸ The *Equivalents* provide an answer to that larger, more profound project through their ability simultaneously to evoke emotional experience and to assert photography itself as the most modernist of mediums.

Although indeed composed of abstract, dramatic fields of light and dark, Stieglitz's *Equivalents* also remain recognizable as cloud-filled skies.

In *Equivalent 216E*, 1929 (cat. no. 30), he captures that moment when natural forms are neither wholly abstract nor recognizable but appear to be both at once. As such, this image lends itself to an analysis that uses the concept of defamiliarization as Jakobson has described it. Stieglitz has created a photograph that turns the most everyday subject, the familiar sky, into something strange, a strangeness that is palpable. Rather than clouds, this image would more likely seem to be depicting columns of smoke and their atmospheric effects, one of Stieglitz's favorite subjects from his pictorialist period. He accomplishes this unusual visual effect through a vertical display that turns his photograph ninety degrees from the natural horizon. His shift in point of view disorients viewers and forces them to consider where they are—and, by implication, where Stieglitz was—in relation to this piece of the sky. He even renders gravitational clues uncertain through this tactical shift in point of view. In spite of his depiction of these cloud forms, Stieglitz is not representing nature here so much as presenting a visual translation of his subjective response to the natural world through the language of abstraction.

It is important to pause a moment here to consider what is meant by the term “abstract.” Abstraction is usually an art-historical shorthand used to indicate a movement in representation away from the specific toward the more general. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Art* defines the most pervasive use of *abstraction* as “a mode of representing visible objects

which reduces the amount or the particularity of the detail depicted.”²⁹ As Robert Atkins writes, “To *abstract* is to generalize.”³⁰ In modernist abstraction, artists have relied on two primary strategies to accomplish such generalization: on the one hand, they regularize forms through geometry in ways that suggest an underlying rational order; on the other, they reject iconic systems of depiction in favor of biomorphic forms that are meant to be visual analogues of expression. Often these two modes may be related. The art-historical understanding of abstraction has also been widely influenced by the notion that it is a primary strategy through which works strive for self-referential purity.³¹ In this formulation, geometric and biomorphic abstraction are different visual vocabularies, but they share a self-conscious attention to the methods of specific media. Both modes of abstraction establish a relation between viewers and depiction that makes the conventions of recognizability an issue in the work. Due to the photograph's reliance on actual forms for its depictions, this notion of recognizability is central to the vocabulary of photographic abstraction.³² *Equivalent 222A*, 1931 (cat. no. 32), offers a case in point. Any orientation to the ground and horizon is only minimally suggested by a tiny indication of foliage, barely visible in the lower right hand corner. Yet, ultimately, it remains unclear whether one is seeing the top or the side of this tree. The ambiguity of



Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 222A*, 1931 (cat. no. 32)

Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 175A*, 1926 (cat. no. 27)

Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 259B*, ca. 1920s (cat. no. 22)

the viewpoint is heightened by the canted striations of clouds organized along a diagonal axis. Stieglitz further adds to this sense of spatial disorientation through the sensation of movement suggested by the blurred streaks of clouds and his diagonal composition. This abstract quality of the image is heightened by another strategy that relates to defamiliarization and the way it complicates the viewer's referential understanding. As in many of the *Equivalents*, it is difficult to tell here what is sky and what are clouds. In this photograph, a close examination leaves viewers uncertain as to whether the sun is coming out from behind a dark cloud or shining through a light cloud. Through these photographic effects, Stieglitz's image evokes the mysterious qualities of the sky and clouds that make them such rich symbols for an experience of the uncanny.

Stieglitz has made the reciprocity of black and white an important element of his *Equivalents* in general. Usually the sky will print as the darkest tone in a black-and-white photograph, which is a reversal of our everyday experience of the sky's brightness. Yet when clouds thickly cover the sky, they will also print as a dark tone. *Equivalent 175A*, 1926 (cat. no. 27) well demonstrates this reversal. The black mass of the image saturates the dramatically dark photograph and fills the frame with its velvety richness. Because a single, small, bright cloud occupies a position near the center of the image, it reads more as an opening in the dark than as a cloud in the clear

sky. The sense of an opening is increased by the small disk of the sun, which is clearly visible in the midst of the cloud. Mike Weaver has written that the recording of sky as dark suggests a reversal of night and day, with the result that the *Equivalents* depict "both cosmic reflection and personal projection, with the sun-as-moon emitting a primordial and transient light."³³ Such an understanding creates the intriguing logical paradox of the bright spot as both source and reflection of light.

As this paradoxical relation implies, the transformation of nature through the vocabulary of photography becomes self-reflexive in this image, as it does in most of the *Equivalents*. The single bright spot of light in an otherwise darkened field recalls the aperture, and the small cluster of white in which it is situated recalls the opening and closing of the camera's lens. However, what appears as dark is actually a depiction of light. In addition, the photographic lens, which is used to capture light, is referenced by the sun, which is the source of light. What at first appeared to be a fairly straightforward metaphor for the camera involves viewers in the much more contiguous associations of metonymy, as the image references the medium of photography itself. The reciprocities inherent in such visual conundrums result in ambiguous interpretations. The consequent irresolution suggests one way in which Stieglitz's *Equivalents* implicate their viewers in the emotionally affective realm of intangible

experience. At the same time, their visual play with light and its effects reveals how much these photographs in particular are informed by references to the medium of photography.

In fact, as this self-reflexive reading suggests, Stieglitz's *Equivalent*s use the defamiliarizing potential of metonymy to depict photographic representation itself: by their nature as fleeting and impermanent yet material substances, clouds are the quintessential example of the intangible yet sensate world. *Equivalent 177A*, 1930 (cat. no. 31; front cover), makes viewers aware of the ethereal quality implicit in clouds. The forces that have given shape to this form, with its tenuous, wispy tendrils spiraling off the center mass, threaten to undo it by virtue of the same activity. One is reminded of the much grander forces of nebulae, clouds of interstellar gas and dust that are part of the vast and mysterious cosmos itself. The emotional power of such an observation is intensified by the intimate scale of the photographs. Stieglitz's small (4 x 5-inch) prints force their viewers to draw close in order to see the photographs. The need for such close scrutiny creates an awareness of macro- and microcosm that is reinforced through the symbolic associations generated by the images themselves.

Having considered how the strategies of defamiliarization and disorientation found in Jakobson's analysis of poetry contribute to an understanding of Stieglitz's *Equivalent*s, this essay now turns to the images of other photographers in this exhibition in order to explore

the ways that they, too, may be understood in the context of these ideas. Stieglitz chose to restrict his photographs in this mode to images from nature. He primarily focused on the distant view of sky and clouds, although he also occasionally drew on the close-up, as *Equivalent 178B*, 1927 (cat. no. 29), demonstrates. For this reason, the exhibition takes its cue from Stieglitz and explores the *Equivalent* as a tradition within the history of photography that is concerned to find its sources in nature and natural processes.

Photographers of the Equivalent after Stieglitz

Paul Strand's photography was a revelation to Stieglitz. Most art historians agree that in 1916 Strand's work demonstrated for Stieglitz how photography could participate in furthering the contemporary movement of modern abstraction that characterized the European avant-garde artists of the time. John Szarkowski writes that Stieglitz learned from "Paul Strand, who, earlier than Stieglitz, had internalized the more obvious lessons of cubism and who (rather briefly) made pictures that were unmistakably—in the parochial, high-art sense—modern."³⁴ The photographs by Strand in this exhibition use the defamiliarizing effects of scale and extreme cropping to disorient viewers and manipulate them into alternative ways of seeing. The durability of the close-up within the vocabulary of photographic



Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 178B*, 1927 (cat. no. 29)



Paul Strand, *Cobweb in the Rain, Georgetown, Maine*, 1927 (cat. no. 34)

abstraction is also evident in Strand's images. *Cobweb in the Rain*, 1927 (cat. no. 34), coincides with the period of Stieglitz's own *Equivalents*, whereas *Iris, Orgeval, France*, 1964 (cat. no. 35), demonstrates Strand's continued exploration of a similar aesthetic thirty-five years later.

The close-up has become such a cliché of photographic practice that it is easy to forget how much it is a product of visual language invented for modernist abstraction. Strand's photographs were revolutionary in that they demonstrated how the close-up could also involve viewers in the kind of disorienting perspective that informed Stieglitz's distant views of sky and clouds. The cropping and withholding of any physically orienting information in Strand's *Cobweb* suggest how a near view could also utilize disorientation as a strategy of abstraction. Strand's image relies on its title in order to sort out the messy melange that has been rendered as an abstract play of different organic surfaces. The spider and its web, especially, have long served as an image of a delicate, smaller world within a larger universe. This use of scale through the close-up reverses the elements of micro- and macrocosm that function in Stieglitz's photographs. Nevertheless, as in his *Equivalents*, viewers are made aware of their own position relative to the universe by this attention to scale.

Imogen Cunningham was another contemporary of Stieglitz whose photographs employ the close-up's disorienting point of view. Her *Agave*, 1923 (cat. no.

7), uses a gelatin silver process that has been printed to give it the appearance of platinum.³⁵ The resulting softness of the image in spite of its sharp focus and narrow depth of field creates a subtle richness and velvety tone that make it one of the most beautiful photographs in the exhibition. The photographic cropping does not produce a disorienting point of view in the manner of Strand so much as it provides a glimpse of the unexpected. The extreme close-up view of the agave renders this less as an image of a cactus than as a play of abstract forms through its light and dark contrasts. Moreover, the implied proximity to the thorny edge of the cactus, which is highlighted in the very center of the image, together with its phallic thrust, would most likely make many viewers feel uneasy despite the benign beauty represented here. Such tensions reflect the kinds of emotional effects that also characterize the ways in which Stieglitz's *Equivalents* suspend viewers among various competing interpretations involving reversals.

William Garnett's aerial photograph *Sand Dune, No. 1, Death Valley, CA*, 1954 (cat. no. 9), also presents its viewers with multiple interpretations through its capacity to make the familiar seem strange. He connects the gendered body and nature through the reciprocity of emotional references embedded in the human form and sand dunes. Nature and gender are linked in a system of equivalencies through an aerial view, which cuts a disorienting space from a larger field by eliminating any reference to the horizon. The



Imogen Cunningham, *Agave*, 1923 (cat. no. 7)

William Garnett, *Sand Dune, No. 1, Death Valley, CA*, 1954 (cat. no. 9)

resulting point of view transforms these dunes into abstract surfaces, which viewers experience through resonant associations that are uncannily familiar: visually, it turns the dune into a metaphor that appears almost literally to depict a feminine body, as the Museum of Modern Art suggested in giving the photograph the allusive title *Nude Dune*.³⁶ However, it is the more metonymic associations of shifting, flowing, smoothness, and even curvilinear form that actually construct the sense of a body here. The image is sexual without being sexed, suggesting the role that is played by the viewer's own subjective responses.

This involvement of viewers in a play of recognition between the image and their own associations is one of the ways in which the Equivalent contributes to a definition of abstraction. Minor White, who saw his own work as an extension of Stieglitz's *Equivalents*, is one of the most self-conscious in his use of photography to initiate the subjective associations of viewers. In a 1963 article for *PSA Journal*, he wrote: "Probably the most mature idea ever presented to picture-making photography was the concept of Equivalence which Alfred Stieglitz named early in the 1920's and practiced the rest of his life."³⁷ White goes on to explain that the tradition he finds in Stieglitz is more than

*a certain appearance, or style, or trend, or fashion.
Equivalence is a function, an experience, not a thing.
Any photograph, regardless of source, might function*

*as an Equivalent to someone, sometime, someplace. If the individual viewer realizes that for him what he sees in a picture corresponds to something within himself—that is, the photograph mirrors something in himself—then his experience is some degree of Equivalence.*³⁸

White's definition, as John Pultz relates, "defines equivalence in photography according to how a photograph functions, not according to formal qualities."³⁹ For this reason, White's photographs do not use cropping to disorient the viewer in the manner that often characterizes Stieglitz's *Equivalents*. As *Two Waves and Pitted Rock*, 1952 (cat. no. 43) illustrates, the use of close-up does not have to detach viewers from a sense of the horizon or a recognizable point of view to initiate figurative associations. The action of the waves, especially, offers a strong sense of orientation by the obvious effect of gravity. Yet, by isolating this constellation of ocean, rock, and sand at a particular moment, White creates an image that uses conventional metaphors for time and eternity, decay and permanence. However, this same image also resonates with the metonymic properties of motion and stability, liquid and solid, soft and hard. And it is these less direct metonymic associations that White encourages his viewers to contemplate in his images.

In concordance with White's own theories of transcendental, Eastern philosophy, he intends his image to function in the manner of a Zen Buddhist "koan," initiating poetic states of meditation that rely



Minor White, *Two Waves and Pitted Rock*, 1952 (cat. no. 43)

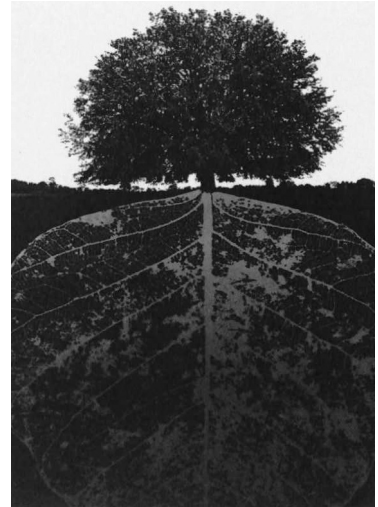
on a mystical tradition of inner vision.⁴⁰ In such an economy all responses become valid, which seems to be at odds with Stieglitz's more relational attempt to create an *Equivalent* that would connect the responses of viewers.⁴¹ However, it is arguable that White's photographs exceed his metaphysical theory. Beaumont Newhall wrote: "What is remarkable about Minor White's work is that without departing from reality he shows things as they are and as they are not."⁴² *Two Waves and Pitted Rock* illustrates Newhall's point through the way in which the opposition of liquid and solid evoked by ocean and rock seems to dissolve where the imprint of the ocean has left its smooth, flowing mark on the bottom surface of the rock. In Newhall's formulation, the rock is solid; yet in the face of time and ocean it is not. This reading of White's image challenges the viewer's understanding of objects through notions of reciprocity similar to those functioning in Stieglitz's *Equivalents*.

Ruth Bernhard is a photographer who also speaks of her work in terms of an Eastern philosophical sensibility. However, her concerns differ from White's preoccupation with the response of viewers. Bernhard seeks to create photographs that communicate the intellectual and emotional responses the natural world evokes in her. Her stated sensibility is thus closer to Stieglitz than to White:

The diversity of my life's work is an attempt to express my sense of wonder at the amazing and miraculous world in

*which I find myself, and the mysteries which lie beyond. I am often reminded of the deceptive simplicity of the Japanese Haiku which, by the slightest nuance, evokes high moments and secret possibilities. Much of my work shares a similar intention.*⁴³

In *Two Leaves*, 1952 (cat. no. 1), Bernhard explores the natural forms of two leaves through artificial studio lights. Her use of the close-up differentiates her work from that of other photographers who cut their images out of the larger field of the natural world. Bernhard's studio setup dramatically isolates her two leaves and lights them in a way that encourages viewers to experience them through a sensibility that Margaretta Mitchell has described as "curiosity about the visible and invisible worlds."⁴⁴ The strong chiaroscuro causes some areas of the leaves to be visible in minute detail, while other areas dissolve into the dark background and become invisible. The view of one leaf from the front and the other from the back speaks metaphorically to this notion of the relation between the visible and the invisible. So does the literal turning of a corner of the front leaf, which offers viewers a glimpse of its back. The photograph evokes a sense of the mysterious relation between the visible world of nature and an invisible realm that seems to lie just beneath the surface. The human place within this metaphysical scheme is suggested through the metonymic associations of skin. By her lighting,



Ruth Bernhard, *Two Leaves*, 1952 (cat. no. 1)

Jerry N. Uelsmann, *Untitled*, 1961 (cat. no. 36)

Jerry N. Uelsmann, *Untitled*, 1964 (cat. no. 37)

Bernhard renders the front of the leaf as if it had the smooth and oily, yet also cracked and wrinkled, texture of human skin. Bernhard's photograph, therefore, is no less an Equivalent for her staging of its effects.

Jerry Uelsmann attended the Rochester Institute of Technology where he studied under Minor White and listened to his teachings on the Equivalent. Beginning in the 1960s, Uelsmann began experimenting with photographic montage as a way of creating images that would function as Equivalents. He relied on the notions of reciprocity and the use of micro- and macrocosm that he learned from White. However, in contrast to White, Uelsmann built the resonant associations that are achievable by these concepts into the photographic image itself.⁴⁵ Primarily by combination printing, he composed single images from multiple negatives to invent seamless fictions. Viewers know rationally that Uelsmann's images are impossible despite their highly seamless composition. In his *Untitled*, 1964 (cat. no. 37), Uelsmann has constructed an image that literally uses a piece of real nature, an actual leaf, as a negative. In combination with a photographic negative of an entire tree, the resulting print transforms the natural world through Uelsmann's favorite techniques of doubling, scale, and inversion. Here the leaf is a metonym for the tree and at the same time a metaphor for the tree's roots, by being printed upside down at its base. The

contrast in scale, through which the decaying leaf occupies two-thirds of the image, reminds viewers of the character of the natural world as an interrelated micro- and macrocosm. Through these devices Uelsmann fixes the notions of reciprocity and scale that function more allusively in Stieglitz's *Equivalents*.

Similarly, Uelsmann's *Untitled*, 1961 (cat. no. 36) demonstrates the way in which his surreal constructions rely on the Equivalent's vocabulary. The inversion and large scale of a hand within a natural setting set up such expectations in viewers of a forest scene that it is difficult to see how the strong "roots" of the "tree" are actually fingers. The wedding band acts as the reference that brings the image into focus, both visually and symbolically. It locates viewers simultaneously in two different positions as spectators of the scene and serves as a metaphor of how deeply human culture is "wedded" to the order of nature. The image formulates the earth in the context of the care and responsibilities associated with the cultural institution of marriage, itself a cultural construct and interpretive paradigm. Completed at a time of growing concern about ecology, Uelsmann's photograph is also a metonymic reminder of how completely the natural world bears the mark of human hands, both literally and figuratively as a cultural construct through representation.

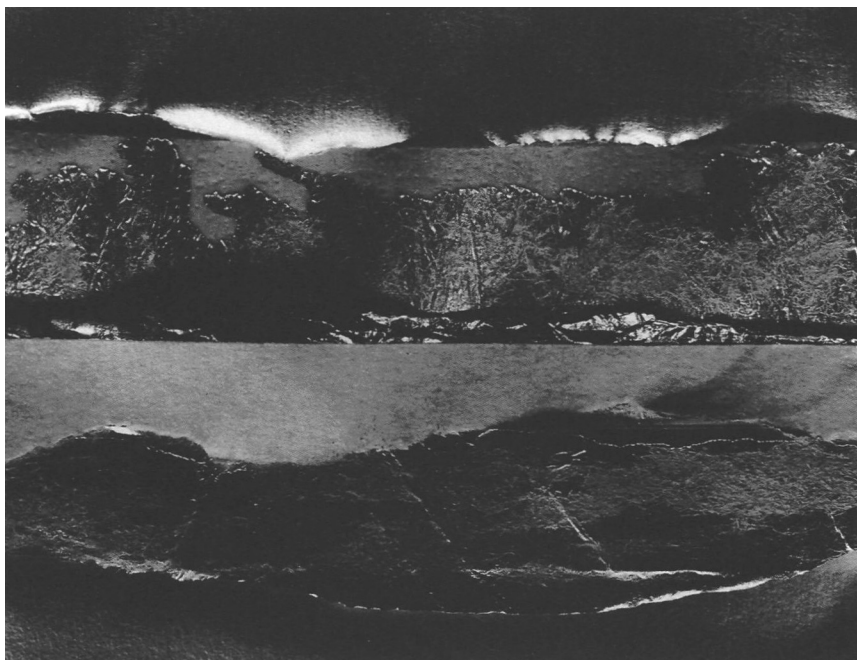
Both of these images contain powerful messages that use the vocabulary of the Equivalent effectively. Nevertheless, by virtue of their construction,

Uelsmann guides the experiences his photographs evoke so directly that viewers are limited to his associations. These photographs thus partially violate the spirit of the Equivalent by virtue of denying viewers an opportunity to discover their own perceptual shifts through unexpected associations. In addition, the literalness of Uelsmann's images works against the usual play between abstraction and reference that allows the Equivalent to mediate the natural world in ways that suggest more intangible emotional experiences.

Carl Chiarenza's photographs rely on another type of constructed image to accomplish the goals of the Equivalent. In *Menotomy* 382, 1983 (cat. no. 6), he uses waste paper and other debris to construct a two-dimensional faux landscape. Even within the fictional realm of the photograph itself there are only suggestions and allusions to space. Most of the elements that we have seen in Stieglitz's *Equivalents* are put into play through this ploy: disorientation, defamiliarization, reciprocity, scale, and the self-reflexivity that results from perceptual shifts. Unable to make sense of this "landscape," viewers are forced to examine their assumptions about the conventions of vision itself. A. D. Coleman writes that Chiarenza has reversed the usual aesthetic of Equivalent photographers such as Minor White, who "asked their viewers to forget the literal subject matter of their imagery in order to concentrate on the metaphorical implications of the forms and tonal

structures."⁴⁶ In Chiarenza's *Equivalents*, by contrast, viewers are presented with the literal systems of reference that make up representation itself. Ultimately, however, his photographs are less about the evocative potential of the Equivalent (as it establishes a resonance between inner and outer experience) and more about the language of visual perception.

A more successful strategy to reference the notion of self-reflexivity within the Equivalent is offered by Aaron Siskind's photographs. Siskind founded the Feature Group within the Film and Photo League in 1936. Although still interested in the League's commitment to socially aware and politically informed photography, the Feature Group strove to champion self-consciously aesthetic images. To this end, Siskind created images using means that, again, can be related to Jakobson's notions of defamiliarization and disorientation. His strategies are similar to those evident in Stieglitz's photographs of the sky and clouds, but he applied them to the more human realm of the city. In *New York*, ca. 1948 (cat. no. 19), for example, Siskind created a photographic surface that is at first intriguingly unrecognizable because of its cut from a larger space. Only by apprehending the details of screw heads on this surface are viewers able to discern scale, bring into focus the photograph's abstract pattern of stains and corrosion, and recognize the object depicted as a piece of metal. The allover



Carl Chiarenza, *Menotomy* 382, 1983 (cat. no. 6)



Aaron Siskind, *New York*, ca. 1948 (cat. no. 19)

composition and its at once specific yet ambiguous title link this image to the work of contemporary abstractionists centered in New York at the time. Mirroring the seemingly random marks of staining, dripping, and pouring that the Abstract Expressionists were claiming as the expressive evidence of their subjective feelings and emotions, Siskind's image records the chemical interactions that natural processes can have on a metal surface. It suggests that, through the vocabulary of the Equivalent, the photograph can accomplish similar goals to those which were being championed by the avant-garde painting tradition in its incorporation of external forms to express inner experience.

More recently, the photographs of Emmet Gowin also make reference to the aesthetic traditions of abstract painting, but he is even more explicit than Siskind in his documentary aims. Throughout the 1990s, Gowin has been producing an extensive series of photographs that have used the earth as a visual field from an aerial perspective, in much the same way Stieglitz used the sky and clouds from an earth-bound vantage point. As Gowin photographs from the air, he focuses on patterns of destruction and disaster in the landscape that have been caused by human intervention. Through these photographs, he exposes the tension between human technology and the natural world. Viewed singly and as a group, they produce a chilling irony that balances both the aesthetic and the conceptual in Gowin's work. His

aerial perspective renders the landscape abstract, creating images of exceeding formal beauty out of the very marks that result from human processes that are destroying the land. *Weapons Disposal Site*, 1991 (cat. no. 13; back cover), traces the effects of open-pit mining, chemical weapons, and munitions deployment. *Winter on the High Plains*, 1995 (cat. no. 14), demonstrates how even the seemingly more benign effects of agribusiness farming methods are altering the natural world in devastating ways. The vast areas of geometric patterns in Gowin's photographs represent lush vegetation created out of previously arid land through gigantic, mechanical irrigation sprinklers. Ironically, in the process of creating these agricultural miracles, such methods are destroying the life-supporting aquifers below the verdant surface. However, rather than relying on the more obvious referential record of the documentary photograph, Gowin creates a complex visual statement through the strategies that define the Equivalent.

Gowin uses a distant, aerial view to disorient the viewer by manipulating scale and eliminating the horizon from the space of the image. The resulting loss of perspective leads viewers to see the places that Gowin photographs as aesthetic arrangements of abstract marks on a photographic surface. His use of toning heightens the visual intensity in his black-and-white photographs, adding the impression of a textural quality that recalls the surfaces of Abstract



Emmet Gowin, *Winter on the High Plains, Snow over
Pivot Agriculture, near Liberal, Kansas*, 1995 (cat. no. 14)

Expressionist paintings. Only as viewers begin to pay attention to the actual sites depicted in these photographs, often through the information given in their titles, does the import of these abstract compositions come into focus. In addition to being photographic surfaces that read as abstract works of art, these are images of ruined landscapes that reflect a disregard for the actual places themselves. They use the resonant associations that are created by micro- and macrocosmic relationships to evoke an awareness of the relationship between our emotional responses to the natural world and larger social issues.

As Gowin's work illustrates, the strategies that define the Equivalent as a photographic mode rely on the contingent associations of viewers. The Equivalent sets in motion perceptual shifts through the visual applications of metaphor and metonymy. Those shifts create tensions that viewers must negotiate in order to make sense out of the image before them. The Equivalent thus illustrates an enduring concern within the history of photography to explore images that are simultaneously abstract and representational. Especially through manipulating point of view, reciprocity, and scale, photographers working in this mode make strange what is usually familiar

in ways that link the cognitive and emotional effects of images.

Stieglitz's own *Equivalents* are an extension of his desire, first expressed in the language of symbolism, to find external correspondences in nature for subjective experiences. And, as the references to painterly abstraction in the images of Gowin and Siskind suggest, such a link between the Symbolists and the Equivalent mode of photography offers us one way to think about the nature of abstraction itself. Claude Cernuschi claims as much when he writes of Jackson Pollock that "the meanings he associates with the formal configurations of his canvases function, not in terms of a representational connection with the external world, but on the basis of equivalence."⁴⁷ Through the Equivalent, the photographers in this exhibition demonstrate that, far from being incompatible oppositions, sharp-focused description and abstraction create a mutual tension that shapes the viewer's experience. The emotional resonances that viewers feel in the presence of these photographs are a testament to the power of images to evoke felt correspondences between their inner lives and the natural world.

Notes

¹ From a letter to Hart Crane about the *Equivalents*, 10 December 1923. Quoted in Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton, eds., *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1983), 208.

² The years for these series of photographs are listed in Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser and Amy Ellis, with Maura Lyons, *Stieglitz, O'Keeffe and American Modernism* (Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1999), 22. It should be kept in mind, however, that Stieglitz occasionally continued to photograph individual works that he considered *Equivalents* when he organized them into numbered sets, as indicated by *Equivalent #2445* from Series IV in this exhibition, which has a probable date of 1935.

³ It should be noted that clouds were not a completely new subject for Stieglitz, who had published an Equivalent-like photogravure twenty-two years previously. See *A Dirigible*, 1910, in *Camera Work* 36 (1911). Even as early as 1902, Stieglitz had played off the dark column of smoke from a train engine against the clouds and lighter factory smoke in his famous image *The Hand of Man* (*Long Island City, New York*). Doris Bry is the source for the astonishing number of Stieglitz's *Equivalent* negatives in the exhibition catalogue *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographer* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1965), 19. Sue Davidson Lowe provides a chronology of Stieglitz's equipment throughout his life. Her list indicates that Stieglitz used a 180mm Goerz Double Anastigmat lens with his Graflex 4 x 5 camera. See *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1983), 442.

⁴ Stieglitz had exhibited his cloud and sky photographs in 1922 under the title *Music: A Sequence of Ten Clouds Photographs*, and in 1923 under the title *Songs of the Sky*.

⁵ This essay uses *Equivalent(s)* in italic to designate the photographs from Alfred Steiglitz's series of that name. The more generic use of the term Equivalent as a mode or genre is indicated by the use of an initial capital and no italic.

⁶ The occasion of this 1925 exhibition was Stieglitz's opening of The Intimate Gallery, which remained open until 1929 when he opened his last gallery, An American Place. The "Seven Americans" included in the exhibition were: Alfred Stieglitz, John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, Arthur Dove, and Paul Strand.

⁷ Beaumont Newhall, ed., *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present Day*, rev. ed. (New York: MoMA, 1964), 59.

⁸ This account comes from Christian A. Peterson's excellent history of Stieglitz's pictorialist period in *Alfred Stieglitz: Camera Notes* (Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1993), 19.

⁹ From its beginning, Symbolism relied on a close association between visual and literary artists. Rejecting the realist mode that had been associated most closely with Emile Zola's writing, Symbolist thinkers first articulated their ideas as a literary movement in Paul Verlaine's *Art poétique* (1882), J.-K. Huysmans's *A Rebours* (1884), and Jean Moréas's *The Symbolist Manifesto* (1886). The movement collected around Stéphane Mallarmé and took its inspiration from the Romantic poetry of Charles-Pierre Baudelaire. Specifically, Baudelaire's theory of "correspondence" (from his 1857 poem of the same name) became something of a touchstone for writers and painters alike. In this economy, the natural word is valued less for its own sake than as an idealist repository of subjectivist experiences that express the transcendental reality of emotion and spirit.

¹⁰ Philippe Jullian provides a brief anthology of Symbolist themes from both the literary and visual arts in *Dreamers of Decadence: Symbolist Painters of the 1890s*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Praeger, 1974), 229–65.

¹¹ A focus on the viewer's experience was not new to the symbolist/expressionist vocabulary of subjectivity, as productive studies of the beholder within Kantian aesthetics have demonstrated. One of the most influential art historians of such studies has been Michael Fried. However, Fried's observations are based in a narrative projection by

the viewer into the imaginary space of the image: he is exploring the viewer's visual understanding rather than the kinesthetic experience of vision itself. See Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California, 1981).

12 Alfred Stieglitz, "The Hand Camera — Its Present Importance," in *Photographers on Photography: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Nathan Lyons (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 110.

13 The image that is conjured up is the typical photographer of the day with a large format view camera, but in actuality part of what made it possible for Stieglitz to take the photograph, a fact he does not report, is that he is using a newly invented small, waterproof hand camera (see Greenough and Hamilton, 14). Kornhauser and Ellis report that Stieglitz's was the first extensive use of the hand camera (11).

14 Doris Bry, *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographer*, 17.

15 *Ibid.*, 17.

16 Alfred Stieglitz, "How I Came to Photograph Clouds," in Lyons, *Photographers on Photography*, 111–12.

17 *Ibid.*, 112.

18 In her biography, Dorothy Norman says that eventually Stieglitz "claimed that all of his prints were equivalents; finally that all art is an equivalent of the artist's most profound experience of life." Dorothy Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer* (Millerton, NY: Aperture, 1960; reprint 1973), 144.

19 F. Richard Thomas is writing about the effect Stieglitz's photographic practice had on modernist poets Hart Crane, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams. He provides an understanding of how the *Equivalents* have influenced literary modes of representation: "The [Equivalent] photograph must, then, be studied for its subjective and symbolic content as well as its objective and literal content." See F. Richard Thomas, *Literary Admirers of Alfred Stieglitz* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 9. Literary modernists often used the concept of equivalency when describing images (sometimes called "objective correlatives") that produce similar subjective

responses in most people. The term originates with T. S. Eliot's literary criticism and is a central concept in his own modernist texts.

20 Kornhauser and Ellis, *Stieglitz, O'Keeffe and American Modernism*, 24.

21 Greenough and Hamilton, *Alfred Stieglitz*, 22.

22 Weston Naef, ed., *In Focus: Alfred Stieglitz Photographs from The J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1995), 25.

23 Kornhauser and Ellis, 52.

24 John Szarkowski, *Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 29.

25 Greenough and Hamilton, 23. It is important to note that, while acknowledging Stieglitz's debt to the Symbolist idea of "correspondence," Greenough maintains that the theory implicit in the Equivalent goes beyond correspondence by virtue of its more complete engagement with abstraction. See her remarks on the pages following the cited quotation (23–34).

26 Roman Jakobson was a founding member of the Moscow Linguistic Circle (1915) and "OPOJAZ" — translated as "The Society for the Study of Poetic Language" (1916). As a result of attacks on Russian Formalism by the Soviet government, Jakobson migrated to Czechoslovakia where he helped to found the Prague Linguistic Circle (1926). He promoted his version of literary Formalism as a professor at Masaryk University in Brno from 1933 until 1939, when Nazism forced him to flee Czechoslovakia. After a brief period in Scandinavia, Jakobson immigrated to the United States where he was an important influence on the movement of American literary Formalism, known as "new criticism." He was a professor at Harvard from 1949 to 1956 and at MIT beginning in 1957 until his retirement. Characteristic of many European intellectuals, Jakobson's ideas were initially disseminated through his teaching lectures and in the discussion groups cited above before they reached formal publication. A presentation to the Prague Circle in 1928 defined the basic principles of his aesthetic theory of polarities and equivalence in what has come to be called in linguistic studies the "Jakobson/Tynyanov thesis." An important paper summarizing his ideas was published in German in 1931 as "Prinzipien der historischen Phonologie." The first published summary of his theories for English

readers is Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956). For the section on metaphor and metonymy that is relevant to the discussion of equivalency in this essay, see 70–96. An account of Jakobson's notion of equivalency for the non-linguist is discussed in Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 76–82. For an account of Russian Formalism, see Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism* (New York: Methuen and Co., 1979), 18–25.

27 Alfred Stieglitz, "How I Came to Photograph Clouds," in Lyons, *Photographers on Photography*, 111.

28 Greenough and Hamilton, *Alfred Stieglitz*, 13. Quoting from Stieglitz's writings, Greenough identifies this larger, more profound project as a search for "the meaning of the idea photography" (quoted on 13).

29 Harold Osborne, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Art* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981; reprint 1992), 2. The definition of modernist abstraction that follows in this paragraph is drawn from this source.

30 Robert Atkins, *ArtSpeak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1990), 35–6.

31 Clement Greenberg, the critic largely responsible for this view, wrote: "The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence." Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts*, ed. Francis Francina and Jonathan Harris (London: Phaidon Press, 1992), 308.

32 Several writers have commented on Stieglitz's use of disorientation as an important strategy to make recognition a central issue for viewers of his *Equivalents*. Elizabeth Kornhauser, for instance, writes that in his *Equivalents* Stieglitz "abstracted his images by eliminating any frame of reference for the viewer. Location, time, and even the direction in which the image should be hung are elusive." Kornhauser and Ellis, 24. Rosalind Krauss writes that the photographic act of "cutting" isolates segments of the sky and clouds in the *Equivalents* in a way that

recalls the human hand. She maintains that viewers experience the physical turning and twisting of Stieglitz's hand-held camera through the disorientating relation to the ground and horizon of his images. Further, such manipulations are commensurate with the "gestural" indications of abstract expressionist painters and tie his photographs to their works. Rosalind Krauss, "Equivalents/Stieglitz," *October* 11 (Winter 1979): 135. Even within a more traditionally formalist reading of Stieglitz's photographs, Estelle Jussim and Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock see Stieglitz's use of a disorienting pictorial space as the means by which he turns a representational image to the purposes of abstraction: "The elements of the picture are organized in what is conventionally considered to be an abstract arrangement, with the forms seeming to hang parallel to the picture plane and strongly related to the four edges of the frame." Estelle Jussim and Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock, *Landscape as Photograph* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 10.

33 Mike Weaver, "Alfred Stieglitz and Ernest Bloch: Art and Hypnosis," *History of Photography* 20 (Winter 1996): 300.

34 Szarkowski, *Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George*, 20.

35 It uses a very thin baryta layer to prepare the paper for the gelatin silver emulsion, which, in combination with toning, is what gives it the appearance of a platinum print. I would like to thank Alison Luxner, who brought this explanation for the platinum appearance of the photograph to my attention.

36 In a letter of 15 July 1999, William Garnett requested that his original title be restored to this photograph for the exhibition.

37 Minor White, "Equivalence: The Perennial Trend," in Lyons, 168.

38 Ibid.

39 John Pultz, "Equivalence, Symbolism, and Minor White's Way into the Language of Photography," *Record of the Art Museum*, Princeton University, 39, nos. 1–2 (1980): 29.

40 In their catalogue essay discussing the use of "landscape as symbol," Estelle Jussim and Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock explain that White's symbolism is not meant "to be the one-to-one interpretation of allegorical, heraldic, or mythological symbols, but rather

the creation of the mood-evoking, ambiguous, timeless icon ritually experienced in a state of quasi-religious contemplation.” Jussim and Lindquist-Cock, 78.

41 As Pultz argues, these mystical theories move White’s photographs “from art as object to art as experience, and particularly art as therapeutic experience.” Pultz, 37.

42 Beaumont Newhall, in *Minor White, Mirrors, Messages, Manifestations* (New York: Aperture, 1969), n.p.

43 Ruth Bernhard and Margareta Mitchell, *Ruth Bernhard: The Eternal Body* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1986), n.p.

44 *Ibid.*, 24.

45 Admittedly, most work that has been viewed in relation to the Equivalent is generally produced within the tradition known as pure (or “straight”) photography, a fact on which Minor White was insistent. Pure photography began as a reaction to the practice inherited from the nineteenth century of manipulating images to create pictorial effects and usually is traced to photographers

working with Stieglitz after his discovery of Paul Strand’s images in 1916 and the San Francisco Bay area collective known as f.64, after their 1932 group exhibition. The dominant aesthetic of pure photography is called “previsualization,” a term coined by Edward Weston. In contrast, Uelsmann calls his aesthetic “post-visualization” as a way to stress his belief that as in all the other arts, “photographers keep themselves open to in-process discovery,” quoted in Vicki Goldberg, ed., *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 447.

46 A. D. Coleman, “Pushing the Envelope,” in *Carl Chiarenza: Photographs, 1984–1997*, exhibition brochure (organized by Ellen Fleurov for the High Museum of Art, 15 November 1997–14 February 1998), n.p.

47 Claude Cernuschi, “*Not an Illustration but the Equivalent*”: *A Cognitive Approach to Abstract Expressionism* (Madison, NJ and London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 17.

Catalogue of the Exhibition

All dimensions indicate the sizes of the sheets of paper, with heights appearing before widths. Entries illustrated in the text are noted with an asterisk.

- Ruth Bernhard, American, born 1905
 1* *Two Leaves*, 1952
 Gelatin silver print, 34.6 x 26 cm (13⁵/₈ x 10¹/₄ in.)
 Gift of George Hopper Fitch, B.A. 1932. 1990.43.22
- Wynn Bullock, American, 1902–1975
 2 *Light Abstraction*, 1939
 Gelatin silver print, 20.3 x 14.3 cm (8 x 5⁵/₈ in.)
 Gift of William A. Turnage, B.A. 1965,
 in honor of Mathilde Sewall. 1977.193.60
- Wynn Bullock, American, 1902–1975
 3 *The Limpet*, 1969
 Gelatin silver print, 15.1 x 33.7 cm (5¹⁵/₁₆ x 13¹/₄ in.)
 Gift of William A. Turnage, B.A. 1965,
 in honor of Mathilde Sewall. 1977.193.63
- Paul Caponigro, American, born 1932
 4 *Rocks and Sand*, ca. 1960s
 Gelatin silver print, 22.5 x 16 cm (8⁷/₈ x 6¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
 Gift of William A. Turnage, B.A. 1965,
 in honor of Mathilde Sewall. 1977.193.2
- Paul Caponigro, American, born 1932
 5 *Frosted Window No. 2, Ipswich, Mass.*, ca. 1961–68
 Gelatin silver print, 39.7 x 48.9 cm (15⁵/₈ x 19¹/₄ in.)
 Gift of George Hopper Fitch, B.A. 1932. 1994.49.12
- Carl Chiarenza, American, born 1935
 6* *Menotomy 382*, 1983
 Gelatin silver print, 40.5 x 50.5 cm (15¹⁵/₁₆ x 19⁷/₈ in.)
 Anonymous Gift. 1983.26
- Imogen Cunningham, American, 1883–1976
 7* *Agave*, 1923
 Gelatin silver print, 35.6 x 27.6 cm (14 x 10⁷/₈ in.)
 Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903, Fund. 1979.44
- Imogen Cunningham, American, 1883–1976
 8 *Amaryllis*, 1933
 Gelatin silver print, 23.5 x 18.4 cm (9¹/₄ x 7¹/₄ in.)
 Gift of William A. Turnage, B.A. 1965. 1978.148.10
- William Garnett, American, born 1916
 9* *Sand Dune, No. 1, Death Valley, CA*, 1954
 Gelatin silver print, 50.2 x 40 cm (19³/₄ x 15³/₄ in.)
 Gift of George Hopper Fitch, B.A. 1932. 1990.43.37
- William Garnett, American, born 1916
 10 *Rice Farm with Reflection of the Sun, Woodland, CA*, 1979
 Gelatin silver print, 27.5 x 35.1 cm (10¹³/₁₆ x 13¹³/₁₆ in.)
 Gift of George Hopper Fitch, B.A. 1932. 1992.53.85
- Ralph Gibson, American, born 1939
 11 *Cloud, New Mexico*, 1972
 Gelatin silver print, 35.6 x 27.8 cm (14 x 10¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
 Gift of Martin Steinberg. 1983.100.3

- Frank Gohlke, American, born 1942
- 12 *Aerial View: Cows, Tracks, Furrows—
Vicinity of Tulsa, Oklahoma*, 1981, printed 1989
Gelatin silver print, 50.5 x 40.6 cm (19⁷/₈ x 16 in.)
Gift of Elaine and Gerald Levine, B.A. 1960. 1996.48.7
- Emmet Gowin, American, born 1941
- 13* *Weapons Disposal Site, Tooele Army Depot,
Tooele, Utah*, 1991, printed 1992
Toned gelatin silver print, 27.8 x 35.4 cm
(10¹⁵/₁₆ x 13¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
The Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund. 1999.27.10
- Emmet Gowin, American, born 1941
- 14* *Winter on the High Plains, Snow over Pivot Agriculture,
near Liberal, Kansas*, 1995, printed 1996
Toned gelatin silver print, 27.8 x 35.4 cm
(10¹⁵/₁₆ x 13¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
The Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund. 1999.27.11
- Sol LeWitt, American, born 1928
- 15 *Clouds*, 1978–99
Iris print from a color photo collage
of 1978, 81.3 x 58.4 cm (32 x 22⁵/₈ in.)
Lent by the artist
- Marshall Lupp, American
- 16 *In Spirit and Self*, 1990
Suite of nine gelatin silver prints,
10.2 x 71.4 cm (8¹/₂ x 28¹/₂ in.) (suite)
Emerson Tuttle, B.A. 1914, Print Fund. 1990.26.1
- Michael Serino, American, born 1951
- 17 *Straw Reeds*, 1978
Gelatin silver print, 27.9 x 35.6 cm (11 x 14 in.)
Gift of Michael Clinger. 1978.103.1
- Michael Serino, American, born 1951
- 18 *Beach*, 1978
Gelatin silver print, 27.9 x 35.6 cm (11 x 14 in.)
Gift of Michael Clinger. 1978.103.2
- Aaron Siskind, American, 1903–1991
- 19* *New York*, ca. 1948
Gelatin silver print, 25.4 x 20.6 cm (10 x 8¹/₈ in.)
Gift of Richard L. Menschel. 1977.190.47
- Aaron Siskind, American, 1903–1991
- 20 *Volcano 114*, 1980
Gelatin silver print, 50.3 x 40.5 cm (19¹³/₁₆ x 15¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
Gift of Elaine and Gerald Levine, B.A. 1960. 1996.48.3
- Ralph Steiner, American, 1889–1986
- 21 *Clouds Monhegan*, 1964, printed 1980
Gelatin silver print, 15.2 x 15.7 cm (6 x 6³/₁₆ in.)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. I. Robert Levine. 1991.105.1.3
- Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
- 22* *Equivalent, Series IV, 259B*, ca. 1920s
Gelatin silver print, 11.7 x 9.2 cm (4⁵/₈ x 3⁵/₈ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
23 *Equivalent, Series IV, 144B*, ca. 1920s
Gelatin silver print, 9.2 x 11.9 cm (3⁵/₈ x 4¹/₁₆ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
24* *Equivalent, Series IV, 155B*, ca. 1924–26
Gelatin silver print, 10.2 x 12.7 cm (4 x 5 in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
25 *Equivalent, Series IV, 170A*, 1925
Gelatin silver print, 11.9 x 9.2 cm (4¹/₁₆ x 3⁵/₈ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
26* *Equivalent, Series IV, 171E*, 1925
Gelatin silver print, 11.7 x 9.2 cm (4⁵/₈ x 3⁵/₈ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
27* *Equivalent, Series IV, 175A*, 1926
Gelatin silver print, 11.6 x 9.2 cm (4⁹/₁₆ x 3⁵/₈ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
28 *Equivalent, Series IV, 141D*, 1927
Gelatin silver print, 9.2 x 11.7 cm (3⁵/₈ x 4⁵/₈ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
29* *Equivalent, Series IV, 178B*, 1927
Gelatin silver print, 9.2 x 11.9 cm (3⁵/₈ x 4¹/₁₆ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
30* *Equivalent, Series IV, 216E*, 1929
Gelatin silver print, 11.7 x 9.2 cm (4⁵/₈ x 3⁵/₈ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
31* *Equivalent, Series IV, 177A*, 1930
Gelatin silver print, 9.2 x 11.4 cm (3⁵/₈ x 4¹/₂ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
32* *Equivalent, Series IV, 222A*, 1931
Gelatin silver print, 11.7 x 9.2 cm (4⁵/₈ x 3⁵/₈ in.)
Yale Collection of American Literature,
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

- Alfred Stieglitz, American, 1864–1946
 33 *Equivalent, Series IV, 180D*, ca. 1935
 Gelatin silver print, 9.2 x 11.7 cm (3 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.)
 Yale Collection of American Literature,
 Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library
- Paul Strand, American, 1890–1976
 34* *Cobweb in the Rain, Georgetown, Maine*, 1927, printed 1976–77
 Toned gelatin silver print, 29.5 x 23.5 cm (11 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
 Gift of Michael E. Hoffmann. 1995.55.1.5
- Paul Strand, American, 1890–1976
 35 *Iris, Orgeval, France*, 1964
 Silver bromide print, 35.4 x 27.9 cm (13 $\frac{15}{16}$ x 11 in.)
 Gift of Lisa Rosenblum, B.A. 1975. 1988.98.2
- Jerry N. Uelsmann, American, born 1934
 36* *Untitled*, 1961
 Gelatin silver print, 20.3 x 15.7 cm (8 x 6 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
 Director's Discretionary Purchase Fund. 1972.58.6
- Jerry N. Uelsmann, American, born 1934
 37* *Untitled*, 1964
 Gelatin silver print, 33.8 x 25.1 cm (13 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{16}$)
 Director's Discretionary Purchase Fund. 1972.58.2
- Jack Welpott, American, born 1923
 38 *Eroded Rock, Pebble Beach near Pescadero*, 1963, printed 1969
 Gelatin silver print, 19.1 x 24.1 cm (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
 Gift of William A. Turnage, B.A. 1965,
 in honor of Mathilde Sewall. 1977.193.10
- Brett Weston, American, born 1911
 39 *Sand Dunes No. 1158*, 1936
 Gelatin silver print, 18.6 x 24.3 cm (7 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{9}{16}$ in.)
 Gift of Charles Seymour, Jr., B.A. 1935. 1964.62.2
- Brett Weston, American, born 1911
 40 *Sand Dunes*, 1948
 Gelatin silver print, 36.8 x 46.4 cm (14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
 Purchased with the aid of funds from
 the National Endowment for the Arts and the
 S. Sidney Kahn, B.A. 1959, Matching Fund. 1974.125.3
- Edward Weston, American 1886–1958
 41 *Shell*, 1927
 Gelatin silver print, 23.5 x 18.3 cm (9 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
 Gift of William A. Turnage, B.A. 1965. 1983.114.1
- Edward Weston, American, 1886–1958
 42 *Squash*, 1936
 Gelatin silver print, 19.4 x 24.4 cm (7 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.)
 Gift of Charles Seymour, Jr., B.A. 1935. 1964.62.1
- Minor White, 1908–1976
 43* *Two Waves and Pitted Rock*, 1952
 Gelatin silver print, 27.6 x 35.1 cm (10 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{13}{16}$ in.)
 S. Sidney Kahn, B.A. 1959, Fund. 1973.24.8
- Tom Zetterstrom, American, born 1945
 44 *Coast Oak*, 1991
 Gelatin silver print, 27.6 x 35.2 cm (10 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
 Purchased with a gift from J. Paul Oppenheim, B.A. 1929,
 Fund, by exchange. 1992.13.2

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