

















## CAMERA WORK :

An illustrated quarterly magazine devoted to Photography and to the activities of the Photo-Seession. Published and edited by

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## PHOTOGRAPHY\*

**P**HOTOGRAPHY, which is the first and only important contribution thus far, of science to the arts, finds its *raison d'être*, like all media, in a complete uniqueness of means. This is an absolute unqualified objectivity. Unlike the other arts which are really anti-photographic, this objectivity is of the very essence of photography, its contribution and at the same time its limitation. And just as the majority of workers in other media have completely misunderstood the inherent qualities of their respective means, so photographers, with the possible exception of two or three, have had no conception of the photographic means. The full potential power of every medium is dependent upon the purity of its use, and all attempts at mixture end in such dead things as the color-etching, the photographic painting and in photography, the gum-print, oil-print, etc., in which the introduction of hand work and manipulation is merely the expression of an impotent desire to paint. It is this very lack of understanding and respect for their material, on the part of the photographers themselves which directly accounts for the consequent lack of respect on the part of the intelligent public and the notion that photography is but a poor excuse for an inability to do anything else.

The photographer's problem therefore, is to see clearly the limitations and at the same time the potential qualities of his medium, for it is precisely here that honesty no less than intensity of vision, is the prerequisite of a living expression. This means a real respect for the thing in front of him, expressed in terms of *chiaroscuro* (color and photography having nothing in common) through a range of almost infinite tonal values which lie beyond the skill of human hand. The fullest realization of this is accomplished without tricks of process or manipulation, through the use of straight photographic methods. It is in the organization of this objectivity that the photographer's point of view toward Life enters in, and where a formal conception born of the emotions, the intellect, or of both, is as inevitably necessary for him, before an exposure is made, as for the painter, before he puts brush to canvas. The objects may be organized to express the causes of which they are the effects, or they may be used as abstract forms, to create an emotion unrelated to the objectivity as such. This organization is evolved either by movement of the camera in relation to the objects themselves or through their actual arrangement, but here, as in everything, the expression is simply the measure of a vision, shallow or profound as the case may be. Photography is only a new road from a different direction but moving toward the common goal, which is Life.

Notwithstanding the fact that the whole development of photography has been given to the world through **CAMERA WORK** in a form uniquely beautiful as well as perfect in conception and presentation, there is no real consciousness, even among photographers, of what has

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actually happened: namely, that America has really been expressed in terms of America without the outside influence of Paris art-schools or their dilute offspring here. This development extends over the comparatively short period of sixty years, and there was no real movement until the years between 1895 and 1910, at which time an intense rebirth of enthusiasm and energy manifested itself all over the world. Moreover, this renaissance found its highest aesthetic achievement in America, where a small group of men and women worked with honest and sincere purpose, some instinctively and few consciously, but without any background of photographic or graphic formulae much less any cut and dried ideas of what is Art and what isn't; this innocence was their real strength. Everything they wanted to say, had to be worked out by their own experiments: it was born of actual living. In the same way the creators of our skyscrapers had to face the similar circumstance of no precedent, and it was through that very necessity of evolving a new form, both in architecture and photography that the resulting expression was vitalized. Where in any medium has the tremendous energy and potential power of New York been more fully realized than in the purely direct photographs of Stieglitz? Where a more subtle feeling which is the reverse of all this, the quiet simplicity of life in the American small town, so sensitively suggested in the early work of Clarence White? Where in painting, more originality and penetration of vision than in the portraits of Steichen, Käsebier and Frank Eugene? Others, too, have given beauty to the world but these workers, together with the great Scotchman, David Octavius Hill, whose portraits made in 1860 have never been surpassed, are the important creators of a living photographic tradition. They will be the masters no less for Europe than for America because by an intense interest in the life of which they were really a part, they reached through a national, to a universal expression. In spite of indifference, contempt and the assurance of little or no remuneration they went on, as others will do, even though their work seems doomed to a temporary obscurity. The things they do remains the same; it is a witness to the motive force that drives.

The existence of a medium, after all, is its absolute justification, if as so many seem to think, it needs one and all, comparison of potentialities is useless and irrelevant. Whether a water-color is inferior to an oil, or whether a drawing, an etching, or a photograph is not as important as either, is inconsequent. To have to despise something in order to respect something else is a sign of impotence. Let us rather accept joyously and with gratitude everything through which the spirit of man seeks to an ever fuller and more intense self-realization.

PAUL STRAND.



## THE GEORGIA O'KEEFFE DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS AT "291"

WHILE gladly welcoming new words into our vocabulary, words which intensify and increase our sense of the complexity of modern life, it is often quite impossible not to regret the lapse of older, simpler ones, especially as such lapse implies that the meaning and force of the words has also become obsolete. I am thinking, in this connection, of a phrase much loved by Lionel Johnson: *the old magnalities*, and I feel sure he used it so often in the hope that others would not willingly let it die. But I have met with it in no other modern writer. Is it because it no longer has significance for us? Have the old magnalities indeed crumbled to dust and ashes, together with all sense of the sublime, the worshipful, and the prophetic? Is it no longer good form, in this avid and impatient age, to mention the things that are God's? Must all tribute, then, go to Caesar? These reflections are forced upon the contemplative mind, and one must take counsel with one's own self in meeting them. And it is in so communing that the consciousness comes that one's self is other than oneself, is something larger, something almost tangibly universal, since it is en rapport with a wholeness in which one's separateness is, for the time, lost.

Some such consciousness, it seems to me, is active in the mystic and musical drawings of Georgia O'Keeffe. Here are emotional forms quite beyond the reach of conscious design, beyond the grasp of reason—yet strongly appealing to that apparently unanalyzable sensitivity in us through which we feel the grandeur and sublimity of life.

In recent years there have been many deliberate attempts to translate into line and color the *visual* effect of emotions aroused by music, and I am inclined to think they failed just because they were so deliberate. The setting down of such purely mental forms escapes the conscious hand—one must become, as it were, a channel, a willing medium, through which this visible music flows. And doubtless it more often comes from unheard melodies than from the listening to instruments—from that true music of the spheres referred to by the mystics of all ages. Quite sensibly, there is an inner law of harmony at work in the composition of these drawings and paintings by Miss O'Keeffe, and they are more truly inspired than any work I have seen; and although, as is frequently the case with "given writings" and religious "revelations," most are but fragments of vision, incompleted movements, yet even the least satisfactory of them has the *quality* of completeness—while in at least three instances the effect is of a quite cosmic grandeur. Of all things earthly, it is only in music that one finds any analogy to the emotional content of these drawings—to the gigantic, swirling rhythms, and the exquisite tendernesses so powerfully and sensitively rendered—and music is the condition towards which, according to Pater, all art constantly aspires. Well, plastic art, in the hands of Miss O'Keeffe, seems now to have approximated that.

WM. MURRELL FISHER.







## PLATES

### PAUL STRAND

- I. Photograph—New York
- II. Photograph—New York
- III. Photograph—New York
- IV. Photograph—New York
- V. Photograph—New York
- VI. Photograph—New York
- VII. Photograph—New York
- VIII. Photograph—New York
- IX. Photograph
- X. Photograph
- XI. Photograph

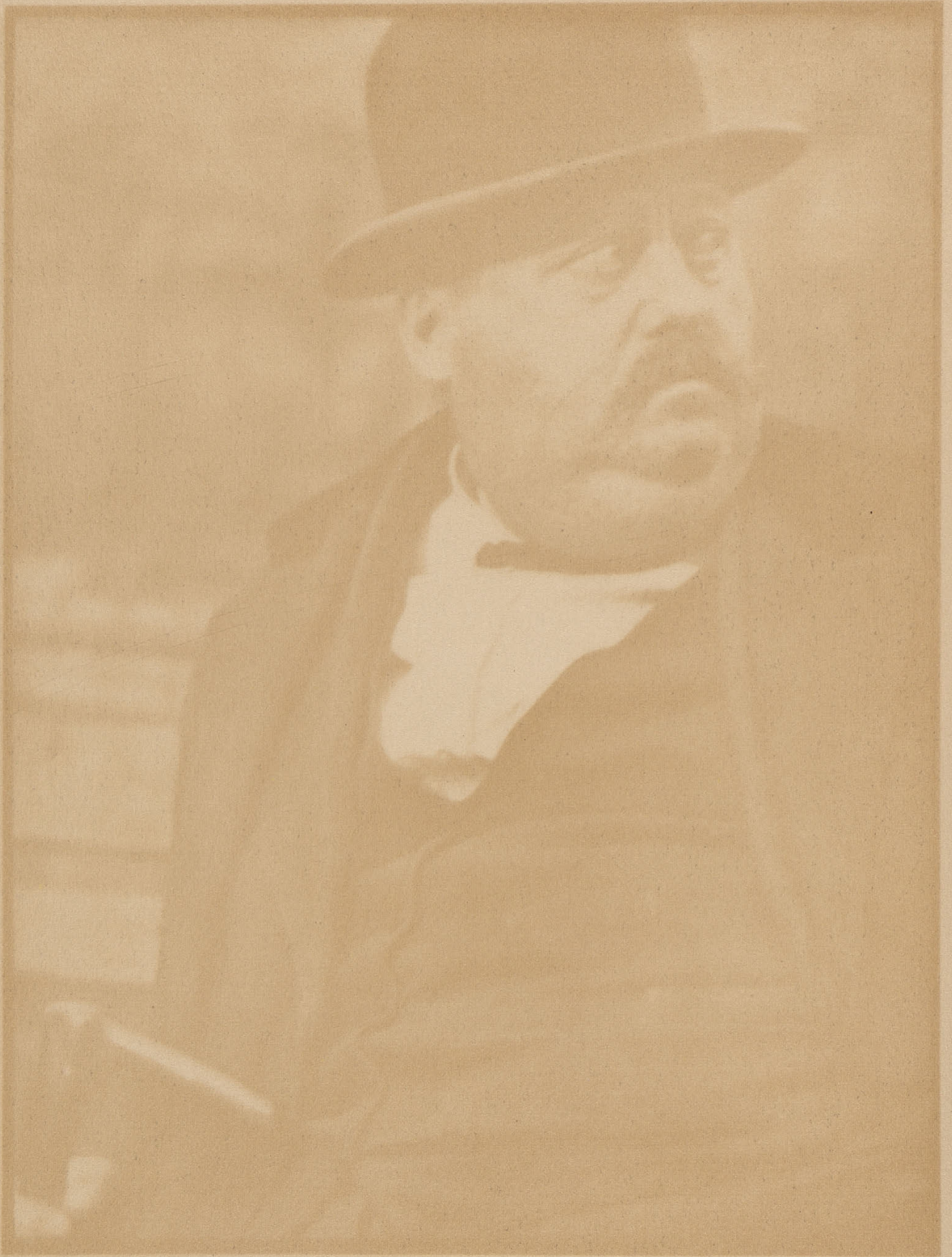




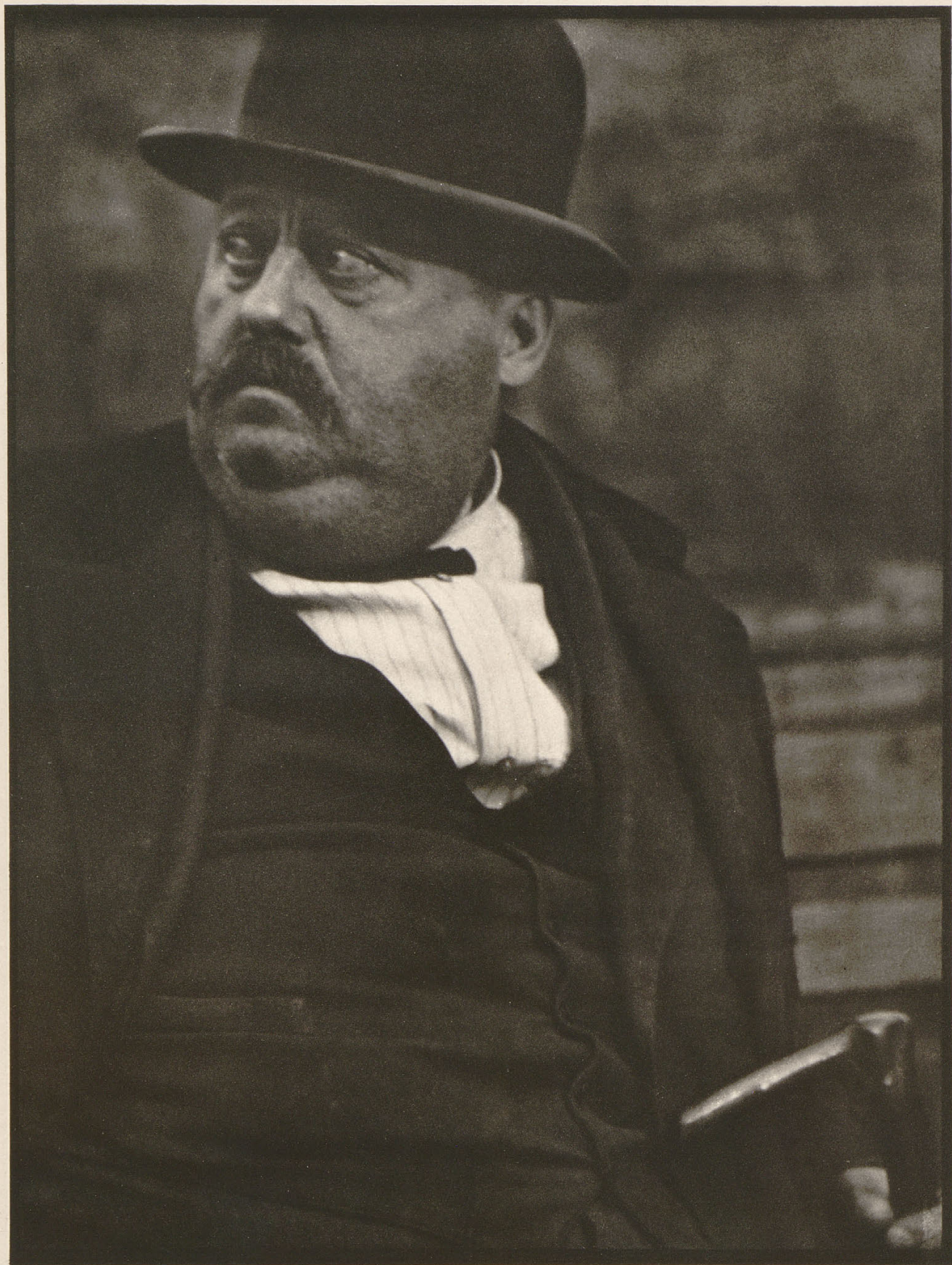
















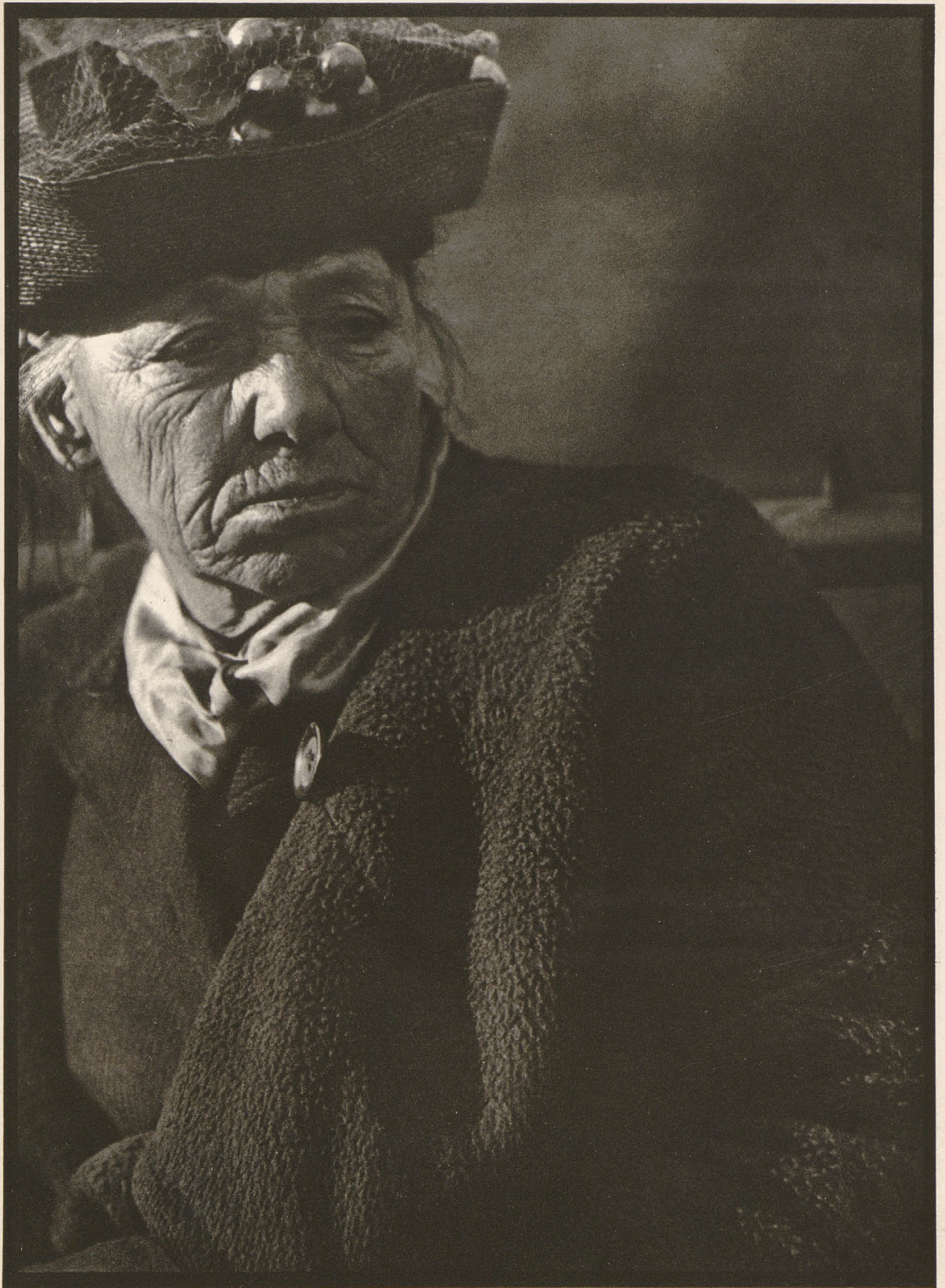












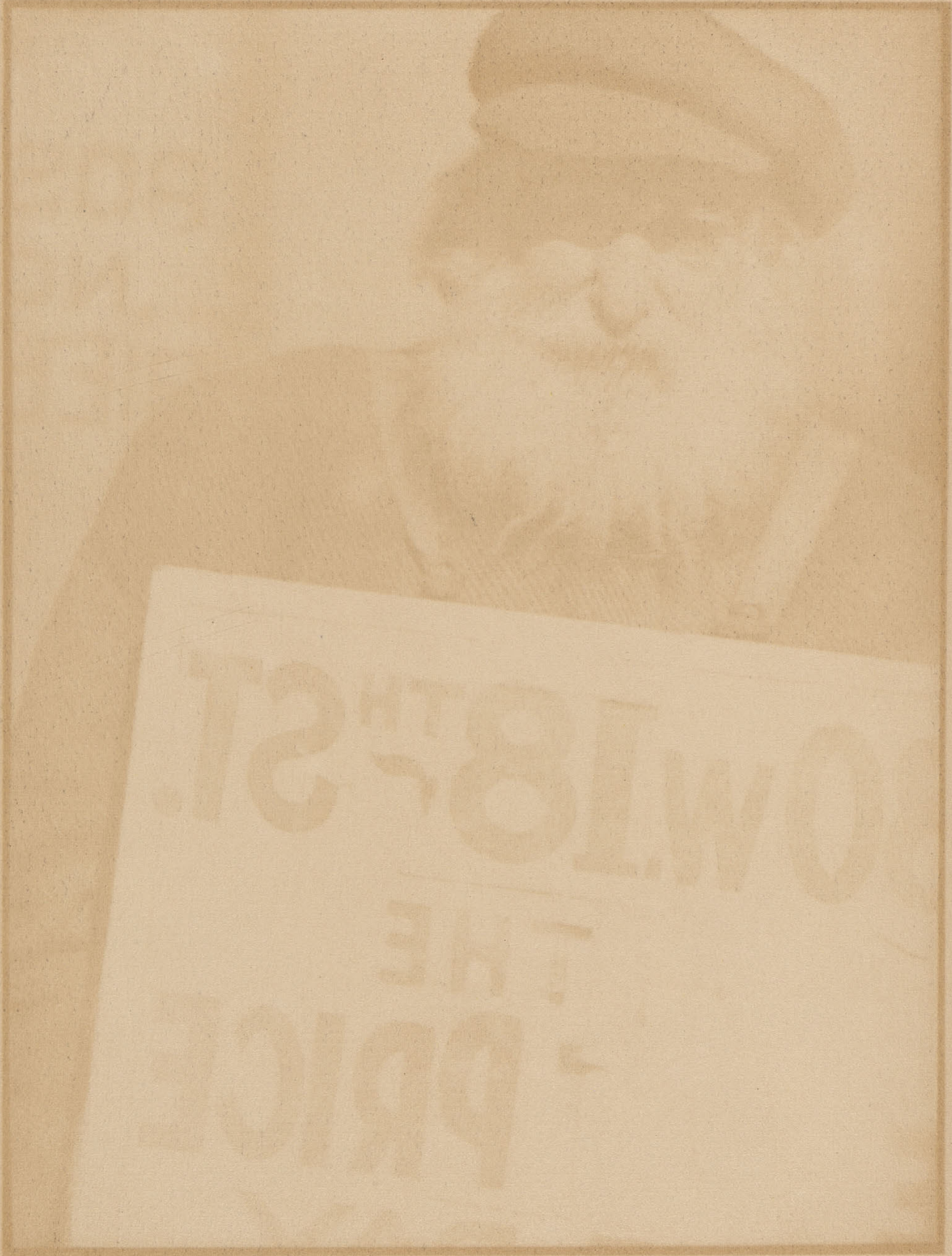






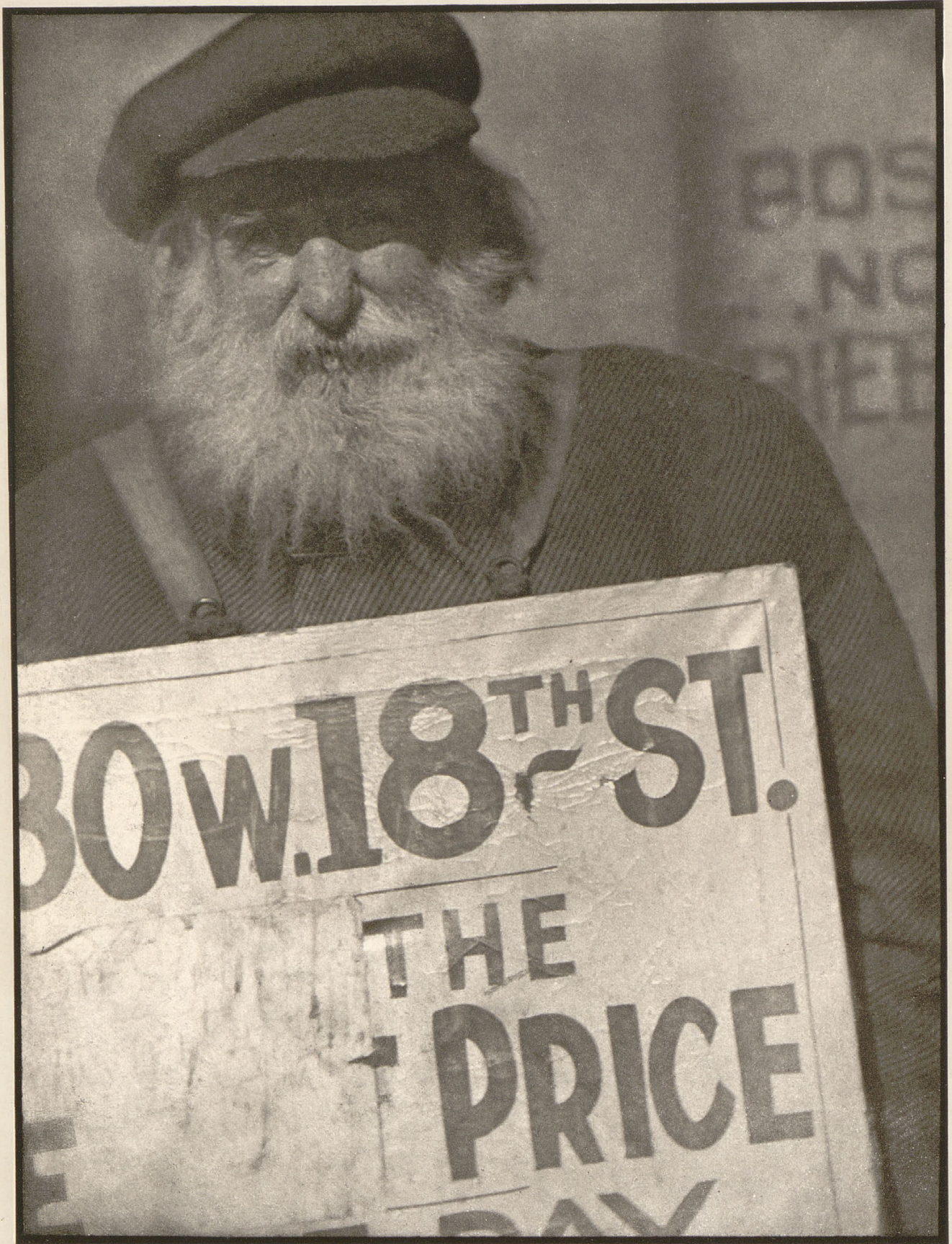






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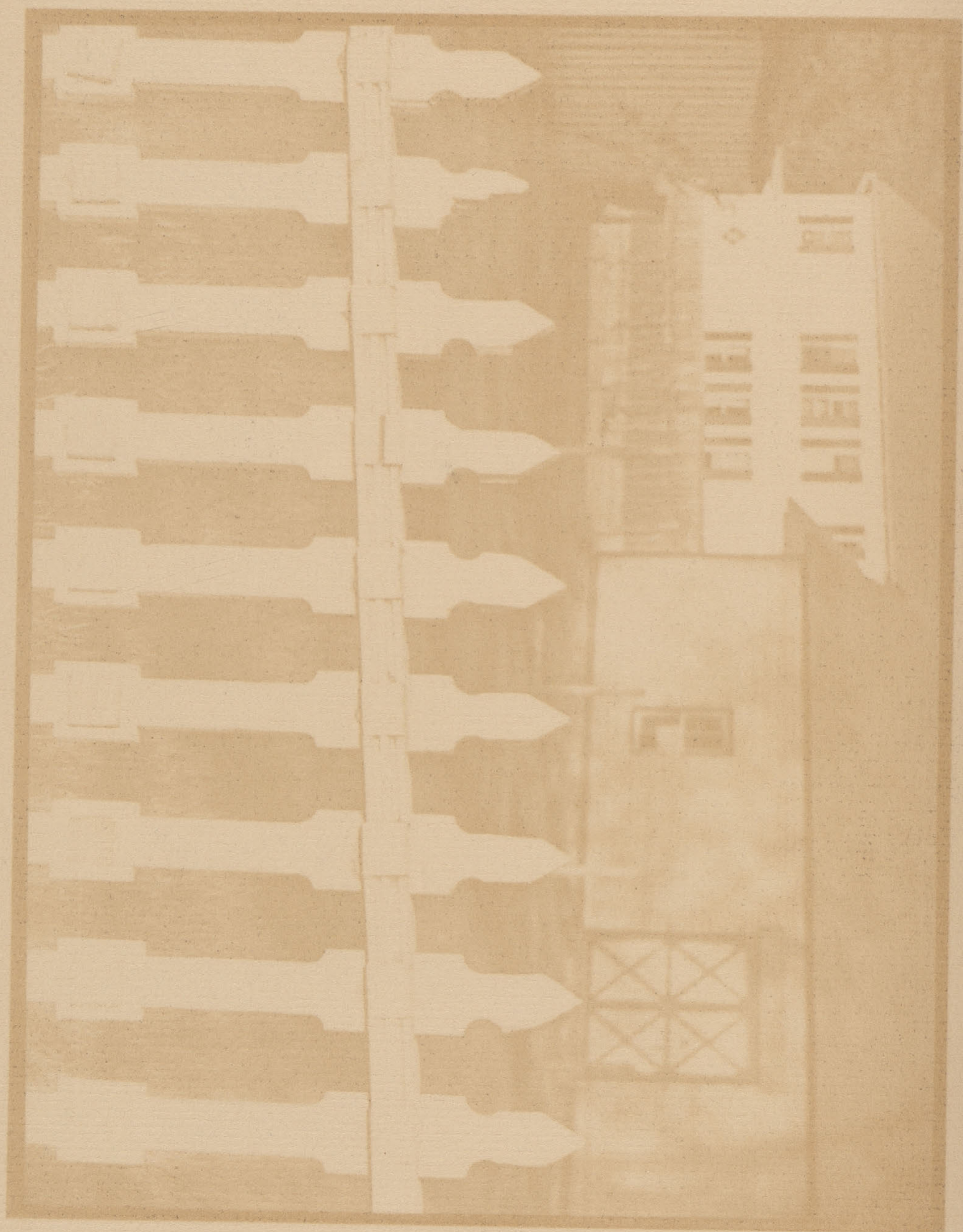




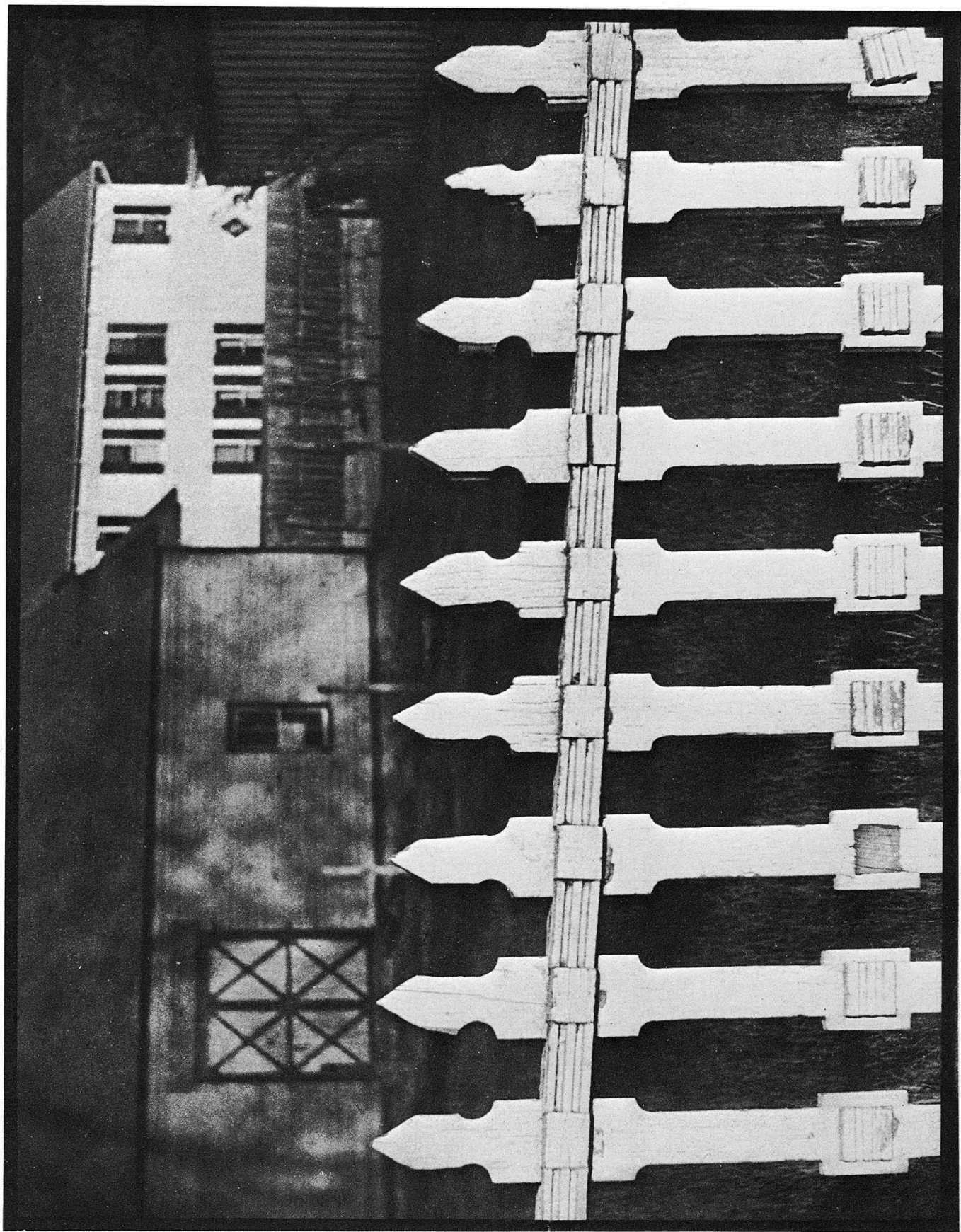










































## EXHIBITIONS AT "291"—SEASON 1916-1917

THE 1916-1917 season at "291" was a very comprehensive one. It began on November twenty-second with an exhibition of water-colors by Georgia S. Engelhard, of New York, a child of ten, unguided, untaught. The work included the complete evolution from her fourth to tenth year. A few examples of the earlier work had been shown before at "291" in the children's exhibitions held there in former years.

In co-relation with this Child Exhibition, hung in the main gallery, a representative group of paintings and drawings by Hartley, Marin, Walkowitz, Wright, Georgia O'Keeffe, was hung in the inner gallery.

Following the Child's Exhibition, an exhibition of Walkowitz's new work (Provincetown, Maine, Lake George, and New York) was held from December seventeenth, 1916, to January seventeenth, 1917.

Hartley followed with his Provincetown Series—recent work. The inner Gallery contained Hartley's complete evolution, 1908-1917.

Marin's most recent water-colors, "The Country of the Delaware, and Other Exercises" held the walls of both galleries from February fourteenth to March third.

Gino Severini, of Paris, one of the original Futurist Group, made his New York debut with an exhibition of drawings, pastels, water-colors, and oils at "291". The exhibition lasted from March sixth to March seventeenth.

From March twentieth to March thirty-first, S. Macdonald Wright's complete evolution, 1909-1917, occupied the galleries of "291." Water-colors, drawings, oil paintings, and a piece of statuary, were included in the exposition. Mr. Wright wrote the following foreword for this show:

"To those who approach the later phases of my work on view with mind pre-tuned to receive the same emotion found in the older work, nothing but confusion can come. These works have nothing in common with those which, like all other painting, are a sculptural expression dependent on definite association for their voluminous and spatial effects. Indeed, the last work is as fundamentally different from these as music is from oratory, and although the principles underlying both are identical, the mental attitude in which they were conceived has moulded the ultimate result into a form which gives a different emotion.

"My ambition is to create an art which stands half way between music and architecture and, in order to ascertain if I have in some degree succeeded, one should receive what pleasure the works are capable of giving in a state of mental relaxation.

S. MACDONALD-WRIGHT."

From April third to May fourteenth, Georgia O'Keeffe's new work—water-colors, drawings in charcoal, oils, and a piece of statuary, occupied the rooms of "291."

In the next number of CAMERA WORK we hope to introduce our readers to examples of Georgia O'Keeffe's work.



It had been planned to hold three more exhibitions during the season. The work for them was ready, but the exhibitions were unavoidably held over. The exhibitions referred to were: The New Work, Photographs, by Paul Strand; Photographic Portraits and A Series of Photographs taken out of the Back Window of "291", (covering ten years of work), by Alfred Stieglitz; Oil Paintings, recent work, by Alfred Maurer.

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Chas. H. Caffin in the "N. Y. American":

At the Photo-Secession Gallery, 291 Fifth avenue, is an exhibition of water-colors and drawings by Georgia S. Engelhard, a child of ten years old. She is described as "unguided, untaught"; that is to say, her parents and friends have kept her from any kind of direct teaching or criticism. They have permitted her instinct of self-expression to unfold freely, subject only to the suggestions of environment, which has included illustrated books and magazines, and occasional visits to the Metropolitan Museum. These pictures represent gleanings of her playwork from her fourth to her tenth year.

Clearly she is an exceptional child, which however does not imply that she differs from other children in kind, but in the degree in which her faculties of observation, reasoning and sensibility are intensified beyond the general wont of children. There are some paintings here that in such essentials of expression as color-harmony, space-composition, movement and even spiritual suggestion are as beautiful as need be. And they are complete, to the degree to which one may believe the concept to have been felt; and that degree will compare favorably with what is reached by the average adult artist.

For a child's will is the "wind's will" and the thoughts of a child are apt to be "long, long thoughts."

Free as the wind is the play of the spirit in some of these paintings, while others reach a depth of emotional expression that would be astonishing if one did not know the capacity of childhood to play with sadness. Others, again, reveal a largeness of feeling that is startling until one realizes that they were done at Lake George, where the child's instinct was in communion with the grandeur of nature.

And it is in its reaffirmation of the miracle of instinct; of the natural habit of the child's mind, before it is clipped and cribbed by convention, that this exhibition is so profoundly interesting. How it uncovers the potentialities of human nature, could it be allowed in Bergson's happy phrase, to recreate self by self; to evolve out of the mystery of itself in a free and truly sane environment! Also, what an irony it casts upon the world's methods of instruction: On the one hand, its steam-rolling of the individual to an average level, and, on the other, its pernicious forcing of culture.

The exhibition, in fact, teems with suggestive significance in many directions.

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Chas. H. Caffin, in the "N. Y. American":

An exhibition of paintings by S. Macdonald Wright is being held at the Photo-Secession Gallery, No. "291" Fifth avenue.

"A clean little show," is the phrase into which I found my net impression shaping itself. For, presented without preliminary drum-whacking or portentous enunciation of some new 'ism, it demonstrates a clear-cut purpose, the direction of which is as lucid as it is interesting. It illustrates, in fact, a chapter, seven years long, in an artist's investigations into certain principles of more abstract expression. And since this particular artist has a keen mentality, as well as subtle sensibility, the various processes of his evolution are revealed with an orderliness of growth that is very illuminating.



The earliest example, dated 1907, is "Adolescence," a half-length of a nude girl, one would say of Latin type, with black hair, large, dark eyes and warm, dusky flesh. Something of primitive grandeur and of the awe of the savage toward life seems to have attracted the artist in his subject, and he has interpreted it in the spirit of Gauguin, but perhaps with a richer sense of color and certainly with more plastic eloquence.

For he was headed already, one may suspect, toward Cézanne. At any rate, it was from Cézanne's preoccupation with the third dimension and with color relations, rather than from the patterned decorative art of Gauguin, that an artist of Wright's mind and temperament would discover more essential inspiration. Accordingly, in two colored drawings of 1911 and two still-lives in oil of the following year, we see him intent on mastering the principles of Cézanne's art; and he has employed them with results that are frankly reminiscent of the older man, yet personally distinguished.

Then follows a "Female Torso," a pencil drawing, far more personal; indeed, the first assertion here of the artist's directly personal bias toward abstraction of expression. His knowledge of form is as conspicuous as the exquisiteness of his craftsmanship; but both have been expended, not upon representing the form, but to make it the theme of a composition that shall impress one with the abstract beauty of volume, movement and rhythmic tone relations. To the enjoyment that one derives from it, the consciousness of the drawing being a nude figure is entirely secondary.

In the next step, illustrated in "Synchronic nude—violet—1913," Wright is experimenting for himself in principles of color; especially, it would seem, in the constructive possibilities of color; the properties of various colors that make them appear, respectively, to recede or advance from the plane on which they are laid, so that simply by juxtaposition of various colors a third dimensional composition can be built up. But at this stage of his researches his experiments seem to get no further than overlaying a figure with colors; he has not yet incorporated color into the structure of the figure.

Apparently conscious of this, he now begins a series of researches into abstract principles of construction. He studies how in nature form evolves out of some inner germ of life movement; the movement itself dictating the actual colors of evolving life and their direction in space. And both these principles of organic growth he strives to express with main reliance upon color relations.

In the few examples shown here one can trace a continued advance in organized control of the problem, until in "Synchrony in Orange, 1917," he translates into visibility the principle of organic growth in the crystal; how it multiplies itself in geometric forms, each transparent so that it projects from but does not obscure the miracle of underlying structure. Through the various surface colors one can see the blends of color, resulting from the convolutions of the forms.

This painting, beautiful as a decorative design, is also a remarkable contribution to the comprehension and appreciation of the principles of organic structure. It is a memorable achievement; full of promise of the artist's still further evolution; which, if I mistake not, will bring him back, reinforced with capacity of abstract expression, to the interpretation again of objective impressions.

Meanwhile, the exhibition is exceptionally valuable in its revelation of an artist's evolution, guided by reason and sensibility and by evident sincerity.

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Other criticisms of the 1916-1917 Exhibitions at "291" will appear in the next issue of CAMERA WORK.



## OUR ILLUSTRATIONS

**T**HIS number of CAMERA WORK is devoted entirely to the new work of Paul Strand. The last Number too was devoted, in part, to Strand's photographs. In it we wrote:

"No photographs had been shown at '291' in the interim, primarily because '291' knew of no work outside of Paul Strand's which was worthy of '291.' None outside of his had been done by any new worker in the United States for some years, and as far as is our knowledge none had been done in Europe during that time. By new worker, we do not mean new picture-maker. New picture-makers happen every day, not only in photography, but also in painting. New picture-makers are notoriously nothing but imitators of the accepted; the best of them imitators of, possibly at one time, original workers. For ten years Strand quietly had been studying, constantly experimenting, keeping in close touch with all that is related to life in its fullest aspect; intimately related to the spirit of '291.' His work is rooted in the best traditions of photography. His vision is potential. His work is pure. It is direct. It does not rely upon tricks of process. In whatever he does there is applied intelligence. In the history of photography there are but few photographers who, from the point of view of expression, have really done work of any importance. And by importance we mean work that has some relatively lasting quality, that element which gives all art its real significance."

The eleven photogravures in this number represent the real Strand. The man who has actually done something from within. The photographer who has added something to what has gone before. The work is brutally direct. Devoid of all flim-flam; devoid of trickery and of any "ism;" devoid of any attempt to mystify an ignorant public, including the photographers themselves. These photographs are the direct expression of today. We have reproduced them in all their brutality. We have cut out the use of the Japan tissue for these reproductions, not because of economy, but because the tissue proofs we made of them introduced a factor which destroyed the directness of Mr. Strand's expression. In their presentation we have intentionally emphasized the spirit of their brutal directness.

The eleven pictures represent the essence of Strand.

The original prints are 11 x 14.

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### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER\*

" . . . . I have not received CAMERA WORK for a very long time, probably due to the war, censorship, etc., etc., . . . . The older I grow the more I appreciate what you have accomplished with your very wonderful publication. When I see you I shall be delighted to tell you, how largely the possession of CAMERA WORK has helped me in my work as a teacher, and what an incentive it has always been to my pupils toward a higher standard. It does that for the man with the camera, what the Bible has, more or less vainly, for centuries, tried to do for the man with a conscience. . . . ."

FRANK EUGENE SMITH"

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\*Frank Eugene Smith, generally known as Frank Eugene, and who is an American, is Professor of Pictorial Photography at the Royal Fine Arts Academy, Graphic Department, in Leipsic, Germany. This letter was written on November 17, 1916, and was addressed to Alfred Stieglitz.



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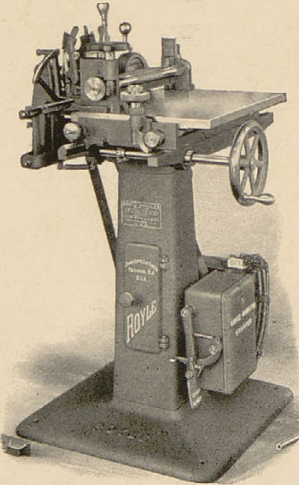
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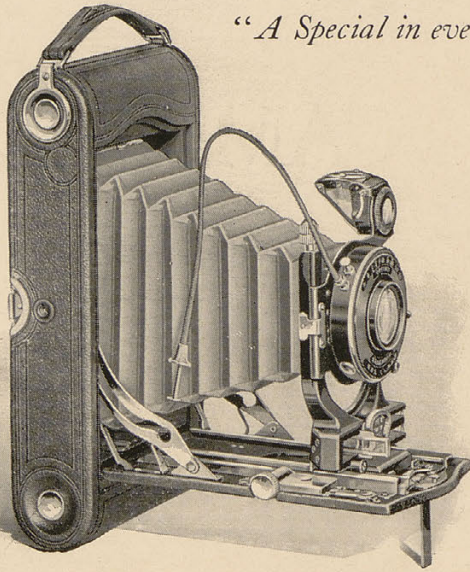
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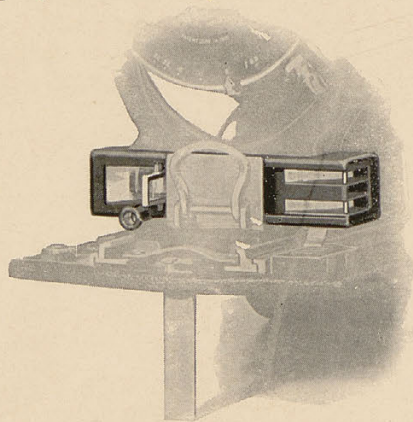
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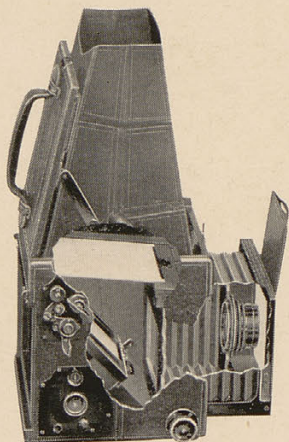


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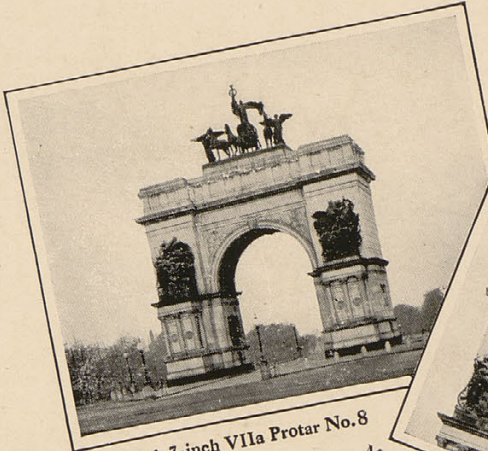
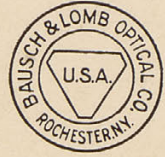
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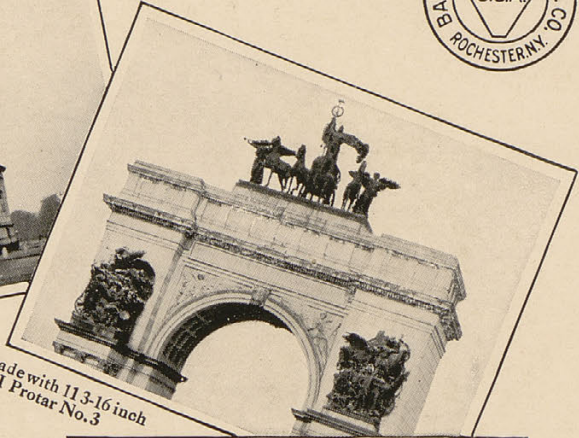
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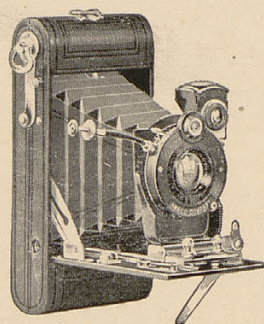
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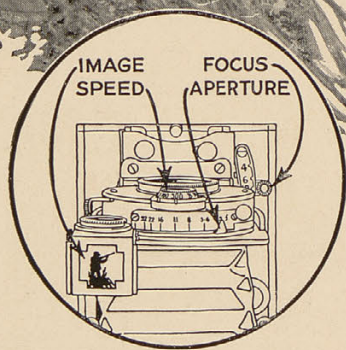
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