

THE INVITATION*

It is conceded we believe that photography has achieved a new significance in the last few years. That is, that through its use an object may be produced as significant as that which has been called Art.

Would you like to say something on the subject? We are under the impression that you have given it some thought. "Manuscripts" proposes to devote a number to that question. It is inviting the following persons to write not more than 600 words: Sherwood Anderson, Walter Arensberg, Thomas H. Benton, Ernest Bloch, Oscar Bluemner, Stephan Bourgeois, Van Wyck Brooks, Gilbert Cannan, Benjamin De Casseres, Charles Chaplin, Thomas Jewell Craven, Elizabeth Davidson, Charles Demuth, Marius De Zayas, Arthur G. Dove, Marcel Duchamp, Charles Duncan, Alfeo Faggi, Waldo Frank, Wallace Gould, D. W. Griffith, Hutchins Hapgood, Oliver Herford, J. B. Kerfoot, Gaston Lachaise, Walter Lippmann, John Marin, Kenneth Hayes Miller, George F. Of, Georgia O'Keeffe, Leo Ornstein, Joseph Pennell, Carl Sandburg, Cyril K. Scott, Evelyn Scott, Charles Sheeler, Leo Stein, S. Macdonald Wright, Carl Zigrosser. Everything submitted will be printed Unedited. Could you let us have your response not later than August 15 and as much earlier as possible. Kindly send your communications to Paul Strand (For "Manuscripts"), 314 West 83rd Street, New York City.

Note.—Although "Manuscripts" is published at the expense of the authors of the writing which appears in it, in this case the publishing will be done at the expense of a special fund.

* Writers who had put themselves on record in regard to photography, as well as photographers, were not invited.

THE RESPONSES

DEAR STIEGLITZ:

Even a few words I don't feel like writing.

You know exactly what I think about photography. I would like to see it make people despise painting until something else will make photography unbearable.

There we are.

Affectueusement.

MARCEL DUCHAMP.

(Painter, Chess Expert, French Teacher, and Type Expert.)

New York, May 22, 1922.

Letter One:

12-7-1922.

To the "Editor Manuscripts":

SIRS:

Photography is not an Art—no longer even a science—but the refuge of incapables—anxious to grab the money artless duffers make by boiling out

The New Art

made in Germany, mostly by Russian Jews, and what is unsalable there gets, like its makers, to New York—and is taken seriously by fools here.

Yours,

JOSEPH PENNELL.

I have not seen your magazine but I suppose the literature comes out of the same can—as it does in Europe—whence I have just returned.

Letter Two:

26-7-22

DEAR SIR:

I have seen but not attempted to read Manuscripts, it is more inane, artless and vulgar in its appearance than I could have imagined.

Yours,

JOSEPH PENNELL.



May 24th, 1922.

DEAR SIR:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your esteemed favor of recent date.

Mr. Chaplin appreciates your compliment in inviting him to contribute to your magazine but cannot definitely pledge himself to accede, his time being so much taken up now and in the near future with his own special work.

You will therefore, I am sure, pardon him from any promises at present. He asks me to thank you.

Yours faithfully,

ALFRED REENE.
(Secretary to Mr. Chaplin.)

Photography is the most recent addition to the family of the visual arts. Although the perfection of its technique by Wedgwood, Sir Humphrey Davy, Niépce, Daguerre, Talbot and others occurred less than a century ago, the process in all its ramifications has entered more intimately into our lives than almost any other branch of the graphic arts. One need mention only the moving picture and the photograph album or the application of photography to the reproductive processes, without which our illustrated books and newspapers would not be what they are today, its use in connection with astronomy and oceanography, with the X-ray and the microscope, as well as its usefulness to the state in criminal records and the omnipresent passports—one need mention only a few of these to demonstrate how thoroughly it has filtered through our present-day civilization.

Photography, as an art for itself, has passed through various stages of experimentation, of commercialization, and of creative mastery. It is foolish to maintain that photography can never become an art because of the mechanical elements inherent in the process. If one does so, one must logically banish engraving, etching, woodcutting, and lithography also, for they, too, make use of mechanical aids, and are capable of indefinite reproduction. Many of the old woodcuts and engravings which we so admire as works of art, were to a certain extent commercial reproductions in their own day. A photograph is as much a "print" as an etching or a lithograph. The essential element in every case is the conscious use of common materials by the human mind and imagination. One might define a work of art as something that "wears well"; it has become endowed, as it were, with a life of its own by reason of which one can come back to it again and again with renewed interest. There are photographs by recognized masters that have this singing quality of perfection as obviously and definitely as any etching or woodcut.

George Moore somewhere speaks of the baneful

effect that increased facility for travel and communication between peoples may have on art. One is tempted to enlarge on this and speculate on the effect that photography through such applications as the line-block, the half-tone, the photogravure, the collotype and the photolithograph will have on the art-student. A veritable deluge of reproductions of art-works of every possible kind from five continents, is being manufactured today, and it would take a very strongly self-centered artistic nature to assimilate all or even part of it without ill effect. Indeed one man has gone so far as to say that the invention of the collotype has ruined more potential artists than anything else he knew of. Formerly one made a pilgrimage to a country or a city to study its works of art; it took time and leisure and a novitiate of preparation. Nowadays one can virtually visit a new country each day by buying an illustrated book. However, as Daumier said, "Il faut être de son temps": we must attempt to digest and not to reject this phase as well as every other of our mechanical civilization.

The possibilities of photography are far from being exhausted. Its technique will continue to be perfected. New masters will find in it a medium of expression. We accept photography, like so many of our modern inventions, as a matter of course, without reflecting how truly miraculous the process is. One might address it without exaggeration in the terms of Leonardo da Vinci's famous apostrophe to the human eye: "Who would believe that so small a space could contain the images of all the universe. O mighty process!! . . . What tongue can unfold so great a wonder. Verily, none!"

CARL ZIGROSSER.
(Print Expert and Writer, New York.)

June 5th, 1922.

DEAR STIEGLITZ:

The delay in acknowledging the circular letter signed by you, concerning the proposed number of "Manuscripts" to be devoted to an expression of opinions upon photography, has not been through neglect but rather from a desire to consider further the possibility of my participation.

My conclusions are that, in as far as I am concerned, it is better to leave the matter in the hands of the literary folk. This should not be mistaken for apathy toward the subject, but rather that in selecting the camera I have chosen the medium through which, I believe, I can best express my opinions concerning photography.

For me it would be like the fish who, wishing to demonstrate his pleasure in a seafaring life, came out on the beach.

I shall however, await impatiently the appearance of this issue of "Manuscripts."

Best wishes,

Sincerely,

CHARLES SHEELER.
(Painter and Photographer, New York.)

118 East King Street,
Lancaster, Pa.

DEAREST STIEGLITZ:

Just a line in the heat and, in other things as trying, to tell you . . . that I am working a bit,—My old age has started,—at least, middle period. It's great fun. Sorry couldn't do something for MSS. about camera. Couldn't,—very little left after I do my daily (sometimes, now), weekly, painting.

Love,

DEMUTH.
(Painter.)

The "Handbook of the Museum of Fine Arts" in Boston is a compact little volume of 447 pages filled with half-tone engravings of the works of painters and sculptors, makers of pottery, jewelry and chaste and beloved wares of many kinds. Accompanying the engravings is an informative text. Altogether it is a valuable book that delivers in its small compass a vast amount of work worth while from men who brooded over forms and mysteries they found surrounding them in life. It is a splendidly companionable book.

On page 399 is a section title, "Library and Collection of Photographs." In the two pages following we are told that "the collection of photographs is an important adjunct of the Library." We are told also that "the collection now contains about fifty thousand photographs representing the art of all times and countries." As we think about it we come to understand that this is a valuable service, that as an instrument serving a community these photographs should be there—as information—to help art and science in the community.

It is significant, however, that the Boston Museum's handbook contains no other references to photographs. So far as the Boston Museum is concerned photographs are only conveyors of information, reproducers in a degree of facsimile of the work of artists who employed other mediums than photography for the purposes of art. If there are photographs which in themselves are works of art in the Boston Museum they are not mentioned in the handbook. It seems that either the authorities and directors of the Boston Museum do not believe there is an art employing firstly and solely the camera and the photographic print. Or else these authorities and directors have not been able to obtain specimens of such an art for installation in the Boston Museum.

There are times when prophecy is not difficult. It is easy to prophecy that sometime the Boston Museum will have a wall or a room or a section devoted to photographs as such, ipso facto, pro bono publico, without apologies nor explanations, a Stieglitz handling of a New York railroad yard on a misty winter morning, a Steichen nocturne of the Flatiron Building in blue mist, a Coburn portrait etched with an anxious fumbling of quivering print paper and cabalistic chemicals with a million secrets where crayons have one.

Quite so. This may be. Prophecy is easy. Making camera and photographic paper murmur and writhe with some of the elusive quality of life that runs through a Rembrandt or Whistler picture is an employment whose products belong where the products of Rembrandt and Whistler belong. The authorities and directors of the Boston Museum of Art are sure to learn this. Either the present authorities and directors will learn this while they are alive. Or when they are no longer alive there will be authorities and directors after them who will casually and easily remark some day that it is preposterous, absurd and beyond belief that the Boston assemblage of the visible forms that constitute the heritage of art should be lacking products of a medium as slippery, evasive and subtle as music and light, as hard, glinting and fixed as gleams of bronze.

CARL SANDBURG.
(Poet and Journalist, Chicago.)

As a means of subjective expression, photography is the equivalent of music, literature,—painting. In scope, it is more deeply interpretative than any other medium. A tool in the hands of trained sensitiveness, the camera unfolds the most complete psychic analysis possible of human reactions; relationships of thought, action and form otherwise undefined.

There are countless photographic masterpieces expressing these intricate, momentary phases of an underlying universal reality. Seeing them is a new elucidating experience for the student of life and art. One finds in the best photographic portraiture revelations of the conflict of human instincts. A profound clarification of impulse is written in each contour. Shades of thought and living light quality build up the planes of pictorial expansion into something gripping the roots of the unconscious world, bringing one face to face with facts for which most people seek channels of escape. Taboos and weaknesses are unmercifully exposed. Again, vibrant courage or delicacy may predominate in the forms and spaces of the photograph. Hands reach forth gently. Hands clutch with selfish power . . . tenacity . . . sometimes elemental, maternal; the theme developed from hands to face, to background, to garments. Resonant repetitions play on the awakening receptivity of the observer. Withal, when presented in a grandly impersonal way, these photographs are a characterization of the only method of approach by which Truth can be given to the world.

In landscape photography, a tree form, rain-drops, clear sunlight, all experiences of the outer world, are brought closer to the senses; transmitted, so that the inner eye becomes alive through photographic readings. A finely organized individual, conscious of embryonic life, symbolic rhythms, atmospheric prophecies, can convey to others perhaps not yet as deeply aware of the encircling world and their own personal directions, an acid truthfulness, a message of forceful penetration.

Photographs taken in this spirit of dynamic analysis seem to undergo changes synonymous with those of the person studying them, who after repeated viewings, and while growing even along different lines to more perfected knowledge, finally arrives at the full content of the message projected by the Artist's completely ripened vision.

We are told that the sage, meditating with steadfast purpose in the wilderness, achieves emotional poise, . . . spiritual clarity and the root simplicity of all relationships. In terms of modern chaos, another fathoming of the wilderness, Alfred Stieglitz has achieved the same realizations, his photographs bearing witness to the intensity of his search.

ELIZABETH DAVIDSON.
(A Person, Mamaroneck, N. Y.)

A THOUGHT HAZARDED

Eventually the distinction that separates photography from the more subjectively attained means of expression, which in case of intense crystallization becomes known as Art, may disappear. A powerful man's control of the camera machine and of the material apprehended by his mind as objective and external and to be fused into a subjective concept may become such that he can achieve through them an essential fusion equal in symbol-value and in its provocation of ecstasy to much that goes unquestioned as art. Once only poetry could become art, not prose. The whole classical tradition of aesthetic excluded the factual domain. Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle regarded as material for art only an essentialized conventionalized Past World, that they believed had never been in fact. The human spirit that in those days was unable to make aesthetic form, let us say, from the contemporary life of a village peasant, later won that power. Today, the human spirit, working through men like Stieglitz and Strand, lifts the significance of the details of a human face into a momentary articulation of the subjective will that a machine can capture and sustain.

The work of Stieglitz is more than half upon his subject and this fact brings clearer the old intuitive mechanism. By talk, atmosphere suggestion and the momentum of a personal relationship, Stieglitz lifts the features and body of his subject into a unitary design that his plate records. His work in thus *moulding* material is analogous to the work of any good portraitist, who does his moulding in his eye and with his hand on canvas. It is an equally intuitive and meta-conscious act. And similarly (as with the "inspiration" of the painter) when the subject is fused to a response with Stieglitz the photograph is good; otherwise it is dead (like, for that matter, the majority of paintings).

This is a suggestion of how photography may possibly become significant by the deep unity of its methods with those of any "art." A man's hand is a phylogenetic acquisition. The camera may later be regarded in a domain of which the

biological is a mere dimension as an Organ also created and controlled by will.

This, however, is sure: the man who believes that what we call Art today limits the infinitude of possible means for the achievement of the ecstasy of art is a barbarian. Stieglitz's work may be close in the pattern of analogous perspectives to that of the first man who articulated music with his vocal chords, or who guided in his half-strange hand a flint across a slab of slate.

WALDO FRANK.
(Author, Darien, Conn.)

DEAR MR. STIEGLITZ:

. . . I wish I understood more clearly as to what you wish me to write regarding photography. Frankly, while I am intensely interested in it, I yet do not feel that I have either sufficient knowledge or comprehension of the subject to really write about it. Unfortunately I find it very difficult to express myself in words, at best, but particularly in a sphere where I have nothing but my instincts to guide me, I feel extremely uncertain in expressing an opinion.

I can't but express my sincere admiration and amazement at the terrific strides you have made and at the originality of your work. After looking at your pictures my whole conception of the art of photography has become revolutionized, for in your work photography has now assumed an intrinsic value, which I have never before been able to find. In your hands it has now assumed a significance which contributes towards a new mode of expression altogether. . . .

LEO ORNSTEIN.
(Composer and Pianist.)

Nothing more is necessary to constitute something a work of art in the limited and habitual sense of the word, than that we should have a feeling of stability in the contemplation of it. A work of art may be fugitive in character like fireworks, and yet our interest in it may have, for the passing moment, that character of stability. On the other hand, to things that are merely pretty or pleasant, the notion of stability of interest hardly applies. The question of artistic value in photographs, as in all other forms of expression, is of this stability. Can photographs have it in the sense in which good paintings have it?

Of course the only real test of such value which is worth more than immediate impression, is the persistence of interest in the revival of the impression. That pictures can be interesting in this way is undoubted. Time will show whether photographs can be so also. I do not want to express an opinion on the subject as I have seen no photographs for several years, but I should like to discuss some of the qualities that make pictures good, and to consider whether photographs can have these qualities.

A painting of a natural object, a landscape, a portrait, a still-life, need differ in no essential way from the object as it can be directly seen. It

must however differ very markedly from the object as it is *usually* seen. This artistic vision may with some persons be natural, but where it is not so, it can be learned. As I did not come by it naturally but found out how to get it with deliberate purpose, I can explain the process.

If I want to look at a landscape pictorially, and I shall take for an instance a bit of landscape that is not in the ordinary sense picturesque, I shall have to get its planes adjusted. A picture, in so far as there is not the effect of deception, differs from the natural object as commonly seen, in the arrangement of its planes. Other things being equal, a picture is, to a cultivated taste, more satisfactory when the planes are not too numerous, are fairly flat, and are massed, rather than remote from each other. In short, values of recession and distance should be reduced to planes which are compact.

This reduction of planes in looking at natural objects, can be deliberately effected by educating the control of one's visual focus. One can learn to look at a landscape or at an object on one's table without a wandering focus of attention. This is done, not by trying to hold the muscles of the eye immovably fixed, which is impossible and would be injurious if attempted, but by keeping some particular plane in the scene as the purposed center for seeing all the rest. The particular center chosen is a matter of taste and cultivated practice.

The result of looking at a landscape, a person, or an inanimate object in this way, is to reduce its planes to order, and also to compress them. The chosen plane is one on which the others rally. They become flattened and pressed together without a sacrifice of values of distance. In fact to have accomplished this simple feat, is to have *made* a picture without either painting, drawing or photography, and no great genius is required for the making of extraordinarily good pictures.

The ordinary photograph is a picture made with monocular vision. I have practiced little with monocular vision, but I suppose that it would offer certain advantages. In binocular vision on near objects, the planes in front of the chosen focal plane tend to be seen stereoscopically, or may even double up. In monocular vision this difficulty is avoided, so that freedom in the choice of focal plane is practically infinite. That the constitution of the arabesque is sufficiently within the range of photography is obvious, and since it can add to this, control of the focus, it would seem as though the photographic art was as possible, as it, apparently, is actual.

LEO STEIN.

(Philosopher, Settignano, Florence, Italy.)

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CAMERA

It is a commonplace by now that the enormous development of machinery has played old Harry with the mind and the art of two generations. The machine remains triumphant and neither the decadence of the nineties nor the intellectualism of the last twenty years is any answer to it. You

cannot see the twentieth century with the eye of the eighteenth; hence the blindness of modern artists and thinkers and their severance from the life of the people. The position of art would be desperate but for the camera-men, those who, like Stieglitz, understood that a seeing machine was necessary and further that it was no use trying to force this machine to see like the eighteenth-century eye. It would see machines as the untrained human eye could not. It could instruct the human eye and mind. It could and does produce art, healthy in the plastic tradition—from bushmen's drawings down to the cinema.

As one would expect this enormous discovery has taken place in America where there are two paramount artists, Alfred Stieglitz and Charles Chaplin, who through the camera have created a technique which no artist in any medium can ignore. The photographs of Stieglitz and Chaplin's films compel a readjustment of ocular (and therefore of plastic) traditions and with that a new order of creative technique altogether, a technique wildly and incoherently anticipated by William Blake, but then Blake's eye was remarkably like Stieglitz's lens. "The eye," "sees more than the heart knows,"

until the eye was fortified with the camera that Blake's truth could be demonstrated. That has been done triumphantly and with the light heartedness that accompanies every first-rate achievement which changes and develops life. The old Artists (with a very large A) are still pursuing the vulgar mediocre aspirations of the heart, while the new technicians (with a very small t) are concerned with the knowledge of the eye. They have the material, the skill and the mind of the people is with them. Their opponents have the rags that are left of medieval splendour, boring and meaningless. The fight is so one-sided as not to be a fight at all. The new mind, the new eye are far too busy to do anything but ignore the old.

GILBERT CANNAN.

(Novelist, Playwright and Journalist, London.)

When I think of my experiences in photography, there looms up in my mind my room in Paris. The walls were covered with Daguerrotypes and old fashioned photos of my family and their friends. They were good company, and certainly better than many people who came to see me. Simple, straightforward, some of them a little vain, but all unafraid. I never thought by looking at them, how the thing was done, how they could be so real, so concrete. Yes, those men and women must have been just like that—they must have acted in such and such a way, and even if it was something ridiculous they did or thought, they did it unconsciously, without attempt to make an impression on the possible spectator. The perfect spontaneity of their behavior made their charm.

Unfortunately I have only a few of these early photos, and would be glad to exchange most of the other so-called likenesses, with which my friends have bombarded me, in order that I

should not forget them, against some of the old-fashioned products.

What happened to photography or to the people in the last 30 years? God only knows.

Were they afraid of the glass-eye which was looking at them so inquisitively? Probably it was so. In any case they tried to be something else, they were in reality. Look at all the beautified ladies, at innumerable genius, superman and stars—everybody on the stage—nobody true to himself.

Even the children had to behave themselves before the camera. I see myself again as a boy in my Sunday clothes, an iron rod behind the neck, stiff like a stick. Please smile—One, two, three—ouff—the torture is over. The result is of course correspondingly.

In order to cover his trail, the photographer puts a charming veil over the whole—light effects, romantic melodrama, sfumato a la Lionardo, smoke screens a la Whistler and other paraphernalia of staging.

What a beautified world—fundamentally insincere. Everything liquid—nothing concrete!

Let us put back the posing actors into their boxes, where they slept before.

But perhaps do I generalize a little too much. I should not forget the serious efforts of the few, who are interested in the representation of the truth. I see again pass before my mind the exhibition of the Comedie humaine at the Anderson Galleries. Yes there are men, who strike again at the root of things.

Are they making art? Why compare? Why decide? Cannot Photography be something good, valuable and fine in itself? Would it not be better, to find out what a Photographer can do with his instrument?

Here is the camera, a mechanism, which reproduces the functioning of the eye—not of the brain behind it. The eye registers reality reflected by light. The brain sees more. Here is the limitation of the camera. It sees the effect, but not the cause.

But granted, it cannot render more than the effect—life externally reflected and arrested in its continuity—it can give marvelous results inside its possibilities. And these possibilities are the registering of life in all its potentialities.

Here enters the photographer. He selects the moment, when the miracle happens and lets the camera seize it en passant. More clear the form, better the representation of the event.

To perceive the fleeting moment, the photographer must have intuition—he must be an artist. To tear off the mask from our faces, he must be human. To extract from his material its highest possibilities of tonal solidity he must be a workman.

STEPHAN BOURGEOIS.
(Art Dealer, New York.)

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE NEW LITERATURE

Esthetic emotion has been called the useless emotion. Such a dictum is the inevitable result of all but the profoundest art study. Indeed few artists, if asked, would be able to tell wherein lies the value of that which produces the esthetic emotion, for they believe art to be an end in itself! The study of works done by these self-styled "uplifters" and "beautifiers" would easily lead one to agree with William James that the esthetic emotion *is* useless; granting, it is understood, that these works are productive of that emotion. Needless to say we consider this emotion important enough to make us search for a more viable and deep-seated cause. Such works as those mentioned could not set it in motion. Rather is it motivated by a work that impels one who is not only sensitive but capable of re-creating it, to penetrate the interrelationship of form and idea, to recognize the resolution of the parts into harmony, and to feel the plastic development which finally flows into the complete natural balance of unity. As such it is the most useful of all emotions for it is the means to the end of that which is an end in itself—philosophical thought.

As art, which leads us to thought as well as feeling, is useful, the medium of such an art is also useful, for it is part of the art itself, and if we can say that literature is an art, we must more than admit, we must proclaim, hoping that some craftsman of the new literature will take heed, that photography is its medium.

As painting intensified expression of sculpture (the sculptural impulse having dominated all painting as it was originally conceived), so literature will be reborn to a greater avatar and a more concentrated expression when it uses the moving picture as its medium.

The stupidity of the photo-drama as it is produced today should not blind us to its possibilities as an art any more than when gazing at magazine covers we should deny Rubens. As bad as these plays are from the standpoint of literature, some of them are beautiful as photography; as ridiculously directed as most seem to be, we can definitely perceive in many instances the art impulse of the photographer. The medium is stronger than that which utilizes it. It is out-running the ignorance of those who employ it.

Some years ago any man who could turn a crank and who had done a little retouching was a camera-man (a really beautiful and descriptive hyphenation) but today the best producers vaguely realize the necessity of intelligent photographers. As photo-literature evolves, with the slowly growing consciousness of the new medium and its infinite possibilities, photography will be recognized as the co-worker of the author. These two will make up the art.

As to pioneer work with the camera—its greatest lineage can be traced in "Camera Work." As

to my personal experience in sensing a medium in photography, I have seen pictures by Alfred Stieglitz, that, had I been a sculptor, I would have thrown away my armaments, clay and butterflies.

The usual objection to photography, that it is impossible to choose a subject without having many objectionable and extraneous things to obtrude themselves into the frame, is not valid when we realize that a desired order is not accomplished only by *subtraction*. It may be achieved by *adding* until another manifestation of the same order appears. It would be interesting to meet a painter who claims that he foresees the minutest line and color developments of his finished canvas before he touches his brushes.

S. MACDONALD WRIGHT.

(Painter and Color Motion Picturist, Los Angeles.)

PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Painting is the revelation of form, more extended in space than sculpture, through color.

The perception of form in any of its natural aspects is not a simple visual experience but a highly complex product of memory and imagination and whether a flowing line or tridimensional mass is perceived its impression on our minds is more than a simple response to sensation. The creation of form in painting, plastic expression, is yet more a process of the mind than perceiving form as a natural fact. As it is impossible to present in painting all the suggestive accompaniments of our perceptions of nature it is necessary that an idealizing process involving the abstraction and intensification of their salient features be brought into play before they can be made simple enough for expression. Such a process, calling up purely subjective ideas of relationship ends in the imposition of a new order on experience.

This order, or composition, divorcing Art from the pure objectivity of vision allies it with Metaphysics and Religion by substituting for the routine of nature a human ideal.

Photography is more allied to Science, which imposes no ideal order on experience but seeks accurately to describe and widen the range of perception. The field of Science lies in nature and the idea of perfect sequence, of complete order, is subordinate to the perfect description of natural phenomena. The scientist who, for the sake of ordered expression, adds imaginatively to his discoveries ceases to be a true scientist.

Photography in that its mechanics is strictly bound to natural action, to the presentation, through the agency of light, of qualities inherent in nature, to description rather than interpretation, is scientific. Its aesthetic accompaniment is not the result of design, of human idealism as in painting, but is a quality of nature, and exists in a fine print as it exists in flowers, crystals or ridges of sand along a beach. Man enters into the aesthetics of photography in a selective capacity, in the isolation of what is aesthetic in nature. Interest in special conditions of illumination, tone and subject added to technical

preferences and mechanical discoveries are responsible for the individualism apparent in the prints of good photographers.

True photography is the isolation and registration of phenomena, of visual sensations and chemical progressions and is interesting according to the selective and directive intelligence of the photographer.

True painting is the ideal organization not of phenomena, but of their effects on memory and imagination and is interesting according to the powers of the will to assert harmonious and sequential relationships.

THOMAS H. BENTON.

(Painter, New York.)

THE PROVINCE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The contention that photography is not art has driven many critics to exorbitantly abusive utterances. Personally, I prefer to keep the camera out of aesthetics; by admitting the physically beautiful, logical science becomes illimitable, and the beauty of painting, which arises when the objective world is completely subordinated to imaginative abstraction, is reduced to the qualitative charm of naturalistic accuracy. But to deny the camera a right to exist because its purpose is different from that of art is nothing short of absurd. To me the value of photography lies in its candid acceptance of the physically beautiful; in its recognition of the fact that the instantaneous action of the lens has but little in common with the complex activity implicit in the human vision; and in its ability to record the infinite tonal contrasts and textural distinctions which make natural objects a perpetual source of delightful contemplation.

It is, of course, only in the hands of the artist that the camera becomes a personal agent. Within recent years the swift development of photography to a uniformity of excellence has made it almost impossible, except in a few striking instances, to distinguish individual work. In these instances, the artist, by various devices—the careful selection of subject-matter, the orderly arrangement of materials, the manipulation of values, the precision of outlines, and so on—has been able to infuse his personality into his prints. With the average sensitive man, the camera is an instrument by means of which he can preserve his picturesque impressions of actualities; in a very small compass he has at his command a mechanism which sets down in black and white, not an imitation, but a positive reduplication of nature. The unique character of the human face; the audacious architecture of the modern city; the surface loveliness of flowers, leaves and water; the configuration of landscapes and the features of old villages—these things are rendered with the unimaginative charm of literal truth.

Photography has exposed the cheapness and worthlessness of the greater part of current illustration. The popular craze for realism has been carried to such lengths that the commercial hack, instead of copying the photograph, now imposes his vicious dexterities directly upon the enlarged

print. This practice not only keeps alive the superstition that art is a clever method, but also debauches the sincerity of the camera—the camera is, above all things, an honest instrument. At least ninety per cent of modern illustration is unspeakably offensive; by throwing it aside and by substituting photography, our magazines and newspapers could be made presentable, and even our advertising tolerable.

It is said that photography fails to portray the spiritual activity of man. This may be true, but I am convinced that, as a means to record pictorially the detailed history of civilization, photography is destined to outlast painting.

THOMAS J. CRAVEN.

(Writer on Art and Novelist, New York.)

The photographs by Alfred Stieglitz, especially the recent ones, were always to me the work of a remarkable artist. He has recorded what he visualised as moments expressive of character in the lives of his friends; and it was a part of his consummate art to bring about a recurrence of such an expressive moment when his camera was ready.

By the use of certain lenses he made the proportions appear right quantitatively, and by his fine feeling for relation for rhythm and for space, he obtained results which are rare and dignified.

Like modern art these photographs can hang with the Chinese and the Egyptian art without conflict, and without implying equality between them. Considering the inherent limitations of the photographic medium, this fact is the more remarkable. The camera a mere neutral device or instrument, is limited to what is before it and to a time exposure. It can give only what is true, personal and individual, though necessarily transient.

That deeper truth which is timeless or eternal, the photographer cannot attain, but the painter does occasionally. Herein is the fundamental difference between the results of painting and photography. The one is being, the other is becoming. Herein each has what the other lacks; they are complementaries.

In the matter of space the procedure in photography is the reverse of what it is in painting but space-feeling, an absolute essential, is the same in both.

The photograph is quite content with these peculiar limitations. As for results they depend on the photographer, and like in painting are vulgar or noble as the case may be.

That it is possible to make pictures by photographic means which have the convincing property of growing out of compelling laws, is demonstrated in the photographs made by Alfred Stieglitz.

GEORGE F. OF.

(Painter, New York.)

What does photography mean to me?—

Nothing!

I'd rather have some photographs than most paintings.

I'd rather have some paintings than most photographs.

I'd rather have writing than typewriting.

I'd rather have vision than art.

I'd rather have today than yesterday.

I'd rather have tomorrow than today.

I'd rather have Stieglitz than Rembrandt.

I'd rather have Chaplin than Twain.

I'd rather have the impossible than the possible.

I'd rather have the abstract than the real.

I'd rather have truth than beauty.

I'd rather have a soul than a shape.

I'd rather have orange than blue.

I'd rather have black than white.

But all these things are identical so photography means nothing to me.

ARTHUR G. DOVE.

(Painter and Illustrator, New York.)

Art is the inexact.

Inexact by unlimited variations.

A reaction to the exact in which races or individuals personalize themselves.

Though the fluency of the inexact in photography is much more restricted than in any other pictorial medium, still it has its own possibilities of formation—deformation.

A simple deformation of time in the slow movie has made the creation of art possible.

Since two photographs of an object can both be different there is an undeniable possibility for the creation of art.

A photograph, simply of a chosen arrangement framed in a chosen space is not a work of art, it is rather a work of taste.

Where amplification begins there begins also the creation of art—good or bad.

Personality is expressed:

by A— G— * in a smoky sentimental impotence.

by Stieglitz in a profound and penetrating comprehension of character.

by Paul Strand in a clear forceful simplification, and amplification of the spirituality of matter, and by daguerreotypes in their enchanting manner.

GASTON LACHAISE.

(Sculptor, New York.)

*Censored.

To begin

Man made a machine — it is called — CAMERA — made so that it records images in front of it — back of it on to a plate That image is called a — Negative Photograph —

If we conceive the possibility of a wind blowing that camera to a place and — in its curious wantonness — opening and closing shutters — starting and stopping exposure — yes producing a negative photograph —

and if we conceive the possibility of a wind blowing pigment — wet by rain — onto a sheet of paper and that after a time that negative photograph and that sheet of paper were found and the two exhibited and the Art Perceptors — upon seeing the two exclaim — Ah Works of Art well what then

Along comes he who says You're wrong from the start

for in the camera instance the wind's wantonness could only release that which made the camera do its work in the second instance the wind did its own wanton piece of work

So right here you start something

In the first instance substituting — man for wind — and in the second instance — man for wind — you have

First — man carrying camera to spot opening and closing shutters — starting and stopping exposure

Second — man placing pigment on paper

As the result you have two things which in the extreme realms of possibility could be identical with the two former things

So to get down to extreme logic you have

camera doing its work its own way

man doing his work his own way

Now: if man doing his work his own way —

creating produces that which in man's definition is Art then if we accept this definition as final we might say

The camera can never produce a work of art — and we will add as a bit of daring — a photograph can never be a work of art — but here we strike a snag — we know that without assistance the camera cannot produce a negative photograph — we know too that without assistance that negative cannot be turned into a positive

So that

we are coming now to — The Man Control — what then happens — It must be granted that what he does with the negative in the darkroom is pure man work — as we accept man work

To go back

The setting up of the camera the opening and the closing of it to make the exposure — pure man work all — The only thing left is the camera working exposed which is camera work and it's that — that that camera has done which cannot be radically tampered with

Otherwise it's not a photograph

So there you have it

can Man produce Art dealing with an element which is basically — not art

Which makes its own forms — makes its own lines

which forces the photographer to record that which is before him as opposed to that which is away from him — which forces him into a kind of slavery using the camera's eye as opposed to his own eye — which brings you right up to the statements

The painter can produce any form or line — the photographer only those — ahead the camera

The painter can create in past — present — future the photographer only in present

To know whether a thing is you have to assume that it is not

So to go back and consider — to all of which we must make answer

This photographer — being an artist must know — the camera sight — of that which is ahead of it — know it intimately and what it releases to him to be of vital importance To him perhaps a human sight greatly intensified — a sight that may bring to his aid another world of sight — an intimacy with camera sight to such a degree so that everything he sees has by long habit gotten to be as if he went about with camera lens in front of his eyes So this would assume that this photographer has made camera sight and his own sight into One

As for forms and lines that's an open

question it would seem though that this would state the case — that all men are forced more or less to create from material ahead of them — the most imaginative thing being a composite of influences of things seen

As for time — is not the present — but a composite of past and future
and as for Slavery well too — are not all men more or less slaves to their medium
Here is this which looks as the great test

Can a photographer create a something ahead of him formed
in such a way — that seen through his cameralens — he can produce a photograph that he — being
an artist — will be given as much plus satisfaction with as any other medium would give him —
and would stamp that as being as much a work of art as is anything — if he can and does all argu-
ment from now on
won't make that which — is — into that which
is not —

We are of an Era where old ways — old terms — old definitions are being reformed
to meet the broadening — to meet the coming in

What is Art anyway
What's the definition
Has it to do with life

The Man's an Artist — has it to do with his eating his breakfast — has it to do with his calls —
his speeches — his everything — his walkings around — his prowlings about — toting his canvas
paint and brushes — toting his camera — toting his musical instrument

There you have it — his Musical Instrument — and as to whether that musical in-
strument be brush — camera — spade — saw — or fiddle — matters not — provided that it gives
out the — SING — of his life — and the record of that — SING — may be that which we will
term Art in the future

To wind up with a little of the personal
Prejudice is hard to allay — because your prejudice may be founded on truth — it may be founded
on falsehood — it's for the strong man to throw overboard when he knows it for a prejudice — then
that which takes its place is — the is — or — the is not

Purified he then is

I have not reached the last stage yet
when and if I do

I may be among the — is — es for as it is

I have said to myself on looking at some of Alfred Stieglitz's photographs
These photographs almost persuade me that they are Works of Art

JOHN MARIN

(Water Colorist, Etcher, etc., New Jersey.)

I did not know photography until I knew Stieglitz. Photography is to me an aspect of Stieglitz.

"291" was a creative experience to me partly because it had to do primarily with the release of personality. Stieglitz, the center of "291" was interested neither in art nor in artists. He was interested in persons and in their release in expression. Art exhibited and art discussion were merely means to an end. No art convention and no re-action from art convention had any relation to the main-spring of his activity. And no convention, in any aspect of work or life, and no inconventionality, had any relation to his prime impulse.

Stieglitz had and has a singularly intense inner life. He goes through things. What happens really affects him, and in his rather awkward way he is able to express these inner experiences. So that to hear him tell what has happened to him is a spiritual experience which is recurrently necessary to those who know him.

This pure experience characteristic of Stieglitz — this independence of "art" and of its negative — explains at least in part, his photography.

Before his day, photography occupied no respectable position. It had no relation to art nor to the release of personality, in any way. It was merely the product of the business instinct —

mechanical reproduction with a commercial End.

With his independence of convention — art and other — Stieglitz didn't care whether photography was art or not — nor whether it was respectable or not. But he felt it was one way in which personality could be released. He felt this machine was capable of responding with great sensibility to the eye that saw what hadn't been seen and to the mind that was free of prejudice. So with love and respect for his medium and the greatest of watchful patience he did his work, and became the father of modern photography and of what might be called a new "art." if I must use the word.

For, in photography Stieglitz expresses his love, his vision; he expresses noble and delicate forms and spiritual arrangements of color and space. He reveals the deep resources of Nature's Soul and talks without words about the beautiful, the good and the true. And one feels the courage and unassailableness of the spirit. The *recueillement* of art and of high moral attitude is there.

To be able to express one's love and one's high demand for purity of life in despised photography is an accomplishment of great value.

HUTCHINS HAPGOOD.

(Journalist and Author, New York.)

It is significant that the invention of the camera is a result of the decadence of painting in Western Europe. An optical and unerring machine takes the place of the eyes, the old and suave Linseed Oil yields to the meretricious silver-bromide as a medium. Such is the final and logical step of European Art in its aberration since Giotto, as propelled by Classical Sculpture, directed by Naturalistic Humanism, and urged on by the Dutch conception of Art; photographic representation.

In the darkest days of painting a light appears—Photos; a child is born whose mother is of graphic and noblest old blood—Art; and whose father is the modern idea: Materialism, Commercialism, naturalistic mass-production. Thus, the infant Photography is duly educated and developed, in time to fulfill the tasks it was begotten for, namely, that pseudo-art into which painting had degenerated, and which to fully achieve with the old brushes and mediums the painters had begun to despair.

The photographer, new priest of the utterly decadent and class-sanctioned painting of the 19th Century, duly subjected his machine, and subverted its products to all the routines and poses which characterize the spirit of those times. The youngster, Photography, forgot all the noble ancestry of her mother, became thoroughly democratic and economically independent, for it made money—likewise a “progress.”

And a step-brother too, was born: the Amateur.

Thus died painting in Europe. However, the offspring was destined to further the greatest achievement of the Human Mind: Photography in service of the Stage; of the Microscope, and of the Telescope. And who may tell whether spectro-analysis may not in future replenish the exhausted Spirit of White Man with new ideas, akin to those which once gave meaning to the forms and colors of Buddhistic Painting?

Whatever that may be, we are in presence of still another and new phase of the camera, and of its most original and natural one—If we remember that the child, Photography, on its Mother's side descends from Art. So then, as every idea or proposition, during its growth, is logically carried to perfection through analysis of and logical working-out of its fundamental factors—Camera and Printing, once freed from the earlier tendencies, from the domination of conventional Art, and now conscious of its powers to discover pure effects of Beauty, and interpretations of mere Life and mere Nature—as a medium of such Art—proceed upon their own path and yield, in the hands of genius, results that for purity and power of effect not only outrank the impotencies of the surviving old Hydra of safe-and-sane class-painting but also that to my mind are the very expression of our all-around White Civilization, namely of pragmatism and mechanical function.

It is neither Art nor Painting, if we hold to

their true and universal Idea. But an artist, in the wider sense, is he who realizes whatever idea, who creates its form and expression, and in our time is busiest with such problems that lie besides the path of Beauty and Emotion.

Therefore, the latest phase of Photography—prolific creature of the White Intellect—signifies artistic evolution—whereas a return of Painting to its true ideals would require a spiritual revolution.

OSCAR BLUEMNER.

(Ex-Architect and Painter, New Jersey.)

NOTE ON PHOTOGRAPHY

The interest essential in photography and that which gives it its undeniable importance lies in its more or less luxurious representation of the familiar patterns of our contemporary life. In photography the painter is confronted with a degree of realism, elaborate and precise, which seems by its instantaneous and mechanical process to place his labors and the discipline of his hands in a somewhat mocking light. It is easy to see how his susceptibilities may revolt at what appears to be and perhaps in some sense is competition with an automaton.

That the camera does mirror the contemporary scene in a graphic sense very well indeed can hardly be disputed, considering the effect photography has had on painting. For in one way or another all painters have shown some effect of the challenge to their practice which this instrument makes, and the more self-conscious among them have retreated—in extreme cases taking themselves out of the field altogether, to seek in abstractions the definition of their independence.

The right of painting to its own existence has always been in need of renewed proof. For in the beginning the painter was a parasite in fact, called in only to ornament forms which had already been moulded, as pottery, sculpture and buildings. Whenever he has attempted to dispense with such previously created structures on the surface of which his art could safely rest as a decorative element he has had to undertake with nearly bodiless materials to create the form mystically.

If painting must be dispossessed of the darling and adored forms which at once express and identify our times, which mould our experience and reveal our symbols to critical insight—if all this must be abandoned to photography, painting will have so far withdrawn from the main currents of life it may well be asked in what way it is relevant at all.

Now, it is this function of the photograph—that of representation—with its parallel in painting, which has disquieted our artists. But the more deceptive analogies between photography and painting or sculpture arise after all from the camera's imitation of these arts—an imitation which to the spiritual sense is the more meretricious the further it is carried. Fundamentally the difference is without measure; a chasm exists

here which no manipulation nor any sleight-of-hand in retouchings can bridge. The camera's relation to our sense perception is conditioned at the outset by its artificial eye, which shows in development a flattish surface of things in a sleek, sometimes rich, grainless half-tone, like a smooth paste, brown or gray.

But the evocation of form arises in the sensory intuition of *substance*, *weight* and *motion*. It is founded in the body's knowledge of itself and in the experience of the nervous system as a whole. It is expressed through the sense of touch in creative gestures of the hand.

We live in the age of the mechanical and the automatic, which challenge at every point the old crafts of the hand. Such an age will delight in the wonder of these productions, for they are the expression of the more obvious part of itself. And for every reason perhaps, except that of the truly aesthetic, photography holds a strong position, is of great convenience, interest and utility. But in its own nature, and in the nature of things, the finest photograph stands by itself—an admirable work about which anything may be said except that it is a piece of true creative art.

KENNETH HAYES MILLER.
(Painter and Teaches at the Art Students' League, New York.)

NEGATIVES AND POSITIVES

Photography? It seems I've heard the word somewhere. Wasn't there, back in *The World That Was*, a tempest in Art's teapot over the matter? A fight or something?

Come to think of it, I believe Photography won out. But the victory seems to have fizzled.

Was it only an explosion in the muffler? Or did something really happen?

It appears fairly obvious that the great works of the great artists, whatever their medium, all show that their creators were possessed by a passionate love of three things:

- (1) The outer reality that inspired them.
- (2) The inner reality thus brought into being.
- (3) The plastic material itself in which they sought to express the second in terms of the first.

It seems equally obvious that, of the masses of mankind who take any pleasure at all in works of art, by far the largest number only share the first of these devotions of the artist. In other words, they are responsive chiefly, if not solely, to the recognition of a familiar outer world involved in the contemplation of the artist's work.

And it naturally followed that the ordinary run of semi- and less than semi-creative painters, etchers, and free-hand picture makers of all kinds should, from time out of mind, have come to regard their native or acquired skill in depicting the beauties of nature as the essence of their standing as "artists."

Guild founded on a monopoly.

And it would have been a good guess, any time these several centuries, that any outside challenger of their privilege and standing would have been concertedly assailed by them with the whole familiar and powerful armory of a vested interest that had become a social caste.

Which was exactly what happened when the invention and popularization of photography made such a challenge possible.

But the real objective of the "artistic photographers" was not an independent art—a Creative Photography. If it had been, they would not secretly have despised the plastic material they employed nor struggled to disguise its qualities.

Their real objective was admission as equals to the guild of semi-creative picture makers.

And their actual achievement (which accounts for the barrenness of their victory) was the undermining of this pseudo-art-guild's prestige.

In short, artistic photography as we knew it is an exhausted victor baffled by the destruction of the world it sought to possess itself of.

Again the most immediate result of this unintended iconoclasm was the hastening of the movement of modern art toward its still developing experiments in making the "inner," rather than the "outer" reality, the accepted subject-matter of graphic art.

And in these experiments, as in the territory they may conceivably open up to artistic settlement, photography can have no part. Because for it the only practicable subject-matter is the outer reality.

But the great Trinity remains.

And while photography is forever conditioned by the fact that, for it, such phases of the outer as will express the inner reality must be sought, not invented, its greatest triumphs may yet spring from this limitation. And that an artist, possessed by a passionate love, not only of these twain, but of the infinitely subtle, infinitely plastic materials in which, perforce, photography works, can achieve a unique and exquisite synthesis of the three is not beyond question. For at least one man of genius is already proving it.

It would seem, then, that the assailants in that all-but-forgotten fight unbuilted better than they knew.

Also that in one corner of the ruin that they wrought, a truly Creative Photography is already crescent; destined to a probably minor, but none the less legitimate and as yet unpredictable place in art.

J. B. KERFOOT.
(Authority on early American Craft work, Freehold, N. J.)

Of course the progress that photography has achieved in the last few years is remarkable. It seems to me, however, that almost all these improvements have been made in a more or less technical direction.

As amazed or enthusiastic as I feel when I first look over one of those beautiful collections of artistic photographs, I cannot help but feel that something is lacking in them. Mastery of the light, subject chosen, arrangement, perfection of the other means in camera, chemicals, plates, papers—all this is present but too often only serves to hide the lack of originality or self-expression of the artist. It looks to me like a wonderfully constructed piece of music (say of Saint-Saens) but it has no imperious necessity.

However, there are Alfred Stieglitz's pictures, the most magnificent exception!! But can Stieglitz be included among photographers? Or does his art mean the real birth of photography? In his marvelous work I see for the first time in history a man, a thinker, a philosopher, using the camera and all its resources to express himself fully and completely like a painter uses brush and colors or the musician uses sounds.

Besides his stupendous technique (a knowledge of every detail of instrumentation, an over-powering of the smallest possibilities, taming of the chemical forces, transmutation of imperfections or weaknesses of material into artistic ends) every picture of Stieglitz embodies an idea and makes one think. It exceeds usual photography as far as a great artist exceeds a mechanical piano. The dead camera and all other technical means are only tools in his hands.

He has not only photographed things as they seem to be or as they appear to the "bourgeois," he has taken them as they really are in the essence of their real life and he sometimes accomplished the miracle of compelling them to reveal their own identity—not even always as they are but as they would be if all their potentialities could emerge freely; and this is the greatest Art because all signs of technique have disappeared for the sake of the Idea!

There are portraits of Stieglitz which condense in themselves a whole "Balzac" character; there are pictures of hands so beautiful that one could cry before them; there are pictures of sky scrapers, and railways and backyards that move you as if all the lives and the tragedies of lives connected with them were written clearly on their features. A picture of a young, healthy and beautiful girl may make you weep because you feel all what she could be, her infinite potentialities . . . and realize that in our actual society all these treasures are probably doomed to death or disfiguration.

Stieglitz has created and is still creating a work and a world that is so completely new, original and powerful that I am almost distressed because I think of the usual fate of all true creators. . . . Our time does not seem to realize the greatness of the

man and the profound meaning of his discovery, but the future undoubtedly will, and lukewarmness or lack of understanding have never prevented the greatest artists from creating, from giving, giving, always in spite of all!

Very truly yours,

ERNEST BLOCH.

(Composer, Director Cleveland Conservatory.)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The photographic achievement of Alfred Stieglitz has made me consider and reconsider in extenso. In my opinion he has annihilated completely every tour de force of the plastic art which proposes to centralize the plastic world in an exquisite reproduction instead of creation.

Above all there exists deep in my mind the fact that his photographic reproduction of a pair of beautiful hands has plastically the same value as those modelled by Verrochio's in his celebrated bust called by D'Annunzio "The Lady with the beautiful hands." But until the present moment the significance of the photograph is only partially achieved in detail; but I await from this photographic magician a work creative and metaphysical which will allow photography to enter as an eighth art among the seven sister arts.

ALFEO FAGGI.

(Sculptor, Chicago.)

Bermuda

DEAR — AND PAUL STRAND:

I dont know what became of you. For a time I hardly knew what became of us. A Hurricane blew most of our house down and we are here, by the grace of God and Swinburne's pocket, to try to build it up.

I couldnt write the piece, Paul Strand, because of being in a most self centered and unconfident frame of mind. I wasnt fit. I have no apology beyond the emphasis of my sincerity. I simply cant write things except as there happens to be enough life in me to overflow in expression, and this summer I was reduced to the lowest ebb. I would have needed to leave New York to do. I cant talk to a world that, in whatever subjective illusion, is entirely alien. Now we are down here it seems possible to spread out. There is room to stretch yourself and no fear of being crushed. No use going elaborately into the origin of pipp, but things that seem to me misunderstandings and psychic brutalities of the stupid make me defiant but withdrawing. My attitude toward your marvelous work wasnt affected but my desire to express it was.

I think Cyril might be quoted ditto. Anyway, we appreciated being asked. It is hard to explain our view of the worthwhileness of the thing and our incapacity to speak. Hope you understand it as we would want you to.

Good luck. If you should want to—remember Bermuda and the visit.

EVELYN SCOTT.

(Novelist.)

ALFRED STIEGLITZ*

Old man—perpetually young—we salute you.
Young man—who will not grow old—we salute you.

I do not know, cannot know, when the thing happened to Alfred Stieglitz that made him a man beloved of many men. It may have been when he was a young fellow but, as he is an American, it perhaps did not happen with him, within him, until he had come into middle life. At any rate any man going into the presence of Alfred Stieglitz knows that, on a day long ago, something did happen that has sweetened the man's nature, made him a lover of life and a lover of men. It has come about that many men go gladly and freely in and out of this man's presence. Knowing the man you may not agree with his judgments on this or that piece of work, you may say to yourself that he talks too much, is too much and sometimes too consciously the prophet of the new age, but in a moment, and after you have gone out of his physical presence, something happened within you too.

You are walking in a city street and suddenly you walk more gladly and lightly. Weariness goes out of you. You are in a street lined with buildings, for the most part ugly and meaningless, but something within is now telling you that a breath can blow even this colossal stone and brick ugliness away. Again, and now quite definitely and permanently you know that, although men have blundered terribly in building up the physical world about themselves and although most men have been incurably poisoned by the ugliness created by men, there is at the very heart of humanity a something sweet and sound that has always found and always will find among men, here and there an individual to strive all his life to give voice to man's inner sweetness and health.

As for myself, I have quite definitely come to the conclusion that there is in the world a thing one thinks of as maleness that is represented by such men as Alfred Stieglitz. It has something to do with the craftsman's love of his tools and his materials. In an age when practically all men have turned from that old male love of good work well done and have vainly hoped that beauty might be brought into the world wholesale, as Mr. Ford manufactures automobiles, there has always been, here in America, this one man who believed in no such nonsense, who perhaps often stood utterly alone, without fellows, fighting an old, man's fight for man's old inheritance—the right to his tools, his materials, and the right to

make what is sound and sweet in himself articulate through his handling of tools and materials.

There is something definite to be said in this matter, something very important to be said. Whether or not I am clear-headed enough to say it I can't be sure. What I do know is that, in some way, the figure of Alfred Stieglitz stands at the heart of the matter. What I think I believe is that we Americans, in the age that has just passed, have been a very sick people. Let me speak of that for a moment. To me it seems that the outward signs of that impotence that is the natural result of long illness are all about us in America. It is to be seen in the city skyscrapers, in the cowboy plays in our moving picture theatres and in our childish liking of the type of statesman who boasts of walking softly and carrying a big stick. True maleness does not boast of its maleness. Only truly strong men can be gentle, tender, patient, and kindly; and sentimental male strutting is perhaps always but an outpouring of poison from the bodies of impotent men. Might it not be that with the coming into general use of machinery men did lose the grip of what is perhaps the most truly important of man's functions in life—the right every man has always before held dearest of all his human possessions, the right in short to stand alone in the presence of his tools and his materials and with those tools and materials to attempt to twist, to bend, to form something that will be the expression of his inner hunger for the truth that is his own and that is beauty. A year ago Mr. Gilbert Cannan made this dark and threatening comment on our modern life. "Befoul the workman's tools and materials long enough," said Mr. Cannan, "and in the end the workman will turn on you and kill you."

I myself think we have gone rather far on the road of befouling. To me it seems that the Ford automobile is about the final and absolute expression of our mechanical age—and is not the Ford car an ugly and ill-smelling thing? And against the Ford car and the vast Ford factories out in Detroit I would like to put for a moment the figure of Alfred Stieglitz as the craftsman of genius, in short the artist. Born into a mechanical age and having lived in an age when practically all American men followed the false gods of cheapness and expediency, he has kept the faith. To me his life is a promise that the craftsmen, who are surely to be reborn into the world, will not have to kill in order to come back into their old inheritance. Against the day of their coming again Alfred Stieglitz has held to the old faith with an iron grip. Through perhaps almost the single strength of this man, something has been kept alive here in America that we had all come near to forgetting.

I have been walking in the streets of New York and thinking of my friend Alfred Stieglitz and suddenly he no longer stands alone. Certain other figures appear and in them I understand in him certain impulses I have not always understood. I have myself come into the years of manhood in an age of Ford factories, and often enough

* This was written for MSS, and at the request of Mr. Sherwood Anderson—who wished after having written it that it might reach a larger public—MSS consented to its publication in the *New Republic* where it appeared on October 25, 1922. It is here reprinted with the consent of the *New Republic*.

I have run with the pack. Too often in my own work I have not been patient enough. I have stopped half way, have not gone all the way. Shame comes to me and suddenly memories appear. I remember that when I was a lad in Ohio there were in my town certain fine old workmen come down into our new age out of an older time. In fancy now I see again two such men, and hear them speaking of their work as they stand idling in the evening before one of the stores of my town. The lad, who was myself, is fascinated by their talk and stands behind them, listening. And now suddenly one of the workmen has remembered something he wants to explain to his fellow. They are both wagon-makers and each, in his young manhood, has served his long years of apprenticeship and has gone on his workman's journey. The workman who is talking is trying to explain to his fellow how, in a certain shop where he once worked in the state of Vermont, they made a wagon felloe.

"You come on," he says, and the two old men go away together along the street in the dusk of a summer evening with a boy tagging at their heels. How sharply their figures remain in my mind, the two old lovers filled with a man's love, we moderns have almost forgotten. And now they have gone to one of the two wagon shops in the town and one of them has lighted a lamp and has opened his chest of tools. How affectionately he handles them, and how bright and clean and sharp the tools are. He begins fitting two pieces of wood together. "At that place I was telling you about we did it like this. Afterward I found out a quicker way but I believe the harder way is the best. It makes a better joint, stands up better in all kinds of weather; that's what I mean," the old workman says—and how sharply his figure comes back to me now as I think of Alfred Stieglitz, the prophet of the old workmen—who by the intensity of his love of tools and materials has made himself such an outstanding American artist.

There is another man in my mind, of the Stieglitz sort. He lives now at Cleveland, Ohio, where he runs a book store, but some twenty years ago he came to America from Germany as a workman, as a church organ builder. On an evening last summer he walked and talked with me, and as he walked and talked his mind went back to his boyhood in a German town. He spoke of the workmen in his father's shop and their treatment of him when he was a lad, learning his trade. When he had grown careless the workman whose assistant he was, did not report the matter to the superintendent but took the blame on himself. Then the old workman and the boy looked into each others' eyes. "I didn't cut up any more monkey-shines after that," said the bookseller of Cleveland.

On Sundays, when he was a lad, my friend at Cleveland walked in the state forest with his father. Other workmen also came with their sons. One of them went to touch one of the trees with his fingers. Soon now that particular tree would be offered for sale and already the workman

had put his hand on his materials. He intended to be on hand and to be a bidder when that particular tree was offered for sale. "After my father died," my friend at Cleveland said, "I went to a sale in the forest and bought a tree just because I had once seen my father look long and hungrily at it, and because I knew he would want me to get my hands on it and to work it up."

And this man of Cleveland came to America to be a foreman in one of our church organ factories. He didn't last long. He quit because they used nails instead of wooden pegs in the factory where he was employed. The owner of the factory tried to reason with him but he quit. "Here you have to do things in a hurry, in the American way. What's the difference? No one knows. They can't tell the difference."

But my friend quit. The fact that nails were used instead of wooden pegs seemed to him a quite sufficient explanation of his inability to stay. He thought the nails affected, in a quite poisonous way, the tone of the instruments. He seemed to care about that. "Every time I drove one of the nails it hurt my arm," he said, and there was something that hurt him too when he heard the other workmen driving the nails. The sound hurt him. He winced when he spoke of it, and quite suddenly one saw that the sound of the nails being driven into the materials he loved was to him what the sound of the nails being driven into the cross of Christ might have meant in the ears of a Christian.

It is just the spirit of these men that has always been alive and has always been kept alive in the person of Alfred Stieglitz, the photographer. In a peculiar way he has made himself an outstanding figure in the lives of innumerable American artists. In the beginning of this article I said that something must have happened to him long ago. He saw something we others haven't often seen. To me and to many other men I know his figure has been sharply defined, and as the years pass is becoming more and more sharply defined as the type of the old workman whose love of his tools and his materials has been so passionate that he has emerged out of the workman to become the artist.

And perhaps that he is a photographer is significant too. It may well be the most significant thing of all. For has he not fought all of his life to make machinery the tool and not the master of man? Surely Alfred Stieglitz has seen a vision we may all some day see more and more clearly because of the fight he has made for it.

Old man—perpetually young—we salute you.
Young man—who will not grow old—we salute you.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON.
(Writer and Novelist.)

To MSS. and its 33 subscribers and others who read and don't subscribe!

I studied art at the Art Institute of Chicago, at the Art Students League of New York, at Teachers College, Columbia University, at the University of Virginia.

I even studied with Chase and Bellows and Professor Dow. I am sorry to say that I missed Henri.

I am guilty of having tried to teach Art for four summers in a university summer school and for two years in a state normal but I don't know what Art is. No one has ever been able to give me a satisfactory definition.

I have not been in Europe.

I prefer to live in a room as bare as possible.

I have been much photographed.

I paint because color is a significant language to me but I do not like pictures and I do not like exhibitions of pictures. However I am very much interested in them.

Not being satisfied with the definitions, ideas, of what is Art the approach to photography has been fairly unprejudiced. It has been part of my searching and through the searching maybe I am at present prejudiced in favor of photography.

I feel that some of the photography being done in America today is more living, more vital, than the painting and I know that there are other painters who agree with me. Compared to the painter the photographer has no established tradition to live on. Photography's only tradition of worth is the early daguerrotype and the work of Hill and Mrs. Cameron. The painter as soon as he begins to paint almost unconsciously assumes himself the honored or unappreciated present representative of a glorious past tradition. He has a respected past even if he has no standing as a respected citizen today. The photographer has no great tradition. He must gain all the respect he is to have by what he himself can actually do.

I have looked with great interest through rafts of photographs done before the war by Steichen, De Meyer, Coburn, Holland Day, White, Kuehn, Frank Eugene, Craig Annan, Demachy and many others. I don't know what they are doing now. I don't even hear any one talk of them with interest. As many of these men were painters or had tried to be, it was natural that they should try to make their photographs look like paintings—etching—drawing—anything but just a photograph. They did not distinctly separate the medium photography from other mediums. In the 50 numbers of Camera Work Stieglitz records the logical development of photography, the work of these men and many others beginning with Hill through 1916—excepting Charles Sheeler and Stieglitz own work.

Alfred Stieglitz has furnished most of the faith and enthusiasm during the past forty years that makes photography of enough interest to force this number of MSS. He also has faith in the painters and the writers and the plumbers and all the other fools. He seems to be the only man I know who has a real spiritual faith in human

beings. I often wonder what would have happened to painting if he had been a painter. Maybe it is because he has faith in all people that he dares and is able to record what some feel the possibly too intimate and significant moments.

Photography is able to flatter or embarrass the human's ego by registering the fleeting expression of a moment. But psychological records registered in this way have nothing to do with aesthetic significance as it seems to be understood today. Maybe through psychology—psychoanalysis—photography—and other tendencies toward self knowledge the ideas of aesthetics may change. To me Stieglitz portraits repeat in a more recognizable form what he expresses with the photographs of trees, streets, room interiors, horses, houses, buildings, etcetera. Devoid of all mannerism and of all formula they express his vision, his feeling for the world, for life. They are aesthetically, spiritually significant in that I can return to them, day after day, have done so almost daily for a period of four years with always a feeling of wonder and excitement akin to that aroused in me by the Chinese, the Egyptians, Negro Art, Picasso, Henri Rousseau, Seurat, etcetera, even including modern plumbing—or a fine piece of machinery.

If a Stieglitz photograph of a well to do Mid-Victorian parlor filled with all sorts of horrible atrocities jumbled together makes me forget that it is a photograph, and creates a music that is more than music when viewed right side up or upside down or sideways, it is Art to me. Possibly I feel it is Art because I am not clogged with too much knowledge. Or is it Stieglitz?

Paul Strand has added to photography in that he has bewildered the observer into considering shapes, in an obvious manner, for their own inherent value. Surely bolts and belts and ball bearings and pieces of all sorts of things that one does not recognize readily because of their unfamiliarity, or because of distortion, when organized and put together as Strand has put them together arrest one's attention. He makes more obvious the fact that subject matter, as subject matter, has nothing to do with the aesthetic significance of a photograph any more than with a painting.

Charles Sheeler, one of America's most distinguished young modern painters (this includes all under 60) also photographs. No one considering his work questions his paintings and drawings as ranking amongst the most interesting of their type in America today. To me his photographs are of equal importance. He is always an artist. He has done things with photography that he could not do with painting and vice versa. However the object that is Art must be a unity of expression so complete that the medium becomes unimportant, is only noticed or remembered as an after thought.

Man Ray—a young American painter of ultra modern tendencies and of varied experiments—seems to be photographing. I have not seen any-

July 14, 1922.

thing but reproductions of his work with the camera so have no definite idea of it excepting the fact that he seems to be broadening the field of work that can be done with it.

I can only agree with Remy De Gourmont's Antiphilos that there are as many philosophies (I add ideas on "Art") ments and personalities.

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE.
(Painter, Texas and New York.)

DEAR MR. STRAND:

I haven't the least doubt about the significance of the best modern photography but I doubt whether there is anything I could say that would add in the least to its significance. It is clear that the men who are doing it *feel* its significance, and that is all that is necessary.

Yours sincerely,

WALTER LIPPMANN.
(Journalist and ex-Editor, The New Republic,
New York.)

Paris, August 3, 1922.

DEAR STIEGLITZ:

I received your invitation to write something about photography. Because you asked me, I would have liked to do something, but it would have been against my wish. I dislike the idea of "getting in contact with the public." Neither the public nor I care a damn about each other.

Just the same I have been thinking a lot about photography on account of the false success that Man Ray has made here among the "intellectuals."

of Judgment the artists here are on the same level as over there, if one could call that a level.

Coming back to photography I must say that I have come to the conclusion that it does not exist as yet. I mean the photography that will represent the object without the interference of man, who always has prejudices, points of view, selections, etc., etc. Photography as it is done up to the present is nothing else than a means of expression of man—Therefore it is Art. And I must also say that outside of what you and Sheeler have done in Photography I find the rest quite stupid. Therefore if I would write on photography I would be compelled to make the eulogy of your work and of Sheeler's and neither of you need any eulogy.

Art in Paris seems to be more than dead—Only once in a while it comes back in the form of a chlorotic ghost. I really believe that Europe is getting the wisdom of decrepitude.

America is too young and Europe is too old to produce art, and there you are . . . and here I am. . . .

I read in the papers that the Brooklyn Bridge is going to be closed because it needs repairing. That is America. They walk so much over a good thing until they make it useless. The same happened to their Constitution. And the Statue of Liberty remains intact!

DE ZAYAS.
(Caricaturist.)

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MSS. Number 2 contained writings by John Marin, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, Charles Duncan.
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