



1988

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Recommended Citation

Wetzel '89, Bill (1988) "Alfred Stieglitz & the Armory Show: Its Impact on His Life and His Work," *Undergraduate Review*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.

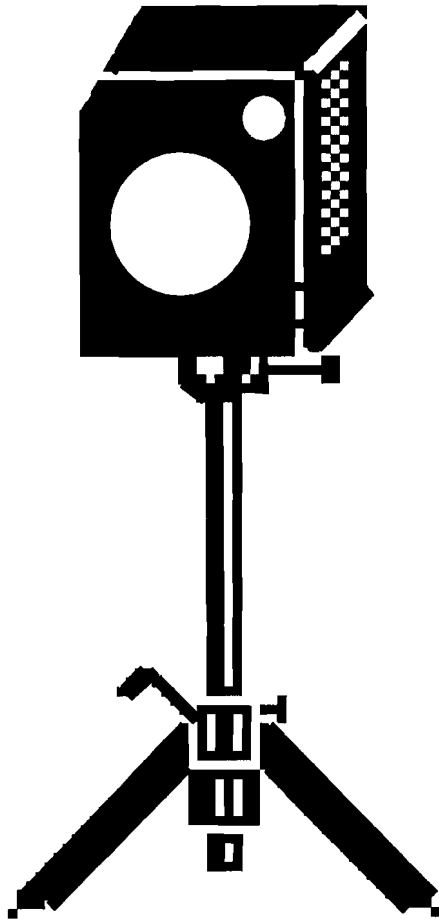
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Alfred Stieglitz & the Armory Show: Its Impact on His Life and His Work

Bill Wetzel



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The transformation of Alfred Stieglitz from a pioneer modern art promoter in 1907 to a self-reflective photographer by 1920 can be linked to changes occurring in society at the time. However, there are also personal dimensions to his metamorphosis that are unique to him. The Armory Show marked a climax of his support of modern art for the public. The results of the Armory Show began his return movement towards his personal goal to establish photography as art.

The decade encompassing World War I was a period of change in the United States. The alterations involved nearly all segments of American culture. The nineteenth-century ideals and goals were replaced by new input. The process of change involved a struggle between a new generation of "iconoclasts" who challenged the authority of the more traditional "custodians" of culture.

The "custodians" were a number of conservatives, organized loosely, to oppose change from nineteenth-century traditions. Henry May describes the values of these conservatives represented by William Dean Howells, stating that Howells "had always believed that American civilization was treading a sure path, whatever the momentary failures, toward moral and material improvement."¹ He also believed that "basic decisions about this forward movement could be best made by the whole people."² However, in his view, "men of education and ability and even of inherited tradition had some special responsibility for maintaining standards."³ The "custodians" promoted an optimism that success in the future would only result from preservation of the past. They desired a continuation of American nineteenth-century civilization, through an allegiance to three central doctrines of that era. Henry May expresses, "these were first, the certainty and universality of moral values; second, the inevitability, particularly in America, of progress; and third, the importance of traditional literary culture."⁴ The maintenance of past tradition was the key to success as far as the "custodians" were concerned.

The "iconoclasts" were encouraging re-examination of traditional values under modern conditions. They were not an organization: their work was accomplished by many indirectly related movements that were pushing for change in society. They believed that "the events of daily life in modern times were a sufficient source of moral value."⁵ There was no longer a need to follow precedents set by the past. This break from tradition had been gaining strength for several years. Henry May points out that "Well before 1912 the dominant American credo had been partly rejected by some people on simple, instinctive, emotional grounds."⁶ The goals of these early opponents of tradition were not radical; however, their questions paved the way for more devastating ideas originating in Europe.

Henry May, in *The End of American Innocence*, emphasizes that the biggest single shock to tradition came from European art. "Not literature but the graphic arts," he argues, "gave American taste its sharpest jolt during the prewar years."⁷ The Armory Show of 1913 was an invasion of modern art and thought from Europe that exposed the gap between American and European ideas. Americans, who had accepted the Ash Can school as the model for progressive art, were not prepared for the European innovations displayed at the International Exhibition of Modern Art. According to Henry May, "Only a handful of Americans, Alfred Stieglitz in his gallery, Gertrude Stein in Paris, had seen this new storm on the horizon."⁸

Stieglitz did not play a direct role in the organization of the Armory Show, but his studio was frequented by Arthur Davies and some of the others who shaped the exhibition. Judith Zilczer noted that while "most of the members of the Association [AAPS] belong to the realistic tradition of Robert Henri, the exhibition which they sponsored had greater affinities with the modern art promoted at Alfred Stieglitz's Photo Secession Gallery."⁹ Stieglitz played a vital role in educating a few artists and promoters in America about current European art. His work promoting modern art in New York helped make the Armory Show possible. He was comfortable in his small gallery that allowed intimate contact between visitors, artists, and himself. Stieglitz was not attempting to overthrow traditional cultural values: he was carrying out, in his own style, an attempt to bring modernism into American art.

Stieglitz did not fit either of Henry May's characteristics of the extreme radical; those being "sweeping irrationalism" and "unmoral materialism".¹⁰ He was acting on carefully thought out goals that he applied to "291" and *Camera Work*. Money was not a primary concern of Stieglitz either; he supported artists out of his own pocket and was always near the financial ruin that eventually caught up with him. The success of the "iconoclasts" in shedding the traditions of the nineteenth-century took time.

There was no single event that marked the end of the period of change, however, the war in Europe brought home a new image of humanity—inhumanity. The war destroyed the optimism of the "custodians" and their movement towards a brighter future. They had tried to create an image of the war that presented the British as the morally superior society and the Germans as barbarians. Paul More and Irving Babitt, two conservatives who defended traditional values, admitted,

There is nevertheless a touch of the irrational and the indecent in our

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*frenzy of bitterness towards that country [Germany], and in readiness to
gloat over every tale of brutality. This is particularly the case in academic
circles.*¹¹

The Allies won the war, but the “brutality” exposed created a mood of concerned pessimism among the public about the future.

The war's effect pushed the public towards the position of the “iconoclasts.” The three central doctrines of the “custodian” position were shown to be false during this decade. America was no longer destined to a certain and bright future. Choices and costs were viewed clearly in the aftermath of the war in Europe. Injustices were committed by both sides in the struggle. The reality of the decade left less room for the optimistic beliefs in universal moral values of the conservatives. The importance of American literature had been on the decline for some time. The popularity of experimental literature had been rising, and events such as the Armory Show brought more European influence to America.

Stieglitz was a part of this change from “traditional” values to “modern” beliefs. Stieglitz, the modern art promoter, was only one of many who helped provide background support for the shift in values, but the changes of the time must be remembered when considering him. His work characterized his optimism in the American public and its ability to react positively to new experiences. Ironically it was the Armory Show, which freed much of society from the old values clung to by traditionalists, that caused Stieglitz to reconsider his optimism in the American public.

Stieglitz's attempt to expose the public to modern art is a variation on his longer struggle to establish photography as art. His interest in photography lasted his lifetime, but his personal involvement in it varied. During the 1890's he encouraged amateur photographers in America to experiment with the new hand camera and to explore a variety of different subjects as the British were doing. He wrote, “There is no reason why the American amateur should not turn out as beautiful pictures by photographic means as his English brethren . . . the fact remains that he does not do so.”¹² Stieglitz offered the public advice on how to catch up with Europe in various publications in the 1890's:

*In what respects are our photographs deficient, more especially when compared with those of our English colleagues? Granting that we are, in our technique, fully equal to the English, what we lack is that taste and sense for composition and for tone, which is essential in producing a photograph of artistic value—in other words, a picture.*¹³

Stieglitz's push for the growth of amateur photography in America declined as the failure of the public to follow his lead convinced him of the creative limitations of the majority of American photographers.

By 1897 the new hand camera had changed the course of photography. Stieglitz recognized the freedom the new camera provided its operator to move around, however, he also realized the impact of the new camera on the public. He wrote,

Photography as a fad is well-nigh on its last legs, thanks primarily to the bicycle craze. Those seriously interested in its advancement do not look upon this state of affairs as a misfortune, but as a disguised blessing, inasmuch as photography had been classed as a sport by nearly all of those who deserted its ranks and fled to the present idol, the bicycle.¹⁴

Stieglitz took the loss of interest in photography as a rejection of his personal attempts to promote the new medium. He began a withdrawal into a smaller public who were not a part of what he considered the philistine masses. He criticized the camera manufacturers who encouraged "photography—by—the—yard" with their slogan "You press the button, and we do the rest."¹⁵ As Stieglitz refined the audience he was writing to, he began to explore and explain more technical matters for his public.

Stieglitz offered technical advice and compositional suggestions to readers in various photographic journals, although he did not always follow his own advice. He had dismissed "express trains" and "racehorse scenes" as "rarely wanted in pictures," yet these were the subjects of two of his most well-known photographs from the turn of the century: *The Hand of Man*, 1902, and *Going to the Post, Morris Park*, 1904.¹⁶ Although at times he did not express it, Stieglitz had an open mind to untried areas for the photographer to explore. His own photography is proof of the many subjects he experimented with. Movements to new subject areas, and new methods of presenting old subjects, were consistent throughout Stieglitz's life. Though he ignored some of his own advice, Stieglitz was an encouragement and a source of instruction to those who read him before the formation of *Camera Work*.

The changes in Stieglitz can be demonstrated in *Camera Work* between its founding in 1903 and its closing in 1917. In the first issue, Stieglitz stated the purposes he felt the magazine would fulfill. He wrote, only a work that displays "individuality and artistic worth, regardless of school, or contains some exceptional feature of technical merit, or such as exemplifies some treatment worthy of consideration, will find recognition in these pages."¹⁷ According to Stieglitz, he intended the pictorial to dominate the magazine; however, literary

Wetzel '89: Alfred Stieglitz & the Armory Show: Its Impact on His Life and H contributions were also to be included. For Stieglitz the pictorial and literary combination was "not intended to make this a photographic primer, but rather a magazine for the more advanced photographer."¹⁸ By 1903 Stieglitz had abandoned completely his optimism that everyone could produce successful photographs if properly instructed. *Camera Work* was designed to offer information to a small number of photographers. Along with *Camera Work*, the Photo Secessionist movement, based in New York, was formed under Stieglitz's guidance to offer support and exposure to photography.

In 1906 the Photo Secession, under Stieglitz direction, decided to hold an exhibition the following Spring of the accomplishments that had been made in pictorial photography. Unable to find adequate space for a large show, the group decided they would lease rooms at 291 Fifth Avenue, New York. Here they could present small exhibitions of American and foreign art never publically displayed before in the United States. Along with a focus on photography, they planned to show works in other art mediums from time to time which they felt to be worthwhile. The studio at 291 Fifth Avenue, and the brilliant selection of exhibitions there, opened with its first show in November of 1906.

By 1908 the focus of *Camera Work* and "291" had shifted, under the direction of Stieglitz. Edward Steichen, a close personal friend, exposed Stieglitz to what was occurring in European art. In 1907 the first non-photographic exhibit at "291" presented the work of an American painter, Pamela Colman Smith, who was living in England. Within a year Stieglitz presented his first of many exhibitions of European modernism with a show featuring drawings by Auguste Rodin. Steichen guided Stieglitz towards modernism. It took Stieglitz time to appreciate the value of the new style he was viewing. George Roeder describes the early reactions of Stieglitz in his attempt to understand the new methods of expression employed by modern artists:

*Under Steichen's guidance, Stieglitz became increasingly intrigued with modern painting and decided that it served as a complement to photography, which eliminated the need for traditional painting. As late as 1907, when Steichen took Stieglitz to an exhibition of Cezanne watercolors in Paris, Stieglitz could not believe that they cost 1000 francs each, exclaiming, "Why there's nothing there but empty paper with a few splashes of color here and there."*¹⁹

Unfortunately, one of Stieglitz's later weaknesses was his impatience with those who were puzzled by their first glance at modernism. After 1908, nearly all the shows at "291" were non-photographic.

Paralleling the changes overcoming the Photo Secession's gallery were changes in *Camera Work* which Arthur Wertheim points out:

*Around the time of the first art shows at "291", Camera Work began to devote more space to European painting. The magazine often printed reproductions of the work of leading European modernist artists, including Matisse, Rodin, Picasso, Van Gogh, and Cezanne. Also published were essays on the "291" group and reprinted newspaper and magazine reviews of the gallery's shows. Camera Work also included literary material, including poetry, the selected letters of Vincent Van Gogh, and the writings of Shaw, Maeterlinck, and Bergson.*²⁰

The link between "291" and *Camera Work* was evident from the opening of the new gallery. The changes Stieglitz brought to them reflected a new purpose he believed he was moving toward.

Stieglitz's new ambitions involved his optimism in the public. He believed they would come around to his position on modernism if they were exposed to it. He felt his promotion of modernism was more important, but related to his work to advance photography as art. In a December 1911 letter to Sadakichi Hartmann, shortly after returning from Europe, Stieglitz indicates the purpose for which he was working at the time:

*There is certainly no art in America today, what is more, there is, as yet, no genuine love for it. Possibly Americans have no genuine love for anything, but I am not hopeless. In fact I am quite the contrary . . . The trouble with most photographers and for that matter also with painters, and other people, is, that they are always trying to do something which is outside of themselves. In consequence they produce nothing that means anything to those who have the gift of intuition for truth: all else is really not worth a tinker's damn.*²¹

Stieglitz continued,

*I am glad that my pictures gave you some pleasure. The number [Camera Work 36] seems to have come as a breath of fresh air to a great many people. It's a pity I can't afford more time for this branch of the work; but daily I realize more and more, that in sacrificing my own photography I have gained something I could never have possessed, and that is certainly a bigger thing; a bigger thing than merely expressing oneself in making photographs, no matter how marvelous they might be.*²²

During this period between the formation of "291" and the Armory Show, Stieglitz was convinced that he was doing a service for both

Wetzel '89: Alfred Stieglitz & the Armory Show: Its Impact on His Life and H photography and art in America that would eventually return dividends.

Stieglitz's belief that he was moving modern art forward was apparent in some of his other correspondence before the Armory Show took place. His mission was clear to himself when he wrote to George D. Pratt, a member of the Photo Secession, on December 7, 1912. The letter was a response to Pratt's protest in a previous letter that *Camera Work* was publishing too many articles on modern art. Stieglitz wrote:

Don't worry that I am not looking after the interests of pictorial photography quite as much as ever. As a matter of fact my interest was never greater. But as I once told you that before the people at large, and for that matter the artists themselves, understand what photography really means, as I understand that term, it is essential for them to be taught the real meaning of art. That is what I am attempting to do, not only at "291" but through Camera Work and this work I am trying to do in such a conclusive manner that it will have been done for all time. With me it is not a question of personal likes and dislikes; not a question of theory; I approach the subject in a scientific way, objectively, impersonally.²³

Stieglitz's attempts to be impersonal about art were unsuccessful. He placed his complete faith in the belief that the new images would free the world of art and his own field of photography. In January 1913, only three weeks before the Armory Show began, "Stieglitz called the modernists 'revitalizers.' 'That's what they are, the whole bunch. They're breathing the breath of life into an art that is long since dead.'"²⁴

The Armory Show was a turning point for Stieglitz as well as many other "iconoclasts." Ironically, Stieglitz's showing of his own photographs at "291" for the first time coincided with the International Exhibition of Modern Art. Stieglitz's return to photography is a result of the big show, and his presentation of his own work at the same time foreshadows events to come. In a letter to Ward Muir, January 30, 1913, he wrote,

During the show of Post Impressionism I shall exhibit my own photographs at "291". It will be the logical thing for me to do. So you see I am not forgetting photography and I am putting my own work to a diabolical test. I wonder whether it will stand it. If it does not, it contains nothing vital.²⁵

At this time, Stieglitz still believed a public test of his work was the best way to measure its value. In this letter, he also expressed,

*Outside of Baron De Mayer, who is here in New York very busy photographing society and doing it in a masterful fashion, I see none of the photographers. They seem to steer clear of "291" as well as myself. It is very amusing but fortunately I don't miss them. Not because they are not nice fellows but because they have not developed mentally but have stood still during the past six or seven years.*²⁶

The photographers mentioned in this letter are not the only ones who stayed away from "291" and Stieglitz. He makes no mention of it in this letter, but Stieglitz's personality had an abrasive streak. This caused the breakoff of at least two of his close friendships before 1913. Stieglitz's relationship with both Max Weber and Edward Steichen ended in heated arguments with neither party speaking to the other afterward. This aspect of Stieglitz's personality did not reappear in the small circle of associates he kept in contact with after the Armory Show. He no longer remained as concerned with encouraging change in the public after the masses rejected his contributions.

Stieglitz was well aware of the link between the International Show and his several years of promoting modernism in New York. Peter Conn states:

*Stieglitz was consulted by the organizers of the Armory Show, but he played little direct part in it. He nonetheless felt within his rights to appropriate it symbolically, to see it as vindicating five years of his own activities. He wrote to a friend that "the Big International Exhibition . . . was really the outcome of the work going on at "291" for many years."*²⁷

Stieglitz was certain the International Exhibition would be a success and he felt that he had played a crucial role in its formation.

Stieglitz's reaction to the Armory Show can be seen in his decreased concern for *Camera Work* and "291." His lack of interest in the promotion of modernism after the Armory Show is reflected in his private writing as well. After the Armory Show only seven more issues of *Camera Work* were released. The issue of July 1914 was devoted entirely to the question, "What does '291' mean to you?" It was posed to a variety of those associated with Stieglitz and his work at "291." The complete issue revolved around this theme and the responses it generated: it contained no photography. Stieglitz was aware he was losing subscribers due to the reduction of material in the magazine which related directly to photography, but he was not concerned. He wrote, in April 1914, in reply to a cancelled subscription:

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*The things you don't seem to like, and I know you don't understand, are things which, I assure you, will live and be considered great—and by great I mean living for all time—by future generations that have been taught how to see. And possibly the greatest work that I have done during my life is teaching the value of seeing.*²⁸

Stieglitz remained convinced he had discovered something important in modernism, but he was also aware of the lack of positive reaction from the public. In this same letter he continued:

*The American has a vote, therefore he thinks he must have an opinion. Unfortunately he has an opinion and unfortunately I sometimes think, he has a vote. The American is superficial and he lacks deeper feeling. I as an American have a right to say this, for I have lived a life which has given me the opportunity to test and Judge.*²⁹

Stieglitz's establishment of himself as a "Judge" was necessary due to the negative reaction of the public to the Armory Show. He had to give himself authority over the opinion of the masses about modern art. He did not want to admit he had misjudged the trend—he said the public did not understand what they were being shown. Stieglitz elevated himself to be among "those who have the gift of intuition for truth."³⁰ He began to downplay the importance of public opinion. Stieglitz was not alone in this response to the Armory Show. John Quinn, a close supporter of Arthur Davies and the International Exhibition, stated in 1918 that he had "long since ceased to care what the ordinary person thinks of my [collected] paintings. I have been bored stiff so often by their remarks to the effect, 'Well, I don't see what this means . . .'"³¹ Many others shared this need to downplay the value of public opinion after the Armory Show. For Stieglitz it involved a loss of interest in his endeavors to educate the public.

By May 1917, Stieglitz had determined the fate of "291" and *Camera Work*. Between 1915 and 1917 Stieglitz's personal interest in these ventures had fallen off almost completely. *Camera Work* published its last issue in June 1917; long before, it had become an effort put out by Stieglitz's associates without much interest and input from him. Stieglitz also decided to close "291" in 1917. In letters he wrote to Georgia O'Keeffe between October 1916, and June 1917, he expresses some of his feelings at the time. On October 7, 1916, he wrote:

I wonder how I'll be when I get back—I never was so little a part of N.Y. as I am now.—Hartley hates the place because the "people have no soul."—It fascinated me for years because of that lack—I thought

*that the huge machine would eventually discover its soul—will it? — Machines have great souls.—I know it.—Have always known it. —But they must be given a chance to show them—People interfere too much and have no faith.*³²

Stieglitz had long been fascinated with New York and its large architectural structures; however, he saw in them a danger of the individual becoming lost.

The next two letters in this group of three to O'Keeffe offer Stieglitz's thoughts as "291" moved nearer to destruction. On May 31, 1917, he wrote:

*I have decided to rip 291 to pieces after all—I can't bear to think that its walls which held your drawings . . . should be in charge of anyone else . . . No the walls must come down—and very soon—in a few days.— So that I am sure they're down.—Others should move in and build anew.*³³

He wrote again to O'Keeffe June 24:

*. . . I didn't tell you that this afternoon I set Zoler ripping down more shelving in the old little room—and ripping down the remaining burlap.— I made a photograph of him—he enjoyed the job—and I enjoyed the destruction.*³⁴

Tearing down "291" and the closing of *Camera Work* were not easy for Stieglitz. "291" had become only one of many galleries in New York displaying modern art, and *Camera Work* had only thirty-seven subscribers for its last issue. Stieglitz felt he was a failure. He had attempted to educate the American public without success. To compound his problems his marriage was unhappy and his financial assets were nearly depleted. The spell of this period was not broken until Georgia O'Keeffe moved to New York in June 1918. Her company was a key to the rebirth of Stieglitz's interest in photography.

The resurgence of Stieglitz's activity in photography had been slowly building from the time of the Armory Show. In June 1915, he wrote to H. C. Reiner:

*. . . I am in the midst of experimenting along many lines. The first real chance I have had in years to do what I want to in photography . . . my photography experimenting had to be side-tracked for years, for the bigger work I was doing in fighting for an idea, fighting practically single handed.*³⁵

The photography of Stieglitz contains a large gap. Sarah Greenough explains:

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*Between 1911 and 1915 Stieglitz did not make many photographs. While he did occasionally make portraits of the artists and critics associated with 291, his attention and his time were primarily devoted to publishing Camera Work and directing 291.*³⁶

George Roeder points out, "As early as 1915, Stieglitz had written to Hartley, "Modern Art" is being exploited in so many impure forms over here, that it is disgusting and even disheartening.'"³⁷ Roeder continues that after Stieglitz folded his ventures in New York in 1917, he

*continued to receive encouragement and intellectual stimulation from loyal supporters, but grew more bitter, and less inclined to keep alive the hope that modern painting could become vital to the lives of any but a small group.*³⁸

As Stieglitz's interest in modern art declined, his involvement in photography increased.

By 1919, O'Keeffe was in New York and Stieglitz was trying new directions in photography. His letters from this period reflect the personal nature he saw in his work, and the return of his concern from promoting modern art back to his struggle to establish photography as art. In April 1919, he wrote to Sadakichi Hartmann,

*. . . I am virtually alone—I refuse to budge—I am at last photographing again—just to satisfy something within me—and all who have seen the work say that it is a revelation. —It is straight. No tricks of any kind. —No humbug. —No sentimentalism. —Not old nor new. —It is so sharp that you can see the [pores] in a face—and yet it is abstract. —All say that [they] don't feel they are conscious of any medium.*³⁹

In August of 1919, he wrote to Paul Strand,

*. . . I have been printing again—and naturally as I print you come to mind frequently. —I am making all sorts of experiments. . . I'm more and more amused how few real photographers exist—and how lax the standard was even when I thought a standard had been partially established. There was too much thought of "art;" too little of photography.*⁴⁰

By August 1923, Stieglitz had concluded, evident in a letter to Herbert Seligmann, that if the

photographer is synthetical in his choice of the moment he does something which the painter cannot do as well. —He achieves a sense of reality, an

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*exactness of reality, a different kind of reality than the painter can put down when he synthesizes. What the photographer can achieve is not greater. It is different in kind.*⁴¹

Stieglitz was convinced photography and painting, especially modern painting, shared some similar characteristics, but that as a whole they were different mediums creating different types of art.

Georgia O'Keeffe was Stieglitz's favorite photographic subject from the time of her arrival in New York, through their marriage, until his death in 1946. He did over three hundred finished portraits of her as well as hundreds more that were never completed. He wanted to produce a pictorial journal of her entire life, but he had to settle for the nearly thirty years he knew her. O'Keeffe worked well in front of his camera. She enjoyed the poses and moods she imitated for his studies. Stieglitz was aware of the enjoyment she expressed before the camera as well as the fulfillment she received from the finished works. Sarah Greenough described, "She was an actress who, as Stieglitz once wrote to Paul Strand, 'Whenever she looks at the proofs falls in love with herself.—Or rather her selves—There are very many.'"⁴²

The relationship of Stieglitz and O'Keeffe provided him with a vitality he had not had since before "291." She made it possible for him to forget his bitterness and failures and produce some of his best work in the 1920's. This was the most productive decade of his life. O'Keeffe and others, such as Paul Strand and John Marin, remained close to Stieglitz and provided him with whatever financial support they could. They also helped him open a new gallery, "An American Place," in 1929. However, Stieglitz's optimism of the twenties was replaced by pessimism in the thirties brought on by his failing health and bleak financial position. He was unable to take photographs after 1937.

Stieglitz wrote to Dudley Johnston April 3, 1925:

*. . . My photographs ever born of an inner need—an Experience of Spirit. I do not make "pictures," that is I never was a snap-shotter in the sense I feel Coburn is. I have a vision of life and try to find equivalents for it sometimes in the form of photographs. It's because of the lack of inner vision amongst those who photograph that there are really but few true photographers. The spirit of my "early" work is the same spirit of my "later" work. Of course I have grown, have developed, "know" much more, am more "conscious" perhaps of what I am trying to do. So what I have gained in form—in maturity—I may have lost in another direction. There is no such thing as progress or improvement in art. There is art or no art. There is nothing in between.*⁴³

This letter expresses a common thread that ran throughout the life of Stieglitz. It involved his personal attempts to help establish photography as an art on his own terms. He felt his work was different than that of others: he believed he possessed the knowledge to judge what was true art. The final image he accepted of the hopeless inability of the public to appreciate art evolved from events that occurred over the years.

Before the Photo Secession Stieglitz had an optimism that anybody could become a successful photographer if properly instructed. When bicycles replaced the camera as the latest fad he withdrew into a smaller group. Through the Photo Secession, *Camera Work*, and "291," he attempted to reach a smaller audience who were dedicated to photography. As Stieglitz's understanding of modern art grew, he became aware of its similarities to photography. When the public did not respond positively to modernism at the Armory Show, Stieglitz retreated into a smaller circle of friends.

Following the Armory Show, Stieglitz gradually became more pessimistic about the public and his personal failures. Some of the resentment worked into his photography. In 1923 his *Spiritual America* depicted a castrated horse.⁴⁴ This was his last blatant jab at the public in one of his photographs. However, in his photographs from the thirties is a noticeable focus on New York and its structural rather than human elements. This is a break from his earlier shots of the city. Stieglitz had concluded that the life of the city was in its architecture, and that the people, "had no soul."⁴¹

The changes Stieglitz went through between 1907 and 1920 occurred in this period of upheaval. However, there are personal aspects to Stieglitz that demonstrate he was more than just a part of a shift in cultural values. He was not the only "iconoclast" who became disillusioned as a result of the changes that took place: the changes in Stieglitz resulted from internal conclusions drawn from external observations. Though the Armory Show caused a great deal of change in art, for Stieglitz it was the public reaction to modernism that convinced him the masses of America were hopeless philistines. After the show, he lost his desire to educate America about modern art and photography; he felt his time spent on the public was wasted and that he was a failure. Indirectly he continued to pursue these goals by maintaining his active production of art and through the effect "291" had on the public and artists who had visited it. Despite his denials, Stieglitz's successes—the establishment of photography as art and the growth of modern art—remain as evidence of his achievements.

Endnotes

- ¹ Henry May, *The End of American Innocence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 7.
- ² May, *Innocence*, 7.
- ³ May, *Innocence*, 7.
- ⁴ May, *Innocence*, 6.
- ⁵ May, *Innocence*, 141.
- ⁶ May, *Innocence*, 140.
- ⁷ May, *Innocence*, 244.
- ⁸ May, *Innocence*, 245.
- ⁹ Judith Zilczer, "The Armory Show and the American Avant-Garde: A Re-evaluation," *Arts* 53 (September 1978), 128.
- ¹⁰ May, *Innocence*, 142.
- ¹¹ May, *Innocence*, 354.
- ¹² Sarah Greenough, *Alfred Stieglitz* (Washington D.C.: Callaway Editions, 1983), 181: letter 2.
- ¹³ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 181: letter 2.
- ¹⁴ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 182: letter 3.
- ¹⁵ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 183: letter 3.
- ¹⁶ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 221.
- ¹⁷ Jonathan Green, *Camera Work: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Aperture Inc., 1973), 26.
- ¹⁸ Green, *Camera Work*, 26.
- ¹⁹ George Roeder, *Forum of Uncertainty* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1978), 28.
- ²⁰ Arthur Wertheim, *The New York Little Renaissance* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 127.
- ²¹ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 193-4: letter 9.
- ²² Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 194: letter 9.
- ²³ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 195: letter 11.
- ²⁴ Roeder, *Forum*, 11.
- ²⁵ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 196: letter 12.
- ²⁶ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 196: letter 12.
- ²⁷ Peter Conn, *The Divided Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 281.
- ²⁸ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 197: letter 15.
- ²⁹ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 198: letter 15.
- ³⁰ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 194: letter 9.
- ³¹ Judith Zilczer, "John Quinn and Modern Art Collectors in America 1913-1924," *The American Art Journal* 14 (Winter 1982), 60.

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- ³² Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 201: letter 23.
- ³³ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 202: letter 26.
- ³⁴ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 202: letter 27.
- ³⁵ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 201-2: letter 20.
- ³⁶ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 228.
- ³⁷ Roeder, *Forum*, 64.
- ³⁸ Roeder, *Forum*, 64.
- ³⁹ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 205: letter 30.
- ⁴⁰ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 204-5: letter 29.
- ⁴¹ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 206: letter 34.
- ⁴² Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 231.
- ⁴³ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 209: letter 38.
- ⁴⁴ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 139: plate 54.
- ⁴⁵ Greenough, *Stieglitz*, 201: letter 23.

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