

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART PRESENTS

"STIEGLITZ"

THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF STIEGLITZ PHOTOGRAPHS

IN TWO BOOKS, ON THE INTERNET, AND IN AN EXHIBITION

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Over the next several years the National Gallery of Art will present -- in two books, on the Internet, and in an exhibition -- the world's largest and most complete collection of photographs by Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), one of the most renowned artists of the twentieth century. The Gallery's collection includes 1,600 photographs donated by Stieglitz's wife, Georgia O'Keeffe. More than half of these photographs have never before been published.

STIEGLITZ is made possible by Eastman Kodak Company, whose innovative sponsorship enables the Gallery to present Stieglitz's photographs in a variety of media.

The multi-year endeavor entitled STIEGLITZ begins with the August 1999 release of a new edition of the Gallery's award-winning 1983 book Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings, which has long been out of print. A series of seven thematic presentations, called Alfred Stieglitz: New Perspectives, will be presented on the Gallery's Web site (www.nga.gov) starting in September 1999. In 2002 the collection will be published, with tritone reproductions of all 1,600 photographs, in a 600-page scholarly catalogue. To celebrate the completion of STIEGLITZ, the Gallery will mount an exhibition of Stieglitz's photographs.

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"The Gallery's Stieglitz Collection is a remarkable testament both to the art of its maker, Alfred Stieglitz, and to the generosity of his wife, Georgia O'Keeffe," said Earl A. Powell, director, National Gallery of Art. "As part of our efforts to publish scholarly catalogues of the collection, the National Gallery has long sought to publish its Stieglitz holdings. Now, with support from Eastman Kodak Company and recent advances in digital technologies, this project becomes feasible. We are grateful both to Kodak and to Juan Hamilton, Georgia O'Keeffe's representative for the Stieglitz Collection, for enabling us to explore new technologies that were unknown during Stieglitz's lifetime. Our hope, as always, is for these electronic and print publications to further knowledge of Stieglitz's art and inspire viewers to see his original photographs."

"As the world's leader in photography, Kodak is pleased to join with the Gallery to bring to the public the work of Alfred Stieglitz," said George Fisher, chairman, Eastman Kodak Company. "Stieglitz proved that the universal language of photography could be spoken with nuanced majesty and power. By offering this handsome book, Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings, and by assembling the definitive catalogue, the National Gallery is honoring his legacy with the highest quality printing. By making selections of his work available through digital and internet technologies, the rich content of Stieglitz's art will be shared with viewers around the world. We are pleased to help preserve and perpetuate the photographs of this seminal figure in American culture."

STIEGLITZ COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS AT THE GALLERY

In 1949, only a few years after its founding, the National Gallery of Art received an extraordinary gift from Georgia O'Keeffe of 1,270 photographs made by Alfred Stieglitz. In 1980 O'Keeffe gave the Gallery 330 more photographic masterpieces by her late husband, and the Gallery's Alfred Stieglitz Collection became the most complete holding of his work in existence. Selected by O'Keeffe to represent the finest examples of Stieglitz's art, the Gallery's collection includes early studies made in Europe in the 1880s; views of New York City from the 1890s through the late 1930s; studies made at Stieglitz's home in Lake George, New York, from the late 1910s

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through the 1930s; and portraits of some of the most important figures in twentieth-century American art and culture, including John Marin, Arthur Dove, Paul Strand, Marcel Duchamp, and Sherwood Anderson, among others, as well as 330 portraits of Georgia O'Keeffe.

PROJECT ORGANIZERS

STIEGLITZ is organized by the National Gallery of Art and supervised by Sarah Greenough, the Gallery's curator of photographs, with the advice of Juan Hamilton.

NEW EDITION OF 1983 BOOK

A 1983 exhibition organized by Greenough and Hamilton and drawn from the Gallery's holdings, was accompanied by the book, Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings. Supported by a grant from Georgia O'Keeffe, the book included seventy-three photographs reproduced in tritone, an introductory essay by Greenough, and a selection of Stieglitz's writings on photography. The book surveys Stieglitz's entire career, including well-known photographs such as Winter, Fifth Avenue (1893), A Venetian Gamin (1894), The Steerage (1907), and Spiritual America (1923).

Described by the New York Times Book Review as "unquestionably the most beautiful book devoted to his (Stieglitz's) work," it won numerous awards such as the American Book Award, 1983; the Federal Design Achievement Award by the National Endowment for the Arts, 1984; and the Silbermedaille der Internationalen Buchkunst-Ausstellung, Leipzig, 1989. Although 20,000 copies were published, it soon went out of print.

The reproductions in the 1983 book, printed from negatives made directly from the Gallery's photographs, have never been equalled in their quality and faithfulness to the spirit of the originals. The book, with a new foreword by National Gallery Director Powell, was printed with the collaboration of several members of the original production team.

The book will be available in hardcover for \$75, the same price that it sold for in 1983, and can be purchased from the National Gallery Shops at (800) 697-9350 or the Gallery Web site at www.nga.gov. It will also be distributed by Bulfinch Press/Little,

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Brown and Company in bookstores.

WEB SITE PRESENTATIONS

A series of seven thematic presentations, entitled Alfred Stieglitz: New Perspectives, will be available on the Gallery's Web site beginning September 15, 1999, and will be changed every four months. The presentations will begin with Stieglitz's last photographs made in New York City from 1927 to 1937, followed by Lake George photographs, 1915 - 1937; portraits of Georgia O'Keeffe, 1917 - 1936; photographs of clouds, 1922 - 1934; portraits, 1907 - 1923; early New York photographs, 1892 - 1917; and European photographs, 1887 - 1894. The fifteen to twenty images selected for each segment will be accompanied by text including new insights on Stieglitz and his impact on American culture, as well as technical information about his processes.

CATALOGUE OF COLLECTION

In the spring of 2002, the National Gallery will publish a definitive catalogue of the entire Stieglitz collection with duotone reproductions of all 1,600 photographs. The 600-page scholarly book will include entries on each photograph, eight essays by Greenough, and appendices on Stieglitz's techniques and processes.

EXHIBITION

To celebrate the completion of this multi-year project, the Gallery will organize an exhibition. Including approximately seventy of Stieglitz's finest photographs, the exhibition will highlight his lesser-known work.

ALFRED STIEGLITZ

A man of many accomplishments, Alfred Stieglitz worked for more than fifty years to achieve the acceptance of photography as a valid form of artistic expression. He organized a group of photographers, the Photo-Secession, whose work he used to demonstrate the artistic possibilities of the medium, and published several periodicals, including Camera Notes (1897 - 1902) and Camera Work (1903 - 1917). At his gallery, The Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession at 291 Fifth Avenue (later known simply as 291), he showed not only the finest photographs of his time, but avant-garde painting

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and sculpture, and mounted the first exhibitions in this country of Picasso, Matisse, and Cézanne, among others. He also championed the work of young American artists, including Charles Demuth, Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, John Marin, and Georgia O'Keeffe. Yet toward the end of his life Stieglitz wrote: "When finally I am to be judged...I think I'll have to be judged by my own photographic work."

Although he began photographing in the mid-1880s, Stieglitz was by instinct and temperament a modernist who respected and was also fascinated by the inherent characteristics of the medium. His photographs are visually concise, direct, and highly expressive, and his legacy to subsequent generations of photographers has been widely influential in Europe as well as in the United States.

THE PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

When Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings was published in 1983, it and the exhibition it accompanied marked the first time that the National Gallery devoted serious attention to the art of photography. Today the Gallery has a collection of approximately 2,800 photographs and organizes major exhibitions celebrating the work of master photographers, such as Ansel Adams (1985), Paul Strand (1990), Walker Evans (1991), Robert Frank (1994), and Harry Callahan (1996).

GENERAL INFORMATION

The National Gallery of Art, located on the National Mall at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free. For general information call (202) 737-4215, TDD at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. To receive the Gallery's free bimonthly Calendar of Events, call (202) 842-6662.

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