

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

Information Officer, Deborah Ziska

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CONTACT: (202) 842-6353
Nancy Starr, Publicist

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART RELEASES NEW EDITION

OF ITS AWARD-WINNING 1983 BOOK,

"ALFRED STIEGLITZ: PHOTOGRAPHS AND WRITINGS"

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The National Gallery of Art is printing a new edition of its award-winning 1983 book, Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings. Containing seventy-three reproductions of master photographer Alfred Stieglitz's most important photographs, as well as a selection of his articles and letters, the new edition will be available in bookstores in August 1999. This reprint is being published as part of STIEGLITZ, a multi-year endeavor by the Gallery to present in print and electronic media, the key set of 1,600 photographs by Stieglitz that were given to the Gallery by Georgia O'Keeffe, the photographer's wife.

This new edition is made possible by a generous grant from the Eastman Kodak Company, which is also sponsoring STIEGLITZ.

The first edition was described by the New York Times Book Review as "unquestionably the most beautiful book devoted to (Stieglitz's) work," and 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 National Gallery's photographs, have never been equalled in their quality and faithfulness to the spirit of the originals," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National

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stieglitz reprint...page 2

Gallery of Art. "We are delighted to be able to make this beautiful book available again and thus to further knowledge and appreciation of the art of this important photographer."

This edition of Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings, with a new foreword by director Powell, was printed as a result of the collaboration of several members from the original production team including Juan Hamilton, sculptor and Georgia O'Keeffe's representative for the Alfred Stieglitz Collection of photographs at the National Gallery of Art, and Sarah Greenough, curator of photographs at the National Gallery of Art. Together with Georgia O'Keeffe they selected seventy-three of Stieglitz's finest photographs for the book. Sarah Greenough also selected and edited fifty-six of Stieglitz's letters and articles.

The illustrations are drawn from the key set of Stieglitz photographs donated to the National Gallery of Art by Georgia O'Keeffe in 1949 and 1980. Consisting of approximately 1,600 images, the Gallery's Stieglitz Collection contains the finest example of every mounted print that was in Stieglitz's possession at the time of his death. The photographs span Stieglitz's entire career: his early European studies from the 1880s and 1890s; his views of New York City from the turn of the century; the portraits of the many artists and writers he championed; the extended portrait of Georgia O'Keeffe; his photographs of clouds, the *Equivalents*; and his final studies of New York City and Lake George from the 1920s and 1930s.

The images have been reproduced in tritone offset and printed on specially manufactured archival paper to achieve the utmost fidelity to Steiglitz's original prints. The negatives that were used to print this edition are those that were used also to make the plates for the original book. The text has been set in letterpress.

Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings will be available for \$75.00, the same price that it sold for in 1983. The book will be available at the National Gallery Shops and distributed by Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown and Company in bookstores. To order from the Gallery Shops, call (800) 697-9350 or the Gallery Web site at www.nga.gov.

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National Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C.

National Gallery of Art

STIEGLITZ

Checklist

- Black & White Prints available
- Slides available
- Color Transparencies available

IMAGES NOT FOR INTERNET USE

Cover. Alfred Stieglitz

- American, 1864 – 1946
Georgia O'Keeffe: A Portrait--Hand and Wheel, 1935
gelatin silver print mounted on paperboard
24.2 x 19.1 cm (9 1/2 x 7 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection

- 1. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
At Biarritz, 1890
platinum print mounted on laid paper, 1895-1896
5.9 x 14 cm (2 1/4 x 5 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection

- 4. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
A Venetian Gamin, 1894
platinum print processed with mercury mounted on blue laid paper
16.3 x 13.2 cm (6 3/8 x 5 1/8 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection

- more -

Stieglitz checklist...2

8. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
Sun Rays—Paula, Berlin, 1889
platinum print, 1916
23.2 x 18.5 cm (9 1/8 x 7 1/4 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
12. Alfred Stieglitz
● American, 1864 – 1946
■ ***Winter—Fifth Avenue***, 1893
carbon print, 1894
23 x 18.4 cm (9 x 7 1/4 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
16. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
City Across the River, 1910
gelatin silver print
11.2 x 9.2 cm (4 3/8 x 3 5/8 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
22. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
Self-Portrait, 1907
platinum print
24.5 x 19.5 cm (9 5/8 x 7 5/8 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
28. Alfred Stieglitz
● American, 1864 – 1946
■ ***Charles Demuth***, 1915
platinum print
24.4 x 19.4 cm (9 5/8 x 7 5/8 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
35. Alfred Stieglitz
● American, 1864 – 1946
■ ***Georgia O'Keeffe: A Portrait***, 1918
palladium print mounted on paperboard
23.7 x 19 cm (9 1/4 x 7 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection

Stieglitz checklist...3

43. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
Georgia O'Keeffe: A Portrait, 1918
gelatin silver print mounted on paperboard
9 x 11.5 cm (3 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
51. Alfred Stieglitz
● American, 1864 – 1946
■ ***Dancing Trees***, 1922
palladium print mounted on paperboard
24 x 19 cm (9 3/8 x 7 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
52. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
Little House, Lake George, probably 1934
gelatin silver print mounted on paperboard
24 x 18.8 cm (9 3/8 x 7 3/8 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
69. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
From An American Place Looking Southwest, 1932
gelatin silver print mounted on paperboard
24.1 x 19 cm (9 1/2 x 7 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
70. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
From An American Place, North (?), probably 1931
gelatin silver print
24.3 x 19.1 cm (9 1/2 x 7 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection
71. Alfred Stieglitz
 American, 1864 – 1946
From My Window at An American Place, North, 1931
gelatin silver print mounted on paperboard
24.1 x 19.3 cm (9 1/2 x 7 5/8 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred Stieglitz Collection

As Seen In
The New York Times

The New York Times Book Review

DECEMBER 19, 1982



Georgia O'Keeffe by Alfred Stieglitz, 1918. From "Alfred Stieglitz."

**Photography
 As High Art**

**ALFRED STIEGLITZ:
 PHOTOGRAPHS & WRITINGS**

By Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton.
 Illustrated. 246 pp. New York and Washington, D.C.:
 Callaway Editions / National Gallery of Art.
 \$67.50 until Dec. 31; \$75 thereafter.

By **HILTON KRAMER**

TO become a legendary figure in the arts is a more paradoxical fate than is commonly supposed. For legends often obscure rather than illuminate the achievements they are created to exalt. So encumbered with adoration and awe are these legend-laden achievements that the task of discovering their true quality comes more and more to resemble the critical equivalent of an archeological dig. Layer upon layer of myth and misunderstanding must be stripped away before the work itself can be accurately perceived and properly experienced.

In the case of Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), we are still, oddly enough, only in the preliminary stages of our "dig" through the massive accumulation of legend that began to obscure his achievements in his lifetime and that has continued to grow without abatement since his death. Stieglitz was the pre-eminent photographer of his generation. He was also its pre-eminent proselytizer for the idea of photography as high art. As an editor, as an art dealer and as a moral and intellectual force, moreover, he played a major role in making modernist art a vital part of American culture. Yet nearly 40 years after his death, no comprehensive biography of the man has yet been written, and none is likely to be as long as his widow, Georgia O'Keeffe — herself a legend-laden figure — controls the crucial documents.

Nor is biography the only thing we lack in regard to Stieglitz. No definitive account of his photographic oeuvre exists, either. As for his influence on the artists, photographers, writers, art collectors and museum curators of his time, and of ours, this too is more a matter of legend than of concrete critical and historical analysis. We have every reason to believe this in-

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Hilton Kramer is the editor of *The New Criterion*.

The innovations
 of Leopold
 Stokowski

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Lives of
 Laurence Olivier and
 Ralph Richardson

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Mark Harris on
 a biography of
 Norman Mailer

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Alfred Stieglitz

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fluence to have been great, but we know remarkably little about it in detail. And about Stieglitz's relations with the artists he exhibited in his two New York galleries — 291 and An American Place — we know even less. Everyone agrees that Stieglitz was the country's most important art dealer in the early years of the American avant-garde, but his actual role in shaping the careers of the first generation of American modernists — and in shaping the taste that created a public for their work — remains shrouded in mystery.

It is therefore good news that the coming year promises to shed some new light on certain aspects of Stieglitz's life and work. Early in 1983 we can look forward to a book by Sue Lowe, Stieglitz's grand niece, that will give us our first glimpse into the family background of this remarkable figure. And on Feb. 3 the National Gallery of Art in Washington will open the first retrospective exhibition to be devoted to his photographs in nearly half a century. (The exhibition will subsequently be shown at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and at the Art Institute of Chicago.) In advance of this exhibition, Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton, its organizers, have produced what is unquestionably the most beautiful book ever to be devoted to his work. "Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings" also makes a significant addition to our knowledge of his thought and achievement. It is a book that everyone with a serious interest in Stieglitz will want to have.

FIRST and foremost, this elegant, over-size book, designed with flawless taste by Eleanor Morris Caponigro, contains 73 plates that reproduce Stieglitz's photographs — some of them published here for the first time — with a visual quality that is closer to the original prints than anything this writer has seen in book form. Virtually every aspect of Stieglitz's photographic development is represented in this dazzling anthology of images. It opens with a tiny picture of the beach at Biarritz, taken in 1890, and closes with a series of stunning views of Manhattan skyscrapers from



Stieglitz.

the 1930's. Many of Stieglitz's most famous pictures are included — "The Steerage" (1907), for example, and the portraits of Arthur Dove (1911-12), Charles Demuth (1915), Marsden Hartley (1915-16), Waldo Frank (1920) and John Marin (1922). The many photographs of Georgia O'Keeffe that occupy so large a place in Stieglitz's oeuvre — and that occupied so large a place in his life as well as in his art — are well represented too. "Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings" is thus itself an important retrospective survey of the work of a master.

The most extraordinary of the pictures reproduced in the book are, I think, Stieglitz's so-called "Equivalents" from the 1920's — the images of skies and clouds that constitute the photographer's most radical pictorial inventions. These pictures undoubtedly owe something to the American modernist painting (Dove's and O'Keeffe's especially) that Stieglitz felt particularly close to at the time. Yet they go distinctly beyond the pictorial conventions that governed avant-garde painting in this period by reaching for the kind of lyric abstraction that was not to enter Ameri-

car painting until the 40's and 50's. In the line that can be traced from the paintings of Albert Pinkham Ryder to, say, those of Clyfford Still, it is in Stieglitz's "Equivalents" — rather than in painting itself — that we find the strongest link.

STIEGLITZ certainly knew what he had achieved in these pictures. (Modesty was never his forte.) Writing about his "Equivalents" to Hart Crane in 1923, he declared: "I know exactly what I have photographed. I know I have done something that has never been done." And further: "I also know that there is more of the really abstract in some 'representation' than in most of the dead representations of the so-called abstract so fashionable now." It is interesting to find that even now, more than half a century after their creation, these images continue to cause a certain dismay. Thus, while Sarah Greenough provides us with a very straightforward account of the "Equivalents" in her introduction to this volume, she expresses her doubts about them in the notes at the back of the book, going so far as to speak of a "major flaw in Stieglitz's theory of equivalence."

What worries her, I gather, is the whole question of intelligibility that has plagued abstract and symbolist art for as long as we have known it. But are Stieglitz's "metaphors" (as she calls them) in these pictures really "so personal as to be unintelligible"? I doubt it, and I find it odd that Stieglitz should — at this late date — be held to the very conventions his work did so much to transform. Readers interested in this aspect of Stieglitz's work will do better to turn to Rosalind Krauss's essay on the "Equivalents" in the winter 1979 issue of *October* magazine.

Miss Greenough has placed us in her debt, however, by assembling the anthology of Stieglitz's writings on photography that constitutes the other valuable part of this marvelous book. Some of these writings, too, are unpublished, and they provide us with a vivid account not only of Stieglitz's ideas but of the passion with which he held them. Here, for example, is a passage from a letter written to James T. Soby in 1942 in which Stieglitz summed up his philosophy of the photographic print:

"You seem to assume that a photograph is one of a dozen or a hundred or maybe a million, —

all prints from one negative necessarily being alike and so replaceable. But then along comes one print that really embodies something that you have to say that is subtle and elusive, something that is still a straight print, but when shown with a thousand mechanically made prints has something that the others don't have. What is it that this print has? It is certainly something not based on a trick. It is something born out of spirit, — and spirit is an intangible while the mechanical is tangible. If a print that I might send did not have this intangible, what would be the value of sending it out? If what I feel about life is not in a print of mine, then I might just as well say that any machine can take a picture and turn out a print mechanically. You might get wonderful pictures as a result, but they would not contain that something called love or passion, both of which are essentials needed to bring forth a living print — or any other living creative expression. A print lacking these elements is simply an illustration."

It is in this spirit, by the way, that the plates in this book have been reproduced.

ONE final word of caution, however. It would be a mistake to regard "Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings" as the definitive book on this subject. What it really represents is Georgia O'Keeffe's view of Stieglitz. Although O'Keeffe's name does not appear on the title page of the book, elsewhere it is made abundantly clear that she has been involved in every stage of its preparation, in the selection of the pictures to be reproduced as well as of the writings to be reprinted and the point of view that is expressed. The hand that appears in the photograph adorning the book's jacket is O'Keeffe's hand, and that is the hand that has shaped our perspective on Stieglitz's life and work for many decades now. It is the hand that will govern the retrospective exhibition now in preparation in Washington. It is well to remember then, while we are savoring the many pleasures of this book, that the future is likely to modify this perspective in important ways. "Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings" is a wonderful book, but it is no substitute for the biographical, historical and critical studies that remain to be done. ■



QUALITY. ACCOMPLISHMENT. VISION. Few people make a significant and lasting contribution to the world or have the conviction to devote their lives to the realization of a belief. Alfred Stieglitz did.

Stieglitz was determined to make us see that photography, the medium that George Eastman did so much to perfect and popularize, could be an art. He knew that what the gifted eye saw, the camera captured, and the print revealed could create an art every bit as intellectually compelling and emotionally nuanced as painting. Stieglitz showed us this through his own photographs and by organizing exhibitions of others. Having established such authority, he was sought out by—and shaped the lives of—younger photographers who went on to become the medium's giants: Paul Strand, Edward Steichen, Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, Eliot Porter.

Like so many other photographers—amateurs who used the early Kodak cameras, as well as professionals—Stieglitz found his subjects within walking distance of his front door. Yet, as is beautifully demonstrated in this book, *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings*, his studies of buildings, clouds, and people reveal an extraordinary intensity, one that guided his eye and informed his remarkable writings.

Kodak is pleased to work with the National Gallery of Art to print this new edition of *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings*. This elegant book is the first result of a five-year-long project that will make Stieglitz's work available to a wide audience. Traditional and innovative imaging technologies will be employed to achieve the highest possible quality reproductions of these photographs, in print as well as electronic media. The other stages include presentations on the internet of representative examples of Stieglitz's art, to begin later this year; the publication of the definitive book of Stieglitz's key set of photographs, given to the National Gallery in 1949 and 1980 by the artist's wife, Georgia O'Keeffe; and an exhibition highlighting rarely seen Stieglitz photographs which will coincide with the publication of the scholarly catalogue.

However you choose to enjoy the rich photographic legacy of Alfred Stieglitz, stop and give his works your full attention. You may detect what Stieglitz termed "something life giving, something inspiring."

The work, the gift of a master.

George Fisher
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Eastman Kodak Company

