MIXING MEDIA: CUBIST PAINTERLY PRACTICE
IN PAUL STRAND’S PHOTOGRAPHY (1915-1917)

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ABSTRACT

Paul Strand began his career at a time when painters were looking away from techniques used to show illusionism and photographers were trying to gain status as artists. Although Strand had worked with the Pictorialist photographers, who emulated the work of Impressionist painters, he and Alfred Stieglitz looked to avant-garde art in Europe for a new vision. I will argue that Strand's work between 1915 and 1917 demonstrates an experimental revelation that was clearly responding to the visual challenges of the Cubist movement in painting.

Strand's early work has previously been regarded as developmental, setting the stage for a so-called realist style that emerged in his later work. For example, in her dissertation (1978), Naomi Rosenblum briefly refers to the literary impact of Cubism on Strand. Her idea is further developed twenty years later in a small exhibition entitled "Cubism in American Photography" which discusses the photographer's interest in Cubism's drive toward flatness. Although both of these texts open the discussion, they do not fully address the implications of

1 Alfred Stieglitz was the first artist and art dealer to promote the avant-garde artists in The United States. He exhibited the latest most innovative art from Europe and America in his art gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue.
Strand's work between 1915-1917. I intend to examine those implications in this paper.

Strand's interest in Cubism was atypical in photography and therefore key to understanding how the movement was adopted and promulgated in the United States. Strand began his investigations into the relationship between Cubist painting and photography when he was vacationing in Twin Lakes, Connecticut, during the summer of 1915. He arranged items, selected particular angles, and overexposed his images to emphasize the strangeness of otherwise ordinary objects. In his most famous print of the series, *Untitled* (1915), Strand indicates his desire to emphasize the potential of his medium both by indicating the obviousness of the object at hand and by drawing attention to the act of photographing. Here he shows a table tipped on its side, caught in a moment of transition. Its instability is captured, frozen, and then re-enlivened in the motion of the quick blasts of strong light and shadow cast on the railing behind it. The table, less instantly recognizable than the stationary porch railing, becomes a foil for the shadows in the background. Emphasis on structural form and the differentiation of materials used to reveal surface texture and pictorial depth demonstrate interests shared by Picasso and Braque in their Cubist works.

*Untitled*, as well as the other photographs made that summer, point toward the paradox of representing three-dimensional objects on a
two-dimensional surface. The flatness of the selected object, in this case the tabletop, counters the spatial depth established via the relationship between table, railing and the space beyond it. Strand’s peculiar use of exposure, both in taking the shot and in his developing techniques created extreme contrasts, evoking visual shifts between highlighted objects and shadowed darkness. Superficially, these works can be read as object studies. They have been relegated to the place of the painter’s preparatory drawings, not dismissible, yet not quite credible as full-fledged works of art. I hope to show that they are indeed worthy of our attention as completed works, aiming toward an avant-garde vision in photography derived from painterly practice in France at that time.
For Nick and My Parents
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INTRODUCTION

In 1911, Paul Strand (1890-1976) quit his post at his father's bank to travel the world. With a high school degree, two cameras and enough money to buy a steerage fare to Calais, Strand left New York and traveled through France (although never visited Paris), Germany, and Czechoslovakia taking pictures for whomever would pay him. He lasted six months, writing home twice for money to cover his expenses, and then after a brief stay in New York, set out for San Francisco, committed to pay the way with photographs he hoped to sell. Traveling and living with the income afforded by pictures taken of various college campuses and students, he made it as far as New Haven, where the remaining tinted prints he made of the Yale campus are currently entrusted. When he returned to New York in 1912, he began anew, by seeking out the support of Alfred Stieglitz and the New York Camera Club where he worked until he joined the war effort in 1917.

This thesis explores the influence of Cubism on the work of American photographer Paul Strand in those years. Between 1914 and 1916 Strand learned how to develop his own prints using new chemical processes developed by the Pictorialists. His work during this period
favors the pictorial haziness of the Pictorialists, who were driven to find artistic independence in their medium of photography, yet did so in the tradition of Impressionist painting. After four years of this sort of inquiry, Strand pursued new inspiration. He began his investigations into the relationship between Cubist painting and his own photography when he was staying in Twin Lakes, Connecticut, during the summer of 1916.

When he first attempted to apply Cubism to his photographs in his still lives, Strand arranged items, selected particular angles, and overexposed his images to emphasize the strangeness of otherwise ordinary objects. He also experimented with the tension between abstraction and realism, light and shadow, physical and metaphorical layering, and various conceptual representations of nature. In these works, Strand echoed the techniques and illusionistic devices that Cubist painters Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, used.

Just as the pictorial innovations of Cubism altered the structure of western painting after 1909 to a degree unparalleled since the Renaissance, Strand used the theoretical and formal concerns of the movement to counter his medium's nearly century old reputation as a mimetic devise of mechanical reproduction; he was innovative in this use of photography as an artistic device to explore techniques previously reserved for painting. Other photographers whose work indicates Cubist influence include the American Alvin Langdon Colburn (and his 1917 vortographs) and European photographers André Kertész and Gertrude
Fehr, whose works share Strand's formal concerns, but who do not share his interest in the more specific theoretical concerns of the movement.

Strand learned about Cubist painter, who turned away from mimicking the natural world when he met photographers who shared his interest in photography. Foremost among them was Alfred Stieglitz, (1864-1946) whom he met in 1908 on a visit to The Little Galleries at 291 Fifth Avenue (291) with Lewis Hine, his social studies teacher and photography instructor in high school.¹ Stieglitz was the first artist and art dealer to promote European and American avant-garde artists in the United States.² In 1902, he had formed the Photo Secession group, which envisioned a place for photography among the high arts of painting and sculpture. The Photo Secessionists hoped to advance photography in terms of its diversity of pictorial expression, to draw together Americans practicing or interested in art, and to hold exhibitions from time to time that worked toward these ends.³ They initially produced photographs in a Pictorialist manner, making their work look as unrealistic as possible, using elaborate shooting and developing techniques to make their photos look painterly. Physical texture was minimal, but they experimented nonetheless with various papers (most notably Japanese rice paper) and

¹ Strand attended The Ethical Culture School in New York City from 1908 to 1909.
² Stieglitz was inspired by works of art he saw on his trip to Europe with fellow photographer Edward Steichen (1879-1973). In Paris, he saw paintings by Picasso and Braque that offered new perceptions of the role of visual media in art-making. Inspired, he returned to New York and looked toward the visual elements of modern city life. Stieglitz exhibited the latest, most innovative art from Europe and America in his art gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue. For more on Alfred Stieglitz's involvement with the Photo Secessionists see William Horner, *Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo Secession* (Boston: Little Brown, 1983) and Sarah Greenough, ed., *Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and his New York Galleries* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, Bulfinch Press, 2000).
³ Many of the initial members were also members of the New York Camera Club although the two groups were not affiliated.
multiple gum printing techniques that gave a bit of texture to the surface of their work. They also experimented with developing processes to explore illusionistic depth by creating strong contrasts. Later they looked to European avant-garde art for inspiration and shifted the direction of their camera lenses toward the city, photographing the architecture and its inhabitants.

When Strand graduated from high school in 1909, he had sought Stieglitz as his mentor and began producing photographs in the Pictorialist manner. First, however, he began to emulate Impressionist paintings with beautiful, softly focused platinum prints, as for example in his *Landscape, Twin Lakes* (1913) and *Bay Shore, Long Island* (1914) which depict languid water vistas with cloudy skies. In these he mimicked the style of George Seely and Clarence White, whose photographs were swathed in hazy darkness. Like them, Strand experimented in the darkroom in order to add a deeper sense of painterly artistry to his work, artistry that was lacking in traditional photography. These images, and others like them, consumed the young Strand’s time well into 1915. However, it was Strand’s relationship with Stieglitz and the Photo Secessionists that exposed him to avant-garde painting that would be his photographic style.

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4 Maria Morris Hambourg, *Paul Strand Circa 1916* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 15. For further information on platinum printing see Appendix C.
Strand was chiefly drawn to Cubist paintings, particularly works by Picasso and Braque that were first shown at 291 in 1911. He was attracted to these paintings because they emphasized the object nature of the subject by representing the subject in a reduced structural form. The object-focused approach of Picasso’s vision dovetailed with Strand’s interest in framing elements of the natural world within the camera lens.

Strand was especially inspired by reproductions of Cubist paintings and sculpture he saw in Stieglitz’s quarterly journal *Camera Work* (1903-1918). *Camera Work* promoted photography as an art, and served as a platform for the ideas of the Photo Secession. By 1909 the journal had also changed in response to the influences of European avant-garde painting. Articles that dealt with chemical processes – most notably ‘how to’ pieces on platinum, gelatin-silver and platinotype printing – were relegated to the back pages and replaced by articles written by many of the day’s leading critics, including Charles Caffin, Sadakichi Hartmann, George Bernard Shaw, and others. In 1910, articles such as Hartmann’s “On the Possibility of New Laws of Composition,” propagated the idea that photography was “the modern art” whose motivation lies in its expressionistic and creative potential. Others, such as Max Weber’s “The Fourth Dimension from a Plastic Point of View,” offered the first instance of praise for the new works of the European avant-garde which
undoubtedly inspired Strand to experiment within his own medium.\(^5\)

Weber was also the first to introduce Picasso to Stieglitz in Paris by showing the latter a small drawing by the artist in Gertrude Stein’s parlor.

In addition to articles focusing on drawing and painting rather than photography, the quarterly published reproductions of non-photographic work for the first time. Stieglitz included reproductions of drawings by Marius de Zayas, Henri Matisse and Gordon Craig\(^6\) in 1910 and in the following year reproductions of Rodin’s watercolors and sculpture as well as one drawing by Picasso. Between 1910 and 1912 Stieglitz stopped publishing articles and photographic reproductions of his own work and began publishing reproductions of paintings and sculpture.\(^7\) The Cubist works he printed evoked the strongest responses.\(^8\) Inspired by *Camera Work*, Strand began copying and elaborating on what he saw reproduced in the pages of the journal.

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5 American painter Max Weber (1881-1961) was often linked to Stieglitz and his circle which coalesced at Gallery 291. Weber studied with Jean-Paul Laurens and Henri Matisse in Paris from 1905-1908 and brought the work of Matisse and Cezanne as well work from the African Congo and the Pacific Southwest to Stieglitz’s attention. He was a frequent contributor to *Camera Work* and occasionally showed his own paintings on the gallery walls.

6 Gordon Craig (1872-1966) was an English actor, theater director-designer, producer and theorist who had a significant impact on the development of theater in England and the United States in the 20th century.

7 Ironically, Stieglitz was returning to documentary uses of photography, using his publication to focus on the new art of Picasso, Braque, Matisse and Rodin rather than new artistic works by emerging photographers. Drawings by Matisse were published in 1910 (vol. 32) and then paintings, sculpture and other drawings in a "special number" (which meant no volume number) edition in 1912. Examples of Rodin’s drawings appeared in 1911 (vol. 34/35) as photogravures in addition to four images by Edward Steichen which included a portrait of Rodin as well as his sculpture of Salome at various angles and light exposures. Picasso first appeared in 1911 (vol. 36) and then in 1912 in a "special number" dedicated to his work, "special number" 1913, and 1915 (vol. 48). Braque’s Cubist works first appeared in the United States in *The Armory Show* in 1913. He was later exhibited at 291 and within the pages of *Camera Work*. For more on this, see Appendix B.

8 Arthur Hoeber, critic for *The New York Sun*, wrote, "Any sane criticism is out of the question... The results suggest the most violent wards of an asylum for maniacs, the craziest emanations of a disordered mind, the germinings of a lunatic... it is almost worth a visit to these galleries to see how far foolishness will go... the limit has been reached." Greenough, 121-4. Others were less condemnatory but equally skeptical.
Strand was also inspired by Cubist paintings and sculpture he saw at what retrospectively became the most significant exhibition of modern art. The well-known International Exhibition of Modern Art of 1913, commonly referred to as The Armory Show, included more than 1,000 European and American paintings, sculptures and works of paper. Although not directly associated with 291, the show was greatly influenced by the smaller shows Strand saw there. Picasso and Braque both exhibited pictures in the Armory Show, several of which had been lent by Stieglitz and others which were previously unknown to Strand.

Strand’s work between 1915 and 1918 reveals an experimental vision that is demonstrably tied to Cubist paintings by Picasso and Braque he saw in reproductions in the journal Camera Work, as well as in actuality at Stieglitz’s Little Galleries at 291 Fifth Avenue and at the Armory Show in 1913. This three-year period marked a shift in Strand’s vision that carried through the rest of his long career. He employed new techniques in the darkroom, such as developing chemicals, resins and varnishes that later became staples in his repertoire (see Appendix II). He stopped down the aperture of the camera when taking photographs and overdeveloped his pictures, which resulted in extreme contrasts and heightened visual shifts between highlighted objects and shadows. This effect became a trademark in identifying his work. His unusual use of

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9 Please refer to Appendix B for complete listings of work by Picasso and Braque that was exhibited at 291, The Armory Show, and within the pages of Camera Work.
abstraction marked his unique vision behind the camera, in the darkroom and on the developed print. Like Cubist painters, Strand attempted to represent three-dimensional objects in a two-dimensional space with his camera.¹⁰

To understand the ways in which Strand manipulated his work, we first need to recognize that he did not mimic Cubist paintings wholesale. Rather, he was fascinated by the ideas he interpreted as being of interest to Picasso and Braque. Not having met or conversed with these artists about their work, his insight was limited to what he saw in New York and to the interpretations he was exposed to by Stieglitz and his entourage. Moreover, in the few interviews they gave about the genre, Picasso and Braque made it quite clear that the paintings spoke for themselves. The first interview in which Picasso discussed his Cubist works was in 1923, well after he had stopped working exclusively in Cubism. As Picasso unhelpfully explained, “Drawing, design, and color are understood and practiced in Cubism in the spirit and manner that they are understood and practiced in all other schools.”¹¹ Picasso claimed, with one foot in tradition and the other in innovation, that he was a realist painter.

¹⁰ In most contemporary monographs, Strand is considered a heroic photographer of realism. His work has been categorized as supporting the “straight-shooting” approach to picture making that Stieglitz proselytized and that his followers supported. In the case of Strand, who did believe in the realism afforded by his medium, the discussion is skewed because his work during this period is neither straight nor realistic in its process or effects. More importantly, this work marks a critical moment in the history of photography because it firmly plants the medium within the most important artistic movement of its time therefore demonstrating and confirming the artistic merit of photography in the modern period.

¹¹ See Marius de Zayas’s interview with Picasso, “Picasso Speaks” in The Arts, May 1923. This quote comes from the only interview Picasso ever gave on the topic of Cubism. Conducted by Marius de Zayas an American artist and art critic, it was, in a way, a favor to one of the only artists/critics that praised Picasso’s (proto-Cubist painting) Les Demoiselles d’Avignon when it was first exhibited in the fall of 1907. De Zayas’s review of the painting in 1908 and of the other Cubist works that followed did not initially appear in modern European paintings journals, but in Camera Work.
Strand too believed his work was realistic, but his work, like Picasso's, pushed the limits of categorization. Strand was indeed interested in depicting his subjects realistically, but he was also interested in abstraction. It is for this reason that my analysis of Strand's photographs will focus on the formal aspects of Cubism, with the incorporation of biographical and historical elements where relevant. Strand's interest in Cubist paintings was formal, that is, his impressions of Picasso and Braque's works as they appeared in his own work emphasized the form of the work rather than its content.¹²

In reference to his photographs from 1916, Strand commented, "[The] abstractions were the result of my seeing at 291 the work of Picasso and Braque. I was trying to apply their strange abstract principles to photography in order to understand them."¹³ Both Picasso and Braque repeatedly remarked that Cubism, if anything, was not about abstraction but decidedly about realism. Although Strand possibly misunderstood what it was that Picasso and Braque were trying to do intellectually, he clearly could relate to their intellectual interests visually.

¹² To help me assess the idiosyncrasies and insights in Strand's Cubist photographs, I have relied on John Golding's discussion of Cubist painting in his text Cubism: A History and an Analysis 1907-1914. (1988). Golding's discussion of Cubism charts the progression of the movement from nascent inspiration to relative completion in the careers of Picasso and Braque. Golding wrote in his well-known treatise on Cubism: "They took each of the elements that comprise the vocabulary of painting - form, space, color, and technique - and substituted for the traditional use of every one of them a new interpretation of their own... Cubism was a completely new pictorial language, a completely new way of looking at the outside world, a clearly defined aesthetic." John Golding, Cubism: A History and an Analysis, 1907-1914. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988), xv. Golding does not address political, social, or personal issues as significant influences, but rather focuses his attention on a close formal reading of Picasso and Braque's works by addressing the influence of style. He saw the paintings for their visual impact, not for the social discourse that surrounded them. Like Strand, Golding does not seem to have been interested in the artists themselves nor their philosophical reasons for working in the ways they did. Much has been written on the Cubist movement, but Golding's text approaches Picasso's work formally, that is, via the paintings themselves. This approach is echoed in Strand's work in which he pulled visual motifs from these Cubist painters for his own medium.

Given the complex relationship between the Cubist painters and Strand, much can, and has been, said about their differences. Naomi Rosenblum, Nancy Newhall, Marisa Morris Hambourg, and Sarah Greenough have brought great insight to Stand’s oeuvre, but none of these critics addressed the formalist issues at stake in the photographs. Rosenblum, who has offered a remarkable body of research regarding the photographer’s technical accomplishments, found Strand’s 1916 pictures to be the most categorically elusive of his career. In her 1978 dissertation on Strand, Naomi Rosenblum briefly addressed the question of influence and style. She cites the “close affinities between Strand’s aesthetic ideas and those of the avant-garde painters” but concluded that “the stylistic and intellectual sources of the still lives and architectural abstractions are not easily discernable.” Others recognized the connection between these pictures and Cubism, but addressed the relationship only vaguely. Rosenblum’s ideas were further developed in a small exhibition in 1982 which scrutinized American photographers’ interest in Cubism’s drive toward flatness. The premise of this exhibition was to compare avant-garde painting and photography in America in order to chart the emergence and significance of photographic modernism. Although both of these studies open the discussion, they do not fully address the

complex influence of Cubism in Strand’s work of 1916. Critics regarded
Strand’s early work, produced between his graduation from The Ethical
Culture School in New York in 1909, and his recruitment into the Army in
1918, as merely developmental, setting the stage for a so-called realist
style that emerged in his later work.

In the following chapters I will examine Strand’s 1916 photographs,
twenty-one works in total, taken at Twin Lakes and in New York City, in
relation to specific Cubist works by Picasso and Braque that Strand had
seen in New York in the preceding years.

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10 It is interesting to note that Strand took very few pictures during this period and all of the known negatives and prints express his
interest in Cubism. This demonstrates his dedication to the project and further marks his devotion to the medium of photography as a
craft and as an art. Struggling against notions of mimeticism proposed by artists and critics who believed photography was not an art
but merely a tool of science, Strand continually showed that the medium had more to offer.
CHAPTER 1

THE TWIN LAKES STILL-LIVES

Like many city dwellers, Strand retreated from the summer heat of New York to vacation at his family’s lake house in Twin Lakes, Connecticut, when he could afford to do so. After a stint of working with his father, this time for six long months, as he recollected in an interview, he had the resources to leave the city for three months in the summer of 1916. Located about one hundred miles from the city, Twin Lakes was a small town, where houses remained vacant with closed shutters almost year-round except in the summer, when the town bustled with out-of-towners. It was in this customarily slow-paced, isolated environment, that Strand began to synthesize Cubism into his own work.

In a letter to George Haviland, whom he admired and had read about in Camera Work, Strand wrote that his Twin Lakes photographs were an “attempt to find out what this abstract idea was all about and to discover the principles behind it. I did those photographs as part of that inquiry, the inquiry of a person into the meaning of this new development in painting.”17 Most of Strand’s work in the Cubist manner was untitled,

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17 Letter from John and Susan Edwards Havilth to Catherine B. Scallen as cited in the exhibition catalog organized by her entitled Cubism and American Photography, 1910-1930, p 22.
and then later given a title by collections that now hold his work. Therefore, for ease and clarity, I will refer to his photographs by these later titles, after specifying those photographs that he left untitled. As Strand did not indicate the chronology of these summer pictures, I will begin with *Untitled* (1916), taken at Twin Lakes, which most clearly draws from Picasso’s work. This photograph is usually referred to as *Bouls* (fig. one). The image itself does not offer much insight if read as figurative and realistic, nor does it succeed as a snapshot taken from the natural world. The image is taken, adapted and transformed: Strand charts an ambiguous form of realism for us. Like many of the Cubist works by Picasso and Braque, this photograph investigates and analyses the nature of solid form, a depiction of what happens when an image of a three-dimensional object is created by compressing it into a two-dimensional representation.\(^\text{18}\) It is a simple enough composition, an object study like those made by countless other artists, but the effect is entirely novel. What we see is a gathering of concentric concave shapes, rather than a realistic rendering of a still-life grouping.

If we look at *Untitled (Bouls)* again with a Cubist painting in mind, more relationships appear. Picasso’s *Nature Morte* (the modern title is *Vase, Gourd and Fruit on Table*, 1909) is a small oil painting Strand had seen in 1913 at the Armory Show (fig two).\(^\text{19}\) Picasso’s painting contains

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\(^{19}\) This still life was submitted to the Armory Show as *Nature-Morte*. For further information about the Cubist works Picasso submitted the Armory Show please see Appendix B.
tightly packed angular motifs that both flatten the depicted table and its objects in a vertical manner and yet at the same time create space in the foreground. The vivid projecting mountain-scape formed by the conical fruit and angular table linens emphasize the hidden edge of the table. The arrangement quite literally draws attention to that which is absent and metaphorically reminds us that in a traditional still life in which a single point of perspective would be employed, this far-reaching table end would be absent from view in order to portray a recessional view of the table. Picasso has made the goal of his Cubist exercise as obvious as possible: that is, to deny the effects generated by traditional techniques used to create illusionism and depth. In this still-life, Picasso employs traditional tools, such as shading and foreshortening, to point out their artificiality. What at first seems abstracted – the objects on the table – are made recognizable relationally. Picasso's realism is not found here in the individual pieces but in their relationships with one another. Shadowing is employed to emphasize his play on perspective. From the gourd, the light source appears to arrive from our right, yet in the fruit, placed just below it, the light source seems to come from the left.

Other intentional inconsistencies in Strand's use of light and shade are meant to disorient to a point, but without compromising our perception of the traditional subject matter. Strand used cast shadow much in the same way that painters use modeling – that is, to highlight certain areas, draw the space closer and throw certain elements into
darkness. In *Untitled (Bowls)*, the object in the foreground is bathed in light, glowing from the overexposed printing process. A swath of darkness, odd as it is, offers an artificial sense of depth and therefore distance between the lip and the bottom of the bowl, while at the same time threatening to collapse the rimmed sides upon themselves like the closing of a clamshell. This bit of shadow or modeling is somehow just enough out of place to feel artificial, yet believable enough to grant space in the object depicted. It is an interesting element in the image, seemingly inconsequential, but as we shall see later on, it is of utmost importance. Behind this object three others emerge, their rimmed lips lit and their inner bodies, dark.

Rather than using tonal gradation to create relationships between the objects, or between recession and relief within each object, here the relationship between tones functions as a formal consideration. The shadow and light stand on their own, casting their own formal identity—bright white against darkness, with the image’s object-like qualities (in this case a bowl) playing second fiddle. The sensation of depth comes about through these harsh juxtapositions of light and dark rather than through shading.

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20 Strand, throughout his career, had a grave sense of exposure values, especially when developing his prints. Rather than seeking a middle tone of grey, he developed with an inclination toward bright white and black, with minimal grey. This characteristic is particularly apparent when one compares the prints he developed against those developed by Richard Benson, who was commissioned to reprint all of Strand’s photographs to date for an *Aperture* edition of his work published in 1976. Strand oversaw the project, but the prints carry a different signature, one more modest, balanced and far less gritty than the originals. See Appendix C for more detail. I am indebted to the Center for Creative Photography for allowing me to examine both sets of photographs.
Another painting by Picasso further clarifies his influence on Strand. *The Compotier*, like Strand's *Untitled (Bowls)*, has various components, but more than these objects in themselves, Picasso is interested in light, both in its source and its effect upon the object matter (fig. three). Picasso used gradations of color sparingly. (The black-and-white image I provide emphasizes this point.) Light enters the picture space from both the left, where it hits the fruit, and the right, where it highlights the tablecloth and foot of the bowl. Light also arcs from the front of the foot to the lip of the bowl and then carries around the lip's edge like a fire ring. These swirling strokes of light function not to reflect the light in Picasso's studio but to relay a sense of space in the work, to distinguish front from back (the bowl in front of the wall), and in from out (the fruit versus the bowl in which the fruit are displayed). Picasso and then Strand used light to relay space rather than color.

In *Untitled (Bowls)* Strand also paid close attention to a still life by Braque of the same year entitled *Still-Life with Fruit Dish* (1908) (fig. four), in which Braque merged foreground with background, an element that Picasso largely ignored, leaving the background of his still lives from this period nearly vacant, in the case of *Le Compotier*, defined only by the edge of a wall.21 The swirling mass of Braque's fruit and bowl pick up the background space, creating a centrifugal force in the picture space. This bounding energy braces against the resulting flatness that emerges in the

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21 *Still-Life with Fruit Dish* (1908) was included in an exhibition of Picasso and Braque's work at 291 in 1913 (9 December-11 January).
elisions of space between foreground and background. The swirling masses coupled with the ensuing spatial compression create unresolved tension. Since foreground is not distinguished from background by subject matter, the space within the scene is flattened. Golding argues that Braque’s tendency toward tension makes for a different sort of Cubism. Unlike Picasso, Braque focused on the increasing fragmentation of forms, which he executed with small careful brushstrokes. By fusing the shapes of the forms he painted, he drew the viewer’s attention to the surface.

In Strand’s Untitled (Bowls), we are similarly focused on a relatively short planar recession because Strand thrust the subject matter against the picture space by shooting it at close range. He then cropped segments of each object, further restricting what we see. Strand mimics Braque’s centrifugal tension (in the eclipsing bowls) and Picasso’s unusual use of light and exaggerated sense of the solidity of the forms. He was interested in the visual challenge Cubism presented to art-making in general and to its potential application in photography, in particular. He later remembered that he hoped to learn “how you build a picture, what a picture consists of, how shapes are related to each other, how spaces are filled, how the whole thing must have a kind of unity.”

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22 Golding, 79-80.
23 Golding, 78.
of Untitled (Bowls) was Strand’s idea, one that carried the lineage of Cubist painting.

Untitled (Bowls) is the most obvious work Strand made to reinterpret Cubist thought for his medium; several of his other fruit and bowl compositions are more difficult to place, but do offer general comparisons. During his summer at Twin Lakes, Strand set up a modest still life out in the yard consisting of a jug, two oranges and a banana on a white table. For some artists, this sort of exercise can be a heavy-handed rite of passage, but with these objects taken from the kitchen Strand fashioned a fresh view. In Jug and Fruit (1916), what really draws our attention is the table (fig. five). The stark contrast between light and dark, affected by the bright light and the film he chose, endows the object study with an otherworldly character. The objects retain their fruit and jug-like qualities, but they seem like shadows of themselves than full-fledged objects. The relationship between foreground and background draws a stark dichotomy between the forms of the objects as distinct entities within their arrangement in composition as a whole. The darkened Pictorialist-style gum-enhanced grass in the far background and the blackened fruit in the foreground share similar characteristics, in that the tactile qualities of one might easily be superimposed on the shape of the other.

25 Strand used orthochromatic film in his fruit pictures taken at Twin Lakes. This film is useful in the darkroom because it is insensitive to red light allowing him to see (and manipulate) the works as they developed. Another useful quality is that this film renders anything colored with red, like apples for example, as black. This has a distancing effect from the “real” even in black and white film. For more information on this developing technique please see Hambourg, Paul Strand Circa 1916, 32.
Strand has taken elements that comprise the vocabulary of painting – form and color (of course here only in terms of value) – and turned them inside out. The shadows stand in for their more solid form, and in the photograph seem as solid as the forms they represent. This is arguably more difficult to achieve in the moment of the shoot than when placing brush to canvas, but works the medium to Strand’s advantage. Rather than solid objects, one sees their apparition folded into a momentary snapshot galvanized to produce the image.

Strand’s series of a teapot with various fruits results in the same effect. Strand is working with textures. In this example the matte white glaze of the bowl, the dark high gloss of the teapot and the tempered fruit skin pierced with rot from an errant fingernail deal with the effects of texture on curved forms (fig. six). Propped and positioned to emphasize overlapping reflection and shadow, the objects appear to be not only made of different materials but also staged on different surfaces depending on their textures. This is most apparent in the apple that sits on a roughly hewn wedge of wood. Strand has playfully demonstrated his new mastery of the effects of light on objects in space.

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26 Photographs are made in an instant and more or less represent that instant. Their credibility arises from the mechanical and chemical basis of the photographic process and is thus linked to the world’s appearances more directly than in painting and drawing. But the mirror-like character of photographs does not guarantee their realism. Choices are made about pose, light, composition, lenses, filters, types of film, shutter speeds, and processing. Although we can argue that these manipulations of the image can serve to heighten realism and enhance the clarity of the message, we cannot assume that photographs mirror “reality.” Strand’s portraits are not likenesses of particular individuals, nor journalistic views of their social situations, economic positions or personalities. This is not to say that Strand has staged the photographs like his Pictorialist predecessors, but that he has carefully selected his subjects to fit his Cubist agenda.
The choice of still life as a motif was no accident; the Cubists sought it out because of its traditional association with realism. Their aim, and later Strand's, was to subvert the signs of realism within the very genre most frequently concerned with it.\footnote{For more on the specific uses of still life in Picasso's work please see Christine Poggi's Table and Tableau in Picasso's Collages, p. 80.} However, once Strand had made a series of five such images, he abandoned the fruit and focused on the table (figs. seven-nine). This series of table images shot at Twin Lakes in 1916 has more to do with time and the sequences of passing light. As a transition from the still life photographs, Strand incorporated the shadow of a chair overlaid upon a still-life arrangement – in this case, a jug, an orange and a book (fig. ten). Set on a wood floor, perhaps that of the porch, the picture is not necessarily one of Strand's best, but it marks a change for Strand in which he now separates object from cast shadow, leaving behind the former for the latter. This concept is pivotal in Strand's translation of Cubist painterly practice into Cubist photographic process. He is sorting out the constituent parts of object and shadow in order to sever their bond. To this end, his ultimate goal is the deconstruction and refiguring of spatial relationships, thereby subverting the supposed realistic, mimetic characteristics of his medium.

Strand's ritualistic rejection of realism is apparent in the next image in which fruit and book have been removed, the chair replaced with patio railing and a table tipped up on its side to serve as background (fig. eleven). Now all we make out is shadow except for a slim slash of railing
on the left of the picture. Shadow has become the foreground, not through shading, but in the sensation of relief via arbitrary juxtapositions of light and dark that cause forms to spring forth much like that which we saw in the still-lives. The significant difference here is that these works are largely abstractions.

This reordering of constituent parts marks Strand’s journey into abstraction. Our ability to determine where the railing begins and ends, on which surface the jug lies and whether or not the tabletop rests on the porch or is suspended by a hidden hand is intentionally vague. Furthermore, this vagueness is more easily achieved in painting or sculpture but readily apparent here in photography. Inspiration for such a journey appears when viewed in light of other Cubist artworks Strand saw.

Owned by Stieglitz, Picasso’s *Drawing of a Woman* (1910) was a regular favorite in New York, where it was repeatedly featured in exhibitions and reproduced in *Camera Work* (fig. twelve). It was shown at 291 in January of 1913 and then later that year in the journal. The charcoal drawing vaguely sketches the form of a woman, but our understanding of her is as much defined by the title as by what we see in

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28 John Golding discusses this aspect in relation to Picasso’s work. For more please see Golding, 07.
29 In the fall of 1911 Strand had returned to New York after an unsuccessful year working in his father’s company and a brief vacation in Europe toward the end of the summer. By the winter, he had set up as a commercial photographer and began to frequent The Little Galleries at 291 regularly. The details of Strand’s chronology during this period vary significantly. Some place Strand in Europe through the spring of 1913 while others place his arrival in New York during the summer of 1912. They are both inaccurate given that Strand wrote to his parents in the fall of 1911 to assure them that he had arrived safely in New York. The postcard is post stamped from New York City in September of that year. See Paul Strand’s “Postcard Home.” September 1612. Center for Creative Photography, Paul Strand Archive, University of Arizona.
the image. The novelty lies in Picasso’s nontraditional use of mass and void. Designations of solid form are absent; they are replaced with textured modeling that neither designates depth nor reveals the figure’s outline. Picasso blends the constituent parts of perceived actual space and formal identities. He focuses attention on the painterly illusions traditionally used to render space by avoiding using them in traditional ways. Instead of shadow used to show depth, here hatch markings (generally reserved for shading) are used to outline form. Lines and arcs designate the vague parameters of form without delineating shape. Strand has systematically removed all traces of traditional illusionism, yet continues to use techniques traditionally associated with rendering perspectival space, such as modeling, line and color value.

Inspired by Picasso’s invention, Strand challenged himself to find similar tools in photography, playing on the misconception that photography is a realistic medium. Although firmly rooted in the application of realism in his work, and, like Picasso, considering himself a realist artist, Strand began abstracting what he saw and distorting it through layering in the Cubist idiom.

For example, another photograph from Twin Lakes shows the jug shadowed on the tipped table (fig. thirteen). In this image, more of the original railing has been included for texture and the contrast between white light and shadowed railing is more tightly cast. In place of Picasso’s hatch markings that designate shape rather than form, Strand uses
actual shadow to denote form. The intersection of the fingers of shaded railing on the table and that on the porch floor interlace so that they contrast in some places and blend in others. This shading functions in a similar way to the elisions of space between foreground and background in the Braque still life. Strand photographed the table, not in its proper position, but on its side, with the light of the porch railing and its adjacent shadow displayed on its surface. He shot these groups from various angles – none of which are obvious or traditional – that feature jutting diagonals, skewed orthogonals and purposely awkward vantage points that must have required a certain level of acrobatic contortion on his part to get the shot.

Strand created a language of interchangeable icons, the objects and their object-like quality standing in for one another. The cast shadow of the railing becomes texture, like the original object. The resulting illusionistic space is a new pictorial language that does not rely on traditional methods of perspectival illusionism used in photography or painting. Following Picasso's lead, Strand discovered that the methodology in Cubism was to represent form in a way that would create space without illusionism and at the same time appear flat so as not to deny the material nature of the media.

In this series of photographs of a table and porch, Strand's work began to look entirely ambiguous, not in terms of obliterating subject matter toward total abstraction, which was never his, nor the Cubist's
intent, but in offering various views within the same image and of the
same object. It is the sense of uncertainty in these more abstract images
that demonstrates Strand’s keenest understanding of Cubist methodology.
The point of layering shadow upon table over floor in the case of the jug
shadow is to provide distance from the original object without losing sight
of it. It is the comparative relationship between the two that is important
to offer a sense of the tangible (object) and the intangible (shadow) in the
same view.

Picasso’s influence is far reaching in these photographs. In
painting, the issue of tangibility of recognition had everything to do with
creating or denying illusionistic space. Later Cubist works that included
elements of papier-collé or collage dealt explicitly with the issue. Golding
argued that it is in these sorts of works that we see the intellectual
interest in structure Picasso had in creating Cubist works.31

Picasso and Braque also made use of layering in their papier-collé
and collage works. Picasso’s Still life with Chair Caning (1912) marks the
transition to the time when Picasso and Braque began applying new
materials to their work (fig. fourteen). Although it is unclear which papier-
collé works Strand saw in New York between 1908 and 1917, Picasso’s Still

30 Strand, like Picasso and Braque, considered himself an artist of realism, not abstraction. He described the ambiguity present in his
work as an effect of his emotional investment. In 1917 he wrote, "The photographer’s problem...is to see clearly the limitations and at the
same time the potential qualities of his medium, for it is precisely here that honesty, no less than intensity of vision, is the prerequisite of
a living expression. This means a real respect for the thing in front of him, expressed in terms of chiaroscuro through a range of almost
infinite tonal values...The fullest realization of this is accomplished through the use of straight photographic methods. It is in the
organization of this objectivity that the photographer’s point of view toward life enters in, and where a formal conception born of the
emotions...is as inevitably necessary for him before an exposure is made as for the painter before he puts brush to canvas." Paul Strand,
"On the Art of Photography," The Seven Arts (1917), 14.
31 Golding, 118-122.
*life with Chair Caning* is a good example of the kind of works Strand likely saw. In this painting Picasso is working with traditional oil paint, but has added oilcloth and pasted paper to the canvas. He has layered paint upon canvas, then pasted paper and oilcloth to its surface and finally painted upon these added textures. Here layering helps to integrate the various elements while at the same time pointing to their differences. Although in Picasso's painting we see layering in the materiality of the object itself, more easily rendered in painting than in photography, Strand adapted these techniques for his own art-making.32

The more interesting layering occurs in the perceptual, visual understanding. Picasso has embedded two readings in the image, a tactic Strand later emulated. The chair-caning can function as the tabletop itself, or it can be viewed as a chair pulled up to a glass café table. In both views the objects obscuring the caning are intended to be seen as sitting on the table. The glass with a slice of lemon can be viewed vertically, to correspond to the viewer's vantage point when the painting is viewed hung on the wall, or alternately from above, as if the painting were situated at table height beneath a standing viewer. These shifting views

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32 Strand learned these techniques when he worked with the Pictorialists at the New York Camera Club. The club was part of an informal circuit of amateur photography clubs that had grown up in the 1880's and 1890's as an offshoot of the Arts and Crafts Movement. From members older and more experienced than he, and from the large and current library of books, magazines and trade journals, he learned how to enlarge - by projection - the negatives from his Adams Idento and Ensign Reflex cameras, perfected printing methods using bromoil, carbon, gum and platinum, and learned how to mount and back the images once he had printed them. For a brief time he also experimented with paper trying to enhance the texture of his pictures. The physical texture of certain back mounted rice papers offered a mottled look to his cloudy seascapes and still lives, but he quickly abandoned the papers for a more traditional smooth surface when he discovered that the papers deteriorated quickly. Based on what we know about the prints that survive, he apparently did not use these sorts of papers again, focusing on print processes rather than paper varieties.
within the same image are the sorts of pictures Strand must have had in mind when he photographed the porch railing at Twin Lakes in 1916.

These Cubist paintings are abstract in effect even though the images are immediately, and at least partly recognizable. The emphasis on structure communicates the artistic experience of translating three-dimensional space that has a tactile nature to a two-dimensional form that does not. The Cubist agenda in these cases is to document visually what it is that makes up an object when viewed, rather than touched. In Picasso's interview with Marius De Zayas, Picasso further remarked, "In our subjects we keep the joy of discovery, the pleasure of the unexpected, our subjects must be a source of interest." Picasso's play between the recognizable and the abstract is a means of rediscovering the world, elements as trivial and banal as an arrangement of fruit or the contents of a café table that have been worked by artists for centuries.

Braque shared this view but emphasized the necessity of abstraction in his work. He explained, "When the fragmentation of objects appeared in my paintings around 1909, it was as a technique for getting closer to the object." For him, capturing the details of an object from more than one vantage point required a level of abstraction that shifted

33 John Golding mentions these two points but does not talk about them in tandem. For more on this issue please see Golding, p 33-41, 57-65.
34 Marius de Zayas, "Picasso Speaks – A Statement by the Artist," in The Arts vol. v, May 1923, 328. DeZayas (1880-1991) was a close friend of Stieglitz and a frequent contributor to Camera Work where his drawings were reproduced and his criticism published. He was an artist, writer and owner of the Modern Gallery where Strand showed his work (Wallstreet, 1916) for the first time outside of 291.
35 Author's translation. "Quand les objets fragmentés sont apparus dans ma peinture vers 1908, c'était une manière de m'approcher le plus de l'objet" Dora Vallier, 'Braque, la Peinture et Nous', Cahiers d'Art, 1954, 15.
emphasis from process to goal. We can see this in comparing Picasso's *Still Life with Chair-caning* with Braque's *Violin*, 1912 (fig. fifteen). Picasso focused more on the object's relationship to its environment and its place within its own space, and less on using fragmentation to understand the inner workings of particular isolated objects. Stieglitz liked Braque's *Violin* so much that he not only mounted it at 291 alongside Picasso's *Violin*, also 1912, but printed it on the cover of the short-lived 291 publication in November, 1915. In the following year Stieglitz included a halftone of the 291 cover in the January 1916 edition of *Camera Work* (fig. sixteen).

Braque was more concerned with the visual appearance of objects removed from their associative sensory qualities – how an object looks versus how it smells or feels in one's hand. His concern was not to separate the other senses from the visual but to demonstrate the differences between them. Golding explained Braque's agenda in the following way:

Traditional painting tries to show illusionistically distance between objects whereas Braque wanted to paint these distances or spaces, to make them as real and concrete for the spectator as the objects themselves.\(^{36}\)

Braque was not as interested in the formal, sculptural qualities of his chosen objects so much as in the relationships between them and the spaces surrounding them.

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\(^{36}\) Golding, 70.
In his porch railing photographs, Strand searched for the complementary visual ideas in his own medium.\textsuperscript{37} In these pictures Strand confronted the mimetic nature of photography. The shadow of the railings is now as important compositionally as the actual railings themselves. There are the layers that we have seen before in the still lives, but these layers are simplified in form, although more difficult to construct. The space between object and shadow defines the relationship between their forms. It is a balancing act. The strong verticals of light in the railing rest on the light-filled swath of porch and then reinvent themselves in the shadows beneath. In figure eighteen, Strand has composed carefully to eliminate background interference between the actual rails, to focus on the interplay of light and shadow on the bars and in the shadow underneath. In figure nineteen, the values are reversed. Here the dark spaces of the bars as in the foreground and the light patterned on the floor are our central focus. This is how Strand plays with Braque's idea of painting the spaces in between, of making them as real as the objects themselves. Braque explained, "There is in nature a tactile space...when a still life is no longer held in hand, it ceases to be a still life...this is the space that fascinated me so much...that is what [my] first Cubist paintings were, a research into space."\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{37} All of the Twin Lakes images were made on 3 1/4 by 4 1/4 negatives with a hand held Ensign reflex camera.

\textsuperscript{38} Author's translation. "Dans la nature il y a un espace tactile...quand une nature morte n'est plus à la portée de la main, elle cesse d'être une nature morte...c'est cet espace qui m'attirait beaucoup, car c'était cela la première peinture cubiste, la recherche de l'espace." Dora Vallier, 'Braque, la Peinture et Nous'. Cahiers d'Art, 1954, 16.
The difference in Strand's works is his emphasis on abstraction, which he seems to have interpreted as the focus in Braque's work or it was his own further experimentation. Strand did not show the multi-aspect qualities of his subject as Braque did in Violin. Instead, Strand kept his attention on the linear, abstract quality of the composition, which is to say, kept the original object intact. However, Strand visualized the chaotic natural world in terms of a structural framework and systematically deconstructed and rebuilt the elements that interested him. He composed a geometric, linear, and re-texturing (via shadow play) of the subject with emphasis placed on composition rather than form. As a result, the fragmentation of the objects, now both shadow and railing, emphasized the resulting surface texture rather than spatial depth.
CHAPTER 2

THE NEW YORK OBJECT STUDIES

Upon returning to New York in the fall, Strand was ready to apply these exercises of light, shadow, texture and formal analysis to the city environment. Abandoning still life, he began taking pictures of people as if they were objects. His New York photographs are unemotional, manipulated studies of urban life. Like the still-lives and porch compositions, Strand constructed an intellectual puzzle in which he set out to solve how to document the perception and manipulation of the human body by reducing it to a series of tones and forms, planes and angles.

Strand’s New York object studies are particularly interesting because of their implicit relationship to the work done by Lewis Hine, who also took pictures of people on the street. Hine was Strand’s first and only photography instructor, and he later became an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee. Hine’s photographs documented individuals, groups and families in a way that revealed their plight without transgressing boundaries of pride or personal space. In most cases, his subjects were fully aware of his presence –
something difficult to avoid, given the large format camera he used. Hine had no professional training but taught what he believed should be a sense of responsibility in photography, following the doctrinal code of the Ethical Culture School where he taught Strand. He hoped that his pictures would influence his students by instilling "the same regard for contemporary immigrants...as for the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock." 

While street life interested him, Strand showed little concern for the problems of the poor in his photographs. There is little gentility or grace in these street images. The framing, most frequently pre-visualized but on occasion cropped, suggests a kind of physical compression or airlessness that has an almost claustrophobic effect.

Like the Twin Lake porch compositions, these portraits are constructed to create a certain level of pictorial flatness via strong tonal contrasts. Our reading of the picture space is not oriented relationally, that is, in terms of how depicted objects relate to one another spatially. Rather, Strand offers us spatial relationships using light and shadow that suggest shape and texture. The individuals are identifiable not by expression, purpose or mood (human, portrait-like qualities) but by their

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39 Hine's purpose was journalistic and he hoped for the betterment of the workers' lot by exposing their plight to the general public. His images solicit sympathy and a call to action. Typical images of individuals such as Spinner (1917), taken in a cotton mill in North Pownal, Vermont, exhibit self-possessed children at their stations, carrying tools, or leaning on equipment. Like Hine, Strand also took pictures of the poor, but never of children, and apparently not with Hine's motivation.


41 Rosenblum, 60.
object-nature. Strand has deconstructed these people, building images using texture and line.

These photos are meticulously rendered, captured after carefully considering the construction of formal elements. To illustrate this point, let us look at Strand’s most famous picture in the series. *Blind* is often praised as a careful reading of a disadvantaged individual, a personal, compassionate portrait of a resolute woman, a reading that seems unlikely in the context of Strand’s other work (fig. twenty). The visual image does not seem to be motivated emotionally yet it does bear witness to Strand’s training as well as the tradition of urban realism heralded by painters such as George Bellows and John Sloan. Her face and her disability are readily apparent as in so many of Hine’s pictures, yet Strand’s interests are different here. Instead, the woman’s features are calculated like the carefully reconstructed faceted space in a Cubist painting. The blind woman’s body is ill defined, jutting out from the unnamed space beneath. The pocked bricks behind her echo the lined textures in her face. Her bearing seems unbalanced in the peculiar angling. The dark background and white sign evokes the jug on the white table photographed at Twin Lakes. An ostensibly horizontal brick juts to the foreground on the right and leans in above her like the lipped bowls Strand shot earlier in the year. The distance between wall and body are both differentiated and joined spatially by shadowed darkness and white surfaces. The blinding bright white sign thrusts to the foreground, Strand’s developing
preferences (overexposure) used to demarcate the most important element of the work.

This was the first time since leaving Twin Lakes that Strand has given a picture a title, not a particularly sensitive one, but perhaps a Hine-like social commentary on the abhorrent practice of hanging a sign around a person’s neck like a dog collar. Here the sensory experience of seeing a blind person – the impression one has of the subject matter – is less significant than the experience of understanding the construction of light and form. This is not to say that the woman’s condition is not important, but that Strand has calculated her features in their constituent parts, rather than showing her in a way intent on soliciting a call to action to change her living and working conditions, as Hine likely would have. To see this image, one must make oneself blind to subject matter and open to the composed synthetic expression of form.

The Cubism of Picasso and Braque was conceptual from the start, in that, even when they were still relying on visual models, their paintings were more depictions of ideas about types or categories of objects than representations of individual examples.\(^{42}\) Strand’s interest in surface texturing, on the other hand, drew from their visual example, as he experimented with photographic techniques.

To capture his city subjects, Strand modified his camera so that he could shoot pictures without his subjects being aware of it. He took the

\(^{42}\) Golding, 121.
brass lens from his 8 x 10 Deardorff and attached it to one side of his Ensign reflex.\textsuperscript{43} By holding the camera so that the false lens pointed straight ahead and the real lens stuck out under his left arm, partly concealed by his sleeve, he was able to photograph at a right angle to the apparent subject.\textsuperscript{44} He later recalled that he wanted to make some "portraits of people the way you see them in New York parks...sitting around, not posing, not conscious of being photographed."\textsuperscript{45} Strand stood in front of his figure but rotated a quarter turn away, and he held his camera so that the false lens pointed in the direction he was facing. The real lens, on an extended bellows, stuck out under his arm toward the figure. Strand could see the figure by looking both over his shoulder and into his lens hood sideways. Once his deception was discovered he changed to a right angle prism lens.\textsuperscript{46} The operation was clumsy even

\textsuperscript{43} Strand preferred large format cameras throughout his career, both in still and motion picture camera work. In the early days he used two, now classic, British cameras, the Adams Idento and Ensign Reflex. The Adams & Co Idento Camera was manufactured beginning in 1905 and used a 4 ¼ by 3 ¼ inch plate that was ¼ inch thick. A bulky and cumbersome camera to carry, the lens and shutter were mounted on a turntable of sorts in order to increase the photographer's angle mobility. The casing not only includes the camera, but storage space for extra plates and solutions, which accounts for its size. The camera was mounted with only a briefcase handle, so given its weight, Strand must have had to alternate between carrying it like a piece of luggage and slinging it under his arm. The unique feature of the camera, and one that clearly benefited Strand, was its seven shutter speeds that reacted between ¼ and 1/100 of a second. This range allowed him to photograph his subject in a misty vagueness in the Pictorialist tradition and to mark vivid detail in close-ups. Shutter speed has greatly increased since Strand used this camera, but his technique, use of focus, and heightened sense of detail can be traced back to his training using this model. The plate size allowed him to generate great detail from his subjects and the speed allowed him to capture movement with less blurring. The Ensign Reflex is slightly more recent. It was first manufactured in 1910 by the British camera maker Houghtons LTD and was produced through the 1930's. It carries the same large format plate as the Adams Idento, affording similar advantages with a now increasing flexibility as Strand could use the plates interchangeably between cameras. The Adams Idento was superior to the Ensign in its size. It was less than half as big and weighed significantly less. Its disadvantages were a less precise focal lens and tighter shutter speed capacity. Using both cameras gave Strand room to experiment. For more on this topic see Jim McKeeen. \textit{McKeen's Price Guide to Antique and Classic Cameras}, 2001-2002. (New York: Centennial Photo Service. 11th ed., 2002) p. 51-2, 62-64.

\textsuperscript{44} Calvin Tomkins, "Profile." In Paul Strand: 60 Years of Photographs: Excerpts from Correspondence, Interviews, and other Documents. (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, 1976) p 144.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid. p 19.

with the new lens, but Strand stayed with his project long enough to take a dozen photographs in the fall of 1916.47

This process, both physically intimate and emotionally detached, was in some opposition to Hine's teachings. Hine valued the use of photography for documenting the poor, children working in factories, and life in the mines, and maintained an equality of power between himself and his subjects, rooted in a sense of moral obligation toward publicizing their plight. Strand's effect, however, is one of voyeuristic fascination and it is for this reason that these photos are disturbing. Strand repeatedly said that the process was "nerve-wracking," for the intensity he gave in composing the image risked the attention of the subject, which would have ruined the desired effect of detachment.

These pictures of the poor are, in effect, object studies much like the bowls of fruit and porch railings Strand photographed at Twin Lakes. His shallow depth of field and smoky backgrounds focus our attention as viewers on the minutia of detail. We lose sympathy for the subjects, observing them as if looking at them under a microscope, distancing ourselves. Strand pushed the boundaries of portraiture and the methodologies of social documentation by being one of the first American artists to abstract figurative studies in photography.

47 Calvin Tomkins, one of Strand's most well known interviewers, explained the reason for the abandonment of this project. He explained, "One day, walking with the camera, he saw a woman with parakeets [who] was selling fortunes...Strand walked by without opening his camera, then came back. 'She attacked me. She said, You're not going to make my picture. I said what makes you think I'm going to? But it was almost like mental telepathy. Maybe somebody had tried to take her picture. Anyway, that finished me, at least for the time being until better equipment is available.'" Tomkins, The New Yorker, 51.
These 1916 photographs are not like later Strand portraits, in which the subject is known and the sitter is clearly aware of the photographer's presence. In the photo of the Woman in a Hat [Untitled], Strand cropped the image in a typical portrait-like way – head slightly cropped from view for a more personal, closer viewing, torso in view but nipped just above the waist like a Roman herm (fig. twenty-one). The woman's face is lit from a single source, framed in darkness by her hat and buttoned coat. This, combined with the slightly blurry but light-filled scarf around her neck, not only focuses the viewer's attention on the woman's face, but also on the complex expression, furrowed brow and aged features. Off center in the picture space, cropped from above and below and offset from a hazy unoccupied background, this unknown individual sits, framed in a way that is typical of many portraits.

The photographs in this series, rather than focusing on a particular characteristic of expression, mood or identifying feature, deal exclusively in a decorative visuality. They are portrait-types and therefore more like object studies than portraits. Here texture is important; light refraction is important; shadow is important. The surface texture of skin, hair, cloth, and other materials seems a part of the person only in the ways that they visually interact with each other rather than leading the viewer to understand the figure's psychic nature in some greater way. Strand has chosen this series of individuals for communal factors, not individual characterizations.
We do not have to search very far to find Strand's visual sources in Picasso's figurative studies from several years earlier. Striking similarities can be seen in Picasso's *Head of Fernande* (1909), which was first exhibited at Gallery 291 in 1912, later in the year photographed from two angles by Stieglitz for *Camera Work* (August 1912) and then included in the Armory Show in 1913 (figs. twenty-two and twenty-three). Most remarkable of all are the physiognomic rhythmic patterns in both works, albeit more exaggerated in Picasso's than Strand's. In *Fernande*, flesh and bone are articulated through a series of soft ridges and faceted forms that are composed of tilted planes and sharp edges. Read texturally, *Woman in a Hat (Untitled)* has a similar composition. The triangle of bright white across the side of the nose connected to the rectangle at the temple via a map of creviced indentations literally tie in with the softly blended canyons in the scarf wrapped tightly around her neck. As in *Fernande*’s architectural structure, shadows are oriented to cast blocky forms across her face. The odd forms that result from the strong raking light to her left as they meet the architecture of her hat and hair function to distinguish planes of space on her face like the lines upon a map. Furthermore, these patches of light and dark spaces are reconfigured in the mimetic texturing of the woven straw hat in the wrinkles on her face. The vacant eyes surmounted by a furrowed brow in *Fernande* are directly reflected in Strand's woman. More than any subsequent street shots by Strand, this one radiates an unsettled sense of surface and mass. The nubby wool
coat juxtaposed against the shadowy wall at the right makes it seem as if the woman has turned to lean away from the encroaching darkness. The image is not only physically shadowed but also psychologically brooding.

Yet despite these similarities with Cubist works, which undoubtedly are most important, Strand’s city work shows us that he is also engaged in the documentary character of his medium. The city studies mark a turn toward social realism and the realization of two types of realism in his work. Hine’s influence is apparent here as is the work of social realist painters. Although Strand’s message is different, he nonetheless engages with their visual understanding of New York.

Strand’s pictures of men share these attributes. Heads are shaded and darkened, faces lit with eyes averted and often shadowed, bodies placed off center and to the left with mottled, hazy, gum-enhanced backdrops (figs. twenty-four and twenty-five). They are forcefully similar, and when viewed together lose any sense of individuality, replaced by their type, as a painting of a bowl of fruit inevitably becomes a still life. These works do not represent individuals but rather exist as aesthetic objects.
CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION: BEYOND CUBISM

After the portrait series, Strand continued to apply to the larger world the ideas he had worked out at Twin Lakes. He made several photographs of the yard below his apartment (figs. twenty-six – twenty-eight). They are geometrically composed and abstracted, yet they relay a personal, natural view in the curves of the billowing sheet and slung up clothing.48 These images are both architectural and natural in a way that reveals Strand’s subsequent sense of “straight photography” and mark his transition out of Cubism.

Strand continued to work in New York after abandoning the right-angle prism lens, but his work changed course. The Cubist drive toward reevaluating technique gave way to stylized recognition of patterns found in the world around him. *New York, From the Viaduct* (1917, originally *New York*) and *Frame Buildings* (1917, originally *Untitled*) show his continued interest in patterned line and structure (figs. twenty-nine and thirty). *New York, From the Viaduct* concentrates on the lines of architecture. The scene is split unevenly giving more weight to repeated

48 Although there are two images of one negative that show his experimentation in the darkroom, for the majority of his work we have little evidence that marks this as a new trend for him.
horizontal courses on the right over vertical patterned lines on the left. The horizontal timber facing joins the steel billboard framing and advertising board on the right to counter the concrete spacers in the sidewalks, picket fence and timber walkway on the left. *Frame Buildings* and *White Fence* (1916) focus on the more subtle ways in which a patterning line appears in the world (fig. thirty-one). All aspects of these two pictures converge on the interplay of parallel and perpendicular lines. In *White Fence*, we see the bright white course of fencing marching across the picture space and within the fence the small pads of wood cut against the grain to emphasize the fence's movement. The same reemphasis of line occurs in *Frame Buildings* in which wood siding, roof shingles, lead paneled windows and a distance stairway all impart patterned texture similar to the porch abstractions. The difference in these later examples is that Strand is now focusing on lines plucked from the city landscape rather than composing the appearance of lines, depth or solid form through shadow as he did in the Twin Lakes compositions.

In 1917, Strand's work was featured in the last edition of *Camera Work*, which was terminated due to declining memberships. In it, Stieglitz included six of Strand's street portraits, two Twin Lakes abstractions and the post Cubist works discussed above.\(^49\) Stieglitz believed that the photogravures in the edition "represent the real Strand."\(^50\) This last

\(^{49}\) Issue 49/50 of *Camera Work* included: *Portrait. Man in a Derby, Blind Portrait, Washington Square, Man, Five Points, Sandwich Man, From the Viaduct, White Fence, Photograph (Abstraction), Photograph (Porch Shadows) and Untitled (Bouls).

\(^{50}\) Ibid.
edition also contained a reprinted article that Strand had written for the *Seven Arts* the year before. As a New York arts journal that did not always subscribe to the idea that photography could be wholly artistic, the editors of *Camera Work* were willing to hear and publish those who did. Strand wrote in defense of “straight” photography as an art form that resonated, but differed from Stieglitz’s view on the matter. He wrote, “Photography is only a new road from a different direction but moving toward a common goal, which is Life” (fig. thirty-two). In an article he wrote for the edition, Stieglitz praised Strand’s work for being “devoid of any flim-flam, devoid of any trickery.” It gave Stieglitz great satisfaction to complete fourteen years of the publication with the work of his protégé.

In many ways, photography was an ideal way of working out Cubist ideas because it obliged the artist to work with what he saw using a camera which initially provided less manipulation, at least initially, than brush and canvas. The transition from documentary device to artistic tool was one that took time and effort on the part of many. Paul Strand was situated at the forefront of this debate where he not only paved the way for the appreciation of avant-garde photography in America but demonstrated that photography had just as much to say about painting as it did about the natural world.

52 Alfred Stieglitz. “Our Illustrations” *Camera Work* November 49/50 1917, 8.
APPENDIX A

LIST OF FIGURES
Figure 1. Paul Strand, *Untitled (Bowls)*, 1916
Figure 2. Pablo Picasso, *Nature Morte (Vase, Gourd and Fruit on Table)*, 1909
Figure 3. Pablo Picasso, *The Comptoir*, 1908
Figure 4. Georges Braque, *Still-life with Fruit Dish*, 1908
Figure 5. Paul Strand, *Jug and Fruit*, 1916
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Figure 8. Paul Strand, *Pear and Bowl*, 1916
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Figure 22. Pablo Picasso, *Head of Fernande*, 1909
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Figure 24. Paul Strand, *Untitled*, 1916

Figure 25. Paul Strand, *Man in a Derby*, 1916

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Figure 26. Paul Strand, *Geometric Backyards*, 1917

Figure 27. Paul Strand, *Geometric Backyards*, 1917

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Figure 28. Paul Strand, *Backyard Winter, New York*, 1917

Figure 29. Paul Strand, *New York (New York, From the Viaduct)*, 1917
Figure 30. Paul Strand, *Untitled (Frame Buildings)*, 1917

Figure 31. Paul Strand, *White Fence*, 1917
Figure 32. Alfred Stieglitz, *Paul Strand (working at 291)*, 1917
APPENDIX B

CHECKLIST OF CUBIST WORKS BY PABLO PICASSO AND GEPRGES

BRAQUE EXHIBITED IN NEW YORK CITY 1911-1917
This checklist provides supplementary documentation of the works by Picasso and Braque that Paul Strand would have seen in New York. The list is organized by gallery and exhibition and when works are shown at various locations, they are cross-referenced in the footnotes.

**International Exhibition of Modern Art, the Armory 69th Regiment of Infantry, NYC**

**17th February to 15th March, 1913**

Titles of works are given as they were registered for the exhibition; those that follow in parentheses are present or variant titles. This list is largely compiled by the information provided by Milton Brown in *The Story of the Armory* (1988).

**Cubist Entries by Pablo Picasso**

1. *Nature Morte No. 1* n.d. ([Vase, Gourd and Fruit on Table], 1909)\(^{53}\)
3. *(Head of a Man)*, o/c 1909-10\(^{55}\)

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53 Brown lists two *Nature Morts* in the catalog entries by Picasso but states that he does not know which ones were exhibited. Pierre Daix's catalog raisonné *Picasso, The Cubist Years 1907-1916* (1979) dates Picasso's *Vase, Gourd and Fruit on Table* to early 1909 (cat.no. 211) and catalogs the beginning of its exhibition history as "New York/Chicago/Boston 1913 cat.no. 345 or 346 [New York]. (Chicago) 288 or 289, Boston 145 or 146." These dates and locations correspond with the those of The Armory Show and the catalog numbers correspond to Brown's entries which means that this work was most likely one of the two still-life entries Picasso submitted. Conclusive evidence for the title of the second of the *Nature Mort* pair has been elusive. Henry Kahnweiler managed most of Picasso's work at the time The Armory Show was assembled. Given that he kept immaculate records and that he lent several of Picasso's paintings to The Armory Show (which are well documented) it seems unlikely that one of his holdings would have been either of the undocumented *Nature Morts*.

Kahnweiler managed all but five Cubist studies at the time of The Armory Show which would not have been accepted (*Green Bowl and Tomatoes*, 1908, and *Jar of Flowers*, 1908 both The Picasso Estate and *Fruit and Wineglass*, 1908 (d.cat.no.203), *Wineglasses and Fruit*, 1908 (d.cat.no.206 and 207), Leo and Gertrude Stein, Paris). Daix cataloged two Cubist still life paintings dated prior to 1913 owned by Ambrose Vollard (*Table with Loaves and a Bowl of Fruit*, 1909 (d.cat.no.220) and *Still-life with Chocolate Pot*, 1909 (d.cat.no.223)), but according to Brown because Kahnweiler had submitted several Picasso's to The Armory Show, Vollard refused to do so. Therefore, with those works highly unlikely contributions, we are left with four likely candidates which were owned by various individuals at the time (their names follow the date of each work). *Bowl of Fruit*, oil, late 1908, owned by H.S. Soothaw (d.cat.210), *Bowl of Fruit*, water-color and pencil, early 1909, Galerie Léonce Rosenberg (d.cat.no.212), and *The Hat*, oil, early 1909, Max Pellequer (d.cat.no.215) and Carafe, Jug, and Fruit Bowl, summer 1909, owned by Dr. G.F. Reber, Lausanne (d.cat.nn.298). Of the four, all but *The Hat*, oil, early 1909 are Cubist works.

55 Brown dates this work to 1912 but there are no extant works by Picasso of that year that are titled as such or bear the appearance of a "head of a man." However, there is a *Head of a Man* dated 1909-10 (d.cat.no.336).
4. La Femme au pot de moutarde (Woman with Mustard Pot), o/c 1910
5. Drawing (Female Nude), charcoal, 1910
6. Bust (Head of a Woman or Head of Fernande Olivier), drawing, 1909

Cubist Entry by Georges Braque
1. Le Violin (The Violin or L’Affiche de Kubelick or simply Kubelick), o/c 1912

Camera Work

Issue 36, Fall 1911
Picasso, Drawing, 1910

Special No August 1912
Picasso

Untitled [painting], 1909-10
Spanish Village, 1912
Portrait, M. Kahnweiler, 1910
Drawing, 1910
Sculpture (Head of Fernande Olivier), front view, bronze, 1909
Sculpture (Head of Fernande Olivier), side view from right, bronze.

1909

Special No 1913
Picasso,

Portrait- Gertrude Stein, 1906
Woman w/ Mandolin, 1910

which was owned by John Quinn, the lawyer, organizer, and primary financial contributor to The Armory Show. Quinn may have bought the painting in 1912 on one of his many trips to Paris and it may have been included in The Armory Show with that date but the work is more likely dated to 1909-10. As a side note, this work was made in the preceding months of Picasso's more famous work Portrait of Ambrose Vollard which he painted in the winter of 1909-10.

56 Lent by Henry Kahnweiler (d.cal.no.324).
57 Lent by Alfred Stieglitz. It was included in Camera Work in vol. 36, Fall 1911 and again in special no. 1913.
58 Lent by Alfred Stieglitz who had bought it from Vollard in 1911. The following year he bought the bronze head of the same title. The drawing was exhibited at 291 in 1911 and two views of the bronze were included in Camera Work, special number (August 1912).
59 Camera Work dates this painting to 1912 but it is a reproduction of the same work entitled Tête d’Homme exhibited at the Armory Show in 1913. Therefore the date is incorrectly cited in Camera Work.
60 This work is incorrectly cited in Camera Work as the year in which the publication included it, 1912.
61 This is the same drawing that appeared earlier in Camera Work (issues 36) as well as in the Armory Show.
62 Like most reproductions in Camera Work, the images in this edition are dated to the year of publication rather than the actual date of production. I have cited the dates in which the original works were made.
**Drawing, 1910**

Jan 1915 Picasso/Braque Show at 291
Main Gallery pictured in *Camera Work*.

**Little Galleries of the Photo-Secesssion, 291 Fifth Ave.**

Although some exhibitions at 291 were entirely or partially documented by photograph, Stieglitz did not make a habit of including price lists or exhibition lists of the works included in the exhibitions he mounted. Therefore it is very difficult to ascertain which works were hung when they were not photographed. Nonetheless, newspaper reviews of these two exhibitions offer specific descriptions of specific works that suggest a manageable range of works which offer a good idea of what the exhibits featured, in general measures, if not in their entirety.

As a result, the following list does include exhibition titles which were advertised in *Camera Work*, but contains only a partial listing of the works likely exhibited. I will list the works that are relevant to a discussion of Cubist influence on Paul Strand.

Parentheses followed by italics indicate present or variant titles.
Parentheses followed by normal text indicate clarification of an ambiguous title.

1911 *Exhibition of Early and Recent Drawings and Water-Colors by Pablo Picasso* 28 March-25 April, extended to May

1. *Study for Les Demoiselles d’Avignon (Nude with Arms Raised)*, gouache, 1907

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63 This is the same work that appeared in issue 36, dated to 1910 but in this volume it is dated 1913 by *Camera Work*. The earlier date is accurate.

64 The photograph, likely taken by Stieglitz, includes Picasso’s *Still Life: Bottle and Glass on Table*, 1912 a hornet’s nest and an African mask of unknown origin.


66 It seems likely that this was quite a large exhibition of Picasso’s work. Steichen wrote to Stieglitz to say, “Numbers 1-49...are the pictures we intend to use for the walls. Some as you will see belong in groups and can go under one glass.” Steichen to Stieglitz, undated [January or February 1911], Yale Collection of American Literature as cited by Greenough, 498.

67 Greenough, 545.
2. *The Mill at Horta*, watercolor, 1909
3. *Standing Female Nude*, charcoal 1910

1914-15 *Exhibition of Recent Drawings and Paintings by Picasso and by Braque, of Paris* 9 December – 11 January 1915

Picasso’s drawings remained on display until the 26th of January and then his work was never again shown at 291. Stieglitz closed the gallery in 1929 and opened An American Place where he continued to exhibit American and European photography but showed only American paintings.

Picasso’s Cubist entries:
1. *Bathers in a Forest*, o/c, 1908
2. *Head of a Woman*, ink on paper, 1909
3. *Study* (*Study for Head of a Woman -- Fernande*), watercolor on paper, 1909
4. *Head* (*Study of a Man*), watercolor on paper, 1909
5. *Violin*, charcoal on paper, c. 1912
6. *Seated Man Reading a Newspaper*, ink on paper, 1912
7. *Seated Woman with a Guitar*, graphite and ink on paper, 1912
8. *Still Life: Bottle and Glass on Table*, charcoal, ink and pasted newspaper, 1912 (also included in exhibition photograph taken by Stieglitz included in *Camera Work* vol. 48, 1916)
9. *Head of a Man*, charcoal on paper, 1912
10. *Violin and Guitar*, oil, cloth, charcoal, gesso, canvas, 1913

Braque’s Cubist entries:
2. *Glass, Bottle and Guitar*, collage, graphite, black chalk, white chalk on paper, 1913
4. *Still Life with Fruit Dish*, 1908

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68 Two separate descriptions make this drawing a likely candidate, although Picasso made several like this example. A work in the exhibit was described as “figures which have hexagonal legs,” Elizabeth Carey, “The Question of Picasso,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1911, reprinted in *Camera Work* 36 (Oct. 1911), 51-2. Also, “the human form looks not unlike the manikin that the artist keeps in his studio, save that its wooden joints are fearfully and wonderfully colored,” “Art Exhibitions” 1911. As quoted in Greenough, 119.

69 “The Village”, the sepia-colored picture of solitude and desolation...the cubes representing the houses could be made impersonal by omission of the roof effects.” Schumacher 1911.

70 It was included in The Armory Show in 1911 and again in *Camera Work* in special no. 1913.

71 Greenough, 546.
Other Galleries Strand Frequentned that Exhibited Cubist Works by Picasso and Braque between 1911-1918

I cite these galleries (and when possible exhibition information) when their exhibitions were reviewed in *Camera Work*. In her dissertation, Judith Zilczer compiled a list of galleries that showed abstract art between 1913 and 1918. I have cross referenced her research with that of my own in *Camera Work*. Unfortunately, the commentaries in *Camera Work* consist of notices or short reviews which are quite general, usually stating only the names of those artists whose works are included in the exhibition. Therefore the list of included works is limited and by no means exhaustive.

**Key to Galleries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gallery</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ardsley</td>
<td>Ardsley Studios, 110 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td>Carrolli Galleries, 9 East 44th St (67 Fifth Ave after 1916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coady</td>
<td>Coady Gallery, 489 Fifth Ave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>Modern Gallery, 500 Fifth Ave</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1914 December **Cubist Watercolors**, Carroll

**Summer Picasso, Washington Square Gallery**

1915 January 1 – February 23 **French Modernists and Odilon Redon**, Carroll

Oct 16 – Nov 13 **Paintings by Picabia, Braque, Picasso; Photographs by Alfred Stieglitz: African Sculpture**, Modern

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73 Directed by Harriet Bryant.

74 Directed by Robert Coady.

75 Directed by Marius de Zayas. Strand said in an interview with William Inness Homer, "I liked de Zayas very much: I think he was an extremely intelligent man. When he started the gallery, I used to go over there and see the things that he put up and to see him." Maria Morris Hambourg, *Paul Strand Circa 1916* (New York, Abrams). 46 (footnote 88). The first show of Strand's work outside of 291 was at the Modern Gallery in 1917.

76 Directed by Robert Coady.


78 Zilczer, 248.

79 Zilczer, 249.

80 Zilczer, 250.
Dec 13 – Jan 3 *Paintings by Picasso and African Negro Sculpture*, Modern

1916 Feb 12 – Mar 4 *Paintings by Picabia, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, Braque, Rivera*, Modern

April 29 – June 10 *Paintings by Cézanne, Picasso, Van Gogh, Picabia, Rivera*, Modern

Nov *European Modernists: Cézanne, Picasso and Gris*, Coady

Dec *Exhibition of Modern Art: Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism*, Ardsley

1917 March 29 – April 9 Exhibition of Photographs by Sheeler, Strand and Schamberg, Modern

1918 Mar 11 – 30 *Paintings by Picasso, Gris, Derain, Rivera, Burty, and Ferat*, Modern

May *Paintings by Picasso, Vlaminck, Derain, and Lithographs by Daumier*, Modern

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83 Zliczer, 251.
84 Greenough, 185, 561.
85 Zliczer, 252.
87 "Modern French Paintings,“ *The Sun*, March 18, 1918; *American Art News*, March 23, 1918; de Zayas, 152; Zliczer, 252.
88 Zliczer, 252.

77
APPENDIX C

FIELD WORK NOTES
My interest in Cubist practice in Paul Strand’s photography came about in large part due to the time I spent in the archives and the fine prints collection at The Center for Creative Photography (CCP) in Tucson, Arizona.

The Paul Strand Collection housed at the CCP includes extensive activity files, business correspondence, printed materials and scrapbooks (which include exhibition catalogs, announcements, personal correspondence, and clippings from newspapers of announcements and exhibition reviews) as well as the most comprehensive collection of his prints in the world.

The bulk of the archive collection includes correspondence relating to Strand’s publications, exhibitions, films, friends and colleagues extending throughout his career. Most of the collection was received in 1976 from the Paul Strand Foundation (now the Aperture Foundation). Hazel Strand (Strand’s wife) and art historian Naomi Rosenblum, who was also good friends with the artist, compiled and organized the collection.89

**Chronology through 1918**90

1890 Born on the 16th of October in New York City.

1904 Enrolls in The Ethical Culture School in New York.

1907 Joins extracurricular photography class offered by Lewis Hine. Goes with Hine to Alfred Stieglitz’s Little Gallery of the Photo-Secession (291) to see an exhibition of photography.

1908 Graduates from high school. Joins the Camera Club of New York. Learns how to use enlargers, various lenses, developing techniques and papers.

1911 Goes to Europe for the summer. Works various jobs, equally unsuccessfully. Begins to read *Camera Work* at the Camera Club, sees the first exhibition of Picasso’s work at 291.

1912 Sets up as a commercial photographer, shooting and hand coloring picturesque images of university grounds throughout the United States. Begins to correspond and visit with Stieglitz, although infrequently.

89 An extensive finding aid for the Paul Strand Archive is available online at http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/branches/ccp/pdf/strandx.pdf
90 Chronology in large part compiled by Naomi Rosenblum for the Center for Creative Photography.
States. Begins to correspond and visit with Stieglitz, although infrequently.

1913 Sees Cubist works at the Armory Show and various New York Galleries (although especially at 291).

1916 First experiments with Cubist imagery in his own work at Twin Lakes, Connecticut. Brings folio of new work to Stieglitz who promises to show and publish some of them in Camera Work.

First one-man show at 291.

First published in Camera Work (vol. 48).

1917 Camera Work 49/50 devoted entirely to Strand’s work.

1918 Joins the war effort. Serves in the U.S. Army medical Corps at Fort Snelling, Minnesota as an x-ray technician. After serving for two years he pursues motion picture photography.

Works through 1918

*Cubist works are followed by an asterisk.

76:011:006 New York (Street Scene), 1910s
76:044:001 Brunig Pass, Switzerland, 1912 (unavailable for viewing)
77:083:001 Snow, Backyards, New York City, 1914
92:118:002 Railroad Sidings, New York, 1914
92:118:008 Hudson River Pier, New York, 1914
76:041:002 Old South Middle, Yale, c. 1915
76:041:003 The Old Library, Yale, c. 1915
76:041:004 Phelps Hall, Yale, c. 1915
76:024:001 Vassar Chapel, Vassar, c. 1915
76:011:004 Telegraph Poles, gelatin silver, 1915
92:118:003 From the Viaduct, 125th Street, New York, 1915
92:118:005 City Hall Park, New York, 1915
92:118:009 Fifth Avenue, New York, 1915
76:011:009 Still Life, Pears and Bowls, Twin Lakes, Connecticut, 1916*
76:119:010 Abstraction, Porch Shadows, Connecticut, 1916*
92:118:001 Abstraction, Porch Shadows, Twin Lakes, Connecticut, 1916*
77:083:003 Jug and Fruit, Twin Lakes, Connecticut, 1916*
77:083:002 Abstraction, Porch Shadows, Connecticut, 1916*
76:119:001 Photograph – New York, 1916 (study print)*
76:119:008 Photograph – New York, 1916*
92:118:004 Yawning Woman, New York, 1916*
92:118:007 Man, Five Points Square, New York, 1916*
76:119:005 Man, Five Points Square, New York, 1916 (detail, cropped)*
76:011:001 Blind, New York, gelatin silver, 1916*
76:119:003 Blind, New York, platinum, 1916*
76:119:002 Man in a Derby, New York, 1916 (study print)*
76:011:002 Man in Derby, New York, platinum, 1916*
76:119:004 Portrait, Washington Square, New York, 1916*
76:119:006 Sandwich Man, New York, 1916*
76:119:007 From the Viaduct, New York, 1916*
76:011:003 The White Fence, Port Kent, New York, 1916 (study print)*
76:119:009 The White Fence, Port Kent, New York, platinum, 1916*
76:011:007 Overlooking Harbor, New York, platinum, 1916
92:118:010 From the El, New York, 1917*
76:011:005 Automobile Wheel, New York, 1917
81:086:003 Automobile Wheel, New York, 1917
76:011:008 White Sheets, gelatin silver, 1916*91*

The following list includes modern prints of Strand’s negatives made by Richard M.A. Benson which were published in Paul Strand, Sixty Years of Photographs. Aperture (1976) with the exception of 84.28.001 which Benson printed in 1981 for the portfolio printing Paul Strand: The Formative Years, 1914-1917 (1983).

These later prints are much cleaner, far less faded, are mounted on archival board which has prevented yellowing, and are not coated with resin which Strand used on certain images to heighten specific effects in his gelatin silver prints. All of the Benson prints are gelatin silver prints, although many of the Strand originals printed before 1918 are (in descending order of commonality) platinum prints, gelatin silver prints varnished with resin to look like platinum prints or uncoated gelatin silver prints.92

91 Cataloged as White Sheets, New Orleans but evidence in the photograph collection indicate otherwise. Two studies of the yard below his flat in New York bear striking resemblance to this image except that this image has been enlarged, cropped, and is badly yellowed probably due to a resin coating applied by the artist. Given the positioning of the sheets in the two examples, they were most likely taken of the same clothesline on the same day and are therefore both likely images taken from the window of his apartment in New York City.
92 After The United States joined World War I, platinum prints went out favor because the mineral became increasingly difficult to find. It was primarily mined in the Urals Mountains before the war; the source was cut off during the war, and when again available, was too expensive for most photographic paper manufacturers to produce profitably. There were two reasons for the declining use of platinum printing. In addition to the sourcing problem, platinum was used in munitions as a hardener on the tips of cannon shells which made the few remaining sources of the metal extremely expensive. Secondly, increases in the printing speed of silver
Platinum prints possess a velvety quality that is evident in the more subtle transitions between light and dark which lends a greater variability in tonal structure. Due to the process, which does not necessitate the use of a gelatin coating, the images appear to be stained onto the paper revealing the texture of the paper beneath. Since he often used various Japanese rice papers in these prints, the nubs and irregularities of these handmade papers is readily apparent, adding a certain distance to the scene depicted and a closeness to the material nature of the process. This technique also relays the greatest sense of layering afforded in the medium and is similar in effect to the Cubist papier-collé works Strand had seen at the time.

Strand preferred platinum because it does not tarnish like silver. When using gelatin silver-coated paper he often varnished his prints in order to try to stop the increasing darkening of the image that resulted. Apparently it worked for a while, but in the last fifteen years his early prints have begun to yellow and fade faster than his later unvarnished prints, causing trouble for those who store, preserve, and restore his work. Most importantly, Benson’s reprints do not have the same grittiness that the Strand originals carry. Whether platinum or gelatin silver, Strand’s printing technique demonstrates a complexity not present in Benson’s. A heightened sense of contrast in the Strand prints is essential to understanding the influence of Cubist practice in his work. Additionally, Benson used a very thin Strathmore paper with little texture, while Strand used various papers depending on the image, which give very different effects to the images printed upon them. Despite these differences, I have included the list of Benson prints because they are often exhibited more frequently than the more fragile Strand prints and it is therefore important to note these differences in the event one happens to view them.

Richard Benson Prints
84:028:001 The Italian, New York, 1916
84:028:002 Portrait (Yawning Woman), New York, 1916
84:028:003 Man in a Derby, New York, 1916

among most photographers. For more on this process as well as its resurgence in the 1960's, please see Dick Arentz, Platinum and Palladium Printing. (MA: Focal Press, 2000). By 1921, no one was manufacturing paper suitable for platinum printing but by this time Strand had temporarily abandoned still photography for motion film and when he returned to the medium opted for the more economical gelatin silver papers.

93 Ansel Adams wrote a postcard to Strand on March 8th, 1949 requesting that he send him the formula for waxing or varnishing the surface of his prints which he hoped to include in The Book III (The Print) which was soon going to press. For whatever reason, the recipe was not included in the book but the note between the artists shows that Strand continued to use coatings for many years. (Center for Creative Photography, Archive 17:13:1).
84:028:001 The Italian, New York, 1916
84:028:002 Portrait (Yawning Woman), New York, 1916
84:028:003 Man in a Derby, New York, 1916
84:028:004 Sandwich Man, New York, 1916
84:028:006 From the Viaduct, 125th Street, New York, 1916
84:028:007 Frame Houses, New York, 1916
84:028:008 From the Viaduct (Shadows), 125th Street, New York, 1915
84:028:010 Brownstone Flats, Morningside Park, New York, 1916
84:028:027 Orange and Bowls, Twin Lakes, Connecticut, 1915
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http://www.library.arizona.edu/branches/ccp/home/home.html.


