BRIEF HISTORY

“Art is not so much a matter of methods and processes as it is an affair of the temperament, of taste and of sentiment.... In the hands of the artist, the photograph becomes a work of art....In a word, photography is what the photographer makes it—an art or a trade.” William Howe Downes- journalist
PICTORIALISM

- International style and aesthetic movement which dominate photography during the later 19th and early 20th centuries

- “There is no standard definition of the term, but in general it refers to a style in which the photographer has somehow manipulated what would otherwise be a straightforward photograph as a means of "creating" an image rather than simply recording it.

- Typically, a pictorial photograph appears to lack a sharp focus, is printed in one or more colors other than black-and-white (ranging from warm brown to deep blue) and may have visible brush strokes or other manipulation of the surface.

- For the pictorialist, a photograph, like a painting, drawing or engraving, was a way of projecting an emotional intent into the viewer's realm of imagination.”

Edward J. Steichen, *The Flatiron, 1904*
Alfred Stieglitz

- American photographer and modern art promoter
- In 1890, Stieglitz returned to NY and was determined to prove that photography was a medium as capable of artistic expression as painting or sculpture.
- As the editor of *Camera Notes*, the journal of the Camera Club of New York—an association of amateur photography enthusiasts—Stieglitz espoused his belief in the aesthetic potential of the medium and published work by photographers who shared his conviction.
Edward Steichen

- Edward Steichen (1879-1973) was a brilliant young artist from the Midwest. Fifteen years Stieglitz’s junior, he first met the gallerist when he was just 20 years old.

- At that meeting, in New York in 1900, Stieglitz purchased three works by the young photographer, including a platinum print of Steichen’s *The Pool — Evening: A Symphony to a Race and to a Soul*, acknowledged as one of Steichen’s earliest significant works.
Edward Steichen, The Pool-Evening: A symphony to a Race and to a Soul, 1899.

Platinum print with hand-applied ink border, mounted on original grey paper, mounted on large sheet of original buff paper.
Edward Steichen, In Memoriam, 1901

Edward Steichen, Maud Allan with Century Plant, 1916
PHOTO SECESSION

- In 1902 Steichen and Steglitz led a group of photographers that held the then controversial viewpoint that what was significant about a photograph was not what was in front of the camera but the manipulation of the image by the artist/photographer to achieve his or her subjective vision.
- The movement helped to raise standards and awareness of art photography.
- The introduction of the handheld camera invaded the photo realm, but a small group rejected the point and shoot approach and embraced labor-intensive processes to produce art.
VALUES- Photo Secession

- Process...Photography needed to emulate the painting and etching of the time. Pictorialists believed that, just as a painting is distinctive because of the artist's manipulation of the materials to achieve an effect, so too should the photographer alter or manipulate the photographic image.

- Techniques...Methods used were soft focus; special filters and lens coatings; burning, dodging and/or cropping in the darkroom to edit the content of the image; and alternative printing processes such as sepia toning, carbon printing, platinum printing or gum bichromate processing.
"The Black Bowl", by George Seeley, circa 1907

Struggle, by Robert Demachy 1904
Raindrops, by Calarence H. White 1903

"Marchesa Casati", by Adolph de Meyer 1912
Youth Sitting on a Stone, by F. Holland Day (1907)

The Ring Toss, Clarence H. White 1899
Frank Eugene: Adam and Eve, taken 1898

"Spider-webs", by Alvin Langdon Coburn. ~1908
Alfred Stieglitz, The Steerage, 1907
OUR ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrations in this number of Camera Work are devoted to the work of Mrs. Annie W. Brigman, of California, and of Mr. Karl F. Struss, of New York. Mrs. Brigman is no newcomer to the readers of Camera Work, for a series of her pictures appeared in Camera Work No. XXV. The photogravures in this number, like those in the former, are direct enlargements from the original 3½ x 4½ inch film negatives. The pictures speak for themselves. We might add that as Mrs. Brigman works in the open air under great difficulties she finds a certain amount of manipulation on the negatives some times necessary to secure the result she has in mind. The direct photogravure process does not hide this manipulation as do Mrs. Brigman’s prints on bromide paper, which process she uses with such understanding.
Anne Brigman
291 Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession
Famous art gallery located in Midtown Manhattan
1905-1917
Abstract Art &
Abstract Expressionism

- **Abstract Art**-
  - *Abstract art uses a visual language of shape, form, color and line to create a composition which may exist with a degree of independence from visual references in the world.*

- **Abstract Expressionism**-
  - *The name evokes the artists aim to make art that while abstract was also expressive or emotional in its effect.*

- Abstract art clearly implied expression of ideas concerning the spiritual, the unconscious, and the mind.
Robert Delaunay, 1912–13, Le Premier Disque, 134 cm (52.7 in.), Private collection

Robert Delaunay, 1912, Windows Open Simultaneously (First Part, Third Motif), oil on canvas, 45.7 x 37.5 cm, Tate Modern
Wassily Kandinsky, *On White 2*, 1923

Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VIII*, 1923
Jackson Pollock, No. 5, 1948, oil on fiberboard, 244 × 122 cm (96 × 48 in), private collection
ABSTRACT PHOTOGRAPHY

Non-Objective
Experimental
Conceptual
Abstract Photography

- A visual image that does not have an immediate association with the object world
- Freedom from representational qualities in art
- Capturing something that may not have been usually seen
- Using the visual language of shape, form color and line to create a composition
- Move away from the concept of the photograph needing to be linked to a “real world object”
Tips for shooting this week...

- Use fundamental elements of design- Line, shape, form, space, color and texture.
- Draw visual appeal- light, color, texture, subject?
- Break the rules
- Spend time with the subject
- Look from different angles, move your feet
Abstraction by isolation or elimination

Aaron Siskind

Aaron Siskind
Aaron Siskind

- American photographer
- Began as a photographer around 1930 as a documentarian
- In the 1940’s his work shifted to abstract and conceptual ideas of the surrounding world, deeply inspired by Abstract Expression
- He dedicated himself to photographing details of nature and architecture, with a focus on the texture, lines and patterns. In the manner of a proper master of Geometric abstract art, Aaron Siskind worked carefully, making sure to frame his image the best way he could in order to obtain something not immediately identifiable.
Aaron Siskind, 1961
Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation #99

Aaron Siskind, 1954
Pleasures and Terrors of Levitation #491
Edward Weston

- 20th-century American photographer.
- He has been called "one of the most innovative and influential American photographers..." and "one of the masters of 20th century photography."
Edward Weston, Cabbage Leaf, 1931

Edward Weston, Surf, China Cove, Point Lobos, 1938
Edward Weston, *Onion Halved*, 1930

Edward Weston, *Pepper No. 30*, 1930
Minor White

- 20th-century American photographer.
- He combined an intense interest in how people viewed and understood photographs with a personal vision that was guided by a variety of spiritual and intellectual philosophies.
Minor White, 1960

Minor White, Moencopi Strata, Capitol Reef, Utah, 1962
Minor White, “Peeled Paint, Rochester, New York” (1959)

Minor White. Windowsill Daydreaming (72 N. Union Street, Rochester). 1958
Harry Callahan

- 20th-century American photographer.
- Callahan’s work was a deep personal response to his life.
- Callahan was one of the few innovators of modern American photography noted as much for his work in color as for his work in black and white.
Harry Callahan, Sunlight on Water 1943

Harry Callahan, Grasses in snow – Calligraphy 1943
ISOLATION- looking at only parts of things to create an abstraction

ISOLATION- a single subject is set apart from the rest of the image. This can be achieved in a variety of ways such as using depth-of-field, lighting, contrasting colors or textures, or subject number.
ISOLATION
ISOLATION

Maciej Dziekan
ELIMINATION- removing parts from the frame.
ELIMINATION