

Abstract photography show : Museum of Modern Art : Adams ... [et al.]

Date

1951

Publisher

[publisher not identified]

Exhibition URL

www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2413

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.

PHOTO ARTS

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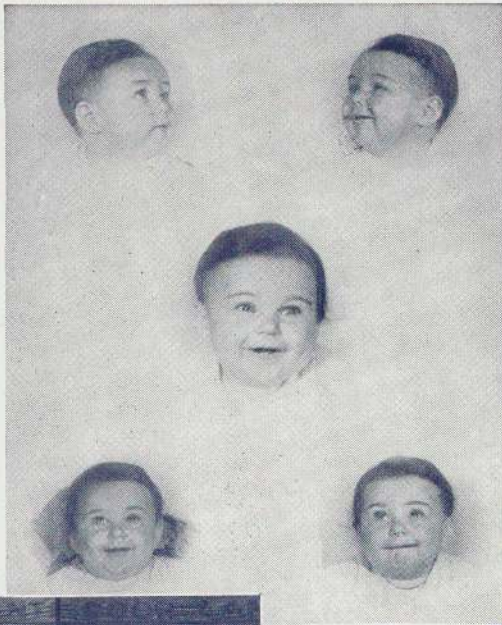
SPECIAL ISSUE
**THE NUDE
ON FILM**

MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART
ABSTRACT
PHOTOGRAPHY
EXHIBITION

OCTOBER 1951

Museum of Modern Art Archives
Alfred Barr Papers

Archive
MoMA
476



IT'S FUN MAKING MONTAGES

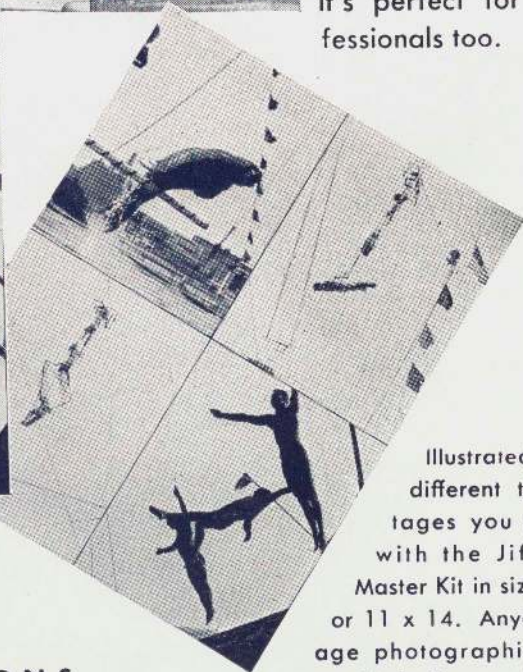
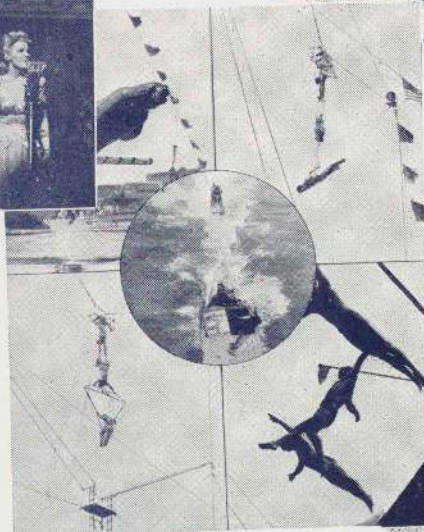
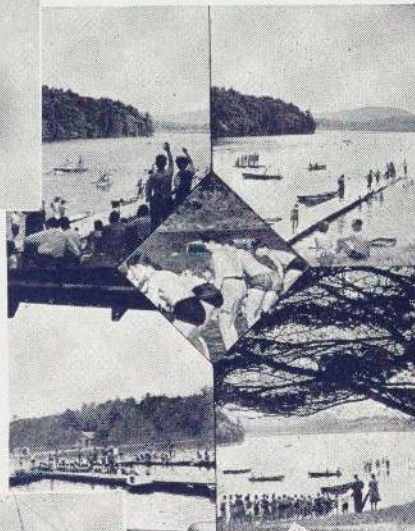
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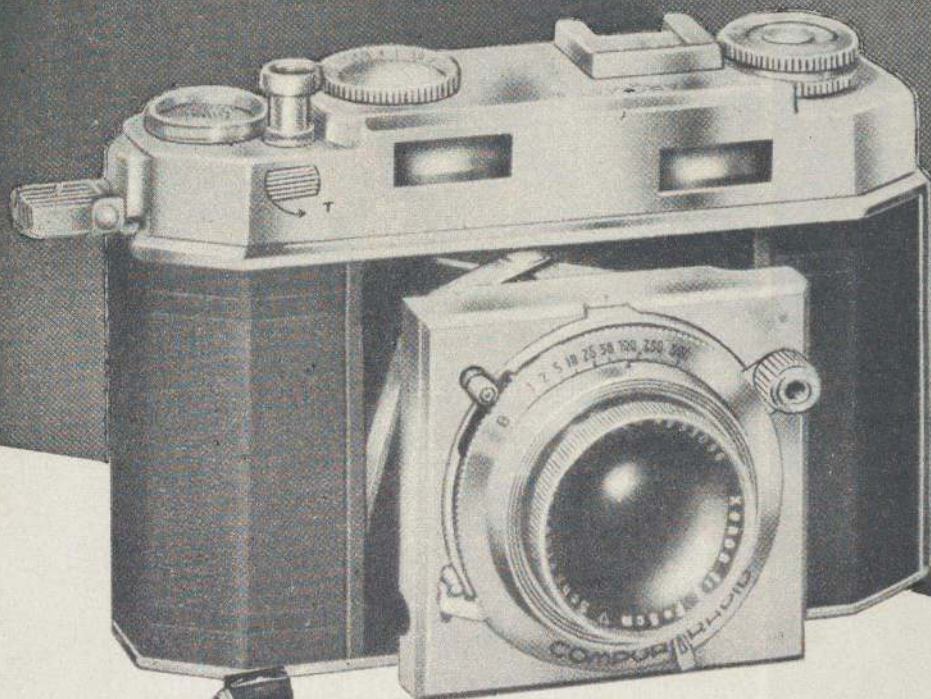
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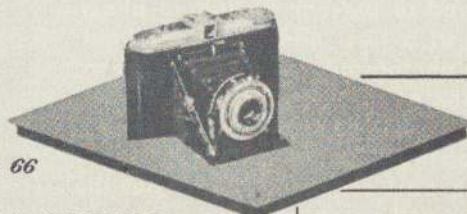
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FENN



ADAMS



MODIGLIANI



LOWE

VOL. I NO. 8

OTTO FENN is one photographer who still believes this is an art. He has a great deal to say about methodical photography and "systems" of picture-taking. He has worked with several of the top photographers of our day i.e. Louise Dahl-Wolf and George Hoyninger-Huene. Page 24 **ANSEL ADAMS** is a landscape photographer of great note. He is recognized as one of the leaders in the field. His pictures appear in the recent book, "Land of Little Rain," which is reviewed on Page 62 **AMADEO MODIGLIANI**, died in 1920, his work was successfully revived at the Museum of Modern Art. Modigliani, a unique painter who fits into no special school, specialized in recreating the human anatomy on canvas. The Museum afforded him a comprehensive and exciting exhibit. Page 56 **JACQUES LOWE** had his career quashed by the Nazi's early in the war years, but managed to pick up the threads and develop as a front rank photographer. He studied and served his apprenticeship with Walter Dick. In 1945 he made a pictorial feature out of a demolished Cologne, the city which was his birthplace. Since then, he has been very active in every phase of photography. Page 42 **THE ABSTRACT SHOW** at the Museum of Modern Art served to present a slighted phase of photography in a new and important light. Some of the top photographers in America were represented at the exhibit, among them Brodovitch, Weston, Man Ray, and Mili. Abstract photography like abstract art withstood a lot of "kidding" in the past couple of years, but the Abstract show served as an effective means of study. It offered an opportunity for serious photography students to see what was being done in Abstract and created much interest. Page 6

adams
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SHOW

PHOTOGRAPHY

abstract

museum of modern art

A VITAL QUESTION

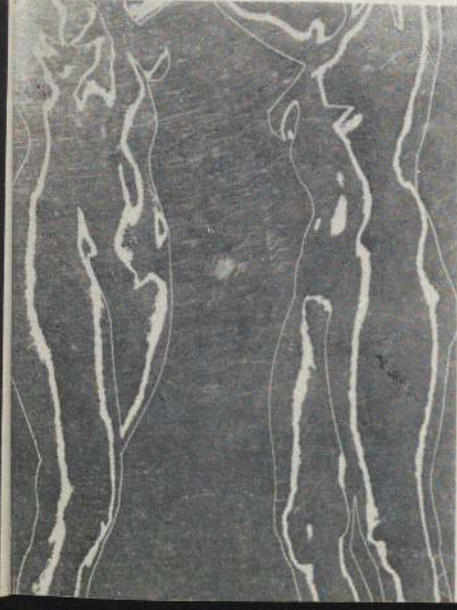
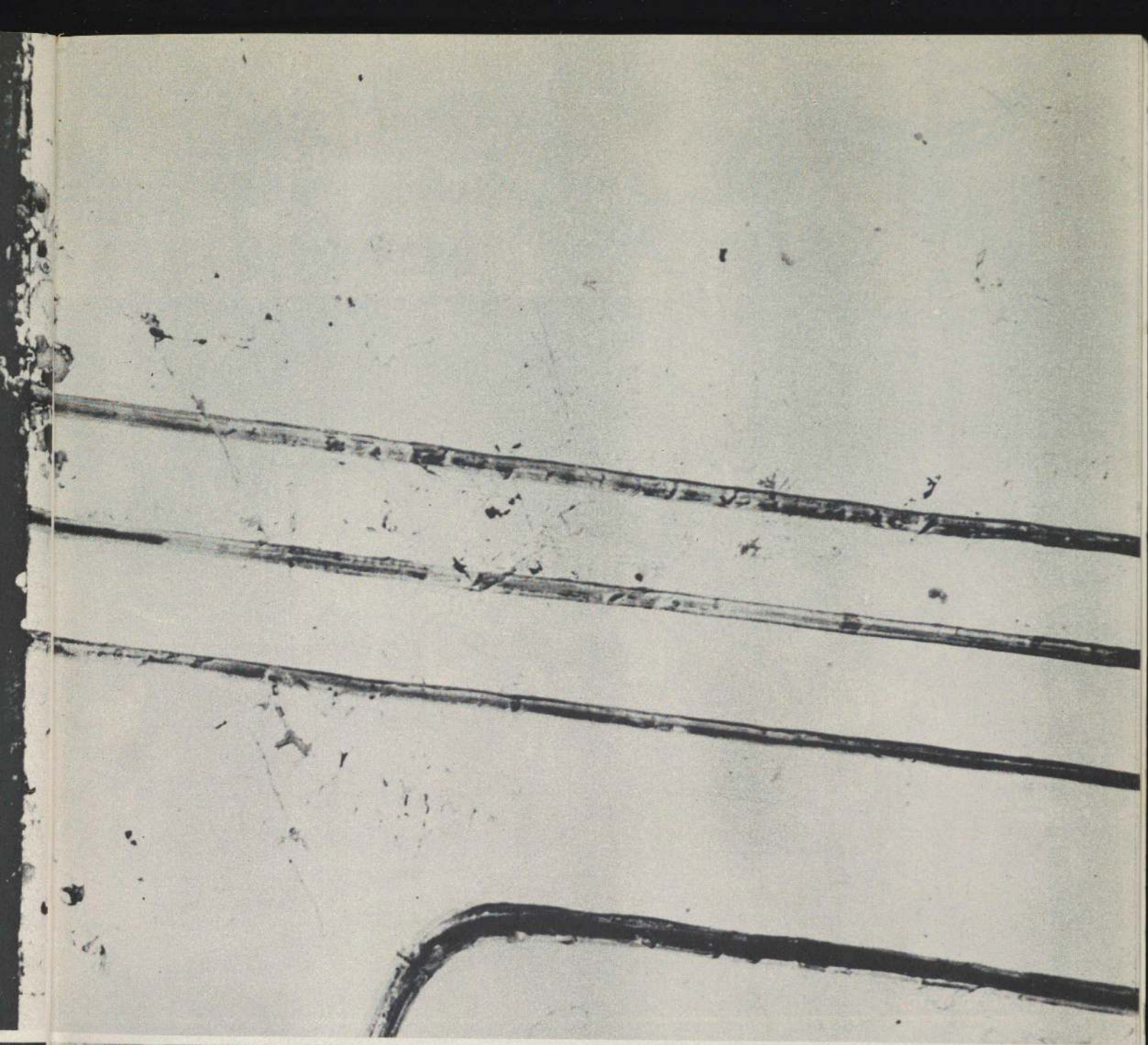
JOHN VINCENT

Abstraction, like logic and what is termed the *practical reason*, is a way of man's thinking. Like all thought, abstraction is included in the more general process called symbolization. Its particular distinction is its quality of *summary*, the ability to treat many particular ideas in more easily handled general categories. Mathematics exemplifies this process more than any other branch of human endeavor. Abstractions are arrived at by eliminating the impurities of fact and retaining the essentials of structure or form. What, then, is abstract photography? More than any other question that could be asked of modern photographers this query is vital, for it is at the root of every argument over photography as an art form. Can photography be abstract? Is abstract photography, as so many critics argue, a type of art product, a result rather than a method? Or is it, as others contend, a truly honest process of aesthetic exploration? Then, too, it could be none of these, for still another group of critics views it only as an example of ill-adapted nomenclature which, in its attempt to be inclusive, declines to be critical. For the first time in memory an attempt has been made to define both the method and content of this

AARON SISKIND



FERENC BERCO



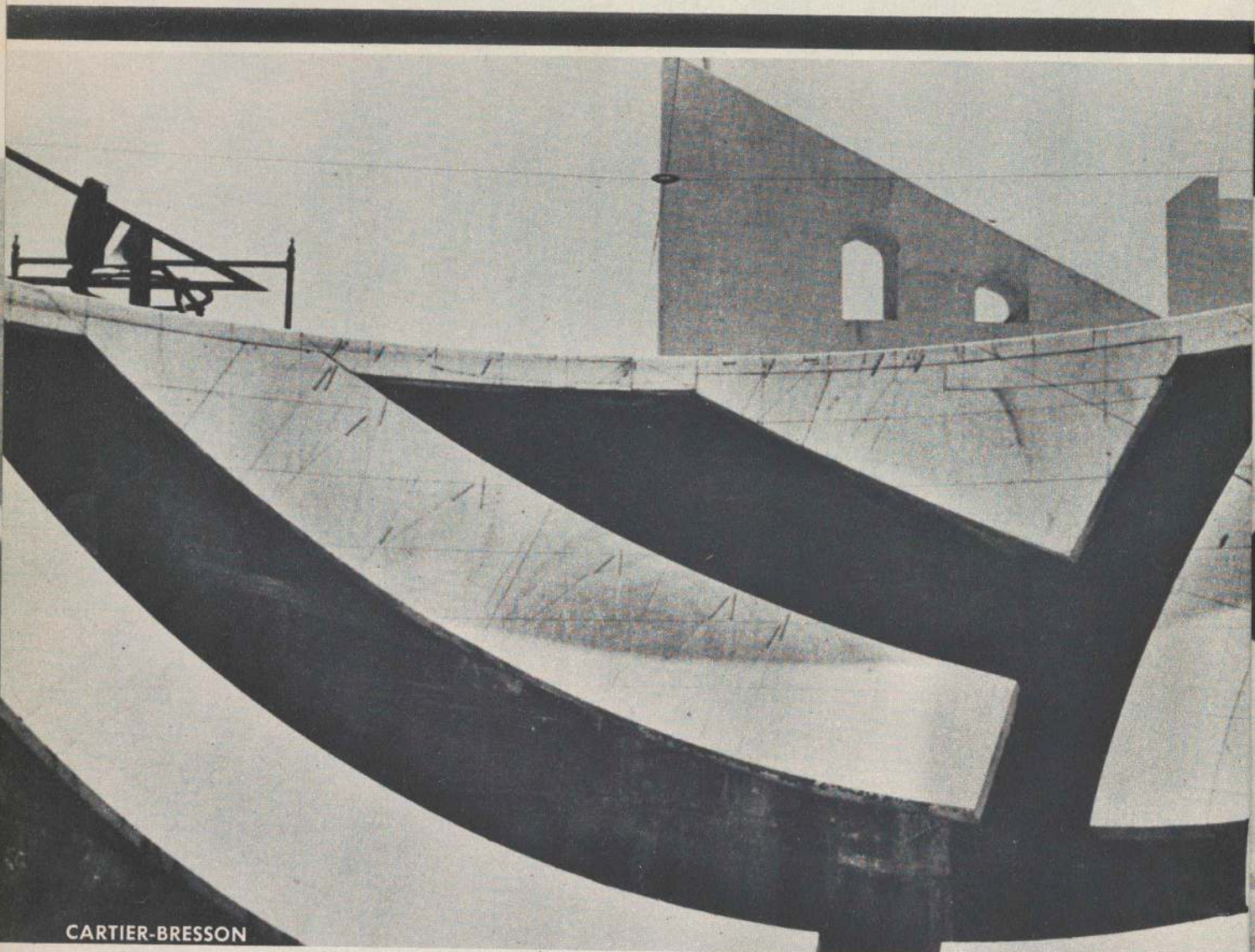


ALEXEY BRODOVITCH

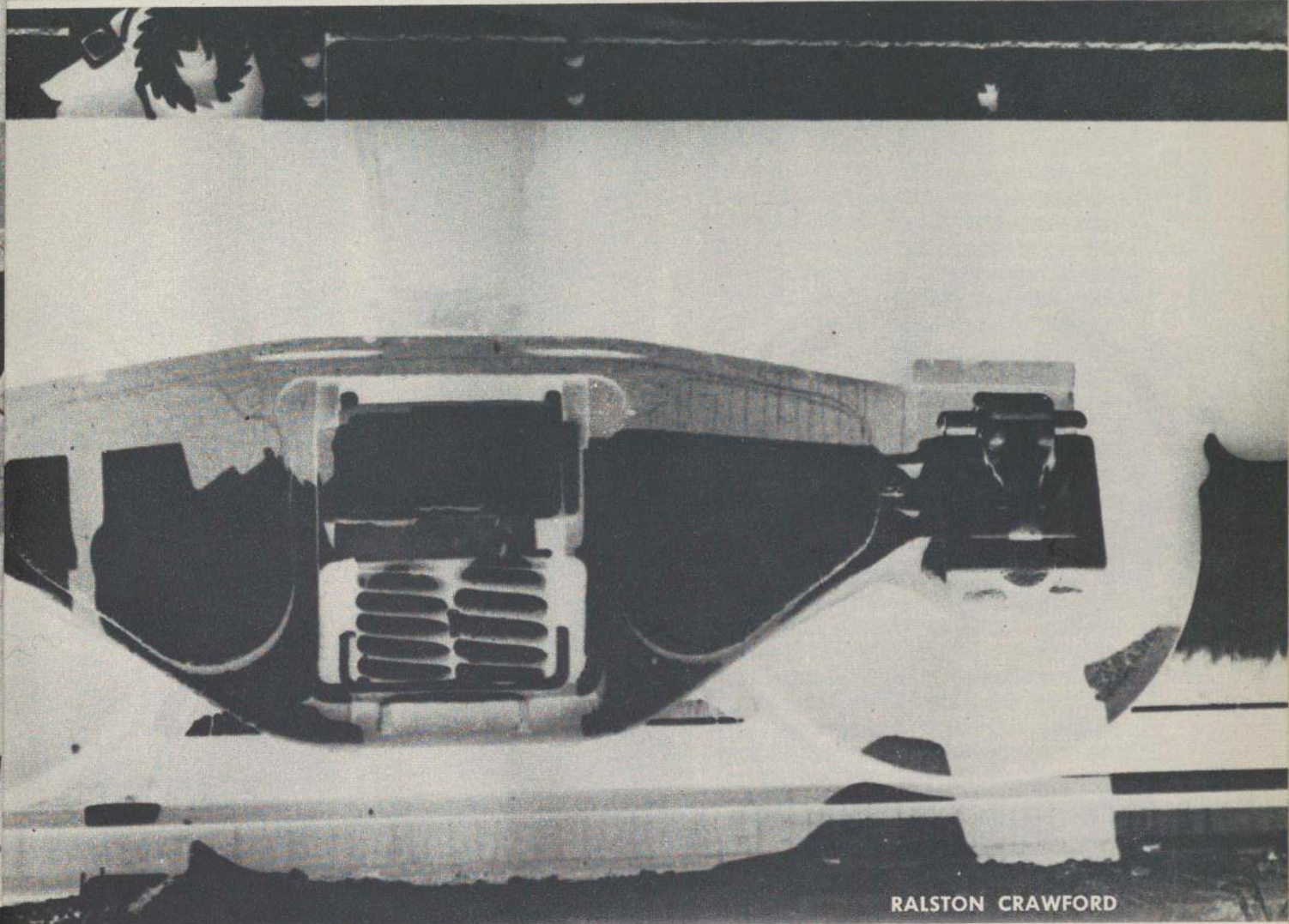
form. Under the direction of Edward Steichen, The Museum of Modern Art in New York has assembled 150 photographs in its "Abstraction in Photography" exhibition from May 2 through July 4, 1951. As a source of pleasure, the exhibition is an unqualified success. But its positive contribution to contemporary photography can only be measured in terms of the problems it raises, the problems stated above. The editors of PHOTO ARTS have decided that the importance of these problems, and of the answers they provoke, merit devoting the larger part of this issue to a discussion and illustration of the arguments raging about abstract photography. We are happy to be able to publish statements by recognized authorities in the field of photography; these express some of the points of view possible on this subject. We feel sure that our readers will be as thoroughly interested in this vital question as are all serious photographers.



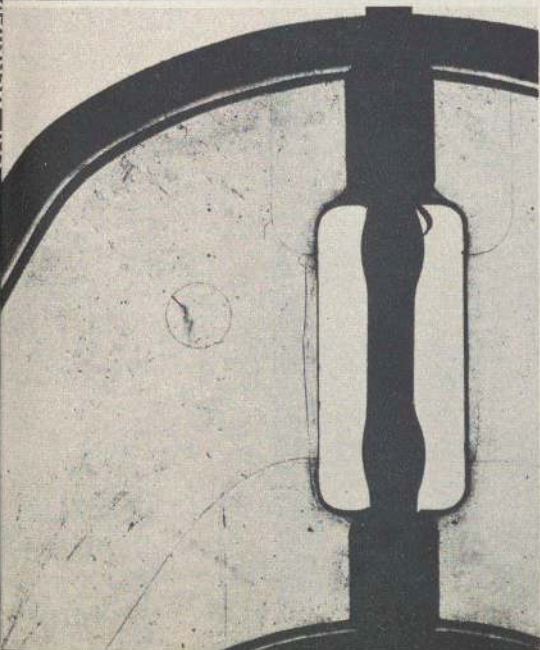
WALKER EVANS



CARTIER-BRESSON



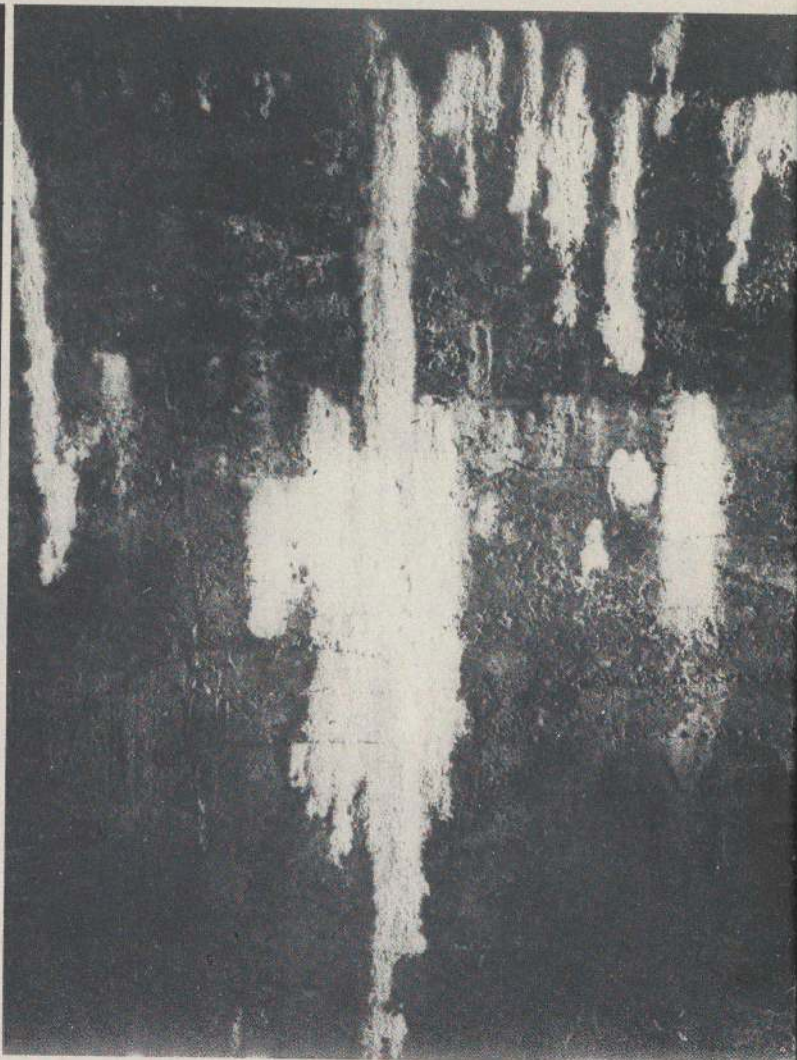
RALSTON CRAWFORD



ABSTRACTION AND CREATION

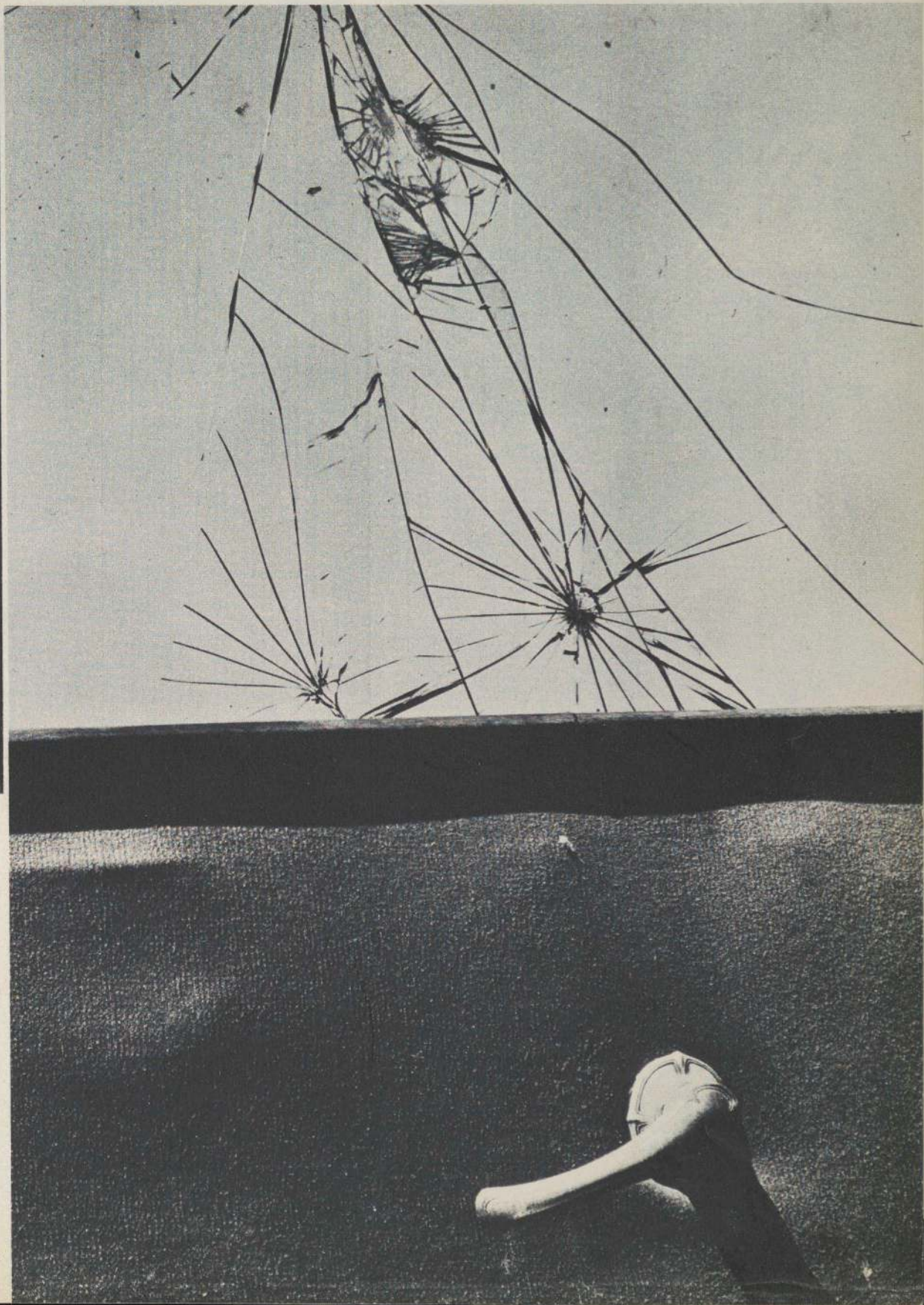
by ERWIN BLUMENFELD

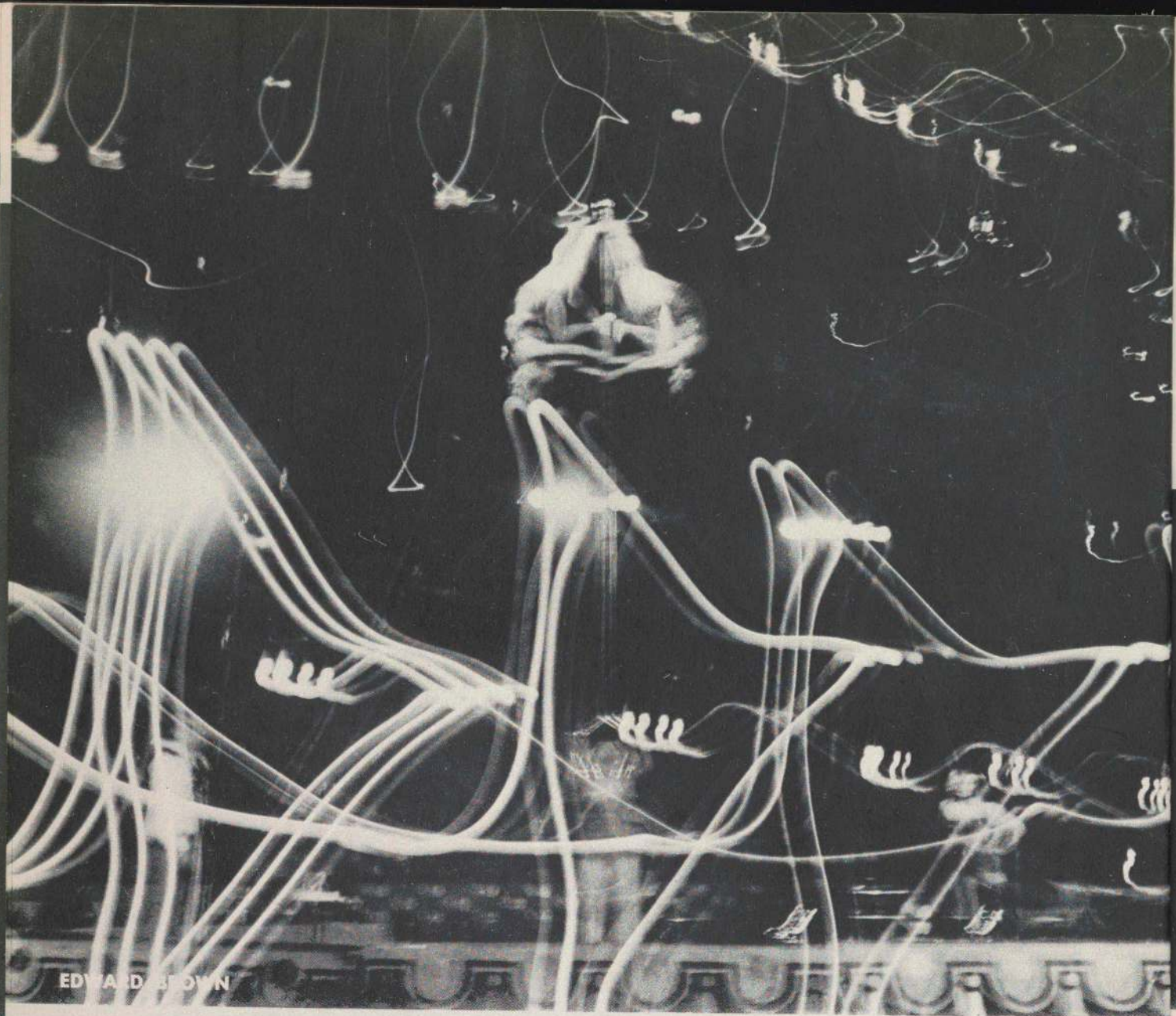
The term *abstract photography* is an old-fashioned one, and, I believe, completely out of step with our times. This is not the day for abstraction. It is too petty a problem to be considered when one also realizes the consequences of recent historical events. The impress of war and international chaos excludes any genuine concern with such funeral pieces. If one is to be frank about the subject, any part of any photograph can be considered as an abstract item. This readily recognized fact illustrates how far abstract photography is from the mainstream of creative photography. All nature itself—the very subject of the photographer—can be seen in abstract terms . . . yet it is not. Why? The answer is simply that the creative photographer is seeking more with his personal vision than abstraction, and that the art in photography lies in precisely these infinite ways the photographer can see his world. He creates his forms, much as natural forms themselves were created. But his is not the role of recorder, for between what he photographs and what he produces on film is projected the personal element . . . his unique *gestalt* of vision. If we can talk of art, it is here that it exists.



FREDERICK SOMMER

GITA LENZ



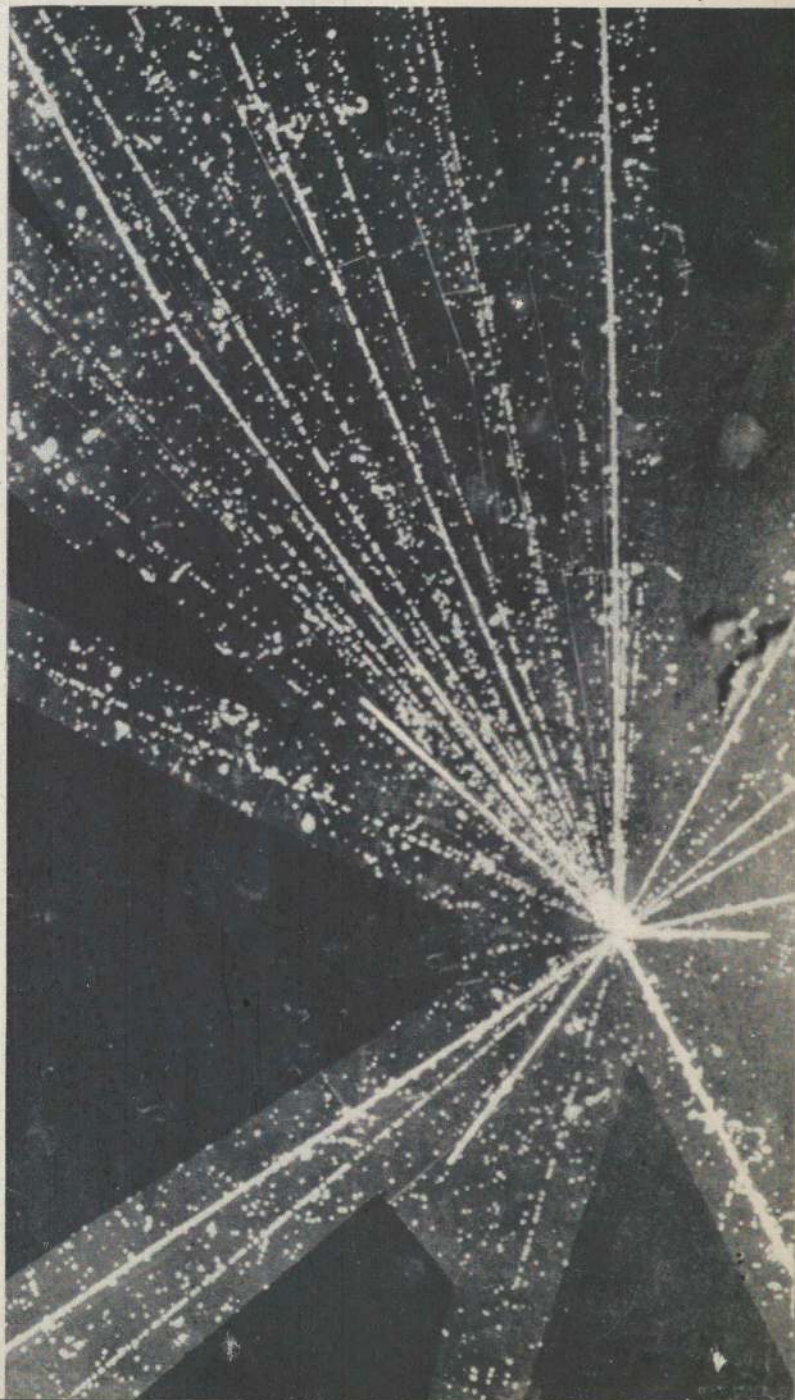


EDWARD BROWN

by EDWARD STEICHEN

The term *abstraction* used here in connection with photography is hardly more than a convenient handle with which to tag a wide range of intelligent artful experimentation as well as the significant creative achievements. The discipline of an enforced objectivity in laboratory photography is countered by the creative control of selection exercised by the photographer. The esthetic factor in the scientific photograph is read or imagined into it by the observer. The creative photographer initiates the esthetic factor. A cloud chamber photograph showing disintegration and conversion under bombardment of one hundred million electron volt neutrons from the giant University of California cyclotron, and a photograph of a fragment of a wall by Frederick Sommer both represent a reality and both convey a feeling of immutable force and power that goes beyond the actual facts of the photographs. In the one, this feeling is incidental to the facts portrayed; the other originates in the perception and creative ability of a major American artist.

THE ACCIDENT OF ABSTRACTION



by **LOTTE JACOBI**

"Throughout my career, I have held that photography means literally light drawing. In my abstract photograph, I do not use a camera: I draw with light on photographic paper — that is how I overcome the limitation of the lens camera and give free play to creative imagination."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The photograph opposite the copy is not that picture of Miss Jacobi's which appeared at the Museum of Modern Art Exhibit. It is though, very representative of her work.





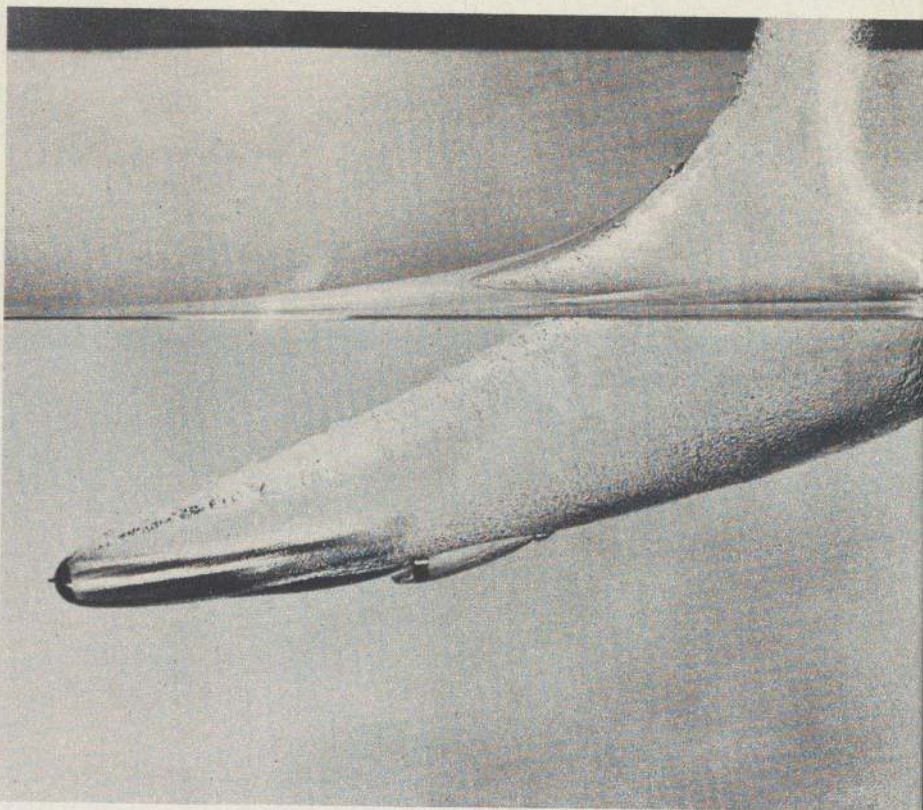
ERWIN BLUMENFELD

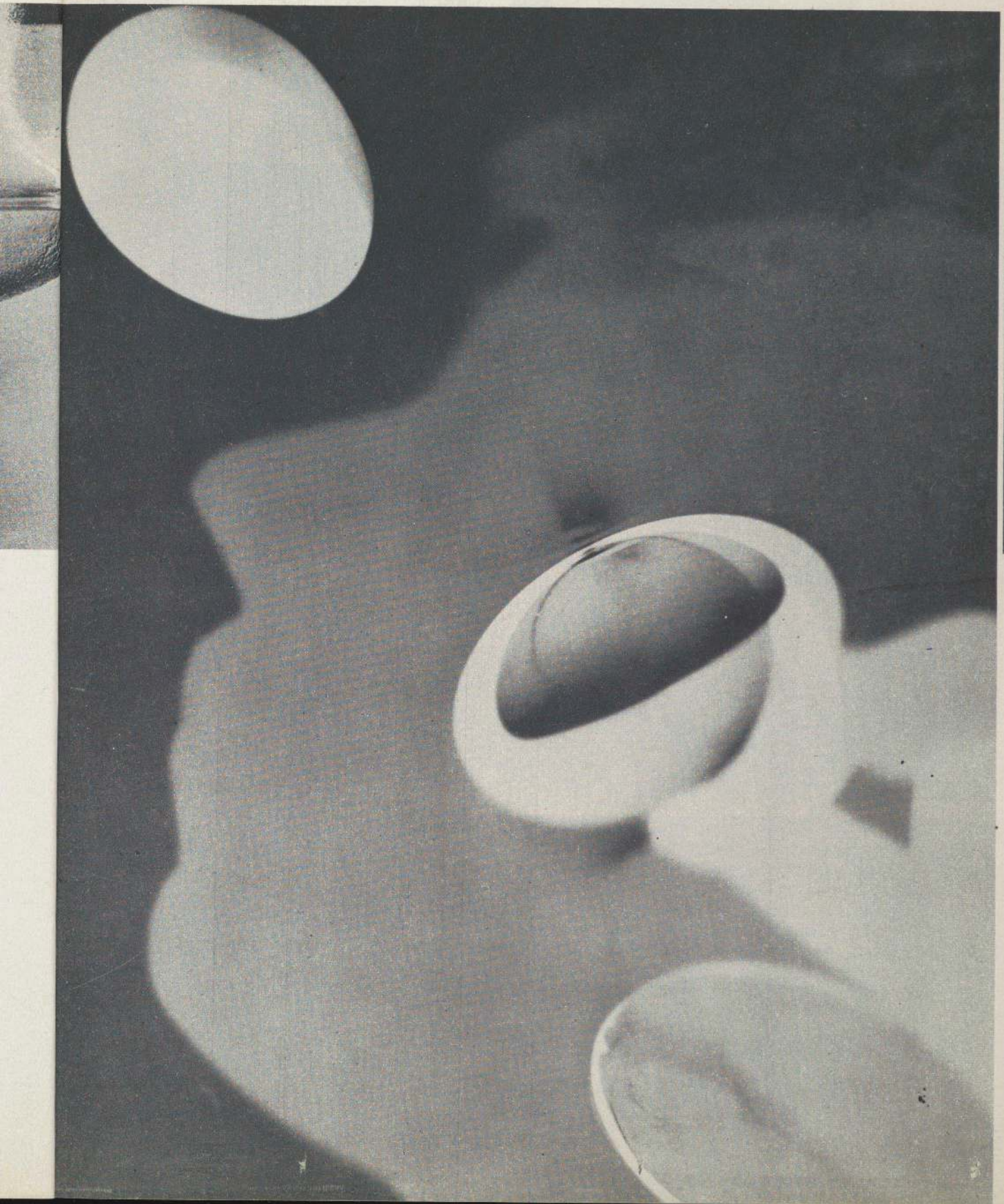
BEN ROSE



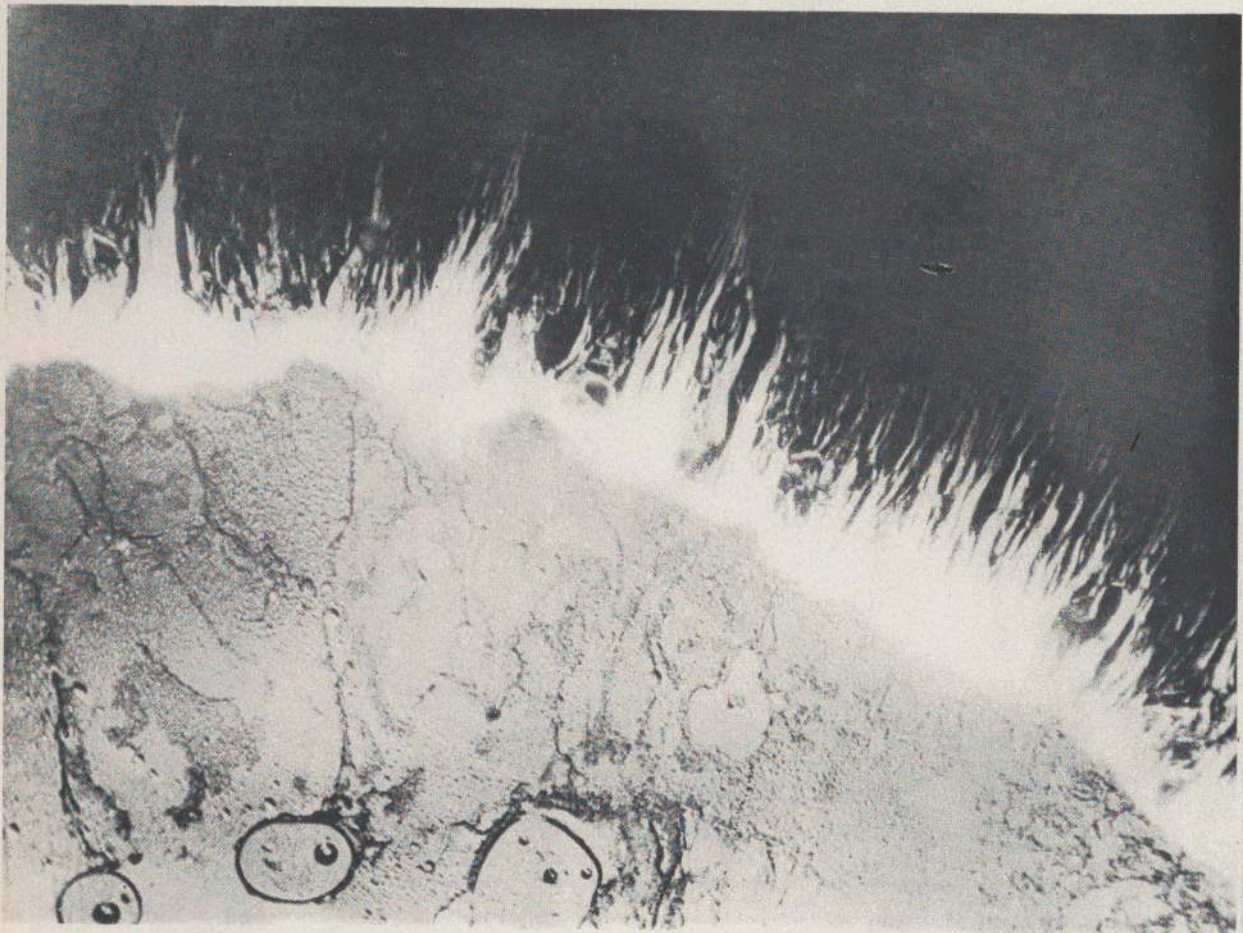
by AARON SISKIND

When I make a photograph I want it to be an altogether new object, complete and self-contained, whose basic condition is order . . . unlike the world of events and actions whose permanent condition is change and disorder. The business of making a photograph may be said in simple terms to consist of three elements . . . the objective world, the sheet of paper on which the picture will be realized, and the experience which brings them together. First, and emphatically, I accept the flat plane of the picture surface as the primary frame of reference. The experience itself may be de-

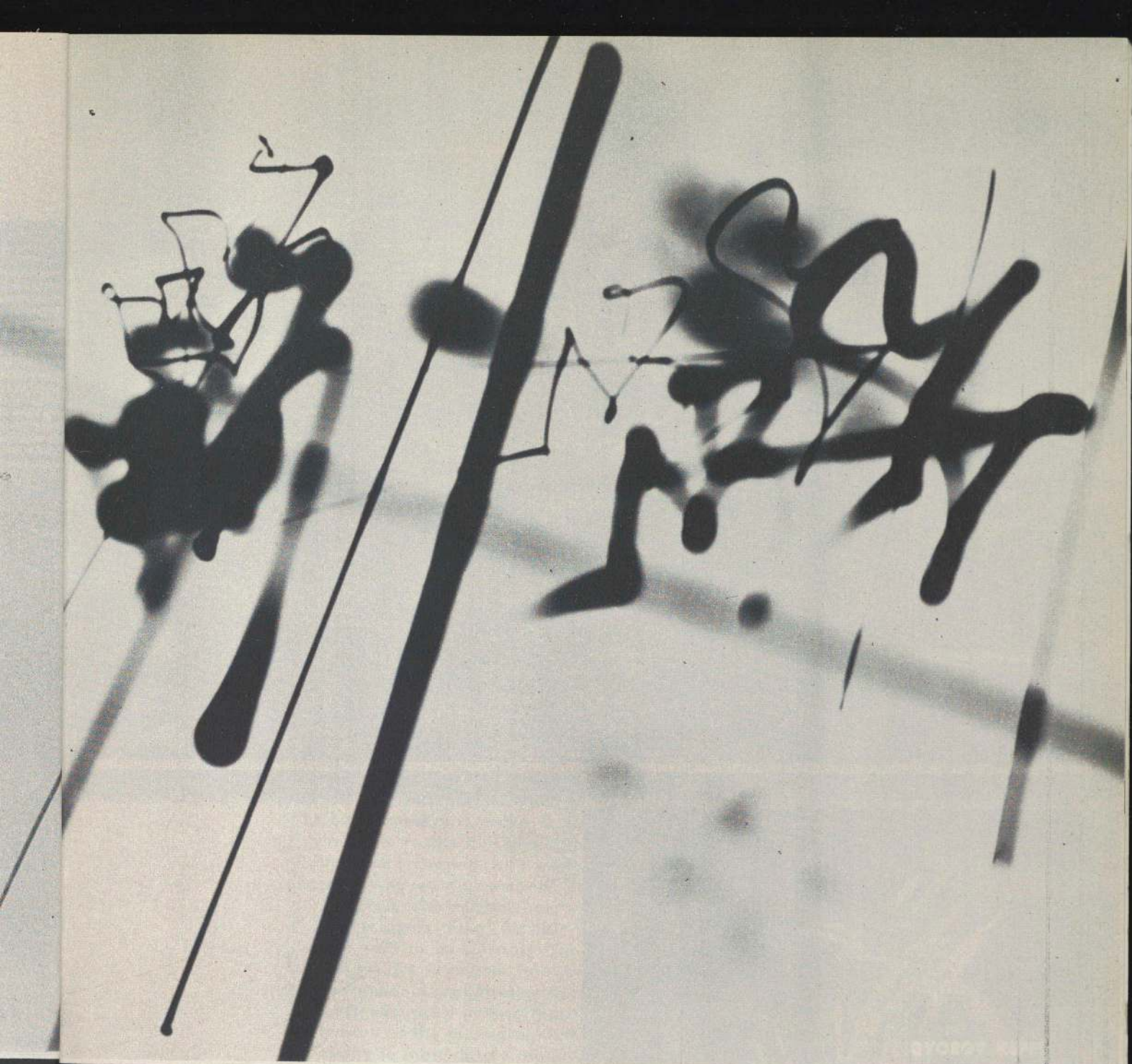




1922, MAN RAY

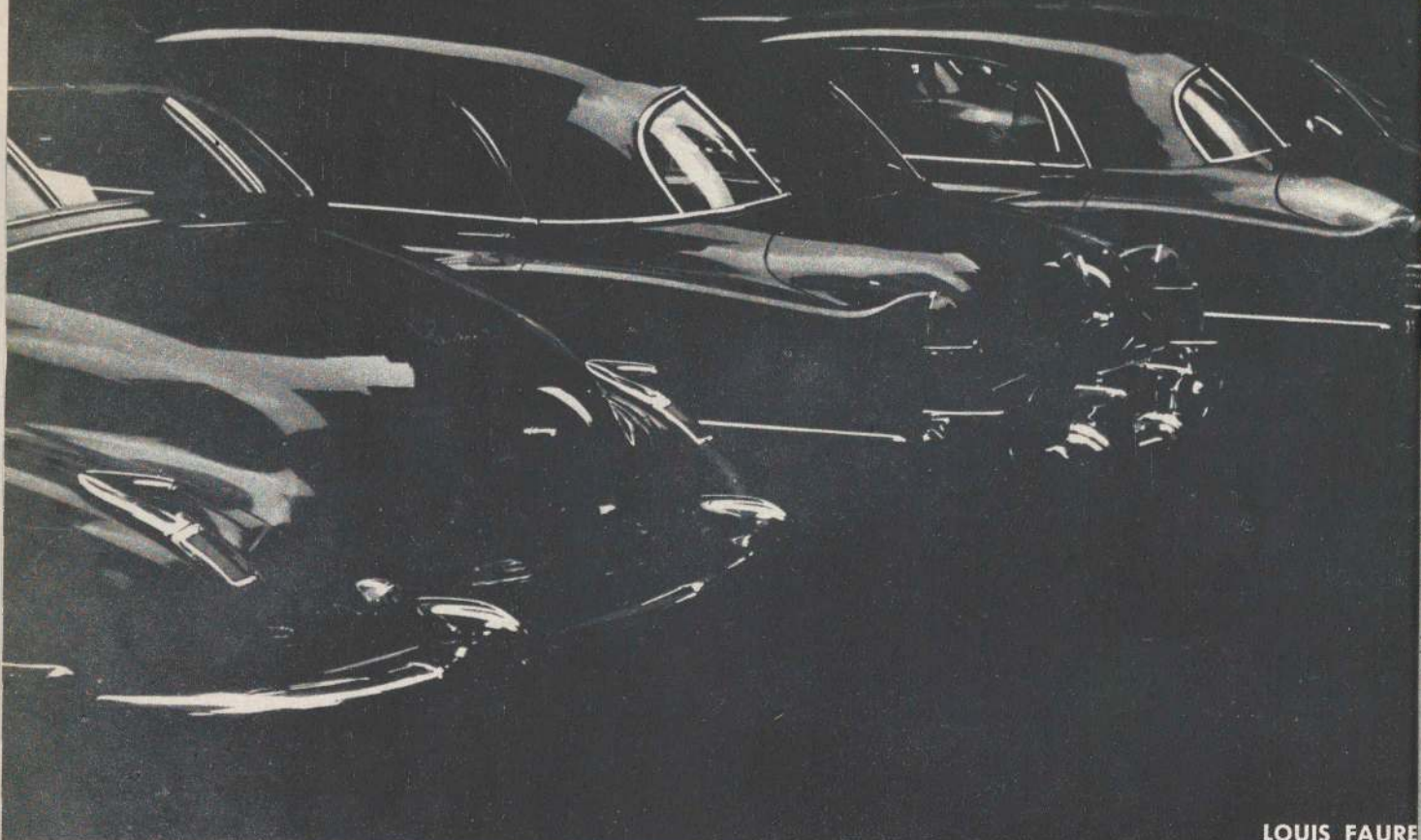


ROMAN VISHNIAC



scribed as one of total absorption in the object. But the object serves only a personal need and the requirements of the picture. These objects must finally take their place in the tonal field of the picture and strictly conform to their space environment. The object has entered the picture in a sense. It has been photographed directly, but it is often unrecognizable. It has been removed from its usual context, disassociated from its customary neighbors and forced into new relationships. I must stress that my own interest is immediate and in the picture. What I am conscious of, and what I feel is the picture I am making, the relation of that picture to others I have made, and its relation to others I have experienced.

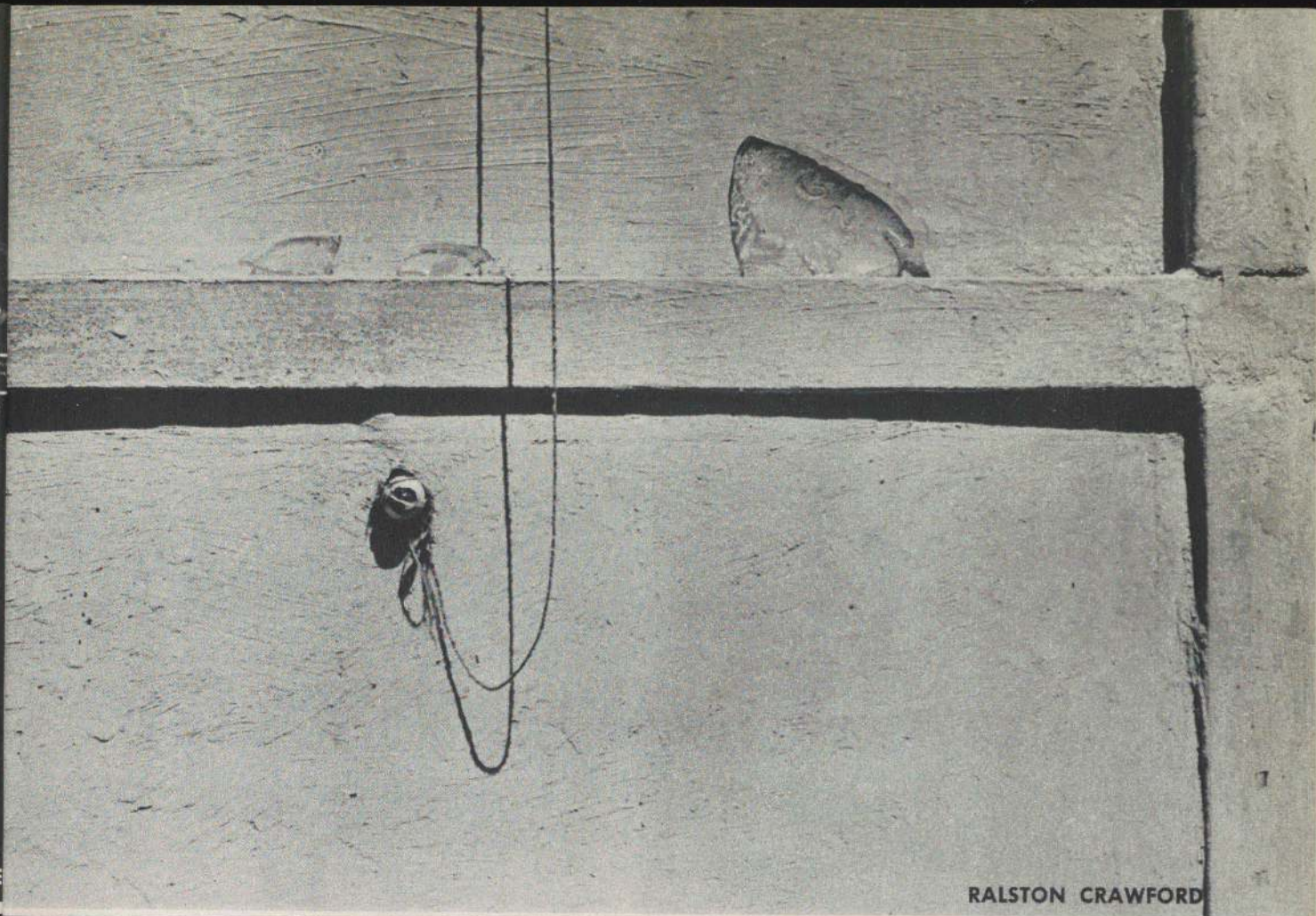
THE PERSONALITY OF ABSTRACTION



LOUIS FAURE



KASTAN



THE DANGER OF ABSTRACTION The moment you make a picture, you translate reality into photographic symbols, and dealing with symbols is the beginning of any kind of abstraction. The closer the symbols mirror the real, the palpable thing, the less is the picture said to be abstract. The more removed the symbols are from their conventional organization in reality, the more abstract. I believe that the unique feature of the photographic medium - its ability to most closely reproduce reality - is irretrievably being forfeited when the object becomes unrecognizable in

the photographic recreation. For me, the most valid abstract is one which both holds onto the reality of the object and yet transcends it by the strength of the associations it evokes in the observer. When photography is used to destroy the object and manipulate what remains into something closer to the eye's desire, a momentarily exciting picture may be the result, but the primary function and vitality of the photographic medium are seriously threatened. The world about us, penetrated with imagination, is "abstract" enough GITA LENZ





LEO COLEMAN

OTTO FENN

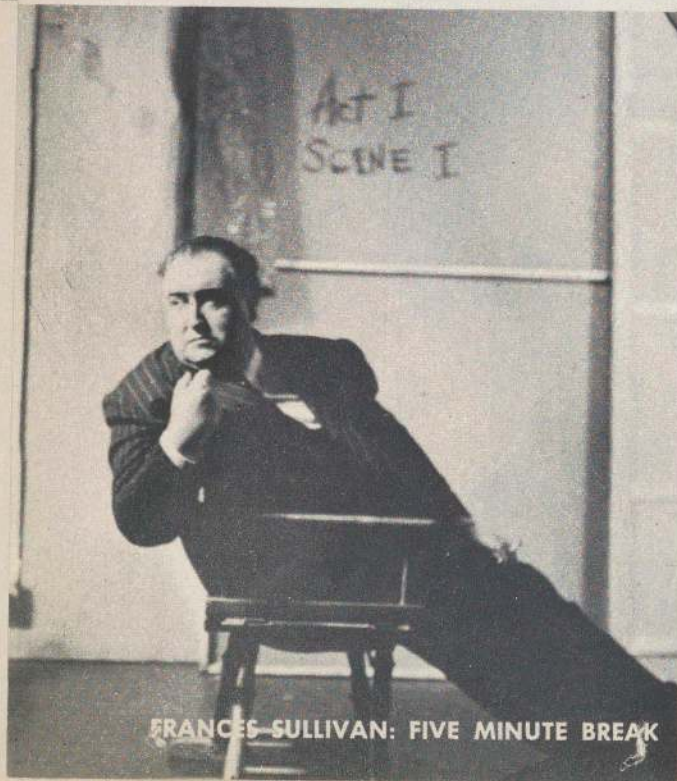
One photographer's formulae for effective work does not necessarily hold true for others in the profession. Very rarely are the methods of one man applicable to a great many and for that reason Otto Fenn believes any postulates put forth on photographic art should be taken with more than a grain of salt. Otto Fenn shies away from dogma and advises aspiring young photographers to do likewise. "I get fed up when I read these high-flown, pedantic articles on sure-fire methods of taking pictures. There just aren't any!" Fenn believes that a thorough study of design is invaluable to the photographer. From design, a feeling for color and composition is acquired which is of prime importance in later stages of photography. Fenn himself, studied design for four years, supplementing the knowledge with studies of window-display and scenic design. Too many photographers are known solely for one type of work. "You often hear of photographers getting bored with their work," says Fenn, "the main reason is, it's always the same sort of work. They make a hit with one type of picture and repeat the format for the rest of their careers." Otto Fenn has a passion for



SONO OSATO



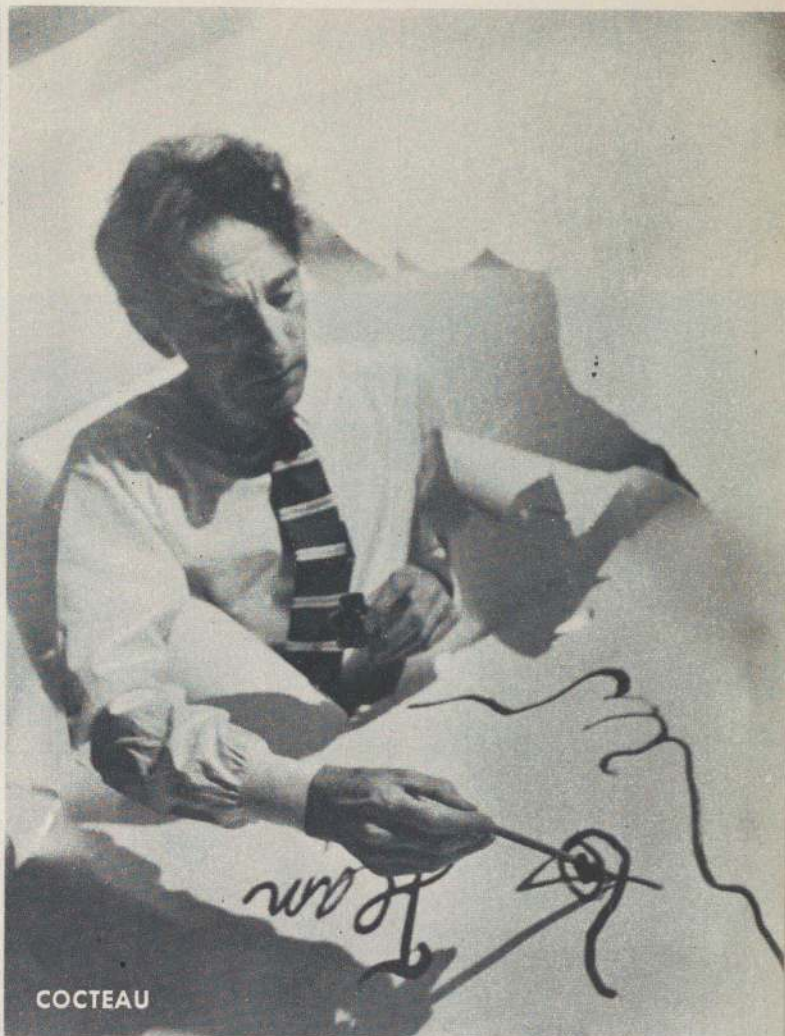
by CHARLES MAROWITZ



FRANCES-SULLIVAN: FIVE MINUTE BREAK



WOMAN OF NEW YORK



COCTEAU

experimentation and novelty. But not novelty for novelty's sake. He points out, "The reason Cocteau's surrealism is so appreciated is because we know he can make conventional shots with just as much skill." Most of Fenn's work has appeared in fashion magazines like Harper's Bazaar and Today's Woman. He is especially noted for his cover series. A photographer working with a model, he finds, is much like a director and an actress. The model must perform with as much animation, with as much feeling, with as much projection as an actress on a stage, and the photographer must strive for the unity of effect that stage directors seek. And, as on the stage, a performer who responds to direction will bring forth the best results. Few workers in the field realize that a photographer is as much an interpretive artist as a singer or a dancer. For, if it

were just a matter of choosing an object and clicking a shutter then a three year old could take pictures. Fenn is one of the few photographers who attacks his work in an artistic frame of mind. He realizes that each picture is a new project which demands a new approach. "The photographer who uses the same lighting and same setting for several pictures is as much a hack as the writer who turns out one pulp story after another." Louise Dahl-Wolfe was looking for an assistant when Otto Fenn was working as art director with the New Hampshire Barnstormers. She chose Fenn and their four years together decided Fenn on entering photography professionally. He cites Dahl-Wolfe as a perfect example of the well-rounded photographer whose black and white pictures are just as deftly executed as her color shots. A great deal of Fenn's work has been

reproduced in Town and Country and Theatre Arts. He shoots with a Rolleflex and an 8X10 View Camera. His personality shots include an amazing number of celebrities in all fields among them: Cocteau, Saroyan, Cantinflas, Mae West, Ethel Merman, Ray Bolger. He doesn't believe in premeditated photographs; he rarely prearranges the details of a shooting. "Too many unexpected things happen when you enter the studio," he explains. He likes to improvise and often gets ideas on the spur of the moment. These sudden inspirational flashes are evidenced in many of his shots. Otto Fenn believes, "If you approach photography as a means of expression rather than a method of transplanting life onto film, then you have left the photographer behind you and you are surely on your way to becoming the artist."



HORST LIGHTING



HUENE ELEGANCE



RAWLINGS STYLE
THE AVEDON FEELING



NAYLOR NATURALNESS
DAHL-WOLFE COMPOSITION





SEAGULL

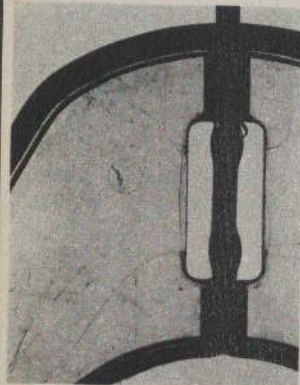
This unique parody on top photographers was a result of relaxed posing and whimsical poses. Fenn noticed that the end product resembled styles of well known cameramen. Thus, simply by accident this parody came about. See photographs on left.



Ballet 1935 by Alexey Brodovitch is a fascinating action photo offset by stationary figures. Brodovitch, a pioneer in the field, used a contax with 1.5 lens in order to get this shot. He estimates the speed at 1/10 to 1/25. The picture taken in 1935 was shot with the fastest film available at that time. A Kodak Triple X or Press as it was known then. The print has appeared in Ballet Books and other exhibits. Page 8.



This curious Study in Diple is the work of Otto Fenn. It is a composite photograph of Bob Cato, art director and Dolores Fenn, the photographer's sister. Notice the smooth meeting of chins. Cato was shot at 1/10 at f3.5 and Dolores at 1/25 at f3.5. A 777 Developer was used on the Super XX film. Fenn snapped the shot almost in the water, without a tripod. Printed on Illustrated Special Paper. Page 49



Sol Mednick's Plastic Coat Hanger was created in the enlarger. The curious subject of the picture and the perfect definition of the object combine to make an interesting example of unphotographed art. The picture was kept in a Dektor Developer for about a minute and a half. As provocative abstract art, Sol Mednick's Plastic Coat Hanger clearly shows the results obtainable through a little imagination and skill. Page 11.



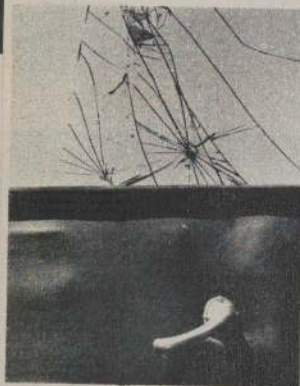
Jacque Lowe's Ruined Railway Station was taken in Cologne, Germany. Lowe tried to present one picture that would be representative of so many of the stations in Cologne. He tried to present a crude scene esthetically. Several attempts were made to achieve the desired effect. This picture was shot when the sun was strongest. Lowe perched above a heap of rubble shot with a 35mm Biogon. Photograph Page 44.



Circus by Edward Brown is one of the more rhythmic shots in abstract photography. Photographed with a Rolleiflex at 1/2 second at f3.5., the picture was printed on varigam made by Defender. A Super XX film was used. Brown tried to capture in this acrobatic performance the full spirit of circus life. He strived for tempo and movement and an overall feeling of dramatic activity. He is covered on Page 14.



Bierwinski's The Fan is a sensitive study in lines and shadow. Eight sittings were necessary in order to achieve the desired effect. Bierwinski strived for a brash rhythm in the body. A delicate white-black hue is offset by the deep black of the fan. The print was made especially soft to emphasize the body contour. The mirror in background did not add greatly to the effect of the picture. Photograph Page 55



This unique study is the work of Gita Lenz. The black and white contrast serves to heighten the pyramid effect on the upper half of the picture. Notice the sensitive shadings on b.g. of the door and the solid effect of the car handle. The picture was taken with a Rolleiflex camera and 3.5 Tessar lens. The lens opening was set at 1/50 at f.11. A panthermic developer was used on the Super XX film. Shown on Page 13.



Nude Before Repose is the work of Bierwinski. Bierwinski succeeded in presenting a rhythmic reproduction of the female anatomy. Natural lighting was used to highlight the left side of the model. Delicate shadings around the back and leg are contrasted by deep shadows and the darker blackness of the hair. This picture was shot with a rolleiflex, a 3.5 Zeiss Tessar lens at 1/5 at F4 on Super XX film. Page 36.

FILM DATA

THE NUDE ON FILM

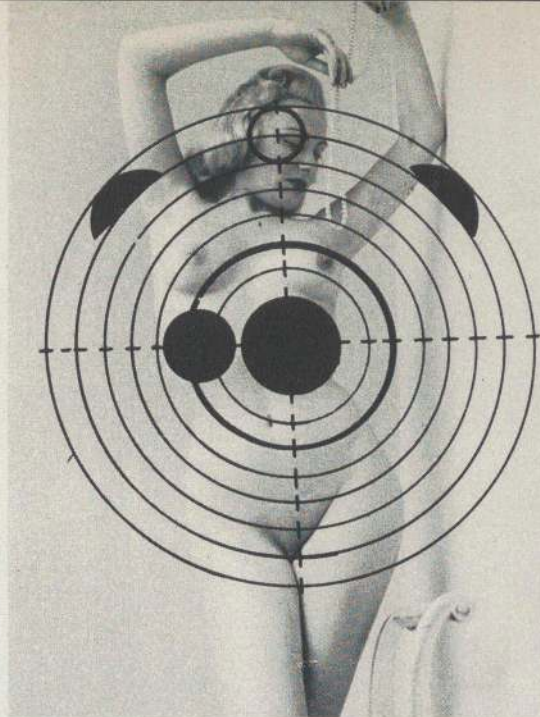
by NORMAN BENSON

The artistic use of the nude in the graphic arts has to do with the exploitation of the natural forms of the body when arranged compositionally in space with or without other objects. Traditionally the artist has chosen the kind of composition which emphasizes the charm and femininity of his subjects, exaggerating the pleasing curve, emphasizing smoothness and delicacy of form. The nude on the left is in a classical sculptural pose, the thrust of the hip and the raised elbows making an S-curve which underscores the muscular and emotional vivacity of the subject at the moment when the camera has caught her. The hands caught to the head and the turned-in leg make the shape an entirely closed one. The lighting served the basic sculptural requirement, namely, the three-dimensional illusion of a solid object.

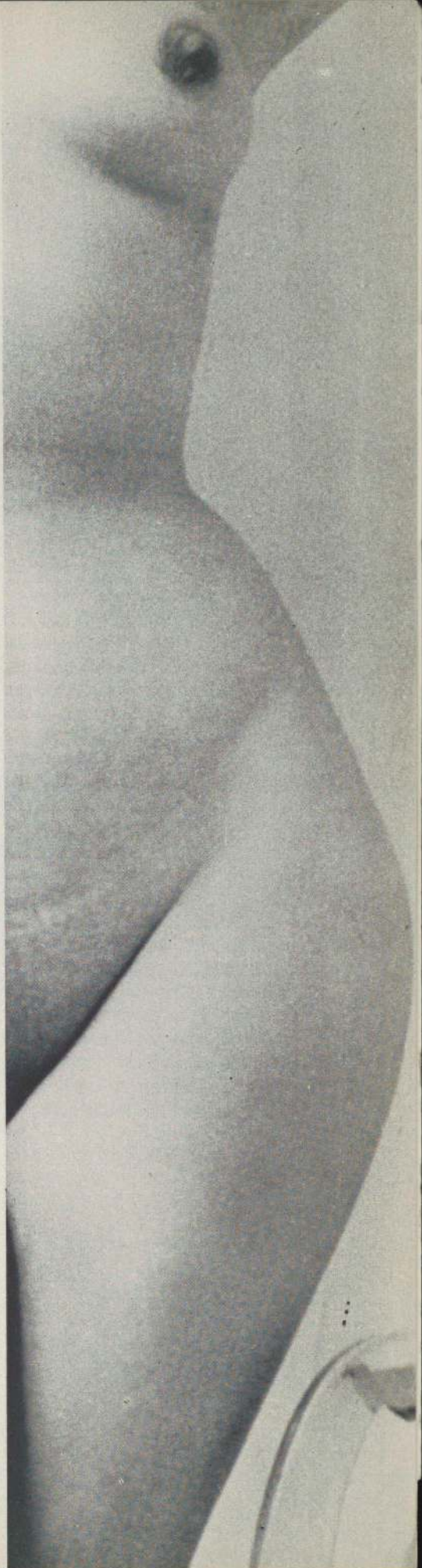


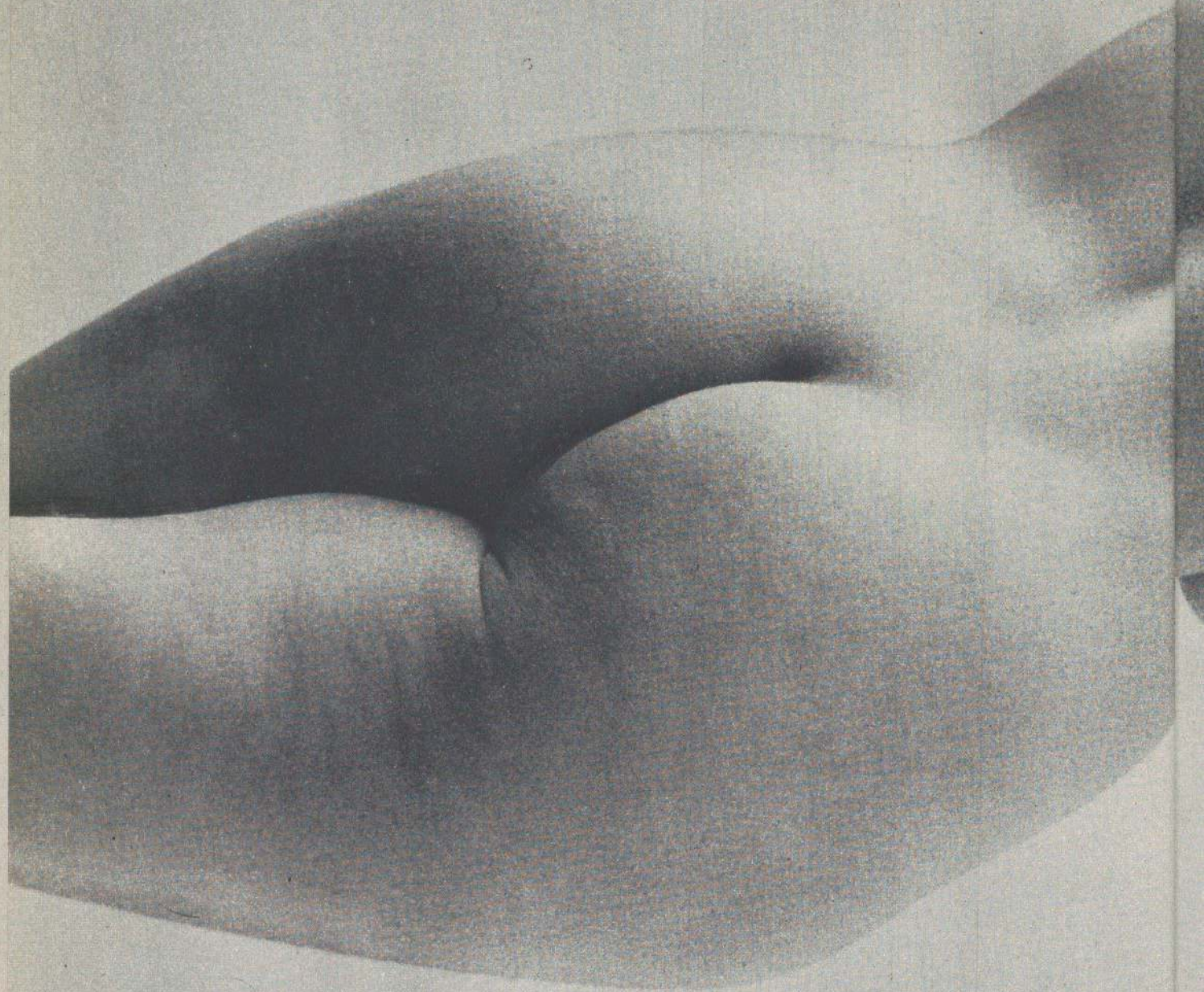
TRADITION





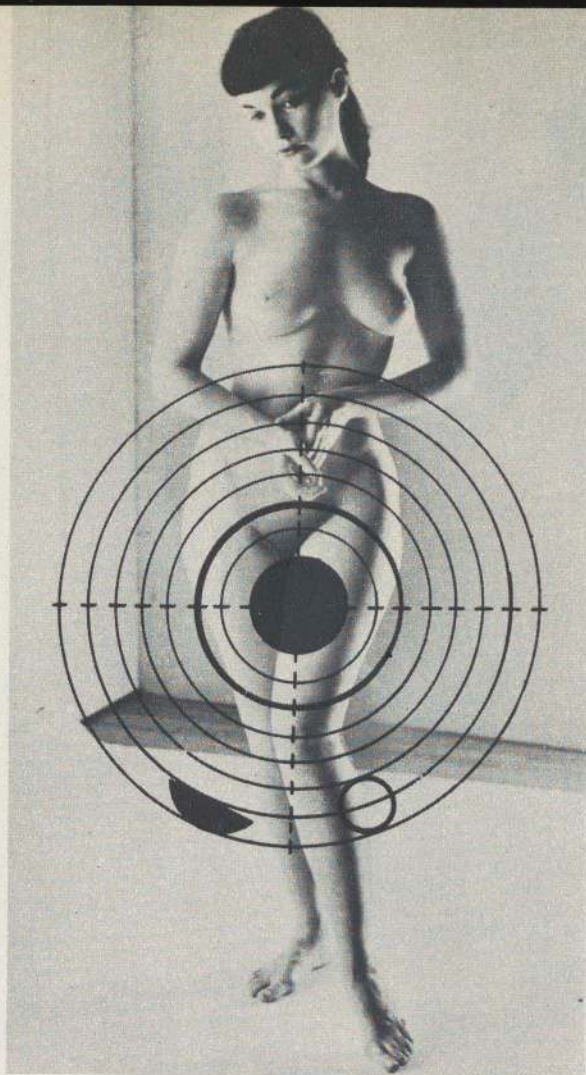
The photographer here used mere suggestions of props to obtain an effect of restrained luxury. But the curve of the carved chair back and the elongated circular design formed by the pearls also heighten the elliptical shape of the picture as a whole. He used a Rolleiflex, shooting on Super XX film at F 4.8 in 1/5 sec. The figure fits into the background instead of being modelled in the round. It is a study in circular or nearly-circular patterns, saved from banality by the tapering-off of the legs at the foot of the picture. As is true of all figure studies, in which the muscles are attenuated, there is a tendency toward spiralling movement, but the spiral is here entirely contained in a perfect ellipse. Pose and lighting both make this picture expressive of calm rather than of energetic action. In terms of the tradition, the standing figure in repose is somewhat unusual, since it is the reclining nude which is usually used for an effect of relaxation. Off center lighting was utilized to create the side-shadow effect in this picture. Overhead lighting and backspots illuminated the background.



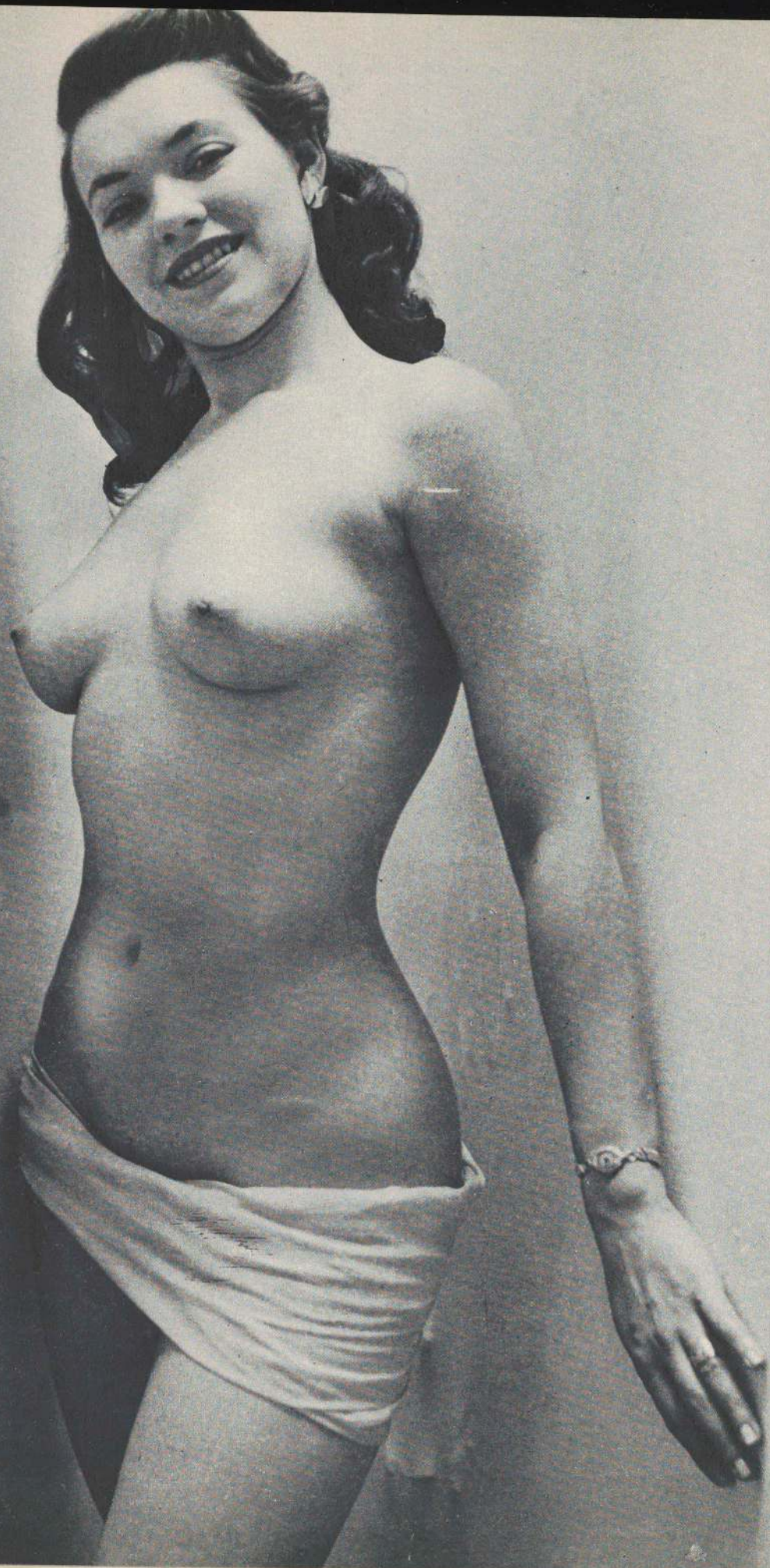


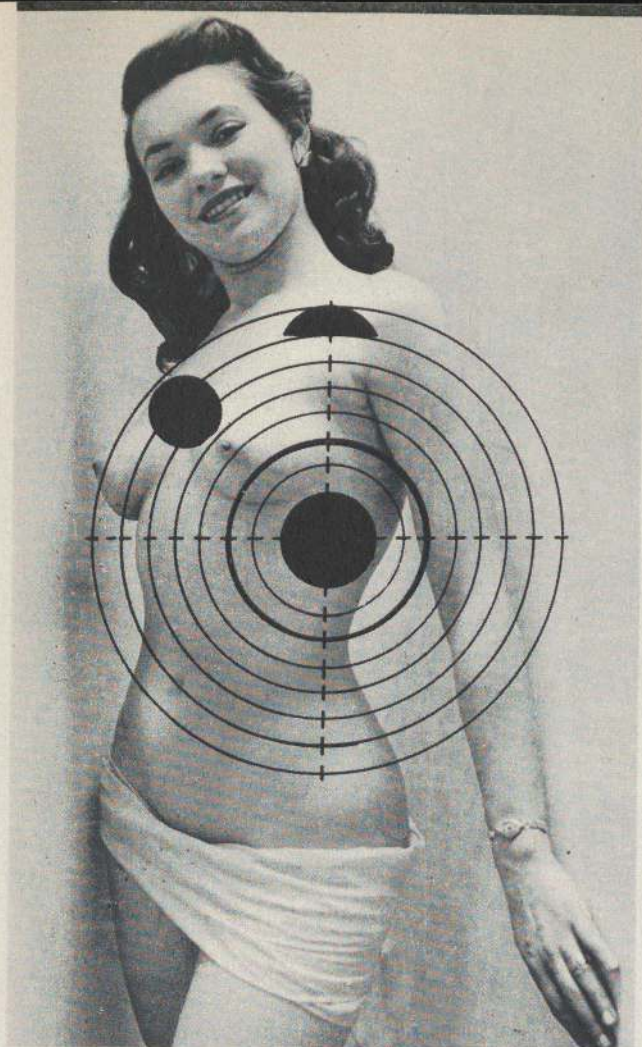






Low foreground lights were directed vertically on the right side of the model. Graying shadows were allowed to settle around the head and neck. Opposite foreground spots were employed to light the left wall and emphasize the center.

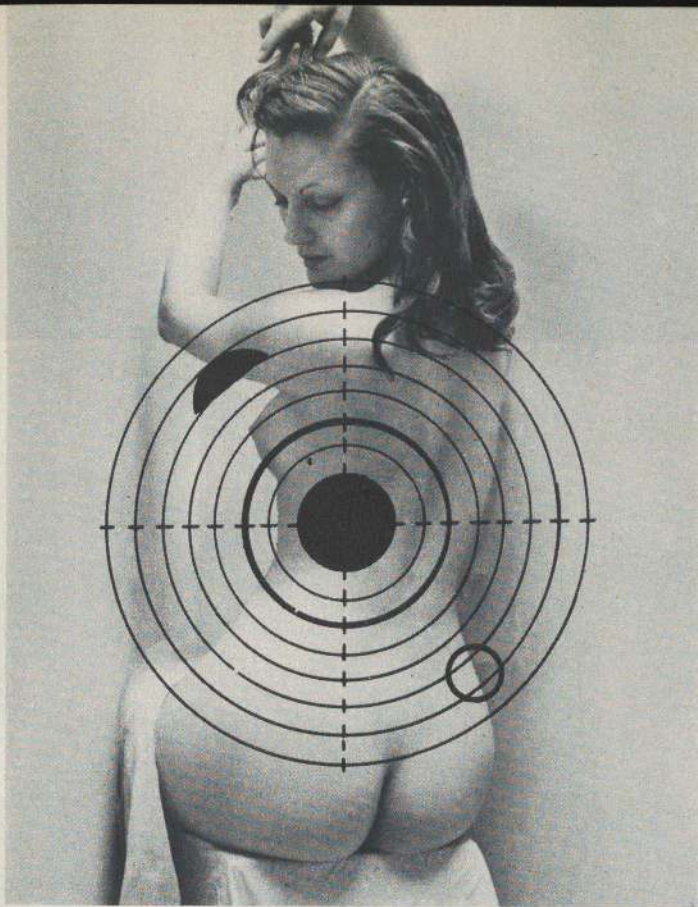




The partially draped nude is traditionally used for an effect of softness, with the draping arranged with the visual design in mind, to create a sense of easy grace and movement. The small drapery in this picture forms an encircling band but not an entirely static one. Rather the folds of the drapery and its sloping position on the body create movement in the traditional manner. Note that the head is tilted at an opposite angle. The arm is thrust down and to the side to form another line of movement. Soft light gently highlights muscular and formal movement within the figure. The picture was made on Super XX film using a Rolleiflex with Zeiss Tessar lens. It was shot in 1/5 sec. at F 4.8. The play of shadows behind creates upward thrusts which assert a vital contrast to the horizontal that dominates the picture.

An upper-right spot was used to beam down the model's left shoulder. Darkening shadows were allowed to settle down the front of the body tapering off into deep shadows on the left. An overhead light was used to create the beam effect around the model.



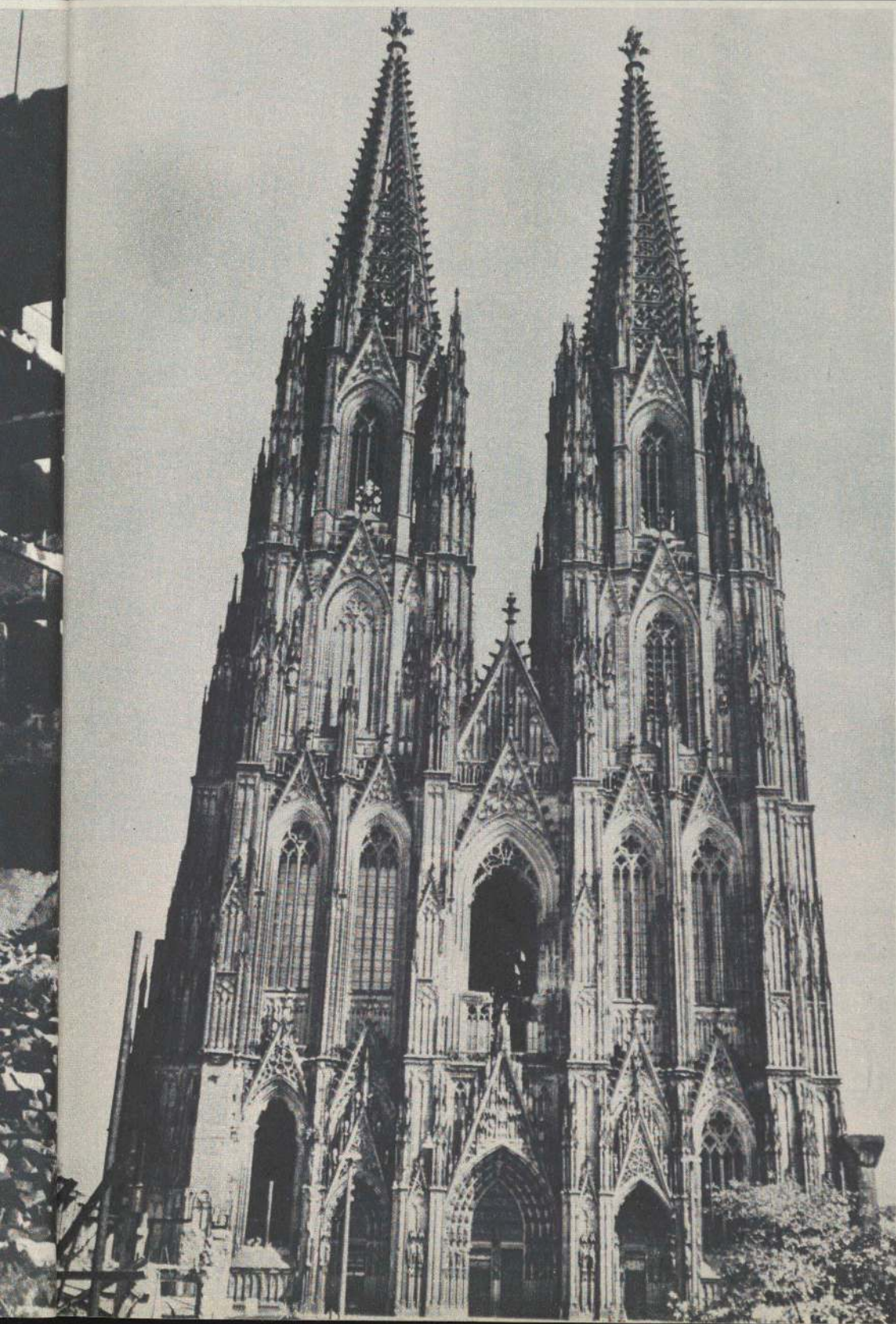


Here the main source of interest is the line pattern which makes an integrated shape based on almost perfect spiral. The starting point is the wrist above the head, the loosened hair continues the line, it then swings over to the shoulder and breast (stopping at the point where a new line is introduced by light contrast), the opposite hip takes up the spiral flow, and it ends with the loose piece of drapery. Like all spirals, this one has two equal and opposite movements. A balancing, though slightly weaker, spiral is traced on a line which begins with the arm in the foreground. The suggestions of drapery and of the subject's dressing her hair are in the traditional manner. Note that here again lighting is sculptural, spiralling around the figure in an interesting play of contrasts. Background is negligible, except as an area on which shadows are thrown to set off the roundness of the figure. This was shot on Super XX film at F 4.8 in 1/5 sec. using a Rolleiflex. Sidelights were used to achieve this curious light design. Deep shadows formed over the face and back with the exception of a highlight on the shoulder. The highlight there extended up the arm and hand. A foreground spot shed light along the buttocks and hip of the model.

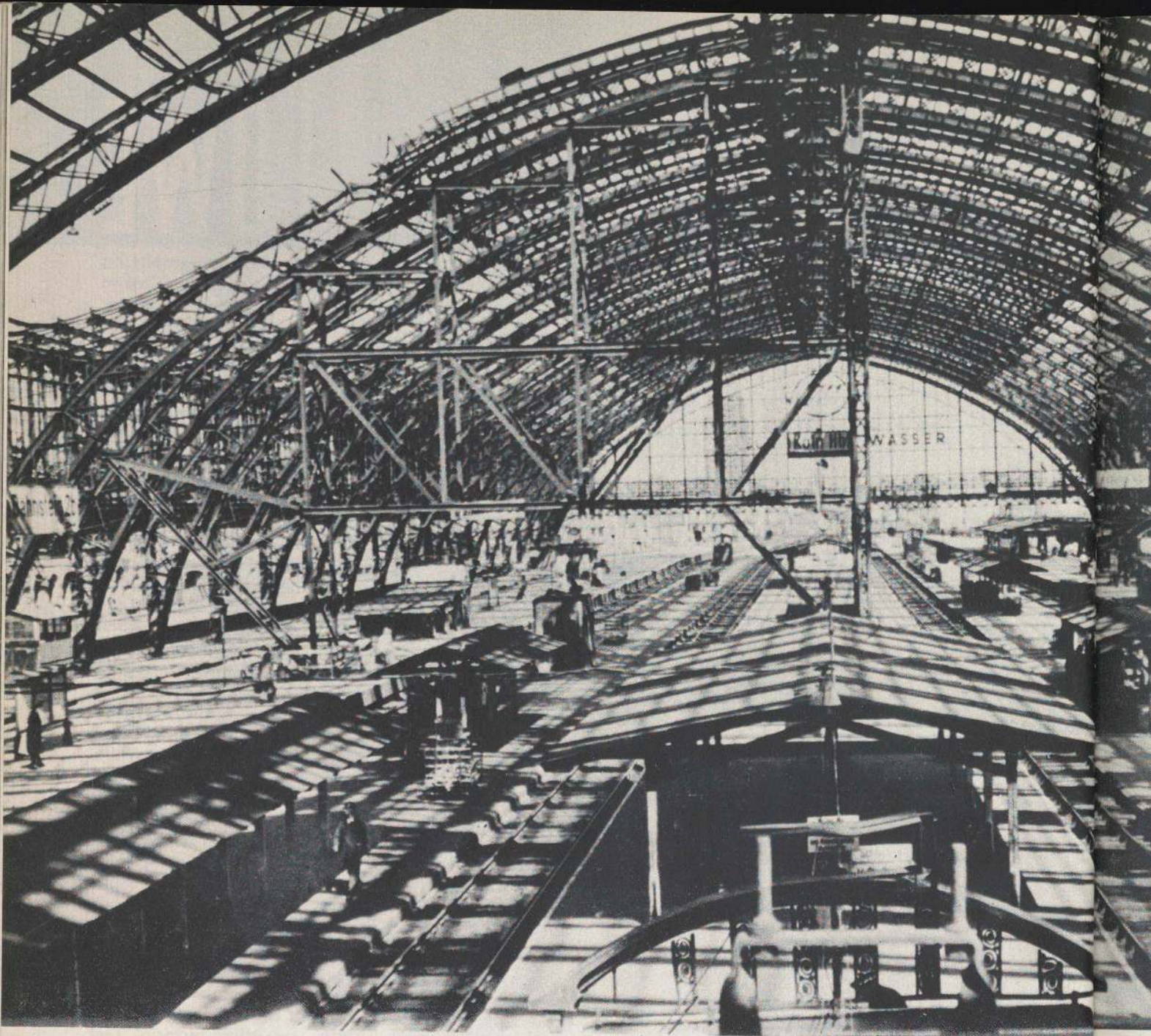
by LOWE

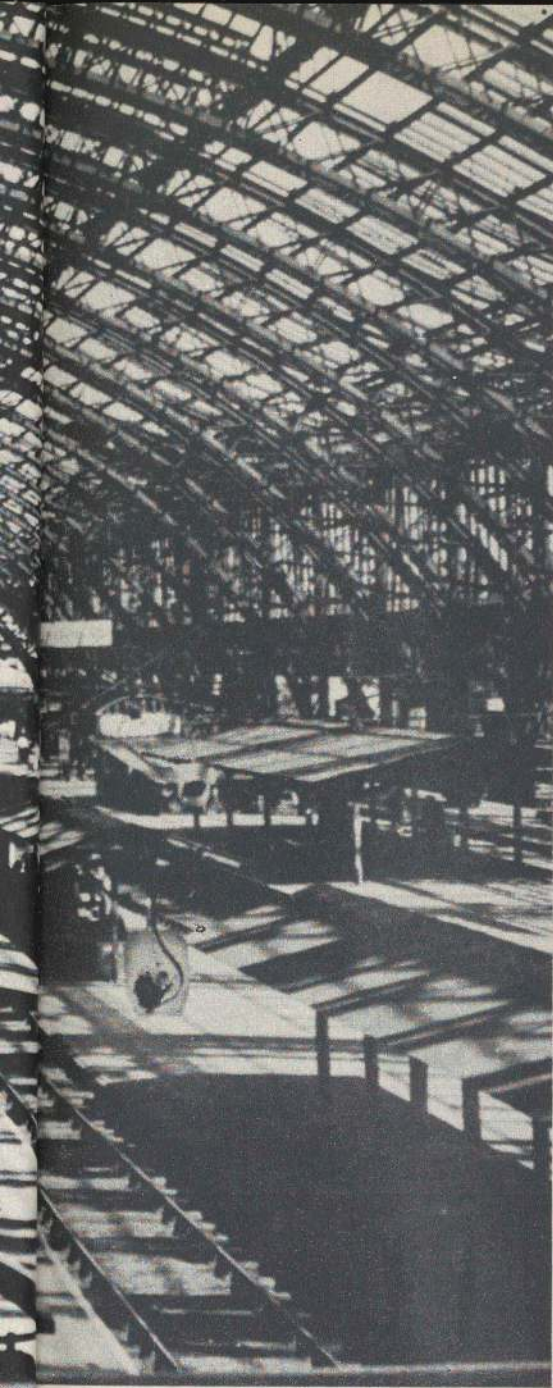


LOWE



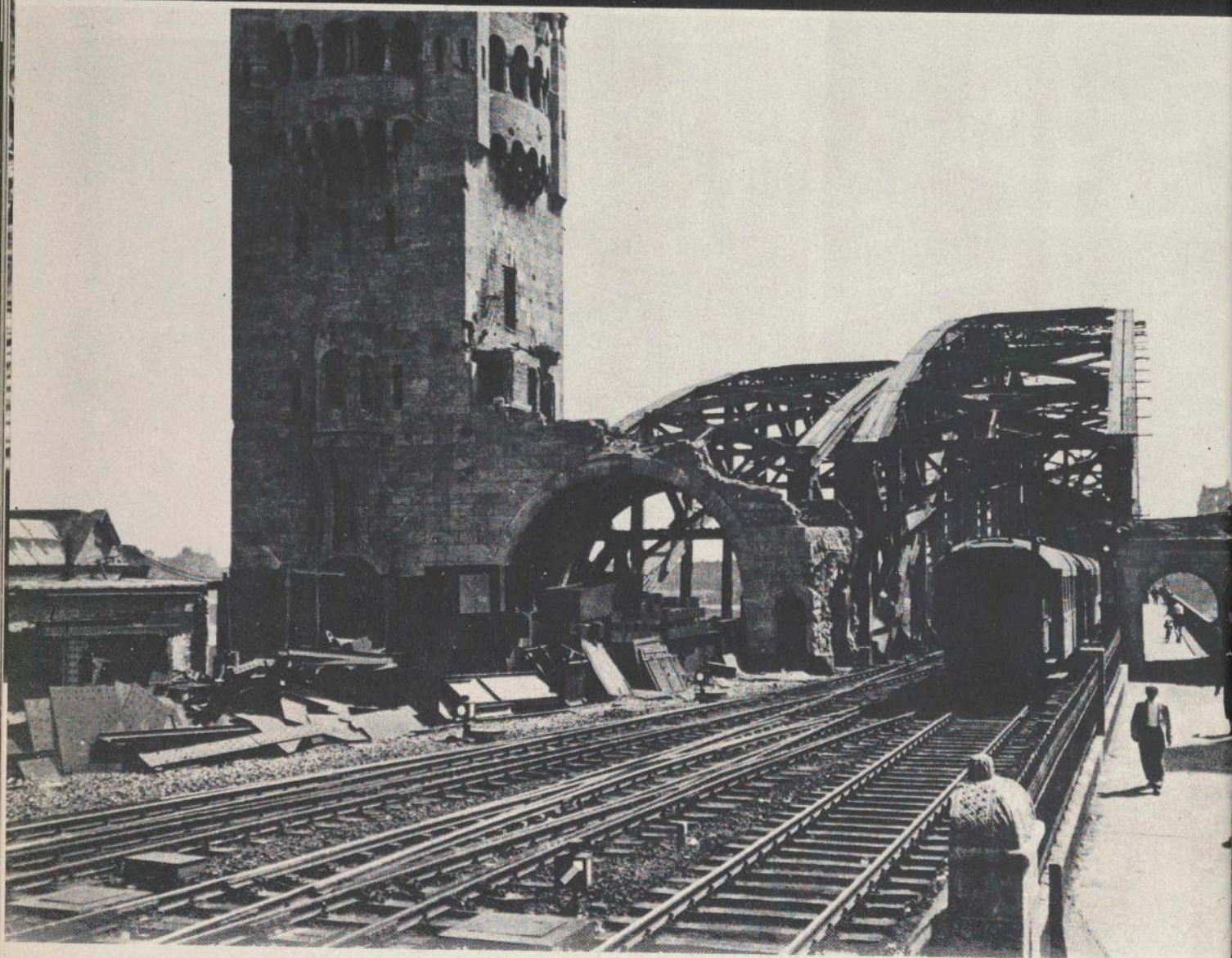
All the photographs on these pages were taken in Cologne, Germany. This is or, more correctly, was the city in which I was born some twenty one years ago. The pictures were made after my return to the war-devastated city in 1945. It was about this time that I took up pictorial journalism. I had earlier in life been planning for a life in journalism, but the Nazis quashed that hope by preventing the completion of my schooling. With the end of the war and my return to Cologne, I began a study of photography with Walter Dick. These pictures were shot while I served this apprenticeship. Cologne in 1945 was a heap of ruin and rubble. Debris was piled on every street. A more depressing sight could not have presented itself to the photographer's camera. But photography is not the documentation of beauty alone. It is also concerned with recording pictorial fact and whatever esthetic elements may arise from this process are in the photographer's vision and not in his subject. I started shooting the scene. When I was through, I had over 100 pictures taken over a period of three years of which only a few are reproduced here. All were taken with a Contax

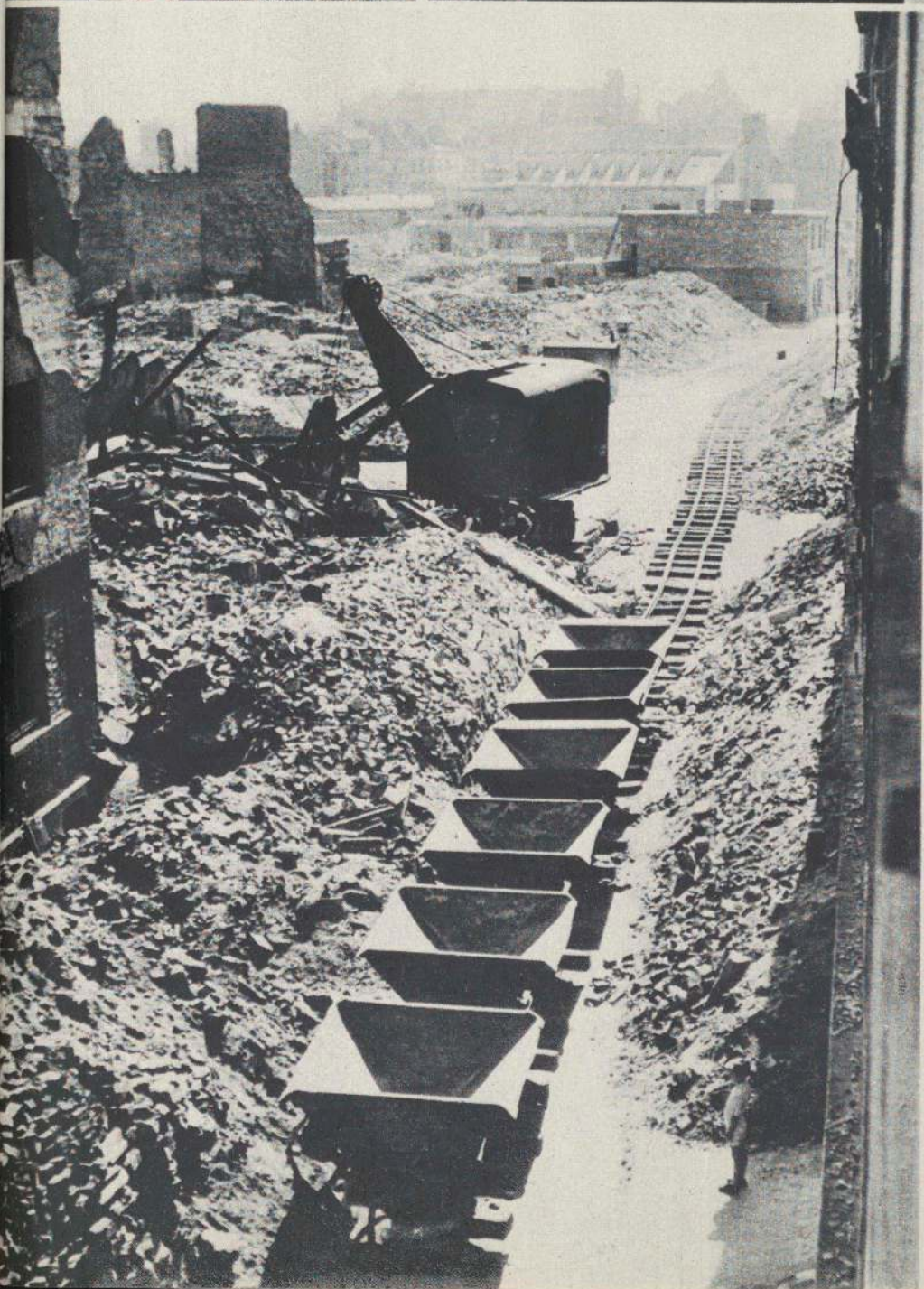
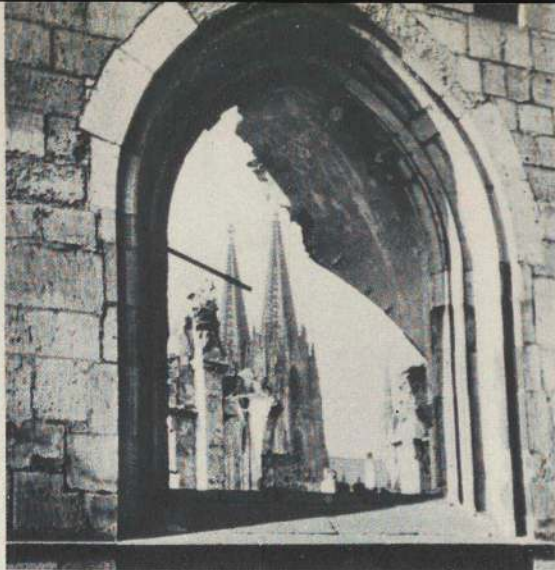
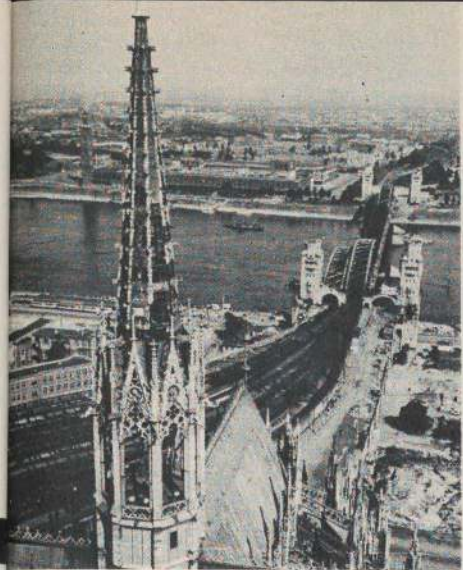




MY 35MM CAMERA

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is interesting to note in Jacque Lowe's photographs, his use of backgrounds. Although each picture has a main subject, the supplementary details of the picture are never insignificant. It is as if the camera's eye was not focused solely on one object, but probing into every corner of a scene. Picture details which do not act entirely as a prop for the central theme, but are in themselves interesting contribute much towards the effectiveness of a many outdoor photographs.





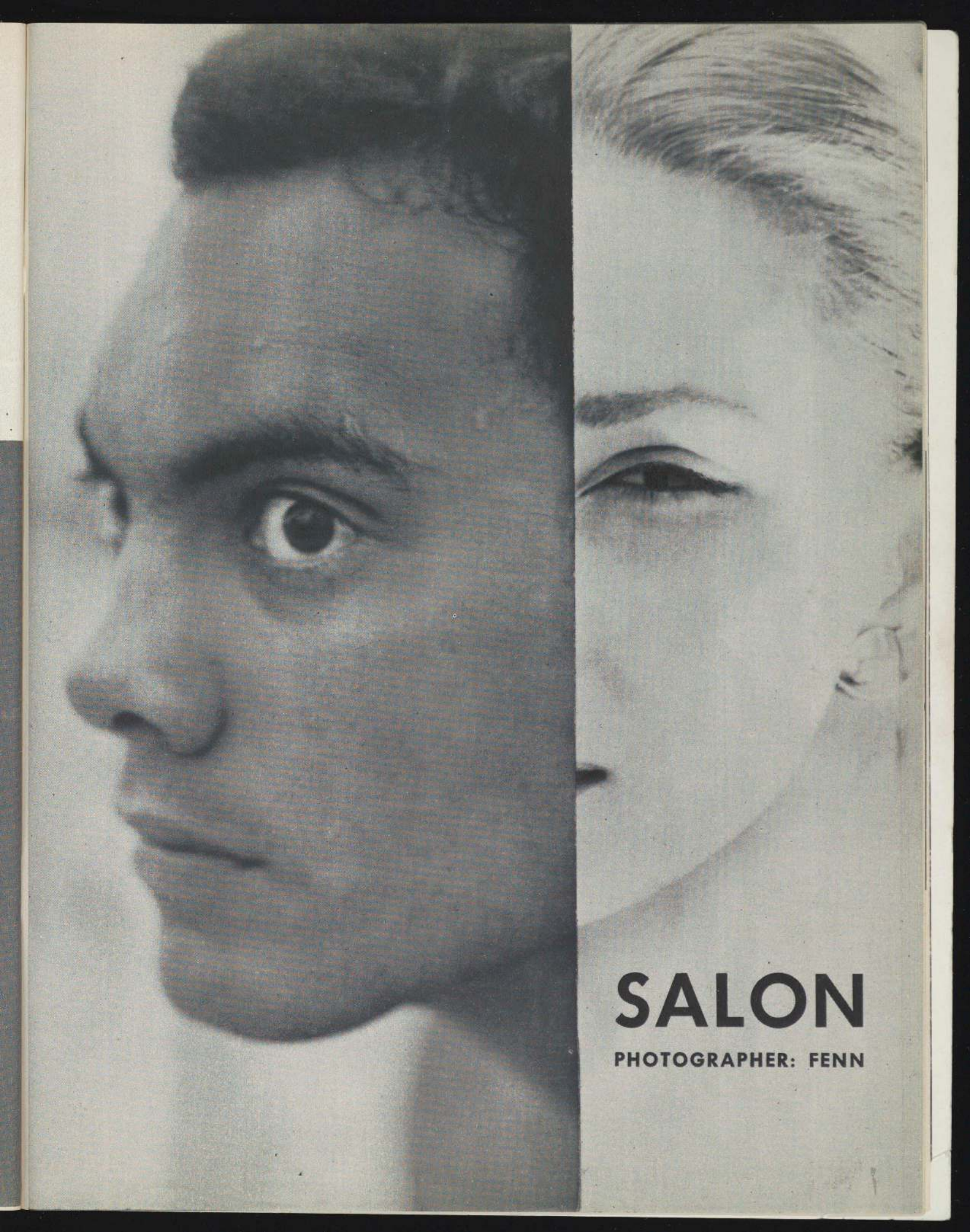
No. 2 utilizing 35 mm Biogon, 50mm Tessar and 85mm Sonar. The additional equipment consisted of red, green and yellow filters, a cable release, a tripod and Afga Superpan film. Reproduced here is a picture of the station, an architectural masterwork, a frame with no glass, a composition of light and shadow, a pattern showing only destruction. I wanted to shoot a representative scene that would depict the unfortunate situation of the stations at that time. I waited for the sun to rise to its height, until the effect was just right, then I snapped it with my 35mm Biogon and wide angle lens. Then, also there is the ruined cathedral standing alone amidst the rubble. That photo was also shot with a wide angle lens at a 25th of a sec. at f16. There are the little rail cars running through main streets clearing off the remainders of war. I came back to this point time and time again and finally standing on the lofty ruins, I succeeded in capturing all the stark desperation of the moment. I caught the shot by combining an 85mm Sonar Telelense with a red filter. Here is a sampling of a crippled city, a victim of the war that deteriorated Europe. Here is Cologne, 1945.

PUBLISHERS STATEMENT

The basic idea of PHOTO ARTS was not to further crowd the long display racks of your local news stand. The basic idea was to create a magazine that would treat photography as an art form. Such a project takes on prodigious considerations once begun. The main problem was to determine the furthest possible projection esthetically without seeing red dollarwise or without failing to attain in time an adequate public reception of such work as PHOTO ARTS represents. By introducing to the public new art forms, we are entertaining the vague and total conflict of what nom de plume school versus what no-name movement is the future direction of photography as an art form. But are there specific movements in photography today? Can you categorize any photographer-artist at any given level? We believe those who attempt to sit in judgment today are premature. The metamorphosis of photography into an art form needs nutrition and sequel development before the lay critic can mesh and distinguish the tree pattern of photographic heritage. The presentation of the abstract photography show exhibited recently at the Museum

of Modern Art is the first serious attempt to convey to the public the experimental techniques of individual artists whose work will become the spearheads of new directions in photography. If more museums and galleries would follow suit and exhibit such work, this activity would in turn foster honest study which might in time result in honest appreciation. Let me make one point clear. We do not preach abstraction nor do we say prayers every night for the salonist. The policy of PHOTO ARTS is to present objectively individuals, groups, and group movements as they appear on the horizon of American photography. Furthermore, we do not intend to slight the accepted and conventional realms of photography and assume an over-all character of futurism. It is the photographer with his own personal vision that we are interested in, no matter what school he represents. There is a genuine need for such a magazine. A magazine which can truly claim to serve its art. A magazine that young photographers can identify themselves with. A magazine that will map the internal progression of photography as an art form.

John Hayward



SALON

PHOTOGRAPHER: FENN



UMBRELLAS IN THE SUN by LOWE CONTAX NO. 2 2.8 WIDE ANGLE BIOGON 1/25 at F11 AGFA SUPER PAN

MIRROR

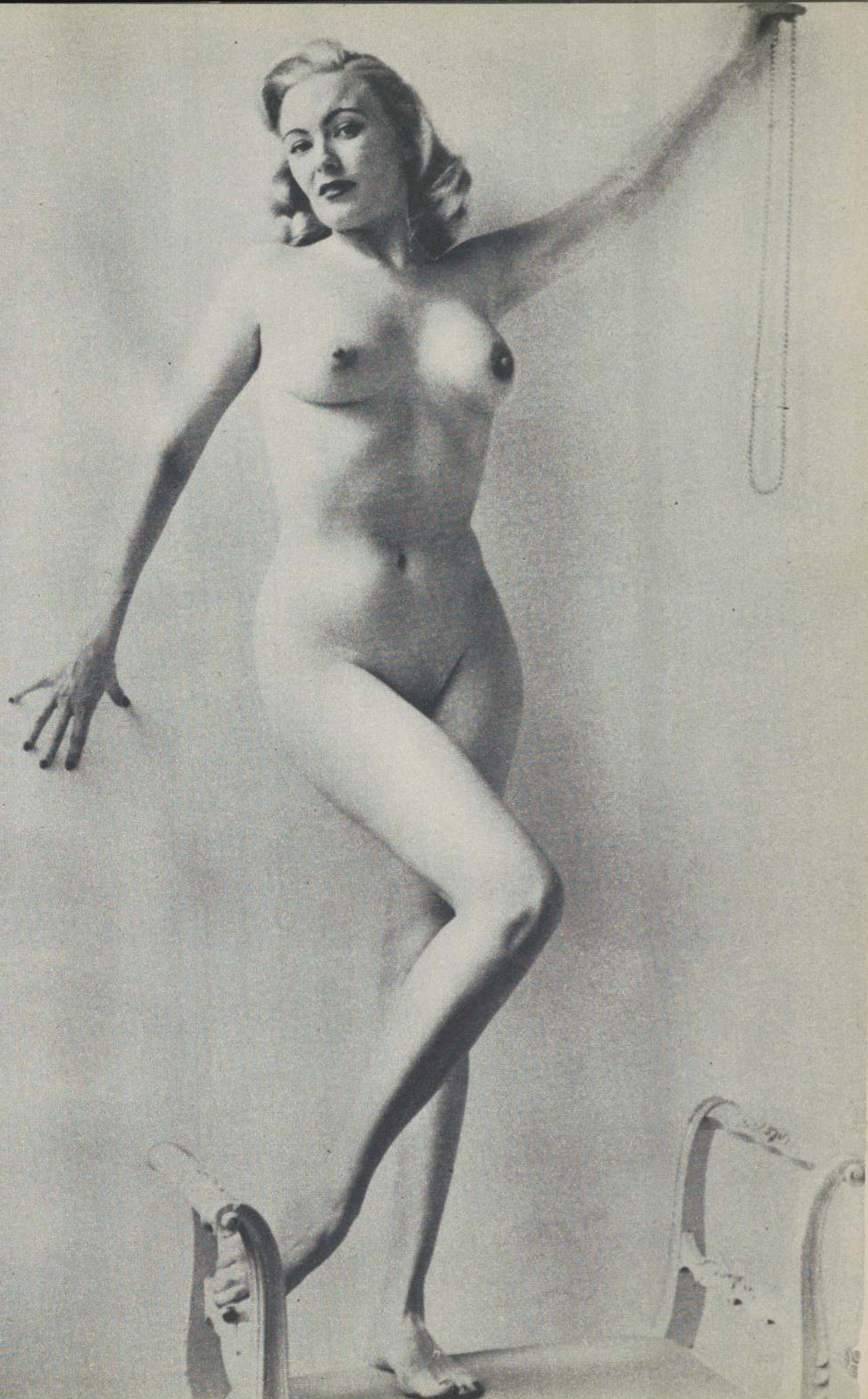


MIRROR by PETER BASCH • ROLLEIFLEX • 3.5 XENAR 1/25 SEC. at F5.6 • SUPER XX



VARIATION by PETER BASCH • CAMERA, ROLLEIFLEX • LENS, ZENAR • 1/10TH AT F 8 • FILM, SUPER XX

THE NECKLACE by BIERWINSKIE • ROLLEIFLEX • ZEISS TESSAR 1/5 SEC. at F4.8 • SUPER XX





NUDE STUDY by BIERWINSKIE • ROLLEIFLEX • ZEISS TESSAR 1/5 SEC. at F.4.8 • SUPER XX

THE FAN by BIERWINSKIE • ROLLEIFLEX • ZEISS TESSAR 1/5 SEC. at F4.8 • SUPER XX

ROBERTO SCHENBERG / MONTY BRONSTEIN • KODAK SAFETY FILM • ZEISS IESSAR 1/3 SEC. @ F4.8 • SUPER XX

THE PAIR by BERENSKIE • ROLLEIFLEX • ZEISS IESSAR 1/5 SEC. at F4.8 • SUPER XX





NUDE ON A CUSHION; (1917-18), GIANNI MATTIOLI, MILAN

MR. AND MRS. FRANCISCO MATARAZZO SOBRINHO



SELF PORTRAIT, (1919),



modigliani

by B .
T H E O P H I L E

The Museum of Modern Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art have recently held exhibitions of the work of Amedeo Modigliani. The retrospective collection confirms Modigliani's already secure reputation as one of the most original and delightful artists to come out of the distinguished group which has worked in Paris in our time. Although Modigliani arrived at maturity as a painter at a time when fauvism and cubism were the current movements—he died in 1920—he himself maintained a masterful draftsmanship akin to the Renaissance painters of Italy. In contrast to the still lifes of the cubists and the imaginary architecture of his fellow-Italian, de Chirico, it was the human face and figure which interested Modigliani. His first influences were the painters of the nineties, clearly reflected in early Beardsleyesque exotic faces. Cezanne's influence

stayed with him longer, as *The Cello Player* indicates. Having served his period of spiritual apprenticeship, Modigliani quickly perfected the manner which we recognize as so distinctively his own. In his portraits his subjects are nearly always shown singly, with an intensity of individual characterization; he repeatedly solved one of modern portraiture's most difficult problems, that is, how to express objective truth in terms of the artist's private compulsion. He preferred rusted colors, elongations of tubular necks and oval heads, his own characteristic dislocations that express so much of varying character and mood. Taken as a whole, the portraits constitute the cast of Modigliani's personal drama and a record of many artistic figures of his era. Probably through encouragement from Brancusi, whom he painted in 1908, Modigli-



RECLINING NUDE, (1919), MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



ELENA PAWLOWSKI, (1917), THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION GALLERY



THE CELLIST, (1909)

DR. P. ALEXANDRE, PARIS

ani became interested in sculpture. For a few years he devoted himself to it exclusively, working always in stone. African Negro work was a major influence on his sculptural style, and this in turn was reflected in the shapes which keep recurring in his paintings. Faces and bodies are modelled in firm, decisive lines, and the typical almond-shaped eye is more the result of a sculptor's than a painter's process of abstraction. At the same time, Modigliani's paintings have a certain delicacy which is not found in his sculpture. For him sculpture was something massive, architectural, whereas painting was expressive and personal.

Though he was only 35 when he died, Modigliani worked with such intensity that he was able to leave behind a remarkably integrated body of work. Most ambitious and probably best known are the nudes, frank and erotic, undisguised by allegory though dignified by conviction of style. These and the portraits give Modigliani his distinctive place among twentieth-century artists. His concern with the reality of the human face and figure as modified by the personal vision of the artist makes his work especially interesting to the serious photographer. Apart from Modigliani's actual painting technique, his work is chiefly impressive for the choice of the moment which is to be captured, the distinctive expression and position of the head or body. The photographer can learn a great deal from this modern master.



BEATRICE HASTINGS, (1915) MR. AND MRS. BRILLOUIN



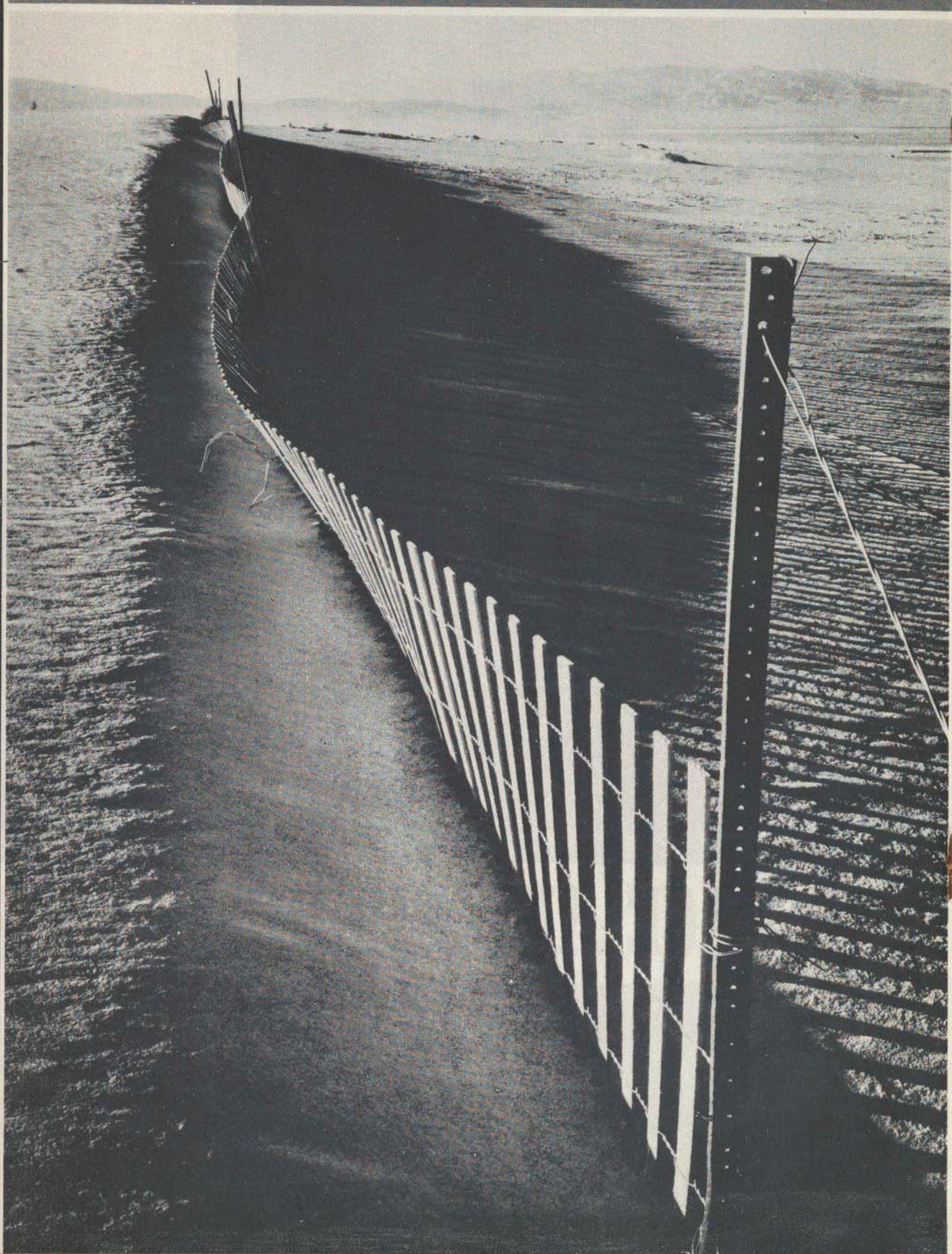
LEOPOLD ZBOROWSKI, (1917), MUSEU DE ARTE, BRAZIL



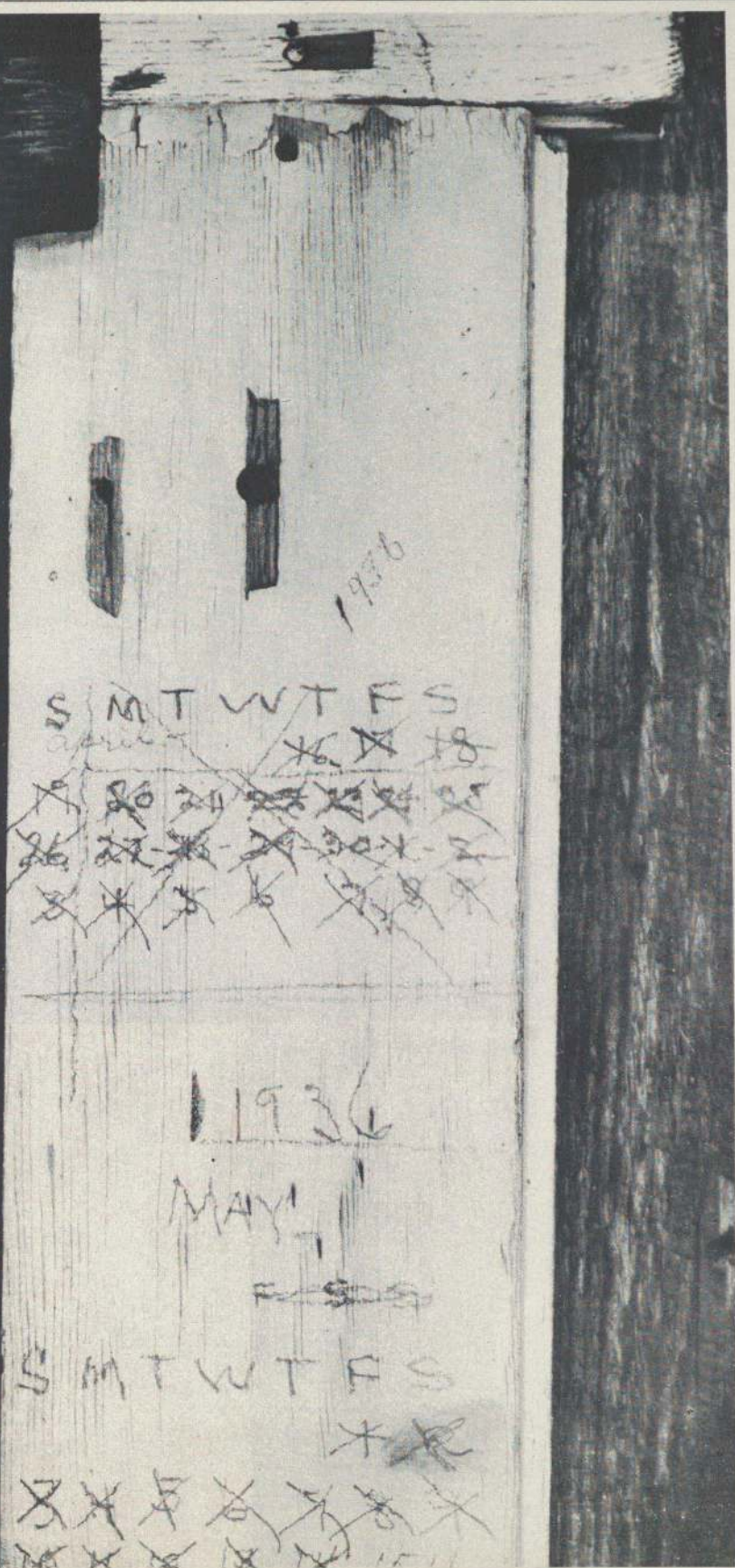
HEAD, PHILA. MUSEUM OF ART

FACE AND FIGURE





CALENDAR ON WALL OF OLD MINING SHACK, TITUS CANYON, DEATH VALLEY

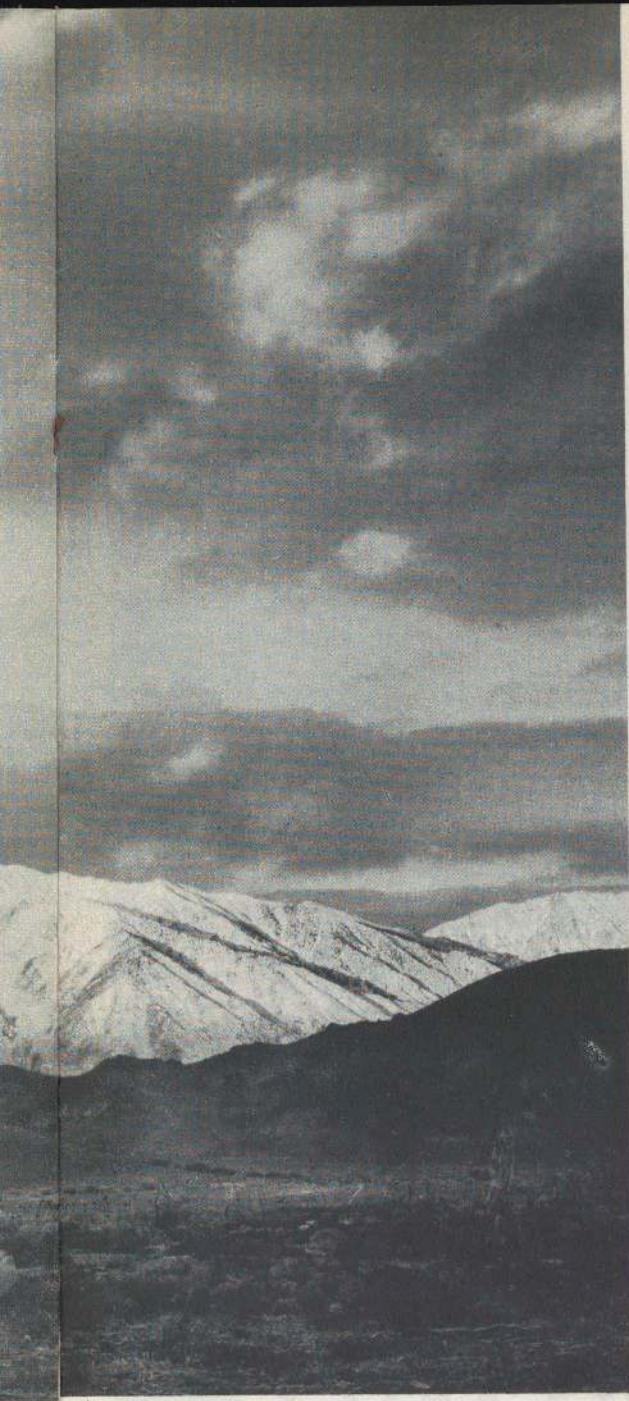


ANSEIL ADAMS

LAND OF LITTLE RAIN

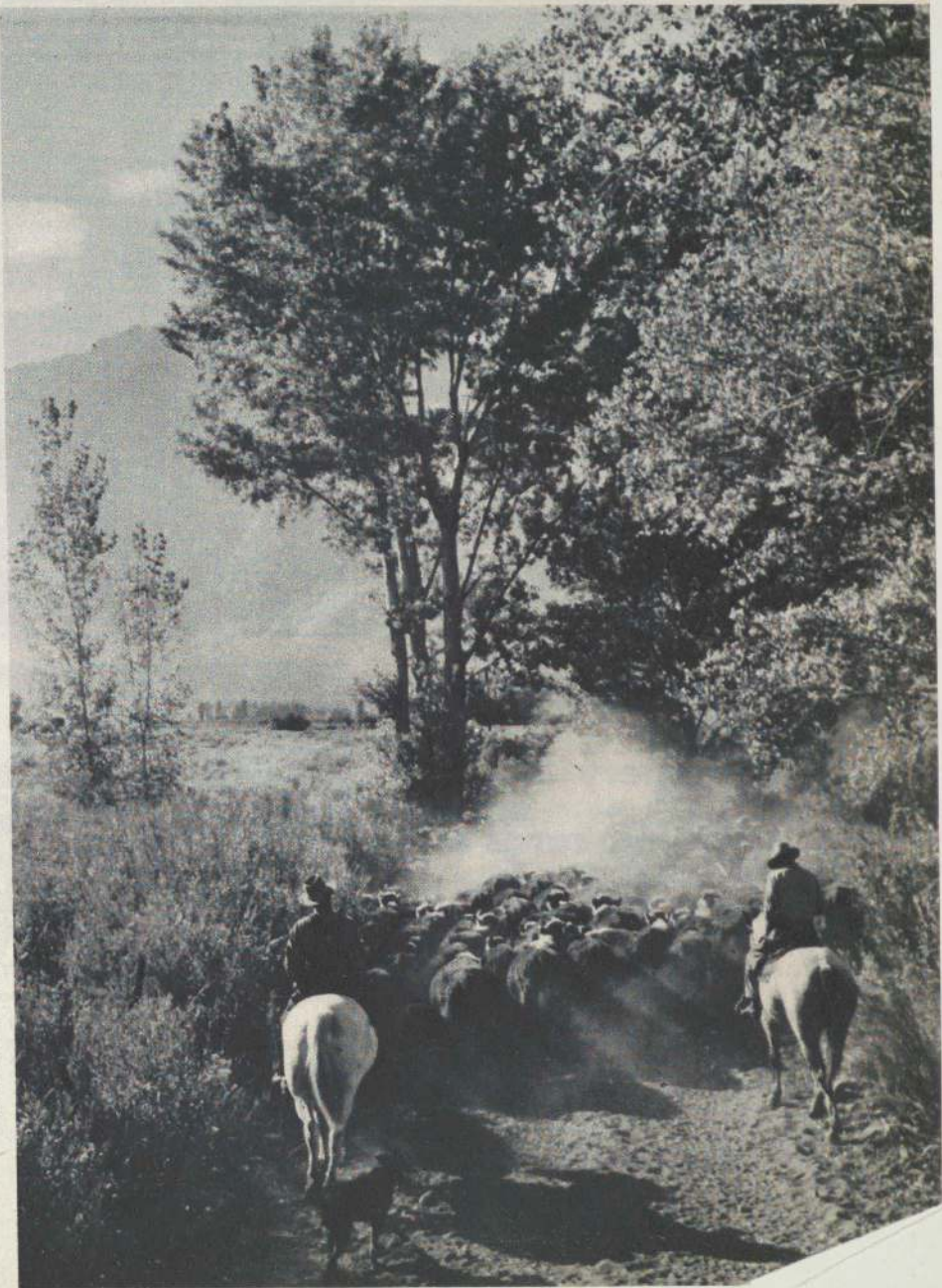


WINTER STORM, MOUNT TOM, SIERRA NEVADA



The Land of Little Rain, text by Mary Austin, photographs by Ansel Adams. Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston. \$6.00. Mary Austin's rich rhythmic prose has long offered itself as a challenge to the photographer. He might well despair of adding anything to such works as *The Land of Little Rain*. Ansel Adams, however, is more than a recorder. A lover of the mountains and deserts of the Southwest, he possesses an eye delicately, yet vigorously, attuned to the lands that captured the fancy of Mary Austin. He has evoked their vast turgid splendor. The Land of Little Rain is the expanse between the high Sierras running southeast from Yosemite to the Mojave Desert, a limitless and fascinating land. It brings forth a strange harvest of plant and animal life: tree yuccas, cacti, coyotes, and lizards. On the land live Amerindians who have retreated from the mainstream of civilization to reside in hard peace. Adams' photographs evoke the splendid desolation of this country and its people. His classical cleanness of execution is unmannered. More than a style, it is his way of seeing this land. To review *The Land of Little Rain* with his camera and Mary Austin's prose is to embrace an area of primordial America.

CATTLE DRIVING, ROUND VALLEY



100
7/53

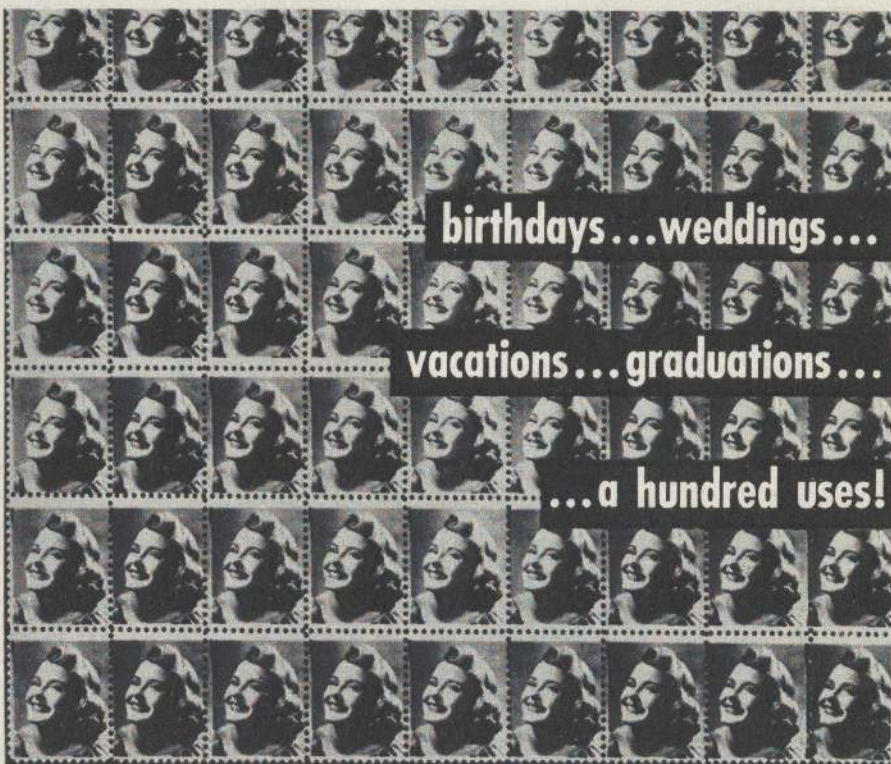
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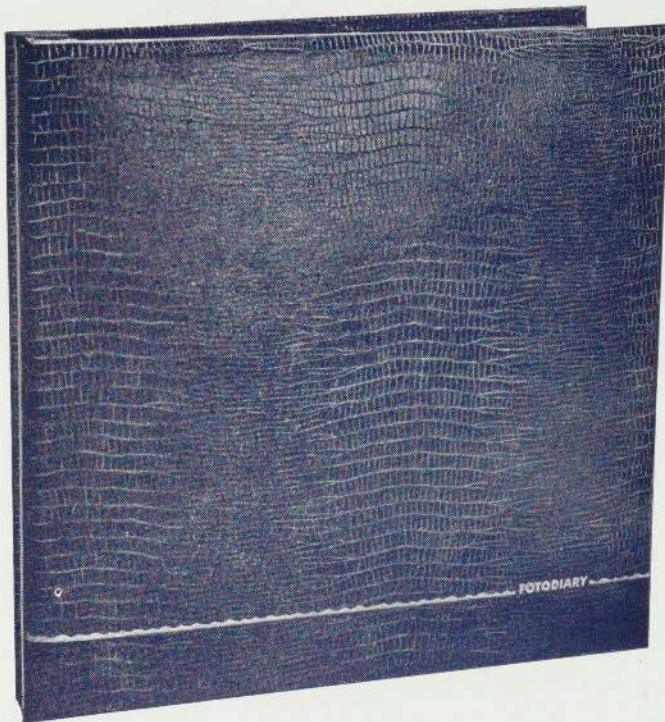
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