

THE MANIPULATED PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES
OF MAN RAY AND MOHOLY-NAGY

"A DECONSTRUCTURAL
APPROACH"

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by

R. Fry

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Supervisor : Professor R Brooks

(i)

To my parents

with deeply felt thanks for the gift of my degree.

To Dwight, Robert and Asley for discussions, friendship, sharing of doughnuts, numerous cups of tea and photographic equipment

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Introduction

In the following essay an emphasis has been placed on manipulated photographic images. Although this implies a whole variety of ways in which these images can be manipulated e.g. in collage, silkscreen etc., the emphasis here is on images that have a fabricated or deliberate manipulation of subject matter to make up the photograph.

The first chapter deals with a brief historical outline. This involves people like Stieglitz and the resulting changes of attitude. This hopefully places Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy in context, where they have been treated as a high point of avante-garde photography during the 1920's. Other aspects covered in this chapter are certain influences of painting on photography and vice-versa.

Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy are both discussed at length in their respective chapters. Their still photography, experiments and manipulations are dealt with in some detail. Here they are seen as actively testing the medium's flexibility, to the point of, in some cases, discarding the camera altogether. The results are 'photograms' and 'Rayographs'. It was, however, through the act of manipulation and experimentation that Moholy-Nagy was able to create 'new relationships', and Man Ray was able to photograph his fantasies. It is here that a tentative hypothesis is put forward; it is that both were starting to work in a 'Deconstructual' mode. A detailed discussion of their work is necessary before a deconstructual approach can be used. This is done briefly at the end of Chapters 2 and 3.

A more detailed account is found in the last chapter, where through a discussion of contemporary photographers' work the role of deconstruction is clearly portrayed. The photographers have been chosen because of their obvious interest in manipulation, and it is through manipulation that the idea of deconstruction manifests. Two terms have been coined to describe this kind of photography: 'Directorial' and 'Fabricated fiction'. These works are distinguishable in that they contain a certain amount of ambiguity;

they appear to describe 'slices of life', but in fact, would not have occurred except for the photographers instigation. The events are seen to have taken place because of the photographic recording of them.

"Here the "authencity" of the original event is not an issue, nor the photographer's fidelity to it, and the viewer would be expected to raise those questions only ironically. Such images use photography's overt verasity against the viewer, exploiting that initial assumption of credibility by working it for events and relationships generated by the photographer's deliberate structuring of what takes place in front of the lens as well as of the resulting image."¹

1. Coleman, A.D. Light Readings p. 251.

CHAPTER I

From Pictorialism

During the first decade of the twentieth century the majority of photographers were endeavouring to produce painterly qualities within their work - the term sometimes used to describe this trend was "Art Photography". The trend can be traced back as far as O.G. Rejlander 1854, who is often considered the 'father' of art photography. However its culmination finds its ideal in the work of H.P. Robinson (fig. 1). It was here that the term "pictorialism" was coined, to describe this particular style. Photographers working in this vein, used various means to obtain the results they desired. In their attempt to simulate painting they would deliberately put their lenses out of focus, or smear a piece of glass in front of the lens with grease to achieve a "soft-focus" effect. It did not stop here, however: positive printing techniques were also used to gain the desired results.¹

For H.P. Robinson the ideal of photography was imitation of painting. To quote Robinson : " Photography would be better if its elements were not so easily comprehended as to make it almost a frivolous pursuit, and to cause it to be included with amusements and recreations." ² Robinsons' statement can be seen as two-fold : firstly the hand-made positive papers, also known as "fine prints", were more easily manipulated right down to the minutest detail, in terms making the elements less easily defined. Secondly due to the development of the

1. Briefly, the process of positive printing is a method whereby the paper was coated with a mixture of various light-sensitive chemicals e.g. Potassium dichromate, with a gum or gel. Areas exposed to light harden, while unexposed areas wash away leaving the white of the paper, exposed areas remaining.

2. Lyons, N. Photographs or Photography, p. 82.

hand-held camera there emerged the "snap-shooter"¹. This infuriated photographers who wished to remain recognised as being different in approach, and "fine prints" were instantly recognisable from a snapshot printed on commercially produced paper. One could say, from a purist's point of view, the struggle to make elements within the picture "not so easily comprehended", was a move away from the typical characteristics of the medium.

It might be worth mentioning here that photography also had its influence on Impressionist painting. It was not the effect of the 'super-real' but rather in terms of the composition used. Petr Tausk argues that the most significant influences of photography on the Impressionists, was its instantaneous rendering of a scene, blurred vision, birds' eye view and holation. It was also the training of the eye in lightning observation; in order to capture a moment or instantaneous impression, the painter was often forced to work very quickly. The result was that sometimes they painted with broad brush-strokes allowing outlines to become blurred.²

A typical aspect of modern art is while many trends are experiencing a simultaneous boom internationally, others are only just beginning, and some are near the end of their existence. The same thing can be observed in photography; during the time that the pictorial photographers were working, other approaches were also being used by different photographers. The return to image sharpness was the most significant, and tampering manually with the final image was frowned upon. This was to mark one of the most important developments in art in the early part of the twentieth century - it was the maturation of photography in to an independent art form.

1. The emergence of the hand-held camera was in 1888. The term 'snap-shooter' refers to the 'casual' photographer.

2. Tausk, P. Photography in the Twentieth Century, p. 18.

4a



fig. 1.

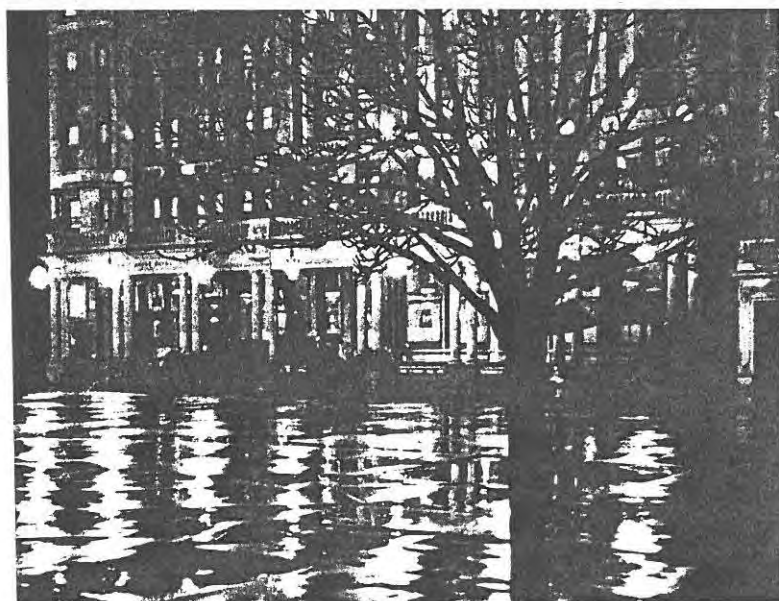


fig. 2

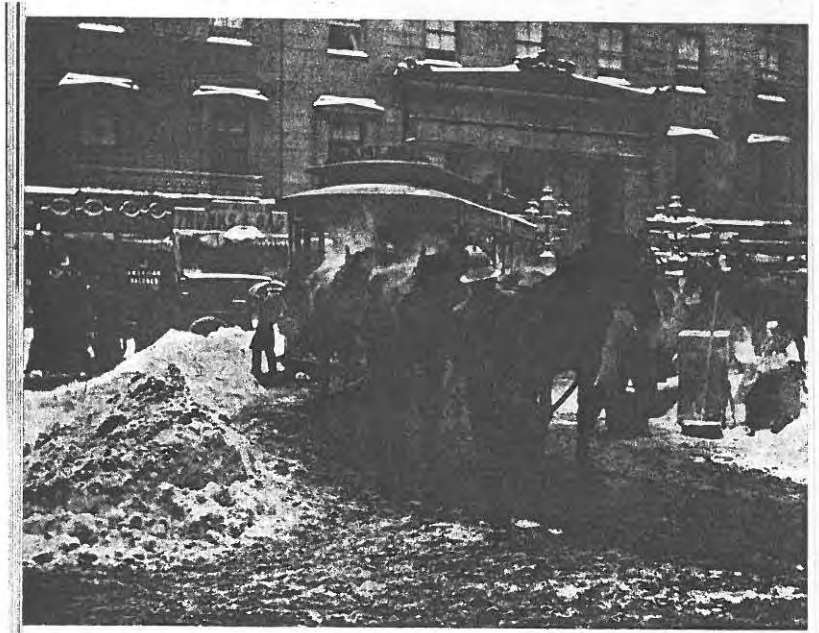


fig 3

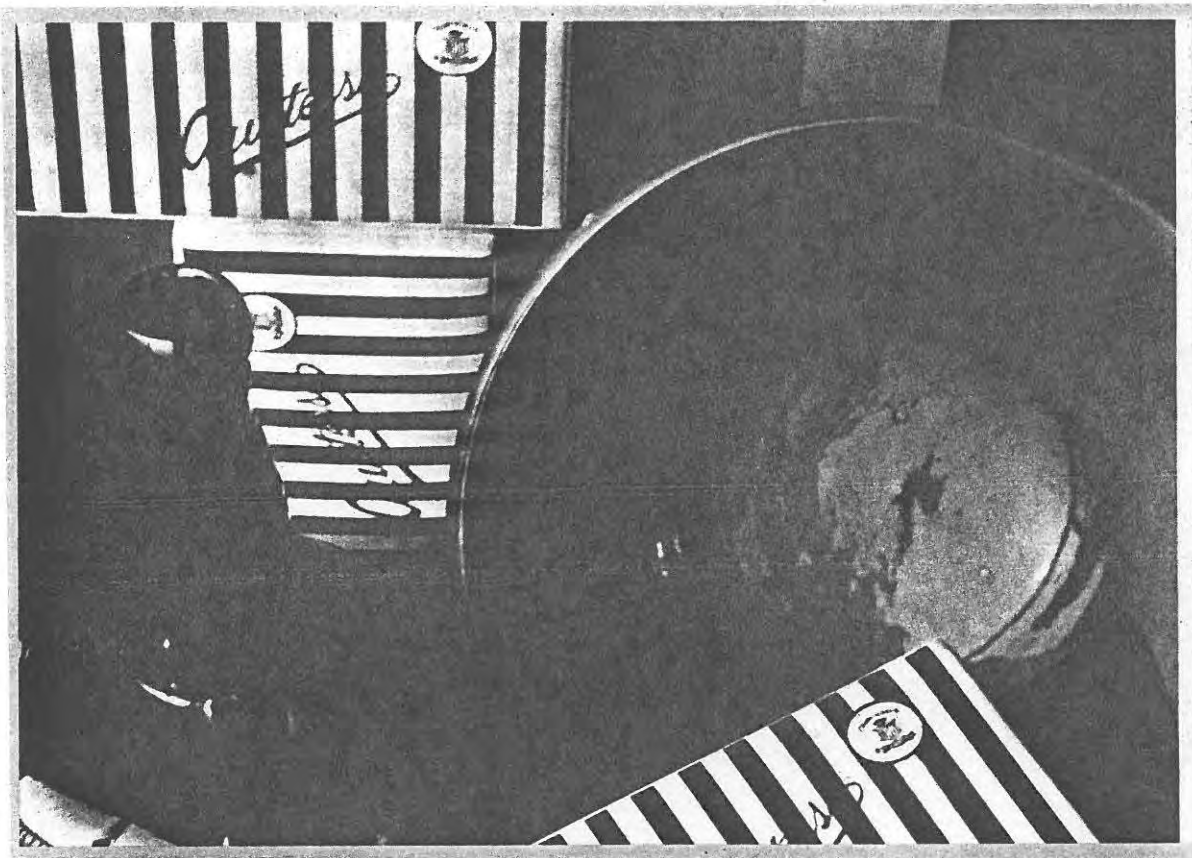


fig 4

This is not to say that there was a complete break from Pictorialism but rather, a move, by some artists to have their work published along with some coherent philosophical backing. Alfred Stieglitz was among those whose work was considered as epoch making.

Stieglitz's attitude is summed up here : "I detest tradition for tradition's sake; the half alive; that which is not real. I feel no hatred of individuals but of customs, traditions; superstitions that go against life, against truth, against the reality of experience, against the spontaneous living out of the sense of wonder - of fresh experience, freshly seen and communicated." ¹ It was after his return to New York that Stieglitz acted as a major catalyst in giving impetus to photography as an independent art form. Born in New York, Stieglitz went to study mechanical engineering in Germany. It was there that he first started taking photographs and realised their potential. On his return to New York he involved himself in the photographic world by working for and editing "American Amateur Photographer".

While back in the United States he bought himself a small camera and deliberately tried to capture the antipictorial appearance of driving rain, snowstorms, and twilight shadows (fig. 2.3.). Although Stieglitz was still influenced by Pictorialism, [initially it appeared that his definition of "Art Photography" was imagery resembling Whistler prints or Genre paintings], he ended up proselytizing for a way of working which was diametrically opposed to what he had been doing. In some of the last issues of "Camera Work" which were devoted to Paul Strand's early photographs which were blunt and harsh, with stormy cubist leanings (fig.4). Prior to this to mark the shift photography was taking, he held a group exhibition which was entitled

1. Lyons, Op. cit. p. 108.

"Photo-Secession". He later founded the "Little Galleries" that became known as "291" (the street address).

The move towards sharp focus had a following of people like Paul Strand, who were persuaded that the inherent unique qualities in the medium should be exploited. Curiously enough they limited themselves to sharp-focus and realism, and seemed to overlook the medium's infinite flexibility. As Coleman points out : "And, as purists tend to do, they made of these qualities not merely stylistic choices but moral imperatives".¹ This process eventually became known as the "New Objectivity". It started to gain a foothold after the First World War, while pictorialism lost more and more of its appeal.

Pictorialism had generally been in a mode of fabricated fiction and, although sometimes rather silly or banal, some good works were produced. During the last two decades more and more photographers have started using a mode of fabricated fiction again. In his book "Light Readings" Coleman has coined the term 'directorial' to describe this mode of photography. However pictorialism, or rather its gift for fabrication also gave impetus to the avante-garde photography of the twenties, highlighted by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray. The connection made may not be obvious at first glance, but although subject matter has changed, one only has to look at photomontages of people like Herbert Bayer, Moholy-Nagy or John Heartfield to see fabrication of reality taken a lot further (fig. 5.6). However I do not exclude cameraless photography i.e. 'photograms' or 'Rayographs' which will form a topic for discussion in the following chapter.

1. Coleman, A.D. opcit. p. 248.



fig. 5

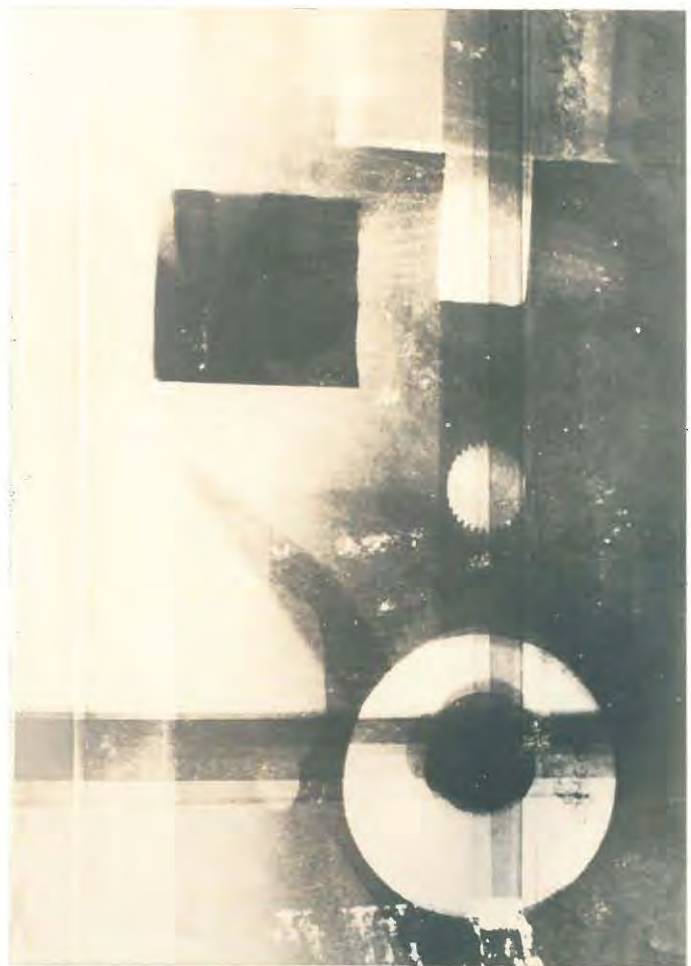
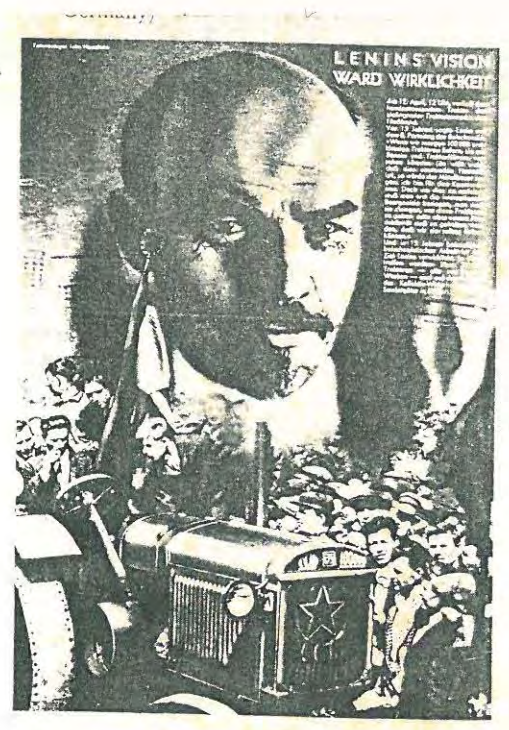


fig. 7



fig. 8



fig. 9

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy 1895-1946

The New Vision

"The enemy of photography is convention, the fixed rules of 'how to do'. The salvation of photography comes from the experiment. The experimenter has no preconceived idea about photography ... He dares to call 'photography' all the results which can be achieved by photographic means with a camera or without."¹

This expanded vision of Moholy-Nagy's has far reaching effects. It goes beyond the sphere of 'pictorialism' or 'New Objectivity', where the interest became a debate over print quality and the types of paper that should be used. With Moholy-Nagy and after him 'creative' photography comes into being. He is generally given credit for two decisive innovations - the first is : the concept of the New Vision i.e. an education for visual experiences of a new kind with the aid of perspectives and optical angles made possible by camera. The second is in the photogram, an image resulting on photographic paper without the aid of a camera. Tones being built up by exposure to light, that tend to become abstract and pictorial in composition.

Moholy-Nagy was born in Southern Hungary. At an early age his family emigrated to U.S.A. In 1913 he was accepted as a student of law at the University of Budapest. During his service in the War in 1914 he was wounded and suffered concussion, it was during this time that he produced his first crayon drawings and watercolours. After the War he resumed his law studies and his interests became political. However in 1920 he moved to Berlin where he contacted 'Der Sturm' and the Dadaists, Schwitters, Hoch and Hausmann. The following year together with R Hausmann, H Arp and I Puni he published "Manifesto on Elemental Art." The manifesto claimed their bold love for invention

1. Witken, L.D. and London, B. The Photographers Collectors Guide, p. 195

and spoke about art being a product of all the forces of an epoch combined. Hence they wished to produce an art which could only originate from them, "which did not exist before us and will not exist after us."¹ Art, they claimed was 'Elemental' because it did not philosophise, "because it builds up products from elements of its own."² In short, they demanded an art which was reactionary.

During 1922 shortly after the publication of the manifesto, Moholy-Nagy began systematic work in photography - his first experiments were with what he called 'photograms.'³ Photography done with a camera appeared much later, around 1925 and disappeared again from his work around the mid 1930's.

For Moholy-Nagy the photogram held the key to photography. He felt that one should understand the actions of light, and its ability to build up forms and volumes with shadow. The basic understanding of this phenomenon occurred in mastering the photogram, which allows an interplay of light and shadow to be captured on paper without the aid of any mechanical apparatus. He also hoped to open up a new set of perspectives unique to the medium by breaking down the 'Renaissance' perspective naturally inherent in photography. As Coleman puts it: "Photography institutionalises 'Renaissance' perspective, relying scientifically and mechanistically on that acquired way of perceiving ..."⁴ The photogram proved for Moholy-Nagy a successful means of doing so. Figures 7, 8, 9 show this flattening effect of layers of super-imposition. His need to break down perspectives in photography arises from his concern, as he puts it in his essay on the 'New Vision' for being too influenced by the aesthetic - philosophic concepts that have governed painting.⁵ His work itself is not

1. Coleman, A.D. Op. cit. p. 248.

2. Photograms are photographic images produced without a camera.

3. Haus, A. Moholy-Nagy, p. 46.

4. Ibid.

5. Lyons, opcit. p. 79.

entirely free from influences as early works show, a compositional influence from the 'Merz' collages of Kurt Schwitters. Although Moholy-Nagy did photo-collages at a later date, the composition and content were different from Schwitters (figs 10, 11).

This occurs when objects are placed on an unexposed sheet of sensitised paper, and then exposed to light. Vast tonal ranges can be built up in this manner.

These early photograms of his dematerialise strips of fabric or paper, into a play of light, arranged very much in a Constructivist manner. The flat character of these early works soon changes at approximately the time he becomes employed at the Bauhaus. His composition changes from a play of lines that run off the edge of the picture, to what could be termed his typical or mature photogram. The spatial form of the content becomes non-objective in its approach: "It is only now that he aims at achieving in photograms the dematerialised 'purity' of light transitions which create a vertical shading of mass and the sense of floating space. What matters for Moholy is the creation of an abstract spatial impression by means of objectless light forms."¹ (Fig 12).

In the creation of his photograms Moholy-Nagy works from within a black space, out of which objects and light forms gradually materialise. The rich blackness is suggestive of a stage on which the characters become exposed with a spot-light. The 'elemental' quality is quite strong here; the darkness becomes activated by light which momentarily reveals secrets to us. In this way it anticipates the Neo-Realism of Bacon during the 1950's. Although Bacon borrowed openly from Muybridge's photographs of people and animals in motion, his figures emerge from that same blackness. The space has (one could say) become actualised and areas have become manifest through an interplay of shadows. Moholy-Nagy himself stated "... it is less of a question of form than one of quantity, direction and positional relationships of particular manifestations of light". He

1. Haus, Op. cit. p. 16.

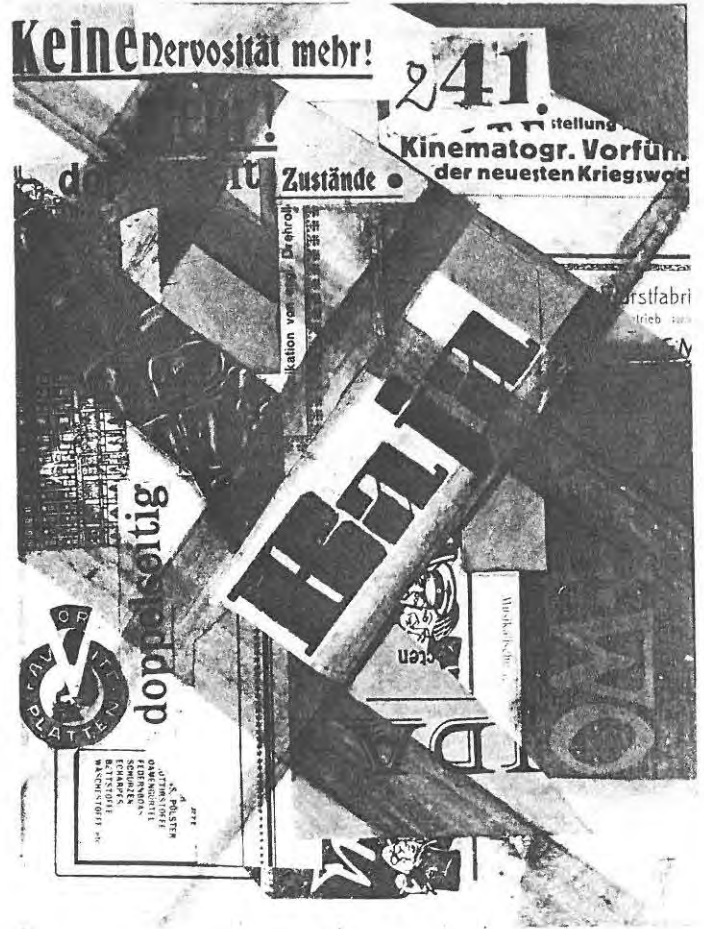


fig. 10

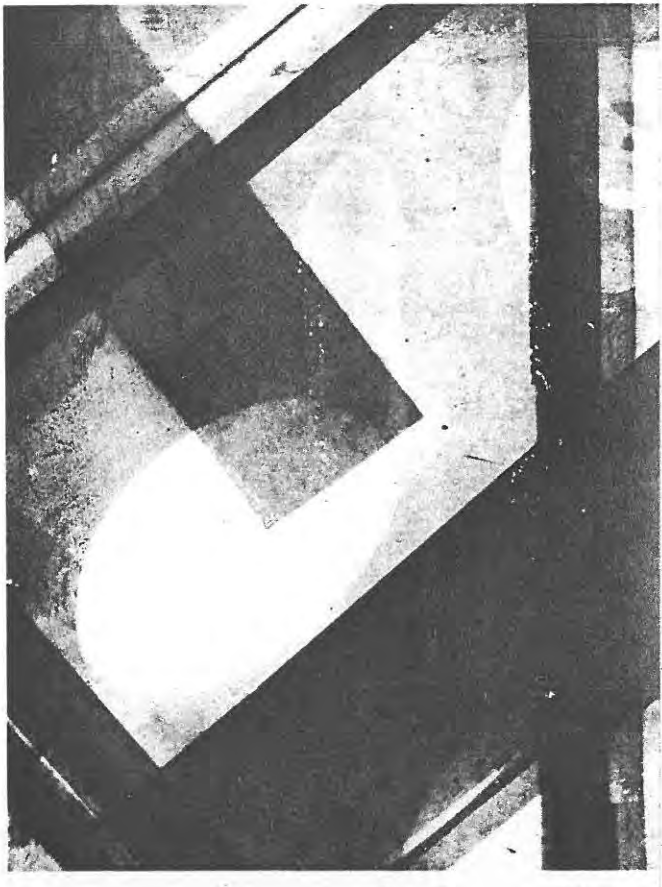


fig. 11

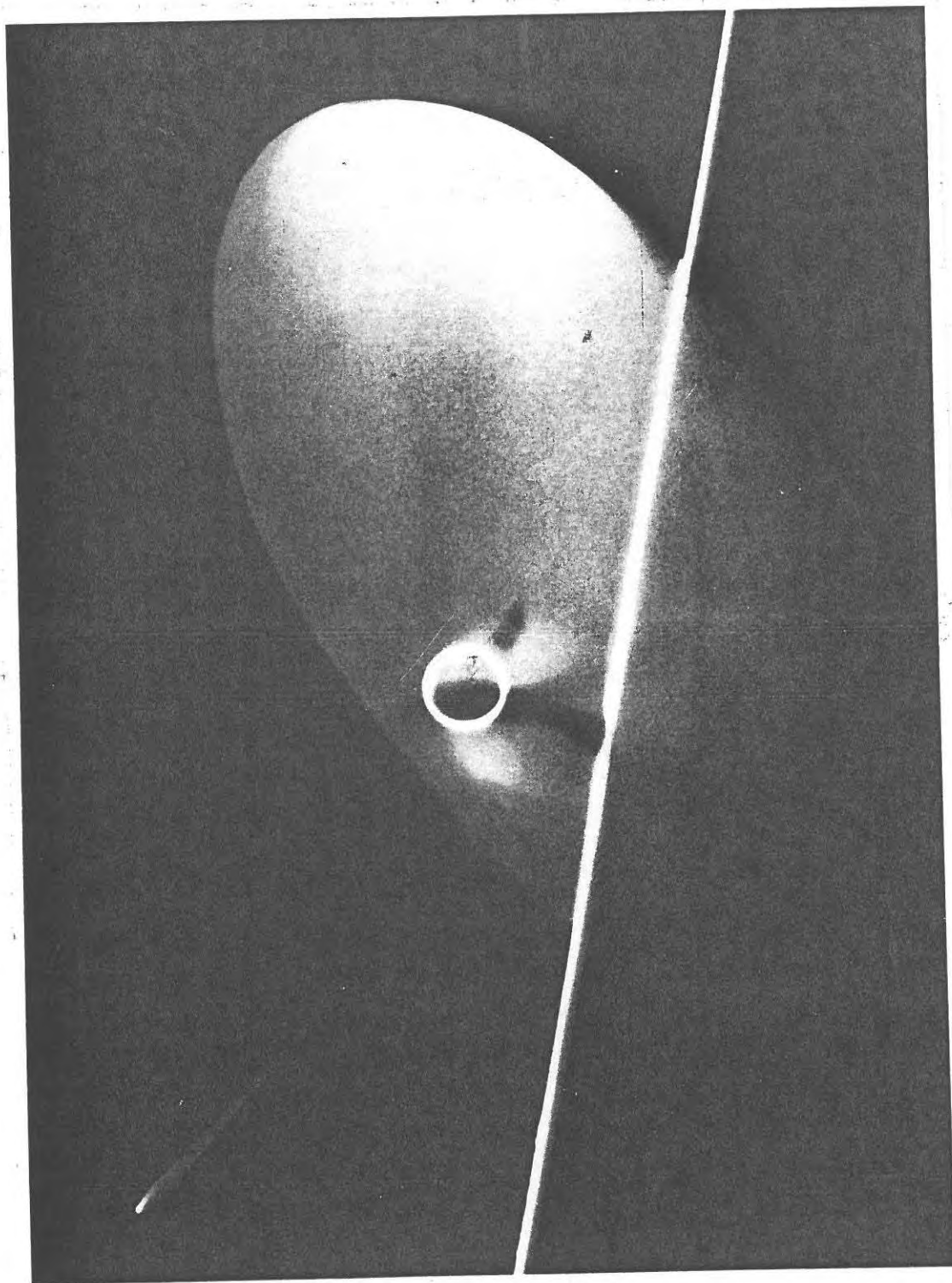


fig. 12

continues : "The light sensitive layer - plates or paper - is a tabula rasa, a blank page on which one may make notes with light just as a painter working on his canvas uses, in a sovereign manner, his tools, brush and pigment." ¹

In the making of his photograms Moholy-Nagy used a moveable light source. It enabled him to build up tones and give a sense of depth through an interplay of shadows. A 'time' sense is displayed in a number of photograms i.e. by superimpositions of light areas that have been added at different stages, resulting, obviously, in a time lapse between each additional (fig. 13). Moholy-Nagy felt that the smallest amount of white could balance a fairly large area of black, these small areas being unexposed because of objects placed on the paper, rather than the other way around. Light for him had become a modulator of space, and gave energy to the composition.

The very concept of photograms is an interesting one; Moholy-Nagy has shown the instability between the subject and the photograph. He does not satisfy our need for a stable centre, or rather a definite knowing about the subject. In almost a zen way Moholy-Nagy tries to capture the essence of an object placed on the paper, by passing light around and through it in hopes, it seems of revealing something hidden. The raw material of the subject matter is being manipulated here: rather than through the lens on to negative, the image has gone directly on to paper. It is this exploration of the familiar and arriving at the unfamiliar that is of interest to the deconstructionalist. This idea however will be explored in more detail later. In these photograms Moholy Nagy is asking us to change the habits of our minds, or preconceived ideas about photography. As Derrida points out, we must learn to use our language and erase it at the same time. In other words, Moholy-Nagy has used recognisable objects, that have, through their familiarity a language of their own, which has been erased in the making of a photogram.

As will be shown, Moholy-Nagy attempts something similar with his 'camera photography'.

1. Haus, opcit. p. 17.

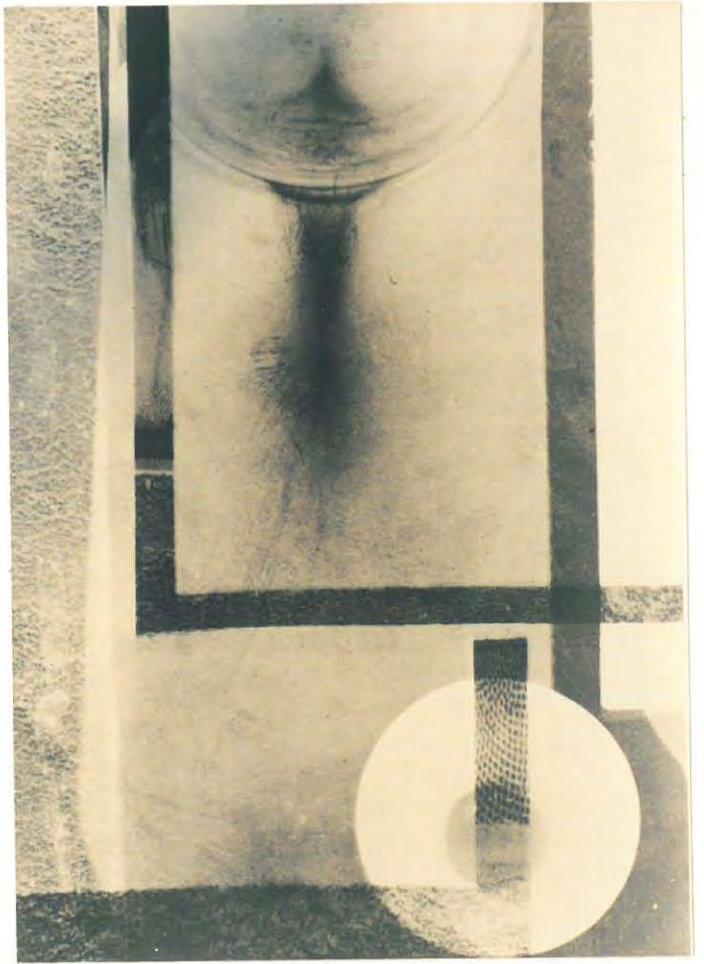


fig 13



fig 14



fig. 15

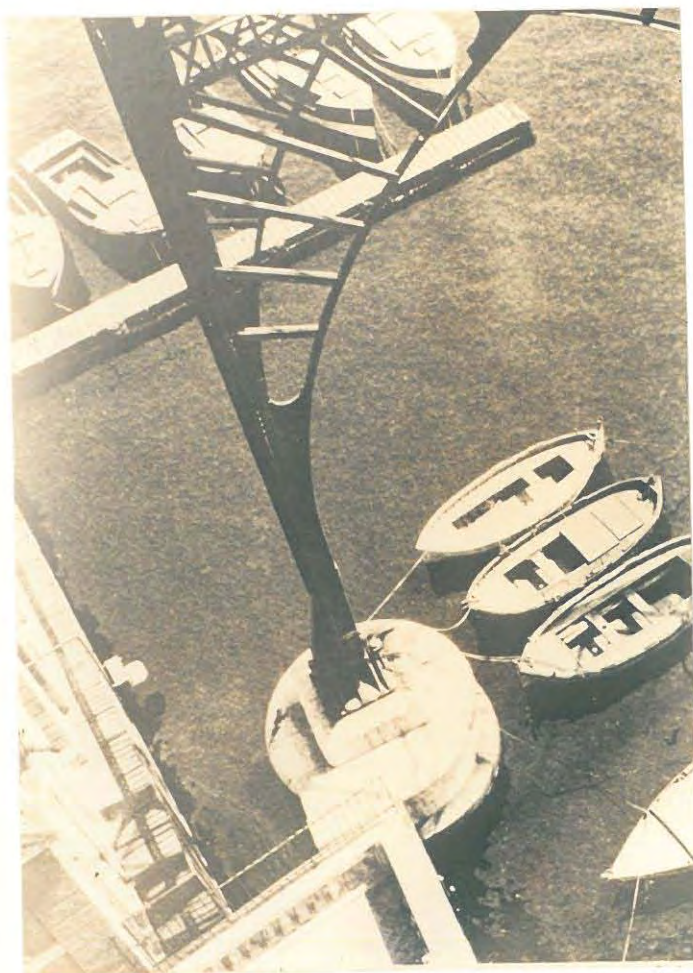


fig 16

This experience of the visible relations of bodies may be checked by movement - by the alteration of one's position and by means of touch. From the point of view of the subject, space can be experienced most directly by movement on a higher level, in the dance. The dance is an elemental means for realization of space - creative impulses. It can articulate space, order it." ¹

His concern with dance arises from his interest in the theatre. Between 1924 and 1925 he occupied himself with Oskar Schlemmer and Favkas Molnar with theatre, dance and ballet. An inconsistency between his theory and work appear here, in that Moholy-Nagy does not use dance or ballet to express movement in his photographs. Instead the movement can be traced by the compositional play of lines (fig. 16).

In these early photographs, Moholy-Nagy leans heavily on constructivism as a source of inspiration. This is clear in his predilection for the basic elements of supermatism, being the circle, the square and the cross. A comparison can be made between a drawing by K. Malevich (fig. 17) with a photograph by Moholy-Nagy of "Lucia Moholy at the Breakfast Table" (fig. 18). The layout of the table is highly intentional, with deliberately crossed knives, and rounded forms, including Lucia's head. Again the view point is unusual and in keeping with his own statements about perspective, mentioned earlier. Although Moholy-Nagy has relied heavily on Supermatist elements the achievement is photographic, in that he has not merely tried to copy a painting or drawing. The mode, as in 'Dessau', one could say, is directorial. The Supermatist elements have been transcended and something new and photographic has been created : "We may say that we see the world with entirely different eyes. Nevertheless the total result to date amounts to little more than a visual encyclopaedic achievement. This is not enough. We wish to produce systematically since it is important for life that we create new relationships."²

1. Ibid. p. 29
2. Moholy-Nagy, opcit. p. 29.

The formation of relationships is important as far as manipulated images go. This is because there is an attempt to create something more than just representation. The objects within a photograph can be placed in such a way that the relationships between them are obvious, ambiguous, or give rise to a third element. This third element can be psychological, and the implications are usually left for the viewer to resolve.

However, in a work 'Asconæ' (fig. 19), apart from the deliberate arrangement of the subject matter, the strong criss-cross shadows suggest the direction in which his later photographs with a camera were to go.

The works from figure 20 - 22 show how the lines of composition have become important. In these later photographs the compositional quality closely represents that of the work of Theo van Doesburg. Van Doesburg used a method of what he called 'classical and counter composition', an illustration of this has been provided in figure 22.

However, Moholy-Nagy extended his idea of manipulation into the photomontage or what he was to call 'photoplastics', so that his work would be distinguishable from that of the Dadaists. Moholy-Nagy did admit that his photoplastics were an outcome of influence from Dadaism, Schwitters, and cubist collages. In these photoplastics Moholy-Nagy attempted to show a way in which imitative photography could be made more creative. He did this by expanding on the Futurists' attempts to express the way in which we experience many events at once. This principal was called 'simultaneity' : "One travels in the tramcar, looks out of the window. Behind, drives a car. Likewise the windows of his car are transparent. All of that in a single movement, because the panes are transparent and everything is happening in the line of sight." ¹

1. Arts Council of Great Britain, L. Moholy-Nagy, p. 50.

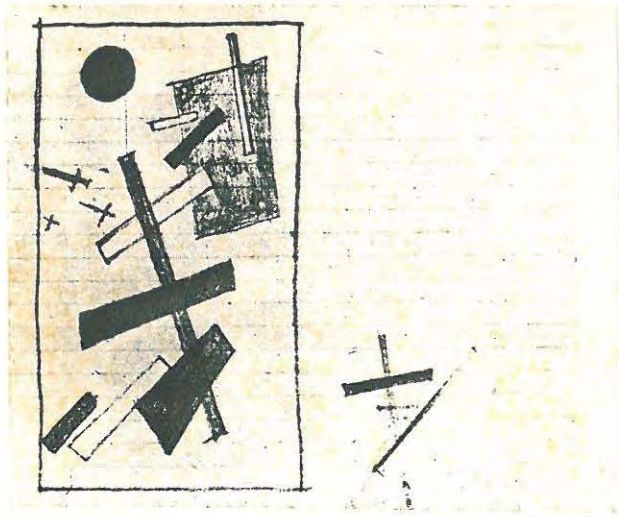


fig 17



fig 18



fig 19



fig 20

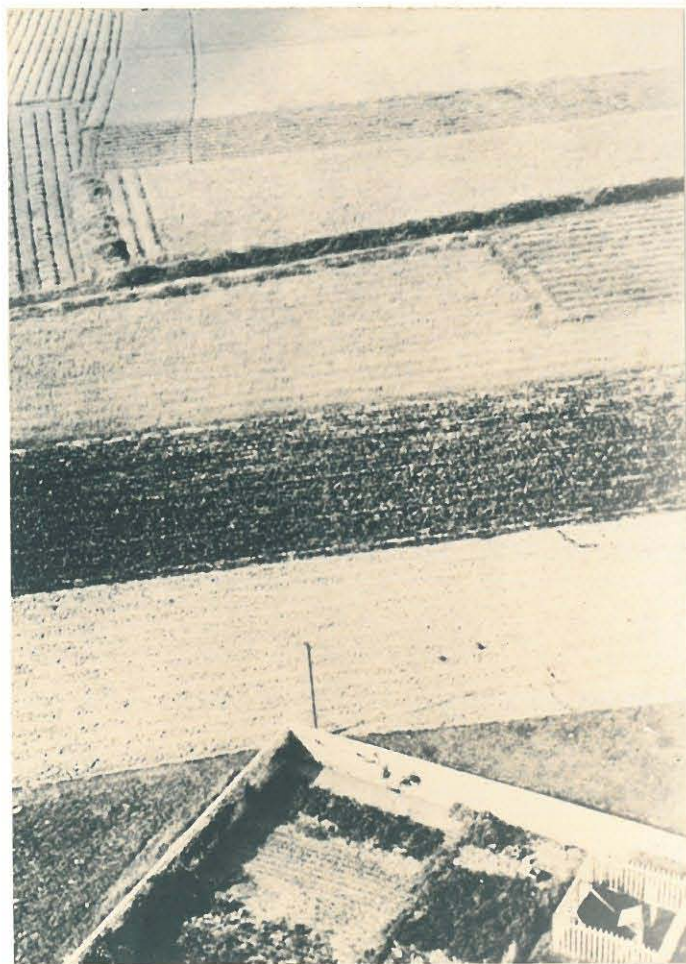


fig 21

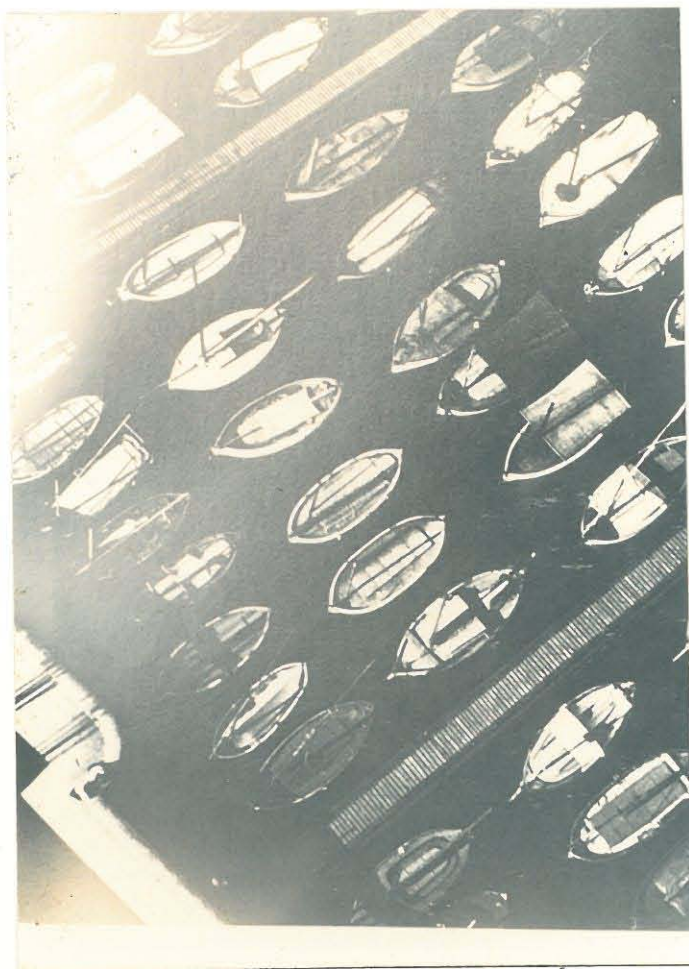


fig 22

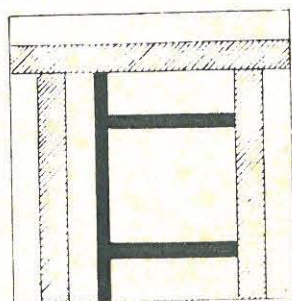


Fig. III.

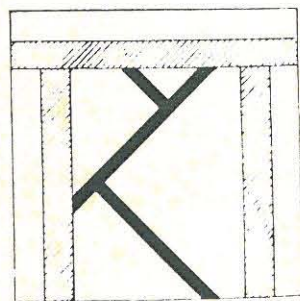


Fig. IV.

fig. 23

In his photoplastics he wanted to demonstrate this kind of experience, arriving at a synthetises of mixed events. These works were sometimes put together in a witty or satirical manner. They were intended to portray some message in an unambiguous way (fig. 23).¹⁾ 'Structure of the world' Moholy-Nagy commented on this work by saying : "The photomontage can be dramatic, lyrical; it can be naturalistic, abstract, etc. Here is a satirical montage, making fun of the fright of the monkey and the quack-clacking super-geese (pelicans) who discovered the simplicity of the world constructed as a leg show."¹

However, the special character of 'reality' in Moholy-Nagy's works lies in his ability to give freedom to the photographic subject. He is not bound by the representational aspect and exercises no restraint, which gives freedom, and does not allow domination of the subject matter.

Moholy-Nagy's need for manipulation seems to arise from a dissatisfaction with what the world has to offer as visual stimulus. It also shows his fascination with technology, and Surrealism, although he never gets caught up with the Surrealists obsession with 'actual' reality. His approach is passive in comparison, arriving at an objective stance. Objective, because he remains distant from his subject matter, and although manipulation occurs, the response is not organic. But nevertheless, Moholy-Nagy has managed to shake off 'purist' vision, where the subject-matter and how clearly it is shown are important, but important through a different kind of objectivity arrived at something subjective.

Moholy-Nagy once mentioned : "The illiterate of the future will be ignorant of the use of the camera and pen alike".² A prophetic

1. Arts Council, opcit. p. 51.

2. Coleman, opcit. p. 88.

statement, and one which lends weight to the idea of Moholy-Nagy working in this manner. It implies that the photograph is a way of writing something or is a means of expression much like a pen. His photographs speak for themselves; one cannot take his works at face value, but rather one sees an underlying need for communication of some kind. This becomes apparent through the contrived quality of some of his work.

New visual angles, a concept of space and intentionally placed figures in an arbitrary fashion shows Moholy-Nagy's commitment to breaking down the preconceived 'language' of photography. With the use of the camera, the subject matter has been made more literal, so new techniques have arisen to deal with this aspect. His concept of space (as discussed earlier) is important to the transcending of pure representation, in that there seems to be a return to something fundamental or a level of 'Being' as Heidegger would term it. More correctly it could be written "~~Being~~": these crossed lines ward off the idea that the word stands by itself, and means something more universal. The father of 'Deconstruction', Derrida, terms this writing 'under erasure'. In an attempt to deconstruct Moholy-Nagy's concept of space, the 'Chandogya Upanishad' comes to mind: "Wherefrom do all these worlds come? They come from space. All beings arise from space, and into space they return: space is indeed their beginning, and space is their final end."¹

These placed figures and the unusual visual angles have become modulators of this space. It has become universal as in "~~Being~~", and it is with this knowledge that one can see just how the representational qualities of the photographs have been transcended. At times the visual elements seem to vibrate in this space with a life of their own.

1. Translated by Mascara, J. The Upanishads, p. 113.

Man Ray 1890-1976

"I do not photograph nature, I photograph my fantasy", said Man Ray. "Rather than give a conventional image of a landscape, I prefer to take my handkerchief, twist it as I wish, and photograph it as I please".¹

Man Ray was flexible, versatile and experimental in both photography and painting. The above quote is in answer to Picabia's statement, which contains an underlying criticism about photography in contrast to painting : "You can photograph a landscape but you can't photograph the shapes I have in my head."² It is apparent that Man Ray thought otherwise. He had a willingness to break rules, with more fervour than Moholy-Nagy, often using accidents in the darkroom to his advantage.

Man Ray was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and later he went to live in New York where he attended a life-drawing class. It was at about this time that he began to visit Alfred Stieglitz's gallery "291", it proved to be fertile ground for him. He became exposed to various contemporary and progressive works by painters and photographers who exhibited there. As noted earlier, Stieglitz's aim was to make photography into a fine art, and wished it to have serious consideration by anyone interested in painting sculpture and all forms of visual experience. Hence he invited a large range of avante-garde painters and sculptors to exhibit, in order to place photography on that level. With a helping hand from the photographer Edward Steichen, works by people such as Brancusi,

1. Schwarz, A. Man Ray, p. 228.

2. Ibid.

Picasso, Picabia, Cezanne, Matisse and Rodin were exhibited in New York for the first time.

However, apart from the other arts, Man Ray found himself particularly attracted to the photographs of Stieglitz, about which he says : "free of anecdote and cheap sentiment. They remained intensely figurative in contrast to the painting and sculpture he exhibited. I could not help thinking that since photography had liberated the modern painter from the drudgery of faithful representation, this field would become the exclusive one of photography, helping it to become an art in its own right."¹ He later reaffirmed and strengthened his opinion about photography. In 1926 he wrote : "After all, photography is not restricted to the mere role of a copyist. It is a marvellous explorer of aspects that our retina will never register."²

Although Man Ray had a common ground of understanding and similar views about photography to Stieglitz, his primary ambition was to become a painter. These early exposures to photography obviously had their effect, and Man Ray was to find himself moving between the two mediums. There is no conflict between the two, each of them serving different aspects of his creativity and requirements for enhancing the end-results. His decision as to whether to paint or to photograph he summed up easily : "I photograph what I do not wish to paint and I paint what I cannot photograph."³

A lively source of inspiration and friendship materialised with his meeting Duchamp in 1915, the two of them finding they had a great deal in common. A friendship developed, which lasted until Duchamp's death. Duchamp,

1. Penrose, R. Man Ray, p. 21
2. Schwart, *opcit.* p. 228.
3. Sontag, S. On Photography, p. 186.

who was considered a rebel, an iconoclast and the founder of the 'Ready-made', gained fame in New York with his painting 'Nude Descending a Staircase'. Shortly after this, he abandoned painting and published a statement in a New York art review entitled : 'A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions by Marcel Duchamp, 'Iconoclast'. In this review his ideas coincided with Man Ray's in that importance was now given to commonplace objects rather than to aesthetic interpretations. This was the very area in which Man Ray was to gain a precedent and give expression to his wit. He began to find new meanings in objects. One of his works of 1920 is of Duchamp's 'Large Glass' (The Bride stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even) (fig. 24). The photograph is called 'Dust Breeding'. It becomes a strange landscape littered with rocks and a ruined city, which shows the transformation from aesthetic interpretation to focus on the commonplace.

At first Man Ray used a camera mainly to make copies of his paintings and sculptures, but he was soon forced to use photography in a professional capacity (taking portraits etc) to help supplement his income. However, in order to photograph his fantasy he was compelled to experiment and invent new techniques and revive older ones. In 1917 he revived the 'cliche-verve' method that had been used during the previous century. The process involves a drawing on a glass-negative with a needle-point and then 'painted' on sensitised paper. Although this was the standard procedure, variations on the method did arise. This, along with other procedures such as Rayographs (Man Ray's version of a photogram), solarization,¹ over-development and over-enlargement of the film, are among his best known innovations (fig. 25, 26). With regard to enlargements, these were shied-away from by other photographers because the grain of the emulsion became evident. Man Ray used enlargements so as the 'defects' in the model would not

1. Solarization involves exposing negatives on film briefly to light. This is done during the development process, and interesting effects from chemical fogging are obtained.

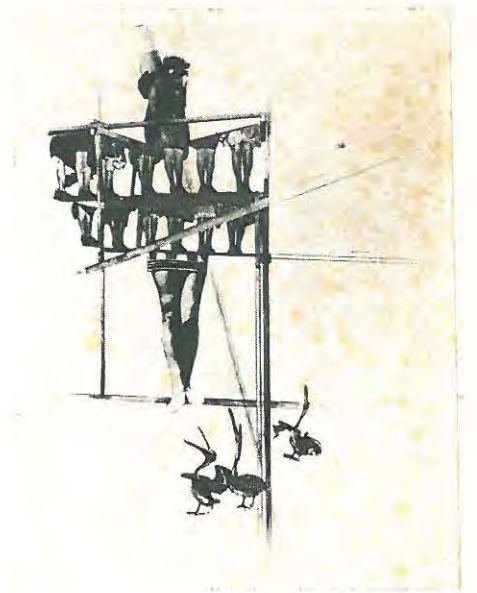
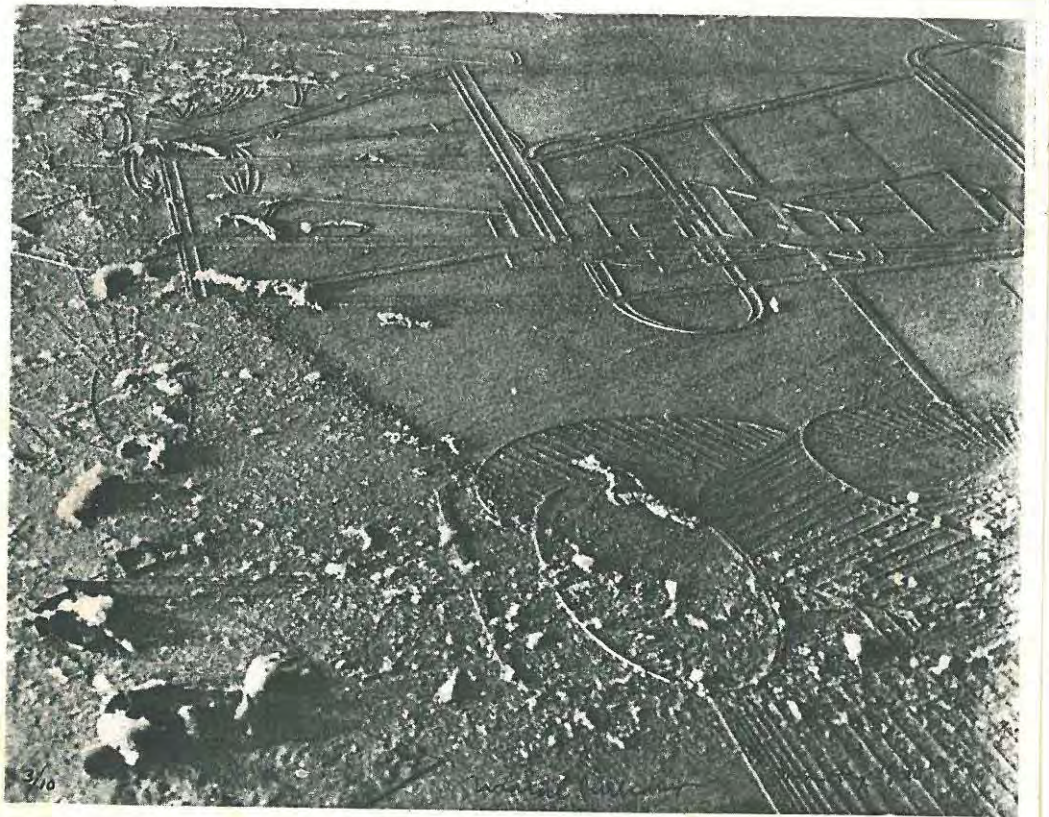


fig 23.1



3/10

fig 24

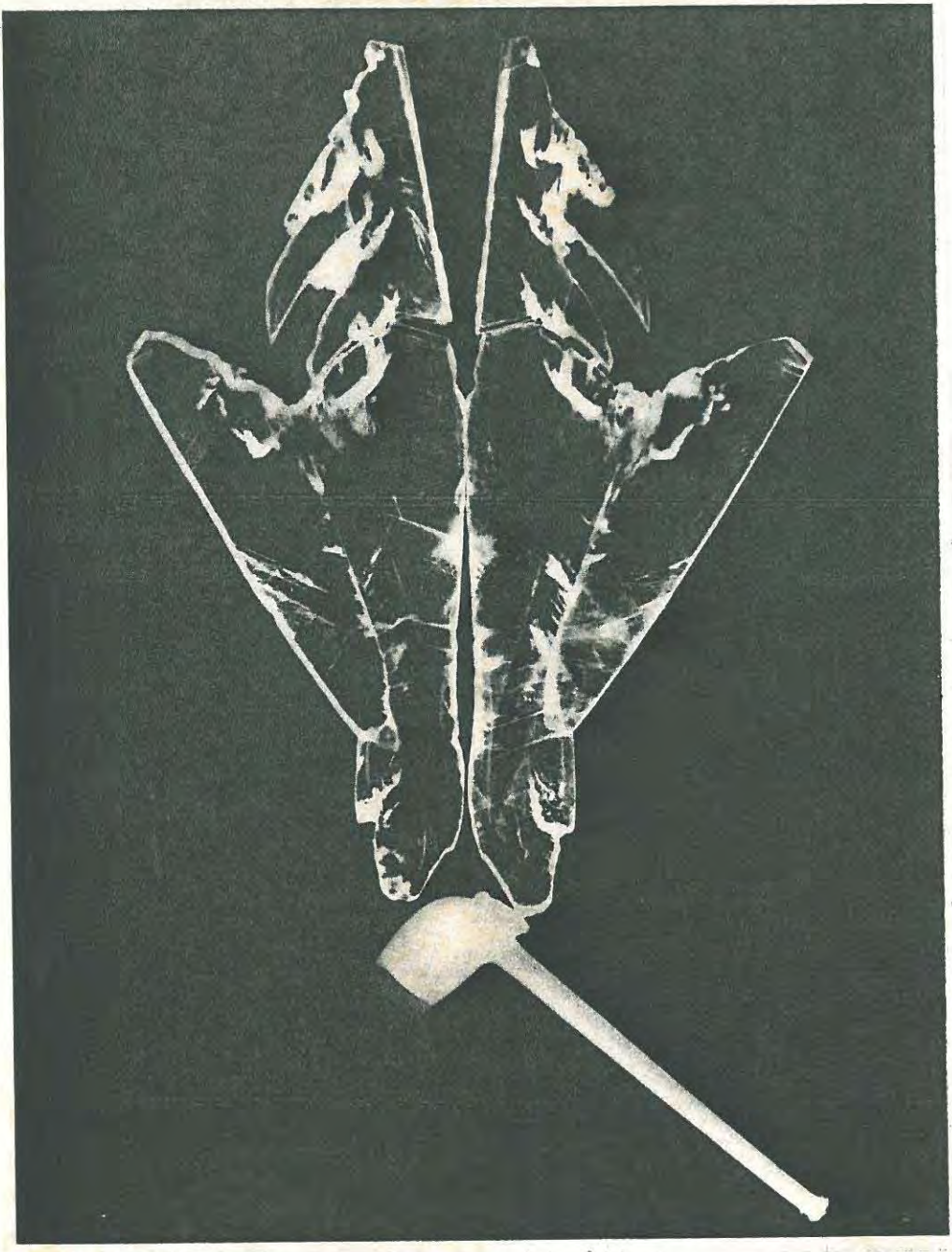


fig 25

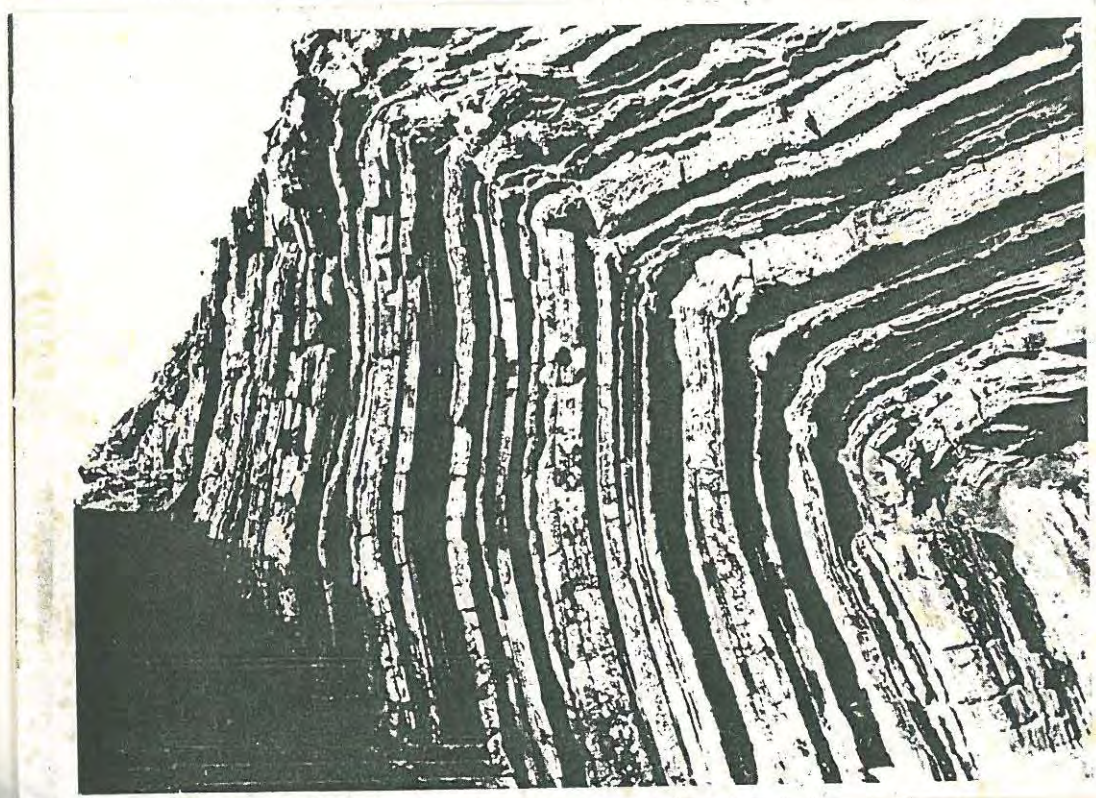


fig 26

be lost : "I never retouched an enlargement : the whole point of enlargements would be missed - great paintings show brush strokes, why shouldn't a photograph show grain?"¹ Over-enlargements and grainy photographs were to find popularity only forty years later during the '60's.

Inventiveness is usually accompanied by a certain contempt for the medium; the camera was for Man Ray, a functional object - he felt no love or admiration for it - to his students he would often say, "if you wish to make photographs throw your camera away."² Comments like this were especially irritating to the purist, where photographic paraphernalia was a hallmark of success. For Man Ray the camera was like a paint brush, and the point he wished to make was that the idea was important, not the camera. He criticised this by implying that one never asked a writer what typewriter, or a painter what brushes he used.

Unlike Moholy-Nagy, whose work can be easily categorised into various sections, Man Ray's photographic work is better seen as an overall whole. Although one could divide his work into portraiture, Rayographs etc., Man Ray's creative activity was organic, (rather than the cerebral Moholy) he tended to use any technique that suited his immediate purpose.

Man Ray probably produced his first Dada photographs just by the act of photographing his constructions and objects. However, to avoid confusion, a distinction must be made between the 'photograph' and 'photomontage'. The photomontage and its invention for Dada purposes was claimed by R

1. Schwarz, opcit. p. 229
2. Ibid.

Hausmann and H Hoch, although, attributes have been credited to George Grosz and John Heartfield. Man Ray's Dada photography and the photomontage appeared during the course of source year 1918. Among his Dada photographs of 1921 no examples such as an egg-beater and a construction with reflectors and laundry bins. Other Dada photographs appeared, such as "Compass", in which a toy revolver is stuck onto the end of magnet" (fig. 27). Duchamp and his 'Found Object' did not pass without having its effect on May Ray: A photograph such as 'Transatlantic' (1920) shows a collection of match-sticks, cigarette ends, and bits of paper (fig. 28). The photograph is almost as incidental in character as the objects found in it. It is through the importance of or rather through the importing of new meaning to innate or found objects, that he pays homage to Duchamp. For instance, in his photograph of the egg-beater, the shadow has become significant, giving new life to this kitchen utensil, and in doing so one cannot help but notice the parallel that has been made with the cogs of the 'coffee grinder' in Duchamp's 'Large Glass'.

The concept of shadows in Man Ray's work is interesting, in that they play an important role in lending a sense of mystery about the subject. Shadows are an important part of man's makeup, and are especially significant to primitive man, who regards shadow as the reflection of his soul. In more recent times Jung has stated that the shadow was given to the primitive and instinctive side of an individual. This latter aspect is very much in keeping with Man Ray and later with the Surrealists. Although it wasn't the shadow in particular that interested them, but rather the expression of dreams which in themselves can be primitive and instinctive. Man Ray often relied on shadow to create mystery in his photographs or to make a comment in a portrait, usually to reveal something else about the subjects personality. Apart from 'Dust Breeding', a good example is a portrait of Yves Tanguy (fig. 29): Harsh shadows are allowed to fall across the left hand side of the face, causing a rather sinister appearance and allowing the eye to emerge from deep shadow. The face is not allowed to merge with the background; it is stopped by feint highlight. The shadowless side of the face is rather gentle by comparison. Two other portraits that can be looked at in this way

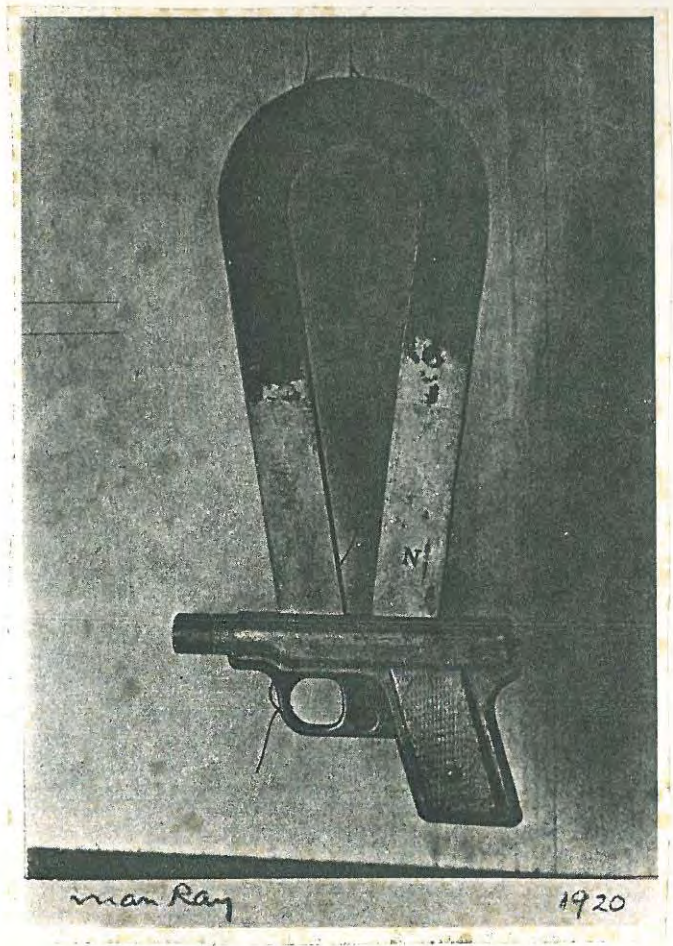


fig 27



fig 28



fig 29

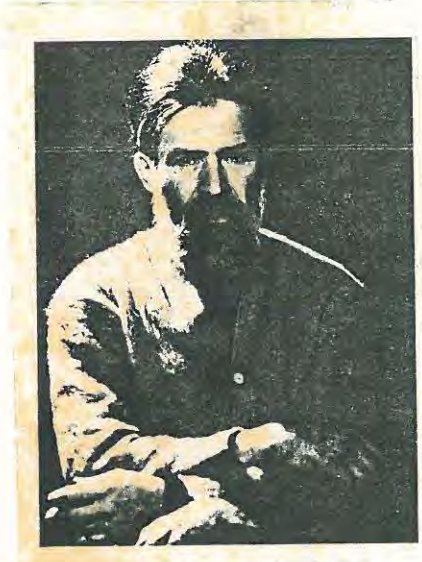


fig.30



fig 31

are those of Brancusi and Derain (figs. 30, 31).

Man Ray in discussing these works in which shadow plays an important role, remarked that "the shadow is as important as the real thing."¹ In 'Dust Breeding' (fig. 24) the title itself is of significance. It is suggestive of certain primal forces, and in fact could be related to the mystical interpretation of creation: man was made from dust and to dust he shall return.

Capturing Light and Image :

"Like the undisturbed ashes of an object consumed by flames, these images are oxidised residues, fixed by and chemical elements, of an experience, an adventure, not an experiment. They are the result of curiosity, inspiration, and these works do not pretend to convey any information."²

This statement was made by Man Ray at an exhibition of his Rayographs in Stuttgart. It is this attitude of his which gave him a freedom of expression through photography and did not allow his talent as a painter to become inhibited by the technical process. The idea of capturing light on a sensitised piece of paper treated with silver nitrate, without the aid of a camera, suggested an incredible potential and versatility to him. The attraction here was the move away from the merely representational quality of photography, allowing more freedom and poetic expression to evolve. But it took an accident in the darkroom for him to discover cameraless photography, which he called 'Rayographs'.

1. Schwartz, opcit. p. 234

2. Penrose, opcit. p. 82.

Having worked late one night on processing and printing negatives, a sheet of unexposed paper was mixed up with the others, and ended up in the developing tray, "as I waited in vain a couple of minutes for the image to appear, regretting the waste of paper, I mechanically placed a small glass funnel, the graduate and the thermometre on the paper. I turned the light on." ¹ The image that began to appear before his eyes was not just a silhouette, but a distorted and refracted image made by the light passing through the glass. The result was like that of Moholy-Nagy's photograms, the only thing difference being in the manner in which the separate discoveries were made. Man Ray's discovery happened in true Surrealist fashion, by accident, whereas Moholy-Nagy's production of photograms had been a planned move. Man Ray was apparently unaware of the experiments being made by Moholy-Nagy and claims that his was an independent discovery.

Man Ray was excited by this stated : "Taking whatever objects came to hand", he tells us, "my hotel room key, a handkerchief, some pencils, a brush, a candle, a piece of twine ... I made a few more prints, excitedly enjoying myself immensely." ² A Rayograph entitled 'Circular Objects in Motion, with Tacks, Spring and an Electric Plug' (fig. 32), 1922, is a good example of this placing of a variety of objects on a piece of photographic paper. In this work and most of his others, the typifying characteristic is that the image tends to float. There is no base on which it rests, and a total lack of gravity results (figs. 33, 34, 35).

Man Ray uses his light source like an airbrush. He builds up rich tones by changing its position. The painter in him is truly evident in these Rayographs. "Everything can be transformed by light.

1. Man Ray, Self Portrait, p. 128.

2. Penrose, opcit. p. 76.

21a

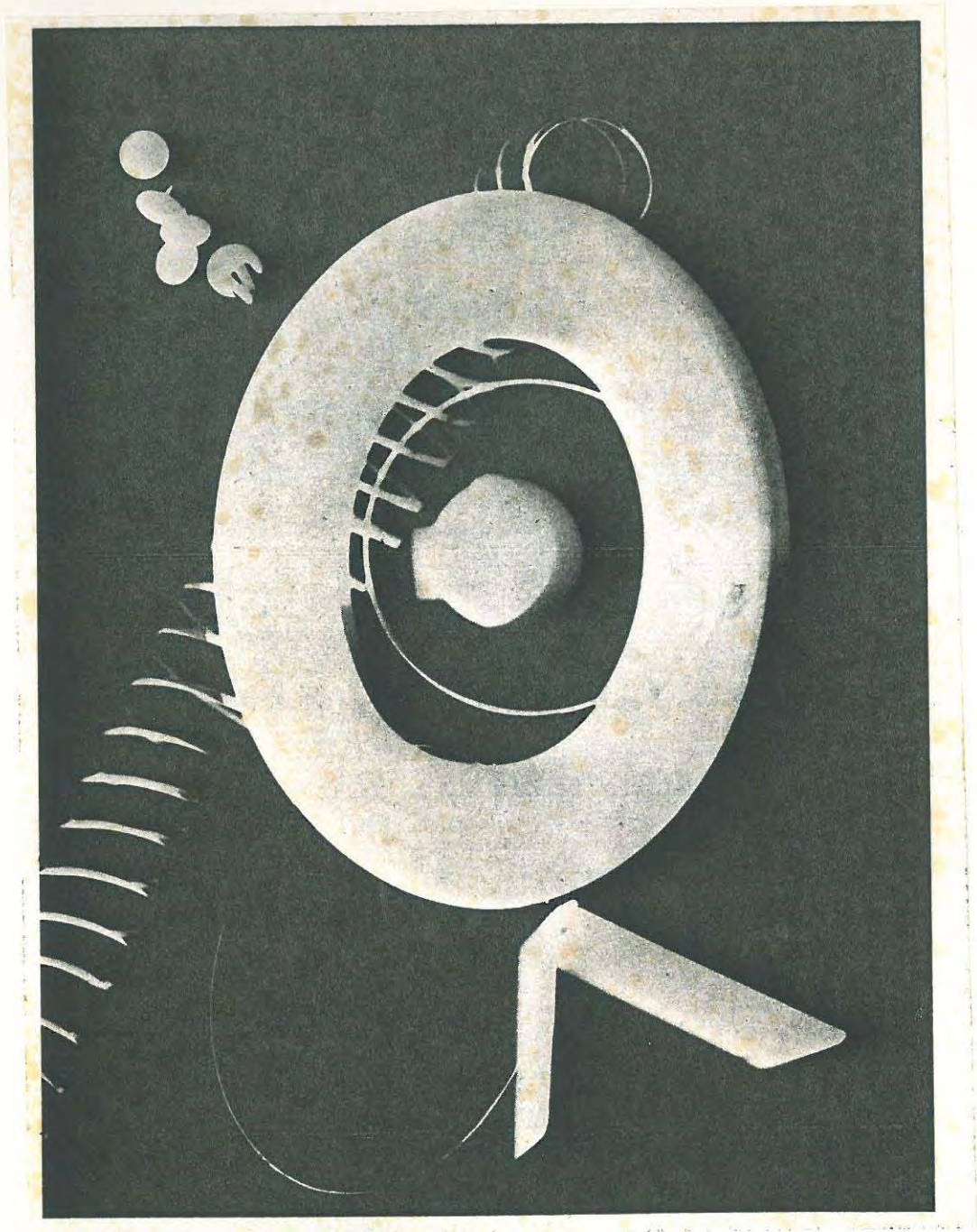


fig 32



fig 33

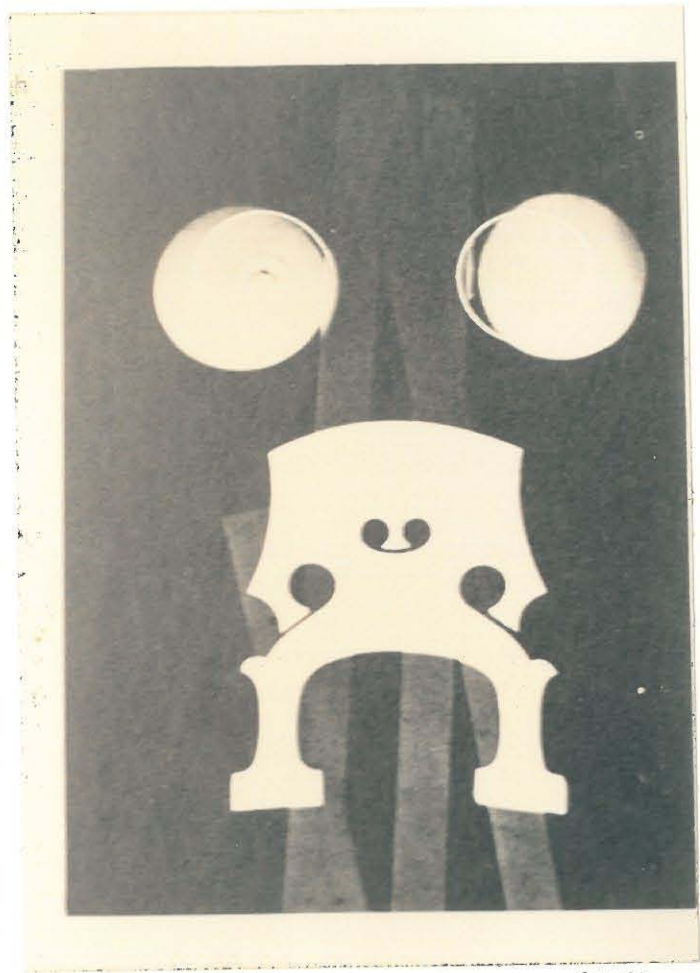


fig 34

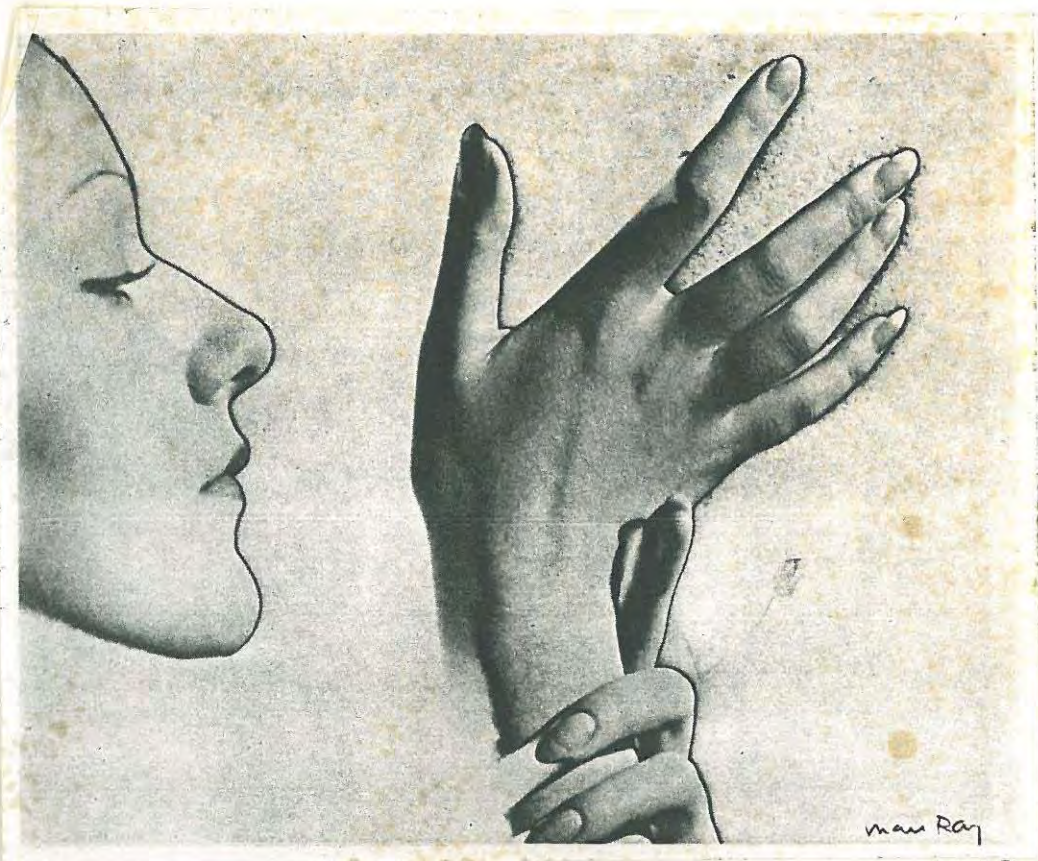


fig 35

2fc



fig 37



man Ray

fig 38



Man 27/33

fig 39

Light is an instrument as subtle as the brush."¹ These Rayographs build up spirals and rhythms in a serial way, and little or no calculation occurs in most of these works. Man Ray did, however, extend his idea into film making, which successfully shows this automatic element. He also succeeded in driving the audience to the brink of insanity. Rayographs are the ideal form of the Surrealist's expression of automatic writing, although, when Tzara saw these works the following morning, after Man Ray had made his discovery, he hailed them as perfect Dada creations. Rayography also answered Duchamp's plea for an art that was more conceptual than retinal, and Aragon stated: "Rayography is a philosophical operation ... without any real relationship to photography."²

Solarization was another innovation of Man Ray's. The discovery, as with the Rayograph was not new. Technologists had been aware for years that the phenomenon known as solarization occurred, often in error, during the processing of film. Man Ray discovered this technique for himself, as in Rayography, through an accident in the darkroom when his assistant had accidentally switched on the light. When he examined the resulting negatives closely, he found that the dark, unexposed backgrounds of the negatives had become exposed, but the exposed image itself was relatively unaffected. A dark, narrow shadow now appeared between the differently exposed areas, enhancing the image with a sensitive outline.

This outline now added a three dimensional quality to the work. He immediately set to take profile portraits, hands and flowers to try out this new technique. The 'Portrait of Julie' is a later work done in 1950 and shows strong three dimensional qualities (fig. 37). In the earlier works such as 'Portrait of Lee Miller' and 'Profile of Hands' and a 'Portrait', (figs. 38, 39, 40) the outline is delicate enough to have been drawn by hand, which he was sometimes accused of doing.

1. Schwarz, *opcit.* p. 236.

2. Schwarz, *opcit.* p. 238.

In 1934 Man Ray made his photography available to the public in an album entitled : "The Age of Light". The emphasis in these photographs is on the play of light on objects. A large variety of objects appear in the album: close-up views of eyes, necks and torsos and a close-up of bubbles, to name a few. (figs. 41, 42, 43).

It was Man Ray's ability to transform and play with relationships and objects that made him acceptable within the Surrealist group. These objects were not always photographic but sometimes painted or sculptured, although he made a vast number of objects he did for the purpose of making photographs only. The photographs aided in the transformation of these objects, which were lost or discarded afterwards. Man Ray stated : "The photographer has pulled his little Jack Horner, and has pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for the scientists and manufacturers, and it is time he kicked over the bucket and put out the fire ... the greatest thrill can be obtained only by throwing the whole pie into the face of those who have arrogated to themselves the monopoly of intelligence, perception and knowledge." ¹ It was also this contempt that enabled him to work unhindered by the limitations of the photographic medium.

He has clearly shown his ability to photograph his fantasies and this is his forte. As Penrose puts it : "With Man Ray ... the meaning of the object remains enigmatic or, more precisely, there is, in the object, as it were, a suspended meaning ; either it remains inexplicable or it offers multiple interpretations, sometimes contradictory, and it is ultimately its mystery that matters." ²

1. Breakspear, C. Man Ray Photographs, p. 27.

2. Penrose, opcit. p. 193.

It is this aspect of his work which makes him relevant to the current trend in fantasy. However, it must be understood that although Rayographs and solarisations were not obviously directorial, i.e. in a form of a play or a comment, the fact remains that they were an attempt to go beyond mere representation. They have become an expression of the inner self and as a result can offer a multiplicity of interpretations, as in some of the modern fabricated fantasies where the interpretation is left to the viewer. It is this psychological aspect, especially in his portraits, that have come into focus recently. Photographers like Collis and Sherman come to mind in their use of psychological symbols and relationships. However these will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, where the freedom given to the medium by Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray has had repercussions directly and indirectly.

The move has been one towards deconstruction, which has been touched briefly upon in the section on Moholy-Nagy. A number of the things mentioned under that heading also apply to Man Ray. For example, where Moholy-Nagy uses space, Man Ray uses shadow. Although the importance of shadow has been discussed, they have not been looked at in a deconstrual light. Man Ray's use of shadow makes a plea to our emotions, we are able to conjure up fantasies or feelings about his works where shadows play an important role. The result is that the structural components of the composition act primarily as a stimulus for these emotions. This is a criterion that runs through the philosophy of deconstruction and should be borne in mind while reading the next chapter. The shadows draw us in, through the intentional structuring of the image. They are in some ways like footprints, and give a feeling of something that is absent, or rather an absence of a presence. This makes the interpretation of the work open-ended, allowing us to resolve the work on a subjective level.



fig 40

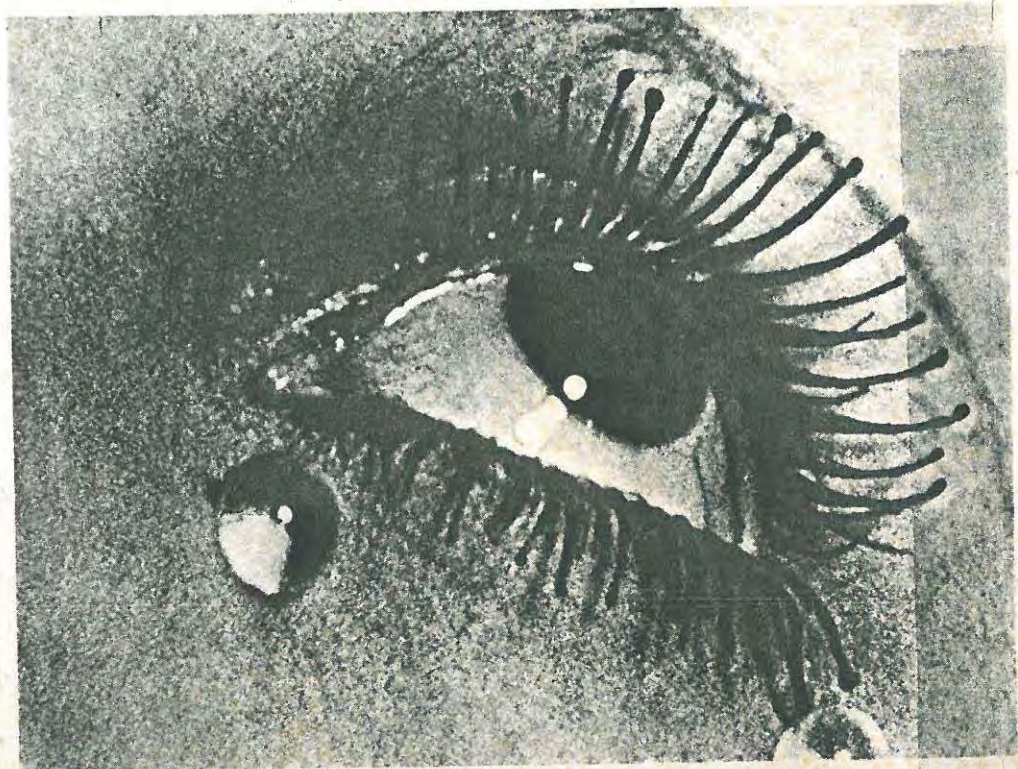


fig 41



fig 42

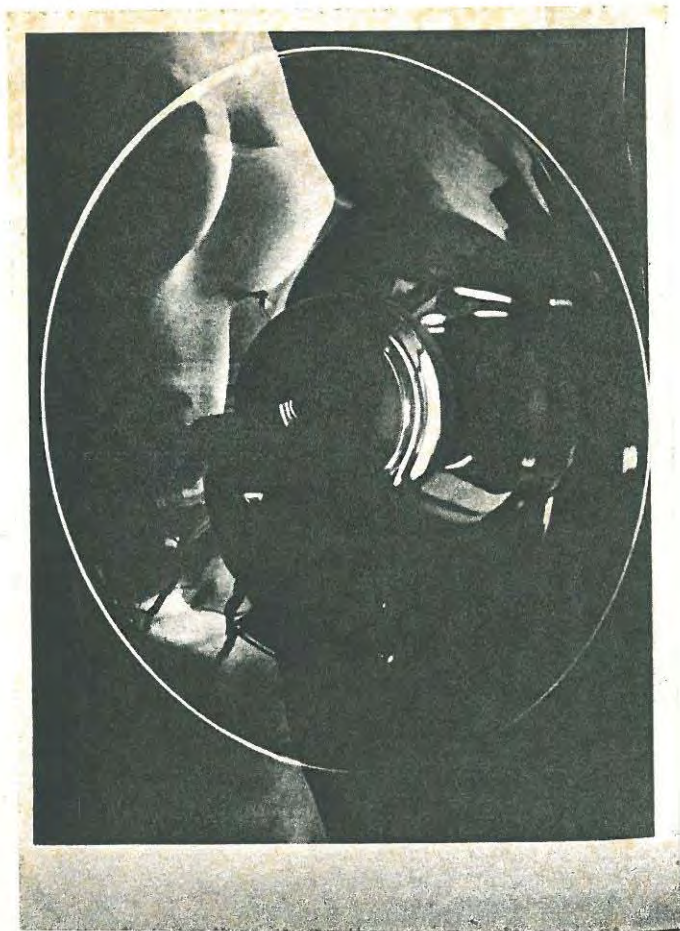


fig 43

Towards Fabrication and Deconstruction

"Although in the popular mind the photograph serves as a surrogate slice of reality, the relationship between any subject and photograph of that subject is highly unstable ... The experienced viewer regards all photographs suspiciously. The problem is not that photography is inherently untruthful, but that its illusion of veracity makes it such a perfect means for a lie."¹

This very paradox seems to be one that was inherently understood by both Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy, and opened up for them, the road to experimentation. It was in this light that Man Ray was able to photograph his fantasy, and Moholy-Nagy was able to set up new relationships.

However, this setting up of new relationships and photographing fantasy, although there have been some instances over the last decades, shows signs of becoming popular in the eighties. The photographers working with this aim in mind have placed emphasis on the new relationships set up within the work, rather than the subject matter alone. Various names have been given to this mode in photography; Eauclaire calls it "fabricated fiction" and Coleman calls it "directorial". The problem dealing with the highly unstable relationship between the subject and photograph of that subject, is not just limited to works in a fabricated mode. It extends into what one might term "documentary" photography, especially today, where "telling the truth about the subject is not enough."² In documentary photography, the photographer must instill confidence in the viewer, so that he or she accepts the truth of deception within the work. Lewis Baltz comments

1. Eauclaire, S. The New Colour Photography, p. 133.
2. Ibid.



on this : "There is something paradoxical in the way documentary photographs interact with our notions of reality. To function as documents at all they must first persuade us that they describe their subject accurately and objectively ... The ideal photographic document would appear to be without author or art. Yet of course photographs, despite their verisimilitude, are abstractions; their information is selective and incomplete."¹

This distinction is important in delineating the difference between documentation and fabrication. To expand on this: successful documentary along with advertising photography, where the message impact is vital, could be termed "structural" in their making. Structuralism is, to quote Spivak : "... a unit composed of a few elements that are invariably found in the same relationship within the activity being described. The unit cannot be broken down into its single elements, for the unity of the structure is defined not so much by the substantive of the elements as by their relationship."²

The work is self-referential, it does not extend beyond its boundaries, provided the intent and message are clear. A 'closure' is offered which one cannot escape from. These relationships are vital to the whole of the work and its message, and would collapse if any of the elements were removed.

In fabricated works we see something different happening, where unstable relationships are set up. In other words, the message, or the intent is not clear to the viewer. In order to get any fruitful interaction from the work, one has to escape the 'closure' set up by the photograph. The interpretation of the work becomes open-ended. "Human-kind's common desire is for a stable centre, and for the assurance of mastery - through knowing or possessing."³ Fabrication

1. Eauclaire, *opcit.* p. 133.
2. Derrida, J. Of Grammatology, p. v.
3. Derrida, *opcit.* p. xi.

does not allow this to happen, and to get any meaning we have to "deconstruct" (Derrida's term). This means that one then breaks down the already-existing "structure" or the elements figuratively, to arrive at an interpretation which is outside but also related to the image. Because of this highly personalised process, a multiplicity of meanings can be obtained. Hegel would state that each viewer would escape the closure differently.

These photographs (as will be discussed later) present an interesting concept, in that, we can no longer take familiar elements for granted. It would appear that these familiar things (elements, signs, etc) are brought together in such a way as that one arrives at unfamiliar conclusions. To quote Hegel : "What is familiarly known is not properly known: just for the same reason it is familiar. When engaged in the process of knowing it is the commonest form of self deception, and a deception of other people as well, to assume something to be familiar and let it pass on that very account." ¹ Fabricated fictions in photography draw our attention to this fact, the process of 'Deconstruction'. Coleman lends a clearer insight : "The substantial distinction, then, is between treating the external world as a given, to be altered only through photographic means (point of view, framing, printing, etc.) en route to the final image, or rather as raw material, to be itself manipulated as much as desired prior to the exposure of the negative." ² It becomes apparent that directorial elements have entered into a vast number of works, but for the purposes of this essay I have restricted myself to discussion of intentionally "manipulated images."

1. Derrida, *opcit.* p. xiii.
2. Coleman, *opcit.* p. 251.1.

Manipulation of photographs in this manner involves the creation of metaphors. The definition of a metaphor according to Nietzsche is the establishing of an identity between dissimilar things : "Every idea originates through equating the unequal."¹ This equating of the unequal, Derrida maintains loosens boundaries and gives rise to freer thoughts. These metaphors present themselves as signs; these signs are created by the structures of difference.² Derrida goes on to discuss the strange 'being' of the sign : "half of it always "not there" and the other half always "not that". He goes on to clarify. "The structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent. This other of course never to be found in its full being."³ He then gives the name 'trace' to this 'other' within the structure of difference that is the sign.⁴ Spivak then sums up : "Derrida's trace is the mark of the absence of a presence, always already absent presence."⁵ However the word 'trace' itself carries strong implications of footprint, track, imprint, it also presents itself as the "mask of an anterior presence, origin, master."⁶

This concept of 'anterior presence, origin or master' bears closer inspection in terms of fabricated images. Here, apart from being the 'director', the photographer is also the 'actor'. Although this may not be immediately apparent, the photographer's action may be seen through his/her manipulation of the subjects or objects. The act is then recorded on film. The result is that 'signs' are set up, through which the absence of the photographer's presence can be acknowledged.

1. Derrida, *opcit.* p.xxii.
2. *Ibid.* p. xvii
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.* p. xv.

It would seem appropriate at this point to discuss some works by contemporary photographers. Sandy Skogland whose images contain superbly modelled animals, creatures, fish and painted environments transports us into a world of fantasy. Sometimes these worlds seem absurd, through their equation of dissimilar things. In her work "Revenge of the Goldfish", (fig. 44) laws of reason appear to have vanished. fish swim through the air, in the environment of a monochromatic room (these monochromatic rooms are a standard setting of hers). The two figures on the bed are seemingly unaware of the invasion of fish, and remain quite peaceful in their poses. A number of interpretations could arise here; a closure is offered from which the viewer must escape if there is to be any fruitful interaction. Skogland has explored the familiar world of bedrooms, goldfish and people, and arrived at something new and unfamiliar. Metaphors have been set up, and to deconstruct, one must become aware of that never-annulled other, through the signs which are the structures of difference.

Arthur Tress, in his staged photographs does not allow us to become too comfortable. They pose disturbing relationships between the people and their environments. A large number of his works seem to peep in on people's private, psychotic and secret lives. The result is that the viewer feels as if he/she is committing voyeurism, and in the act of turning away the attention is held. The works have become a stimulus which invoke very powerful reactions of oppression or anguish. The works sometimes stimulate the exploration of one's own neuroses. Tress "does not allow for the enchantment part of the nightmare which normally allows it to be tolerable. His images force us to believe what they are relating to us."¹ In his photographs one is powerfully aware of the "trace" and cannot ignore it.

1. Tress, A. Theatre of the Mind, p. 3.

The work itself includes anything from a stuffed sheep standing on top of a reclining male nude. (fig. 45 to an old woman in a wheelbarrow. In this work we get the impression of something "kinky" going on, again, this impression is created by metaphors. Tress' works are theatrical in their approach, his photographs have become the proscenium arch, and the viewer the audience.

Coleman gives a deconstructual insight into Tress' work : "Regardless of subject his images are clear, precise, articulate, intelligent. Because they are intended to communicate fairly specific understandings be they intellectual, emotional or both - they are open, careful and ordered. This accessibility and structural consideration is purposeful : they are intended to entice you in and sooth your reason sufficiently so that the images can play freely in tne non-linear, non-explanatory areas of the mind."¹ (my underling).

In deconstructing a Tress photograph, one is immediately drawn to the metaphors that he creates. This is, of course bearing in mind Nietzsche's definition of a metaphor. In a work called "Claire de Lune" (fig. 46) one is aware that the careful ordering of the structure of the work, as Coleman suggests, entices you in. As one looks at the work, being a static image, we soon become familiar with the visual components making up the composition. In a sense, one could say that as the eye wanders across the surface of the image, certain areas start to repeat themselves. This is because the eye through its wandering keeps being brought back to the centre of interest, it continues in this manner, wandering and coming back. This self-identity of the visual components one could say, "... receives an imperceptable difference which allows us to step effectively, vigorously, and thus discreetly out of the closure."³ This happens in a metaphorical way, the mind could start to fantasise about the next instant, where the carving will be completely covered

1. Derrida, *opcit.* p. xii
2. Derrida, *opcit.* p. xix.
3. Tress, A. Theatre of the Mind, p. 3.



fig 44



fig 45



fig 46



fig. 47



fig 48

by water. This of course never happens. The result is any number of emotions could arise, and the trace or Hiedigger's 'Being' becomes tangible through these. This is because the components of the photograph are arranged in such a way as to stimulate an emotional response outside the closure (or picture frame) in the viewer's mind. In this way one picture becomes a 'preface' or starting point for another. This can, of course, become an infinite progression.

Again Derrida maintains that : "No engineer can make the 'means' - the sign - and the "end"-meaning become self-identical. Sign will always lead to sign, one substituting the other (playfully ...) as signifier and signified in turn. Indeed the notion of play is important here. Knowledge is not a systematic tracking down of a truth that is hidden but man be found. It is rather in the field of "free play", that is to say a field of infinite substitutions in the closure of a finite ensemble." ¹

Two other photographers working with notion of "free play" are Les Krims and Lucas Samaras. Krims fictions to which he gives the name "Fictcryptokrimsographs", are as bizarre as any of Tress'. His images are often based on elaborate scenarios which he has either set up or selected for their weirdness. His work tends to be pseudo-pornographic, obviously designed to shock the moralists and rile the feminists. His work is reactionary and the images include anything from a chicken carcass out of which milk is being poured, to a portrait of his mother covered with her personal photographs. (fig. 47). "The question to ask is not whether he is coherent, for he surely is, but rather, what language is he speaking with such fluency."² Krims also

1. Derrida, opcit. p. xix.

2. Coleman, opcit. p. 241.

titles all his works, but the titles are not explanatory they tend, rather, to enhance the free play of the image. 'Aerosol Fiction, 1969' (fig. 48) is one of these. The scene is domestic: a nude woman stands transfixed as a man complacently sprays her genitals with an aerosol.

Krims works largely with Polaroid, which enhances the feeling of perversity, since the medium has a reputation for being the ideal for home pornography. Like Lucas Samaras he manipulates the still wet Sx-70 print emulsion, to create images that appear to melt and peel (fig. 49). The result is that his images have created some rather unexpected reactions; he is the only photographer to have caused a kidnapping. "...when four of his half comic, half scatological pictures of nudes were displayed at the Memphis Academy of Arts, an enraged spectator kidnapped the son of one of the academy instructions at gunpoint, demanding the removal of Krims images as ransom."¹

In this respect Krims lives up to his statement : "I am not a Historian, I create History. These images are antidecisive movement. It is possible to create any image one thinks of, this possibility of course, is contingent on being able to think and create. The greatest potential source of photographic imagery is the mind."²

Lucas Samaras, although producing vastly different images also has a feeling of perversity about his work. He is more indulgent than Krims, and fulfils his own narcissistic ends by using himself as the subject for his photographs. Samaras is also a captive of the Polaroid camera, and its implications. The format and device of the Sx-70 Polaroid poses an interesting problem within itself; in that as a creative tool it is very restrictive. It was made as a fool-proof camera and reproduces acceptable prints of the same quality every time. The result is that, as far as any creative control goes over print quality

1. Wilkin and London, opcit. p. 176

2. Coleman, opcit. p. 252.

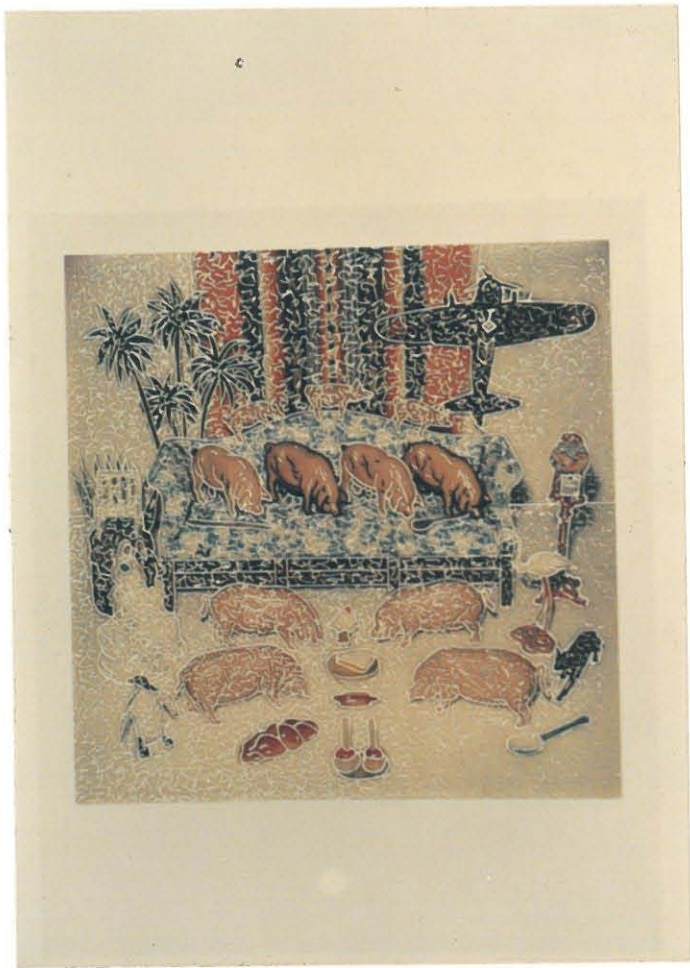


fig 49

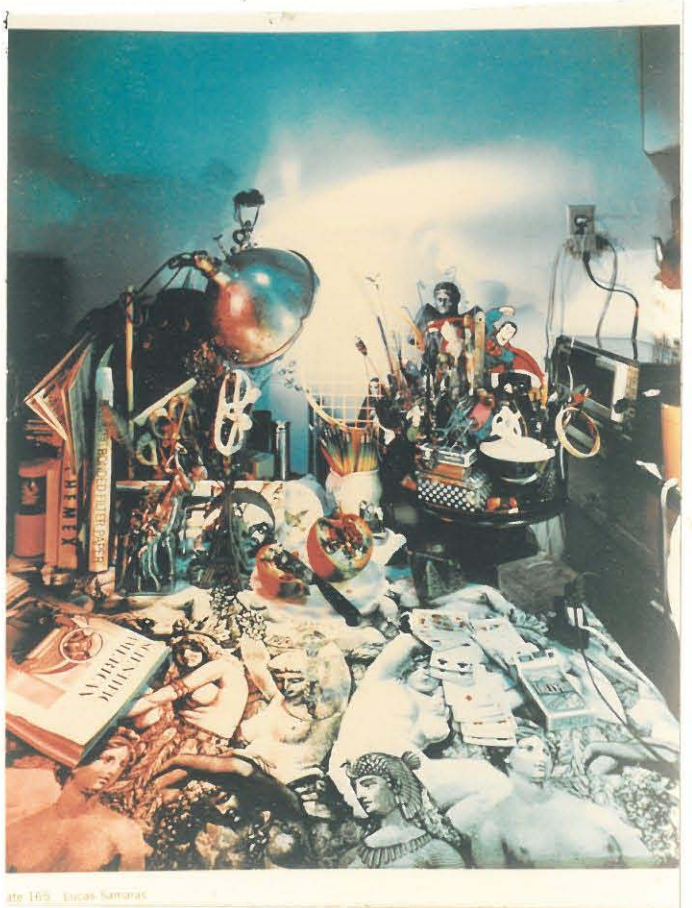


fig 169 Lucas Samaras

fig 50



fig 51



fig 52



fig 53

etc. it is very limited. This, as Coleman suggests poses a "unique test to image-makers, viz. how can its integrity be violated."¹ The Polaroid has a preset frame of empty space which is filled by the image and cannot be cropped or enlarged. Samaras crams this space, in his still-life studies with objects (fig. 50). Self-portraits appear within these still-life studies, which give an intense feeling of claustrophobia. And although these images are highly structured, again they can "play freely in the non-linear, non-explanatory areas of the mind."

In "Photo-Transformation" (fig. 51) we see a home-made drama being enacted. The space has become flattened and one is left with a feeling of the intensely personal nature of the work. The solidity of the structure is also threatened and the figure appears to melt. For Samaras these images have become starting points for others, as a number of other photographs are set within the same area of his kitchen. He uses objects, that are personal and familiar to him, to such an extent that their validity seems to be questioned.

Mark Cohen's photographs at times seem almost accidental in character, as though, while walking along he accidentally bumped the shutter button. Some of his subjects are shot at such close range that they seem assaulted. An image of an old woman holding a cigarette with smoke coming out of her mouth (fig. 52) is one such example. The smoke appears to be an out of focus zone, while the hand and face seem disembodied. These elements float and almost threaten to come out of the picture frame.

Cohen takes many photographs in rapid succession, as he attempts to record, in an almost arbitrary fashion, life around him. This allows him very little time to consider any philosophical divergences, before pressing the button.

Later, while editing his negatives he then notices relationships

1. Coleman, opcit. p. 258.

between things. In figure 53 the bra-strap echoes the poles, and both appear to be on the same diagonal as a blue board in the background. In viewing Cohen's images it becomes apparent that there is a whole world of things outside the picture frame of which the image itself gives us a clue.

Conclusion:

The works that have been discussed show common element and which is: exploration of the familiar to arrive at unfamiliar conclusions. A similar thing happens in the Rayographs and Photograms of both Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray. Objects have been placed on a sheet of paper and a new photographic impression is made, the form becoming disturbed through the play of light etc.

Both had already started to work in a deconstructual mode during the course of the twenties. The 'new relationships of Moholy-Nagy' are nothing more than the creation of metaphors, created through differences, giving rise to the trace. Man Ray realises the subjectivity of the medium through photographing his fantasy, a stance also held by Krims.

The claim here is not that these photographers are working under any direct influence of Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy. It is rather a case of attitude, and a concern with manipulation and the subjective side of photography. As mentioned earlier, seeds scattered by these two photographers (artists) have found germination in hybrid forms. Whether contemporary fabricators would acknowledge this is beside the point - the connection remains, if one is willing to scratch below the surface : ... "whether or not they consider themselves as "photographers" or "artists", or whatever, these individuals and many others are exploring the same field of ideas. That field of ideas is built into and springs from the medium of photography itself, it has a history of its own which is operative on many levels of our culture."¹

1. Coleman, opcit. p. 257.

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