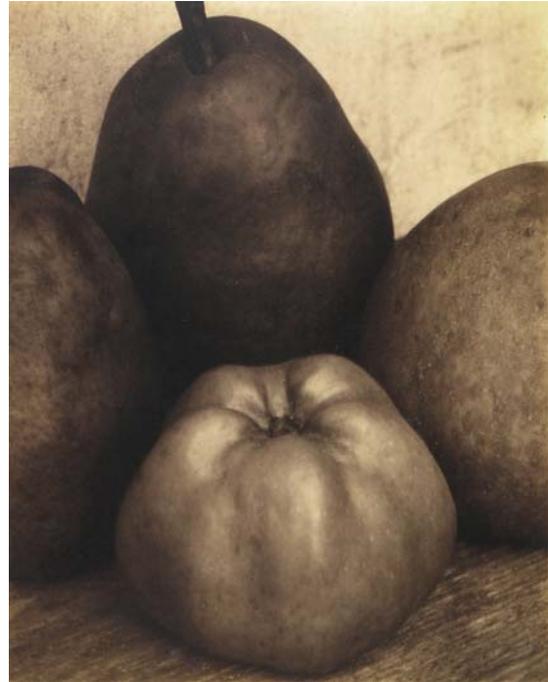


Edward Steichen

1915-1923

20 March – 16 May, 2009

Opening Reception
Thursday, 19 March, 6-8pm



Pears and an Apple, France, 1920
Toned palladium print; printed c.1920

Beginning March 20, 2009, Howard Greenberg Gallery will exhibit select photographs made by Edward Steichen between 1915-1923, one of the most personal and experimental periods of Steichen's career. In the complex years surrounding World War I, Steichen became absorbed by Modernism, gradually abandoning his Pictorialist style in favor of straight photography, with a strong sense of design and clean, uncluttered compositions.

Steichen has always been highly esteemed and recognized for his role in the Photo-Secession and his association with Alfred Steiglitz and Gallery 291. His tenure as chief photographer at Condé Nast also significantly contributed to his legacy. But rarely has his modernist work been considered and exhibited as a separate entity. This exhibition demonstrates that Steichen's modernist photographs visually confronted many of the prevailing perceptions of the photographic medium and were as avant-garde as the works of his contemporaries such as Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler.

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In 1906, uninspired by his established portrait business in New York, Steichen relocated his family to Paris and remained in Europe until the outbreak of WWI. He continually reinvented his artistic identity, focusing his energies on painting, photographing, and even gardening. He devoted himself to these pursuits at his farmhouse Villa L'Oiseau Bleu in Voulangis. Here, he experimented with color and rendition of form, brightening his palette, and using a less naturalistic style. Flowers were central to his aesthetic, beginning a life-long practice of developing the landscape before recording it on canvas or film. In 1915, Steichen began to make sharply focused nature studies in daylight with literal names like *Lotus* or *Frog on Lily Pond*. These images, which reveal incredible detail in composed frames are forerunners of "New Objectivity" – a movement which emerged in the 20s celebrating the abstract qualities of quotidian matter.

During World War I, Steichen was in command of all aerial photography for the American Expeditionary Force; he retired as lieutenant colonel in 1919 and returned to Voulangis, France to resume his artistic pursuits. According to Steichen, 1920-23 were among the most productive years of his life. Throughout this time his style of photography underwent a dramatic change; he began to create works that were much more abstract and enigmatic than any of his previous images. The photographic work he had executed during the war infused him with a new passion for sharp-focused pictures and he developed a keener interest in the new technical advances in photography. He considered this time to be a self-imposed photographic apprenticeship, during which he worked with specimens in his garden. *Pears and An Apple*, (1920) is one of a series of images in which Steichen realized a true sense of form. He continued to explore compositions in which groups of objects played a central role. This experimentation produced some of his most important work: *Time Space Continuum*, reflecting his interest in Einstein's Theory of Relativity; *Triumph of the Egg*; and *Harmonica Riddle* centering on fertility and pregnancy.

In 1922, Edward Steichen returned to America and a year later opened a commercial studio in New York, specializing in advertising photography.

In addition, we will exhibit vintage works by Martin Munkacsi in the South Gallery.

For further information, or to request visuals for press,
contact Ali Price at 212 334 0010 or ali@howardgreenberg.com
Starting March 19th, the exhibition can be viewed at www.howardgreenberg.com