

The Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents*: Spirituality in the 1920s Work of Stieglitz

Kristina Wilson

With a mixture of bitterness and yearning, Alfred Stieglitz wrote to Sherwood Anderson in December 1925 describing the gallery he had just opened in a small room in New York City. The Intimate Gallery, as he called it, was to be devoted to the work of a select group of contemporary American artists. And although it was a mere 20 by 26 feet, he discussed the space as if it were enormous—perhaps limitless:

There is no artiness—Just a throbbing pulsating. . . . I told a dealer who seemed surprised that I should be making this new “experiment”—[that] I had no choice—that there were things called fish and things called birds. That fish seemed happiest in water—& birds seemed happy in the air. [. . . In this gallery] I have decided to give birds a chance—will create an atmosphere for birds that fly lighter than sparrows [. . . for artists who are] free souls.¹

About three years before writing this letter comparing the Intimate Gallery to the freedom of the open sky, Stieglitz had begun taking photographs of the sky at his family’s summer home in Lake George, New York. By 1925 he was calling all of his sky images *Equivalents*, and he continued to do so through the early 1930s. This multiyear series comprises hundreds of 4-by-5-inch images, printed no larger than their negative; Stieglitz mounted each on a white mat with a 3-to-4-inch margin on all sides. Stieglitz’s sky, as depicted in these photographs, is often an unfamiliar, confusing place, the tones of black-and-white film making it difficult to discern the open air from the clouds and, thus, to read the most basic patterns of light and dark. In a photograph from 1929, *Equivalent 216E*, the progression of wispy, white forms in the lower center of the photograph may at first appear to be a series of small clouds against an open sky (Fig. 1). However, the modulations of tone in the upper left of the image indicate that the black is not the flat background of the sky but, rather, the dark figure of the underside of an enormous cloud, and the small white forms are in fact a passage of thinner clouds where the light of the sun is attempting to break through. The black cloud resembles a large hand of clenched fingers, while the white shapes offer a glimpse of the expanse of light on the other side. The image gives us no orienting anchor, and as we peer into its uncertain depths, we experience a vertiginous loss of direction; the photograph captures that moment of disconnect between the embodied experience of gravity and the expansive field of the sky, of that “atmosphere for birds that fly lighter than sparrows.”²

This article examines the institution known as the Intimate Gallery, available to us today only through the traces left in its own paraphernalia, critics’ comments, and Stieglitz’s personal letters. Opened in the fall of 1925, seven years after the closing of his famous gallery 291 (officially called the Little

Galleries of the Photo-Secession, where he had shown work by both American and European modernists), the Intimate Gallery was Stieglitz’s first venture dedicated solely to the promotion of a national art.³ It operated in room 303 of the Anderson Galleries Building on Park Avenue for four seasons, from when Stieglitz was sixty-one years of age until he was sixty-five; after the Intimate Gallery closed, he opened An American Place on Madison Avenue, which he ran until his death in 1946. It is at the Intimate Gallery, where he primarily showed the work of Arthur Dove, John Marin, Georgia O’Keeffe, Marsden Hartley, and Paul Strand, that the ideals and aspirations motivating his late-life quest for a unique, homegrown school of art can be found in their clearest and most vibrant form.⁴ This article also draws the Intimate Gallery into a comparative dialogue with the *Equivalents*, the series of photographs that Stieglitz embarked on just as the momentum of his multiyear *Portrait of O’Keeffe*, begun in 1917, started to wane. While the discrepancies in form—an art gallery and a series of photographs—may seem to resist comparison, the fact that Stieglitz considered his gallery activities as much a form of artistry as his photography argues for such a side-by-side pairing.⁵ Indeed, I suggest that a true reciprocity exists between these photographs and the gallery. Not only do the *Equivalents* demonstrate how Stieglitz wanted viewers to interact with art during the years that the Intimate Gallery was in operation, but also the ideas put forth at the gallery itself lend insight to these persistently inscrutable images.

Informing both the photographs and the gallery was a period-specific concept of spirituality derived from Transcendentalist and Theosophical ideas, such as the intertwined nature of bodily experience and spiritual knowledge and the loss of oneself in an oceanic cosmos at the moment of enlightenment. At the Intimate Gallery, references abounded with a mantralike repetitiveness to an art that would help viewers to achieve an enlightened awareness of a spiritual realm. Stieglitz engineered this spiritual and aesthetic experience through the choice of artworks, the pamphlets he printed for the gallery, the arrangement of the hang, and the atmosphere he cultivated in the small space. And it is through the lens of the Intimate Gallery, with its unequivocal pose as a sanctuary for the soul, that we can confront such observations about the *Equivalents* as Stieglitz’s famous, if coy, pronouncement that he had “photographed God.”⁶ While scholars have observed that Stieglitz’s understanding of an “inner” psychological life—which he claimed was represented in the sky photographs, “equivalents” of his feelings—was indebted to European fin de siècle Symbolism, they have generally overlooked the spiritual component inherent in this idea of the inner life.⁷

I propose that both the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents* established an interanimating zone between the viewer



1 Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent 216E*, photograph, gelatin silver print, 1929. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature

and the work of art, and that this zone was a central component of Stieglitz's larger spiritual message.⁸ At the Intimate Gallery, the sensuous art and small, crowded space encouraged visitors to be aware of their embodied existence and, in turn, of their place in a larger physical and spiritual universe; so, too, the viewer's empathetic response to the disorienting *Equivalents*, whose small size demanded that they be looked at up close, was intended to enhance spiritual revelation. This article first addresses the intellectual and artistic contexts in which Stieglitz formed his ideas about spirituality and then goes on to examine the strategies by which he attempted to promote his version of spiritual enlightenment through his gallery and his art. Ultimately, although the ideal behind his theories was of an expansive moment of elevated awareness of the world, his multifaceted tactics tended to seem coercive, demanding mental submission rather than fostering genuine mental openness.

A Spiritual History of the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents*

The Intimate Gallery opened with an exhibition of John Marin's recent paintings in November 1925. The announcement for Marin's exhibition consisted of a single sheet on which was printed a lengthy description of the gallery and its purposes (but, noticeably, nothing about the artist himself). Because this statement was reprinted for every subsequent

show during the next four years, it acquired the stature of a manifesto (Fig. 2). Immediately evident in this inaugural proclamation were allusions to a spiritual state and the power of art to guide viewers to that state. The gallery (which Stieglitz also referred to as "Room 303," or simply, "the Room") was described as a place of "Intimacy and Concentration" in which "All the not overtired will be welcome." Stieglitz announced that he would "direct the Spirit of the Room" (and later changed the wording so that he became its "directing spirit"), leaving no doubt that larger lessons were to be learned through the "intimate study" of his anointed few American artists. In its second season, the additional notice of "Hours of Silence: —Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 10–12 A.M." only intensified the sanctified air.⁹

In order to understand spirituality and its relationship to art as constructed at the Intimate Gallery, one must take note of the imagery and metaphors used there that had particular resonance among subcultures interested in mystical enlightenment. Many writers and artists who frequented the gallery, for example, imbued the untainted American wilderness with a divine signification and relished the sensory experience of the natural world as a pathway to enlightenment. The spiritual resonance of the American landscape was evident in Dove's 1929 show, among others. For the exhibition pamphlet, Stieglitz selected and printed excerpts from the artist's diary. In one entry, Dove described how the "spirit" of the

THE
INTIMATE
GALLERY

ROOM 303

ANDERSON GALLERIES BUILDING
489 PARK AVENUE AT FIFTY-NINTH STREET, NEW YORK

opens its door to the public on December Seventh with a
JOHN MARIN EXHIBITION

The Intimate Gallery will be used more particularly for the intimate study of Seven Americans: John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur G. Dove, Marsden Hartley, Paul Strand, Alfred Stieglitz, and Number Seven.

It will be in the Intimate Gallery only that the complete evolution and the more important examples of these American workers can be seen and studied.

Intimacy and Concentration, we believe, in this instance will breed a broader appreciation. This may lead to a wider distribution of the work.

The Intimate Gallery will be a Direct Point of Contact between Public and Artist. It is the Artists' Room. Alfred Stieglitz has volunteered his services. He will direct the Spirit of the Room.

Every picture will be clearly marked with its price. No effort will be made to sell anything to any one. Prices will be kept as low as possible. Rent is the only overhead charge.

The Intimate Gallery is not a business nor is it a "Social" Function. The Intimate Gallery competes with no one nor with anything.

The Gallery will be open daily, Sundays excepted, from 10 A.M. till 6 P.M.

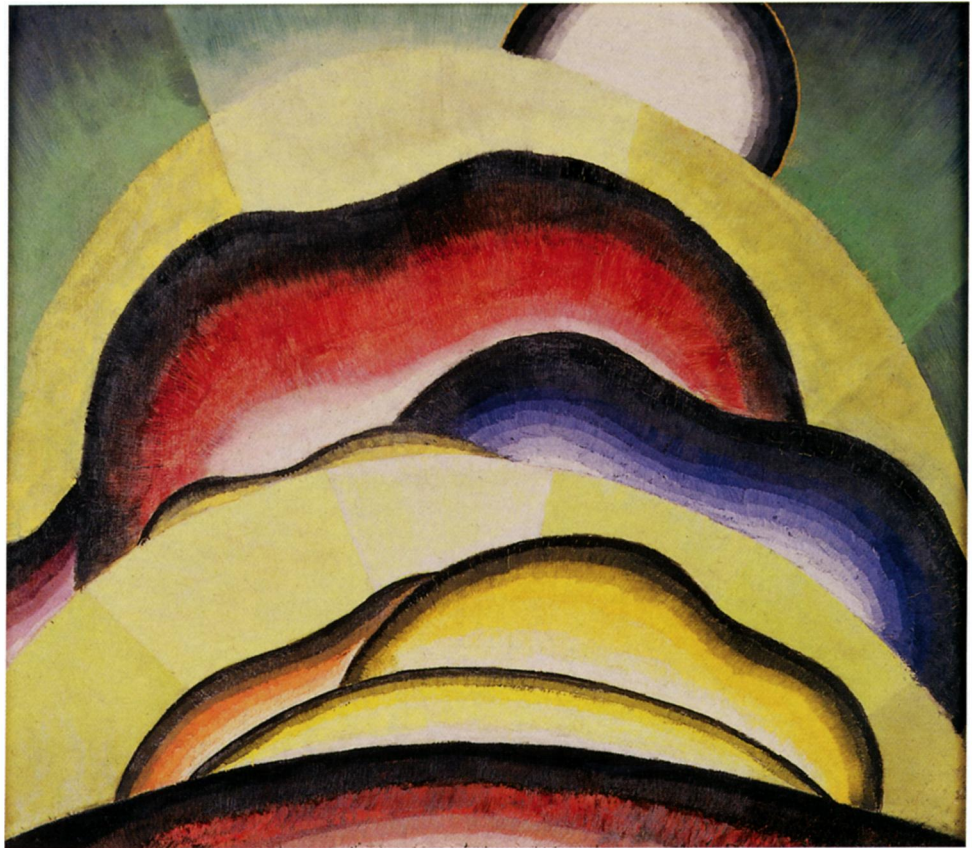
Exhibition I —JOHN MARIN.
Exhibition II —ARTHUR G. DOVE, January, 1926.
Exhibition III—GEORGIA O'KEEFFE, February.
Exhibition IV—MARSDEN HARTLEY, March.
Other exhibitions to be announced.

All the not overtired will be welcome

2 Intimate Gallery announcement, 1925. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature

natural world inspired his abstractions: "to feel the power of the ground or sea, and to play or paint it with that in mind, letting [its] spirit hold what you do together rather than continuous objective form." He hoped that the paintings themselves, "fly[ing] in a medium more rare," would capture some quality of that spirit.¹⁰ *Sunrise* (1924) might be interpreted as a product of "feel[ing] the power of the ground" (Fig. 3). The painting is composed of a repeated series of yellow circles emerging from behind vibrantly colored forms—a montage of views of the sun rising from behind a mountain. Each larger circle of yellow is surmounted by even larger colored masses; it is as if the sun, rising through the sky, is pulling the earth with it. Dove prolongs their separation through ever larger suns and mountains, until suddenly all is condensed into a small circular form—the risen sun, now in a divine white—at the top of the panel. Dove's representation does not convey observed fact but, rather, reenacts the anticipation and awe of divine revelation that he experienced before such a scene.

Stieglitz's presentation of Dove—emphasizing the painter's belief in a link between raw nature and the divine order of the cosmos—echoed the tenets of Transcendentalism. At its core, the theology codified by Ralph Waldo Emerson was experiential, one where individuals were driven by "throbs of desire and hope" to understand God.¹¹ The broader legacy of this doctrine of religious immediacy appeared in twentieth-century mainstream culture as a pervasive concern with the loss of spiritual touchstones in daily life.¹² More specifically, however, the Transcendentalists had popularized the belief that the natural wilderness contains within it evidence of the divine workings of God.¹³ Following a theory of "correspondences," first proposed by the Swedish eighteenth-century theologian and mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg, the American Transcendentalists believed that any given object symbolized both material and spiritual existence, which meant that the material world could always be read as an indication of the existence of a spiritual realm. Although Stieglitz himself rarely, if ever, directly cited Transcendentalist authors, his



3 Arthur G. Dove, *Sunrise*, oil on panel, 18¼ × 20⅞ in., 1924. Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Edward R. Wehr (Ethel), M1960.32 (reprinted with the permission of the Dove Estate)

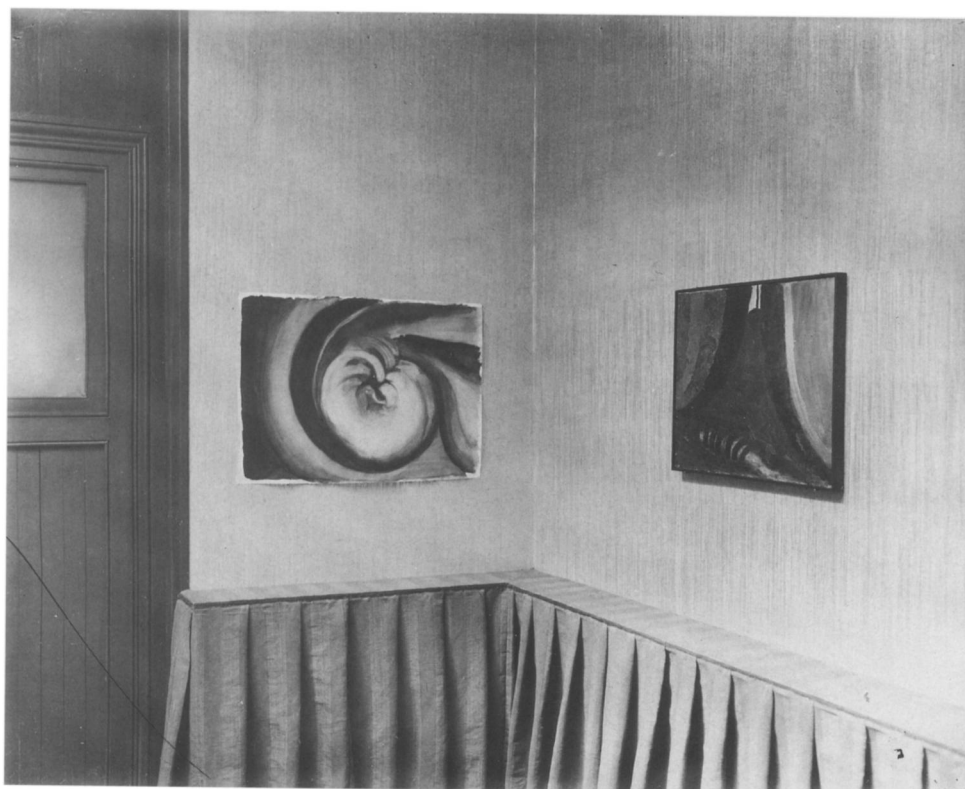
affinity with their tradition is revealed in both his willingness to privilege a spiritual interpretation of landscape painting at his gallery (evidenced in the pamphlet published for Dove's show) and his own rhapsodic love of the Lake George landscape. In a typical letter from 1923, he imbued the terrain with an emotional life and death that evokes the nature writings of Henry Thoreau: "A few days ago the whole landscape was a yellow mass. I never saw such living yellow. Yellow is a great favorite of mine—but unless it 'lives' it isn't yellow for me—A few hours of rain & a little wind & the yellow was gone—Many trees are denuded. Bleakness is setting in."¹⁴

That Stieglitz's belief in a spiritual American landscape recalled the Transcendentalists was not lost on the circle of writers and artists who admired him, and was in fact a principle reason for their veneration. In the years following World War I, this group pointedly referred to Emerson and Thoreau as ancestors in their "usable past," model Americans who rebelled against materialism and superficiality in an effort to understand the essential aspects of human existence.¹⁵ Waldo Frank's 1919 book *Our America* established a genealogy of American thought that became a rallying cry for many artists in the ensuing decade. From a discussion of Emerson and Thoreau, Frank arrived at a portrait of Stieglitz, who seemed to have brought the Transcendentalists' sanctuary of nature to the city during the first decades of the century in the form of 291: "'291' is a religious fact. . . . A little altar at which life was worshiped above the noise of a dead city. Here was a refuge, certain and solitary, from the tearing grip of industrial order."¹⁶

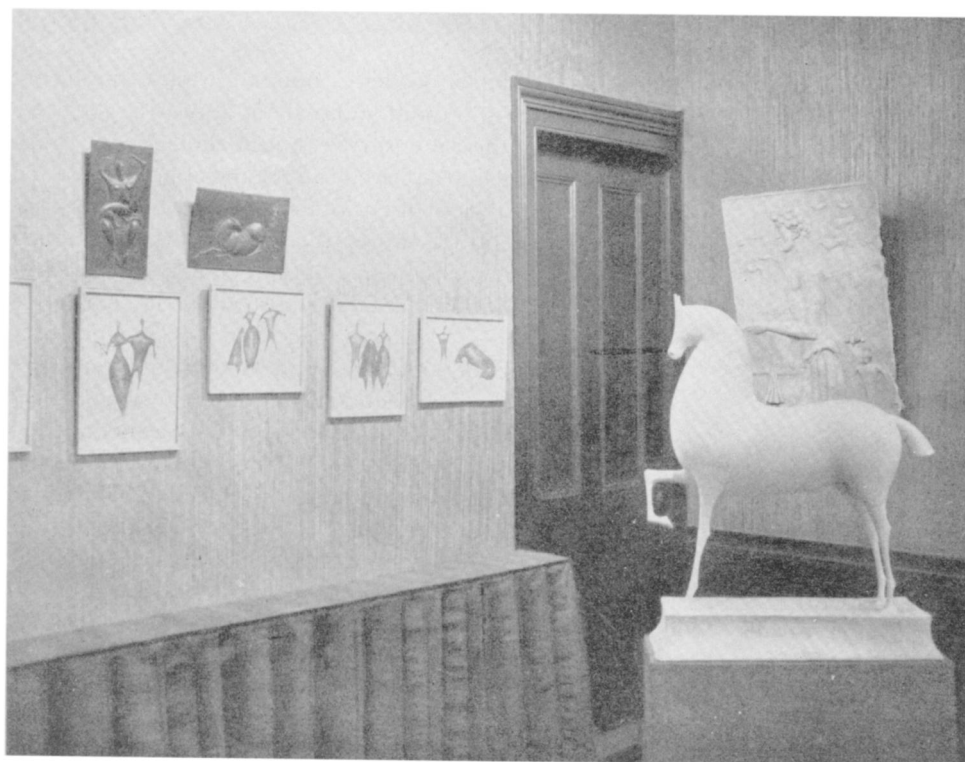
The space of the Intimate Gallery was, if possible, smaller than that of 291. Stieglitz overlaid the black velour-covered

walls in the Anderson Galleries Building with a translucent gauze to lighten the room and make it appear larger.¹⁷ No photographs of the room survive, but in all likelihood Stieglitz hung pictures here as he had at 291 and as he would again at *An American Place*: often in a single row, but also occasionally stacking works two or three high, always grouping them so that complementary color and composition created a unified aesthetic statement that transcended the specifics of the work (Figs. 4–7). The wall space, however, was probably insufficient to display all of the works in an exhibition. From references to "the jumbled Marins" and paintings "piled around," one surmises that canvases were also leaned against the walls along the floor.¹⁸ Despite what must have been a claustrophobic room, Stieglitz consistently described the gallery as expansive, the kind of space one would willingly lose oneself in. To Anderson he wrote, "I like the room . . . best with the pictures & myself alone. [It] breathe[s] a cathedral feeling—a finest feeling."¹⁹ And in a letter from 1928, he responded to a description of the Intimate Gallery as "an oasis" with an urgent plea: "Do you understand why The Room *must be*—for me—& all those who need to breathe a bit in this greatest city of to-day's world."²⁰

The metaphor of breathing was a popular rhetorical trope in mystical practices of the day because it handily captured the sense of unity and oneness that had become the *sine qua non* of spiritual enlightenment: breathing is a bodily function shared by all humankind and is also an obvious means by which we exist in symbiotic unity with our environment. For example, Claude Bragdon, an architect with a strong interest in mysticism and Stieglitz's good friend when both lived at the Shelton Hotel in the 1920s and 1930s,²¹ used the meta-



4 Todd Webb, from a canceled negative by Stieglitz, *Exhibition of the Recent Work . . . by Georgia O'Keeffe*, installation view at 291, New York, 1917 (printed 1963). New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature

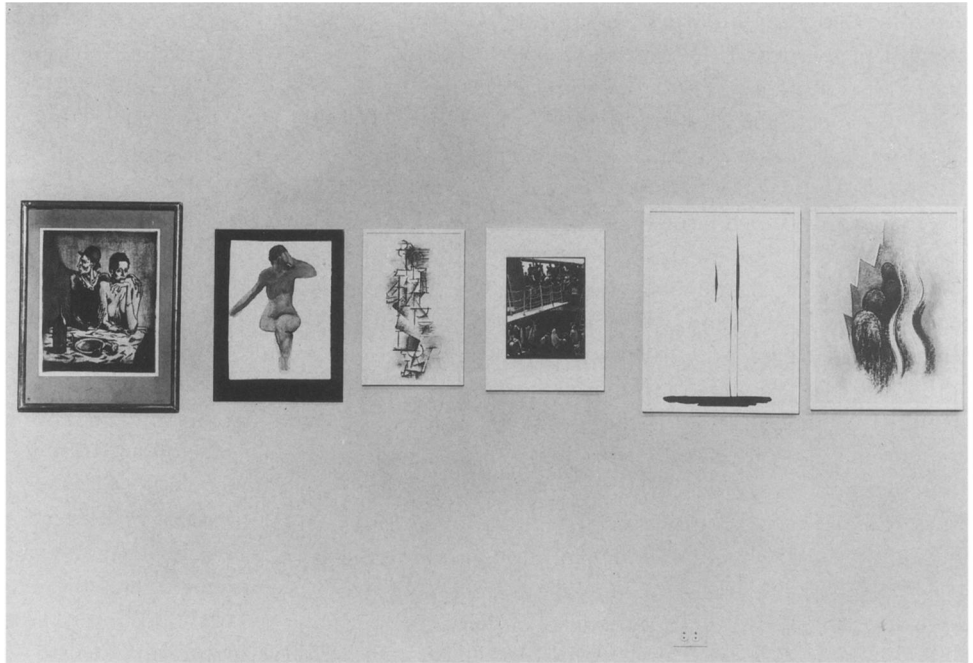


5 Stieglitz, *Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings by Eli Nadelman*, installation view at 291, New York, 1915. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature

phor of breathing as a spiritual exercise in his 1933 book *An Introduction to Yoga*. "Breath is indeed the lord of the body," he wrote, "and for that reason Brahma is said to assume in the body the form of breath."²² Stieglitz praised the book in a letter to Bragdon, describing how he had received it "after midnight. I opened it at once and began reading in the

elevator while going up to the 30th [floor of the Shelton]. Read into the night."²³ He went on to proclaim that "the book ought to be a real go," indicating his sympathy with Bragdon's ideas.²⁴

Among the most influential mystical schools promoting ideas of a unified physical and spiritual cosmos in the early



6 Stieglitz? *Beginnings and Landmarks: 291*, installation view at An American Place, New York, 1937. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature



7 Stieglitz? *Beginnings and Landmarks: 291*, installation view at An American Place, New York, 1937. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature

twentieth century were the Theosophists, who promulgated a syncretistic religion incorporating elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judeo-Christian beliefs. The Theosophists believed that although society had devolved in its spirituality since ancient times, each person still contained a kernel of divinity that could be cultivated to unite all humankind.²⁵ Theosophic enlightenment was achieved when an individual, through study and meditation, became aware of her place within a larger whole of united religions and humanity. Accompanying this epiphany would be a sensation of oneness with a divine universe and a Nirvana-like loss of the individual

self. Although there is no evidence that Stieglitz ever attended any Theosophical meetings, he would have been familiar with its basic doctrines since at least 1912. At that time, he received letters from Marsden Hartley, who had learned about Theosophy in Berlin. Stieglitz had also read laudatory references to the religious group in Wassily Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, an excerpt of which he eagerly translated for the July 1912 issue of his avant-garde journal *Camera Work* (published from 1902 to 1917).²⁶

After World War I, an ever larger number of Stieglitz's friends and colleagues became involved with Theosophy and

other mystical practices based loosely on Eastern religions, including Bragdon (who had also translated a book on the mystical properties of the fourth dimension by the Theosophist P. D. Ouspensky, entitled *Tertium Organum*), Dove, and Stieglitz's niece and her husband, Elizabeth and Donald Davidson.²⁷ The Russian mystic G. I. Gurdjieff (a disaffected Theosophist) brought his disciples to New York in 1923, where they performed a series of dance recitals, demonstrating their belief that the work of the physical body was a pathway to spiritual oneness.²⁸ Assorted artists and intellectuals such as Hart Crane, who was in correspondence with Stieglitz at this time, attended these performances.²⁹

Indeed, the Stieglitz-Crane correspondence of the years around 1923 demonstrates a shared interest in the quest for enlightenment—carried on in the “impressionistic” terms of contemporary mysticism—and their letters shed light on Stieglitz's spiritual aspirations for his cloud photographs.³⁰ In the summer of 1923, when he began photographing the sky in earnest, Stieglitz wrote to Crane about the larger goals of this work, using the clichéd euphemism of “light” for spiritual enlightenment: “We're all after Light—even more Light—so why not seek it together—as individuals in sympathy in a strong unsentimental spirit—as men. . . .”³¹ His vision of a collective of sympathetically minded artists must be understood in the context of the Theosophical model of spiritual transcendence, which holds that individuals will be united on some higher level of consciousness; Crane replied, again invoking this model of a unified human race, “We must somehow touch the clearest veins of eternity flowing through the crowds around us.”³² Present in both of these letters is an undercurrent of physicality—Stieglitz's “men” and Crane's “veins” of the crowd—that resonates with the Transcendentalists' emphasis on the natural world and, furthermore, with the embodied work of the Gurdjieff dancers. Five years later Stieglitz used similar language of light and searching to describe the *Equivalents* in a letter to Hartley, where he pointedly compared the photographs with his work at 291 and the Intimate Gallery:

They are photographs—pure and simple. My search for more Light—that is the never ending Search—of all those truly working—in whatever medium. . . . May these Prints in possible moments of Darkness give you Courage—Dispel all Doubts. They represent the Spirit of “291”—and “303”—as I understand that Spirit.³³

The final link in the chain connecting Stieglitz, his peers, mysticism, and the goal of cultivating a spiritual school in American art can be found in the 1930 book *Prophets of the New India* by Romain Rolland. Rolland entered the Stieglitz circle through his friendship with Waldo Frank in the 1910s; he shared his immersion in Eastern mysticism with Frank and other American colleagues throughout the 1920s.³⁴ Rolland firmly believed that the experience of oneness with the universe was the goal of mystical knowledge. He proposed further, in the 1928 letter to Sigmund Freud that became the departure point for the latter's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, that such oneness was the source of all true religious feeling. He gave a name to this particular sensation, calling it “the oceanic.” As Freud introduced the concept,

It is a feeling which he [Rolland] would like to call a sensation of “eternity,” a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded—as it were, “oceanic” . . . it is the source of the religious energy which is seized upon by the various Churches and religious systems, directed by them into particular channels, and doubtless also exhausted by them. One may, he thinks, rightly call oneself religious on the grounds of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion.³⁵

In *Prophets of the New India*, Rolland proposed that Americans were highly receptive to Eastern teachings—were, one might say, open to oceanic epiphanies—because of the legacy of Emerson and Thoreau.³⁶ Although Rolland did not mention Stieglitz, his choice of the Transcendentalists as spiritual forefathers for a rejuvenated America perfectly echoed Waldo Frank's genealogy in *Our America* (which Rolland would have known through his friendship with Frank). As Stieglitz was the explicit torchbearer of the American spiritual tradition in Frank's book, he was the implied student of Eastern mysticism—aware of the organic unity of the cosmos, committed to sharing this insight with other citizens of the modern world—in Rolland's book.

These few examples of public and private discourse surrounding the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents* disclose how thoroughly intertwined were spirituality and art for Stieglitz. He believed that American modern art would distinguish itself from its European counterpart and play a vital role in American society by opening up a realm of spiritual resuscitation. In this nondoctrinal spiritual realm, individuals, through the recognition of their place in an organic cosmos, would cease to be isolated from one another and the world. Most importantly, this spirituality emphasized the physicality of experience as a route to enlightenment. The Intimate Gallery would ultimately become the sanctuary where Stieglitz could offer his spiritual leadership, orchestrating the art, written paraphernalia, and gallery architecture to guide visitors down the path that he perceived was the correct route to spiritual enlightenment. Similarly, the *Equivalents* became a parallel exploration of spiritual expression, in which Stieglitz shared his personal vision with viewers through small prints that demanded up-close, intimate scrutiny. In light of his spiritually inclined associates, a comment by Stieglitz to the critic Paul Rosenfeld in 1923 becomes more than a self-aggrandizing proclamation, alluding instead to the shared interests of an international coterie: “I'm not sure about being as much an artist as one of the leading spiritual forces of this country.”³⁷

291: A Point of Contrast

The spiritual ideas that so thoroughly infused Stieglitz's work of the 1920s had been of some interest to him years before, as the excerpt from Kandinsky's book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* in *Camera Work* attests. Such theories did not, however, occupy a position of especial importance in the intellectual debates of the Stieglitz circle in the 1900s and 1910s. There, they represented a few strands of thought among many, debated within the pages of *Camera Work* and among the artists and critics who visited 291, about the nature and value of modern art.³⁸ Indeed, the atmosphere of discussion rather

8 Webb, from a canceled negative by Stieglitz, *Exhibition of Photographs by Eduard J. Steichen*, installation view at 291, New York, 1906 (printed 1963). New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature



than prescription was one of that gallery's defining characteristics. It was evocatively captured in a statement offered by Hodge Kirnon, the elevator operator at 291, in response to the question, "What is 291?": "I have found in '291' a spirit which fosters liberty, defines no methods, never pretends to know, never condemns, but always encourages those who are daring enough to be intrepid; those who feel a just repugnance towards the ideals and standards established by convention."³⁹

The presentation of the art at 291 reflected and contributed to the general tenor of intellectual debate. In the attic-story gallery of 291 Fifth Avenue, Stieglitz covered the walls with a coarse cheesecloth-type material in a muted color, a practice that Alfred H. Barr Jr. would copy almost twenty-five years later at the Museum of Modern Art.⁴⁰ Around the room, slightly higher than the traditional height of a dado rail on a paneled wall, ran a narrow shelf, from which hung a curtain to the floor. A large square pedestal usually stood in the center of the room, holding an enormous hammered brass bowl filled with leaves or grasses; a translucent scrim that diffused overhead light crowned the space (Fig. 8). Because Stieglitz chose to preserve the traditional proportions of the wall with his dadolike shelf, he had only the upper surface area in which to hang art. There he hung artworks according to what can broadly be described as two different hanging techniques.⁴¹ In the first, he hung the works in an evenly spaced single row, only occasionally hanging a small piece above or below another (Figs. 4, 8). In the second, he clustered works in irregular patterns across the walls, grouping them together based on formal qualities (Fig. 5). Both of these hanging styles had a quality of apparent neutrality: in the former, each object occupied an equal amount of wall space, while in the latter, works were clustered

sympathetically so that each would be understood in relation to the others, none commanding more attention than its neighbors. This evenhandedness was complemented by Stieglitz's framing preferences. Narrow, squared frames—sometimes painted white or black, other times decorated by the artist (such as Marin or Hartley)—neither overwhelmed the art nor signaled degrees of importance as more ornate carved and gilt frames might have.

When 291 opened, Stieglitz's method of displaying art represented a radical departure from traditional installations in American museums. Throughout the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries in Europe, salon-style hangs, where works climbed tall walls, clustered by genre or subordinated to larger decorative schemes based on canvas size, had predominated in large public collections. Major American institutions of art founded in the nineteenth century, most notably New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, had taken their cues from these famous collections; even in the first decades of the twentieth century, the Metropolitan Museum tended to hang its gilt-framed paintings in a variety of symmetrical arrangements stacked well above the average line of sight (Fig. 9). However, in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, independent groups of modern artists in both England and France had begun to challenge salon-hanging practice.⁴² They intermittently sponsored simplified installations in private, smaller galleries, where they placed paintings at a viewable height and often gave more wall space to each work (Fig. 10). The paintings, in these settings, were privileged as unique creations demanding undistracted attention. Stieglitz's hanging and framing styles, which before World War I looked positively alien next to the procedures of the Metropolitan, must be understood as the heir to these European independent installations.⁴³ All aspects of the gal-



9 Children in a gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, July 7, 1910. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

lery space itself—its framing style, hang, and burlap-covered walls, evoking an air of noble poverty—can be seen as an attempt to clear away the unnecessary frills around the art. In so doing, it encouraged visitors to set aside preconceptions, look thoughtfully at the works, and develop critical theories in dialogue with others in the room.

Stieglitz often described 291, with its modest decor, simple presentation of art, and open debates about the meanings of art, as a laboratory. His choice of metaphor, which revealed his early training as an engineer, was unsurprising in an era when science, with its rigorously controlled experiments, seemed to have the omnipotence to reveal objective truths about human experience and the natural world. Stieglitz envisioned 291 as an artistic experiment in which the traditional markers of value for art (such as framing and hanging) were controlled and visitors determined worth for themselves.⁴⁴ Thus, the viewers as well as the works of art were the subjects of Stieglitz's experiments. He professed disillusion in one interview about the "sense of honesty possessed by the average American," revealing this goal of his gallery experiment. By removing the traditional trappings of fine art, he wanted viewers to respond to the art independently, based on their emotional reality. His experiment aimed to cultivate "self-expression" and the "exchange [of] living ideas" among the broader public as well as artists and critics.⁴⁵

Another notable instance of scientific language in the Stieglitz circle can serve as a metaphor for the differences between 291 and the Intimate Gallery. In two important *Camera Work* essays from 1913, Marius De Zayas, the Mexican artist, critic, and close associate of Stieglitz, contrasted photography and art.⁴⁶ Prior to this time, Stieglitz's agenda had been the promotion of photography as an art form equally expressive as painting or sculpture. De Zayas's articles refuted that position by arguing that the power of the photograph is precisely its anti-expressiveness: it has the ability to capture the real world in a completely objective, unaltered form. Photography, in De Zayas's formulation, was an untainted

mirror of nature, "free and impersonal research."⁴⁷ He defined art, in contrast, by its ability to convey emotional subjectivity rather than external reality. An artist, as opposed to a photographer, recognizes his or her inner state, then manipulates the forms of the outside world in order to express that state, creating "a systematic and personal representation."⁴⁸ These differences between art and photography dictate different responses on the part of the viewer. A work of art presents an emotional state that the viewer is meant to discern and sympathize with. Since a photograph, on the other hand, provides an unmanipulated view of the world, the emotional significance of the work depends on the viewer's individual response to the thing depicted.⁴⁹

If 291, with its open debates and uncluttered presentation style, was meant to teach viewers to find their own responses to art, then it can be called a kind of "photography" of gallery practice. In contrast, the Intimate Gallery, as the rest of this article will argue, was the "art" version of Stieglitz's gallery career. After 291 closed, Stieglitz associated most closely with the American artists he had sponsored and with sympathetic writers and critics such as Anderson, Crane, Frank, and Rosenfeld.⁵⁰ Their shared interest in a national art and their experimentation with various schools of mysticism grew into the layered, often cacophonous dialogue documented here. By the mid-1920s, Stieglitz increasingly foregrounded his belief in the spiritual power of art and used it to thoroughly infuse the interpretative scheme of the Intimate Gallery, quelling much debate and forcing viewers to either accept his view or leave.

The Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents*

Stieglitz carefully orchestrated every aspect of a visitor's experience at the Intimate Gallery, ranging from the specific art seen on the walls, its interpretation in Stieglitz-sponsored pamphlets, and the way in which sales were made to, finally, the deployment of the architectural space. Each of these elements supported his belief that art could be a vehicle of

spiritual enlightenment. Ultimately, Stieglitz used his Intimate Gallery as a pulpit from which he argued that American culture could only be resuscitated through spiritual epiphany.

The most direct vehicle for Stieglitz's ideas at the Intimate Gallery was the work of the artists he showed and the interpretative pamphlets he published. The Stieglitz circle from the 291 years was known for its pioneering abstraction, and because philosophers and artists in the first decades of the twentieth century, such as Wilhelm Worringer and Kandinsky, claimed that abstraction was the ideal vehicle for spiritual expression, one might expect that it was through abstract art that Stieglitz presented his ideas.⁵¹ The evidence surrounding the Intimate Gallery, however, refutes these assumptions. Not only was a significant percentage of the art shown representational, but also Stieglitz himself believed, as we shall see below, that realism was an essential tool for conveying spiritual ideas. Stieglitz saw spirituality not as an intellectualized, abstract state but as intimately linked with the awareness of one's embodied existence (as with the Gurdjieff dancers) and the physicality of nature (as with the Transcendentalists). Indeed, Stieglitz's conception of the spiritual in art could be characterized as pragmatic: he wanted not an art that simply illustrated the completed spiritual state but one that catalyzed the process of enlightenment. A work of art would do this by calling on the viewer to empathize with both its subject matter and the body of the artist who created it. By establishing this interanimating zone—in which the art, infused with a tactile vibrancy by the artist, in turn evokes an embodied awareness in the viewer—the work would seemingly encourage the viewer to participate in the same spiritual transformation that the artist had ostensibly experienced.⁵²

Stieglitz's belief in the expressive potential of realism is evident in his 1920s correspondence with Hart Crane and D. H. Lawrence.⁵³ Crane implied his own allegiance to realism in a letter from the summer of 1923, when he praised Stieglitz: "You have the distinction of being classic and realistic at once. That, of course, is what *real* classicism means."⁵⁴ Stieglitz must have been intrigued by the younger poet's comments, which arrived at Lake George the summer he began the cloud series that would become the *Equivalents*. In these pictures, as Sarah Greenough has argued, Stieglitz found a subject matter that would allow him to make profoundly expressive images while adhering to the absolute fact of reality; they are an exploration of the poetic potential of "straight photography," the theory of photographic practice codified by Paul Strand that celebrated the hard-edged, apparently unmanipulated realism of the camera's eye.⁵⁵ In a December 1923 letter to Crane, Stieglitz described his cloud pictures in terms of reality and abstraction and claimed that their achievement was the expression of the intangible spirit through concrete forms:

I'm most curious to see what the "Clouds" will do to you. . . . Several people feel I have photographed God. May be. . . . I know exactly what I have photographed. I know I have done something that has never been done . . . I also know that there is more of the really abstract in some "representation" than in most of the dead representations of the so called abstract so fashionable now.⁵⁶



10 James A. M. Whistler, *Sketch of the Interior of the Suffolk Street Gallery during an Exhibition*, pen and ink, 8 × 6³/₈ in., 1886. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

Five years later, Stieglitz started a correspondence with D. H. Lawrence after the publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The photographer was one of the first in the United States to receive the privately printed novel before it was censored by the postal service. He commented to several friends that he believed Lawrence's art bore strong resemblances to his and O'Keeffe's work, noting, in particular, a shared quality among all three of "'brutal' directness," which was "direct like Georgia's paintings when they are truly great."⁵⁷ Although Stieglitz was perhaps using the word "direct" as a euphemism for the sexual content that was read into O'Keeffe's work and was explicit in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, he was also speaking more broadly of the use of a sensuous realism capable of eliciting empathetic responses. Lawrence explained his belief that modern art must appeal to the physical experience of reality, in contrast to the remoteness fostered by abstraction, in an August 1928 letter in which he proclaimed, "If a picture is to hit deep into the senses, which is its business, it must hit down to the soul and up into the mind . . . and the meaning has to come through direct sense impression."⁵⁸ Significantly, Stieglitz felt so vindicated by Lawrence's pronouncement that he copied the letter for the critic Herbert Seligmann later that summer.⁵⁹

A close examination of several paintings displayed and interpreted at the Intimate Gallery demonstrates how their particular kind of sensuous realism was intended to lead to spiritual epiphany. O'Keeffe's paintings, for example, whether depicting a still life or a landscape, were consistently



11 Georgia O'Keeffe, *Large Dark Red Leaves on White*, oil on canvas, 32 × 21 in., 1927. Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection (© 2003 The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)

understood as a representation of her own embodied physicality. Oscar Bluemner cultivated such a reading in his 1927 essay accompanying her Intimate Gallery show: "The human form and face as motifs avoided yet presented in every flower, tree, pebble, cloud, wall, hill, wave, thing. Surface-modeling now emulates vital process, expresses biological emotion."⁶⁰ And, indeed, *Large Dark Red Leaves on White* (1927), shown in her 1928 exhibition, lends itself to such an interpretation (Fig. 11). The leaves seem almost human, arms enveloping each other in an intimate embrace and casting deep shadows against crumpled white bedclothes. At the same time, the leaf at the top of the pile lists slightly to the right, reminding us that its broad, deeply colored form is both lightweight and fragile, that it rests only precariously on top of other equally fragile leaves. The stray curved "finger" of one leaf in the lower right of the canvas calls to mind the membranous plasticity of an actual leaf held between the fingers. It was Lewis Mumford, however, who argued for the larger significance of an empathetic response to her paintings. He claimed that "the essence of our contemporary spiritual dilemma" was the loss of a sense of "our vital needs" in the face

of an increasingly mechanized society, casting her vibrantly physical forms, and the sensations of embodiment and touch that they evoked, as a kind of expansive spiritual succor for the contemporary world: "she has brought what was inarticulate and troubled and confused into the realm of conscious beauty, where it may be recalled and enjoyed with a new intensity."⁶¹

While Stieglitz encouraged viewers to project O'Keeffe's body onto her painted forms, he advocated a somewhat different response to the landscape paintings of men such as Marin and Hartley. Rather than fostering an identification between the viewer's body and the painted subject, the gallery literature promoted an identification between the viewer's body and the virile body of the artist as he stood in nature and recorded his awe on canvas. In the work of Marin, whose watercolors of the New England landscape were among the best-known images of the Stieglitz circle, critics saw not merely a depiction of mountains or coastline but also an expression of a vibrant, teeming natural world that surrounded the painter as he worked. In *Near Great Barrington* (1925, exhibited 1926) the large, overlapping blocks of green are meant to denote the vegetation of the Berkshires, but the fluidity of the water that suspends the pigment connotes a restless movement that a more detailed rendering might not have (Fig. 12). Marin's color composition furthers this effect: the patches of shades of green in some places seamlessly flow together, in other places abut with greater tension. The varying rhythms and forms of these greens undulate across the paper, crawling up the form of the mountain with a relentless energy.

In an essay to accompany Marin's 1928 exhibition at the Intimate Gallery, Hartley maintained that the simplified forms of Marin's landscapes represented the essential elements that constitute the natural world; by capturing these essences, he asserted, Marin more closely conveyed the physical and emotional reality of the landscape than a more literal painting might have. "The pictures have come to look," he wrote, "more like mineralogical fragments in a geological collection with their textures of tarnished metal, facets of crystal, achrous substances, and by this very selectiveness have come to look still more like nature, because they represent natural substances more naturally." He then compared the contours of the earth to a human body, evoking a living, sensate landscape, and concluded, "Marin has experienced his subject with depth, insight and feeling . . . he has a universal comprehension of his essential detail."⁶² While Hartley never directly referred to a spiritual quality in Marin's work, his closing phrase evoked an image of the painter in a state of inspired oneness with the earth, intuiting the "harmony" of his existence on both the universal and microcosmic scales.⁶³ The viewer of *Near Great Barrington*, swept along in its fluent evocation of the New England wilderness, was meant to share Marin's moment of complete fusion with both the natural and the spiritual.

Lee Simonson wrote the interpretative essay for Hartley's 1929 show, which included many paintings from his time spent in France (1924–30), such as *Mt. Ste-Victoire, Aix-en-Provence* (1927, Fig. 13). Hartley's painting is an unabashed reference to Paul Cézanne's work, but he markedly altered the experience of the landscape through his palette of hot

pinks, oranges, and greens and his distorted perspective, in which the pink road falls out beneath the canvas and the trees and foothills are massed precariously between the road and the distant, shimmering mountain. Simonson celebrated this highly subjective rendering of the mountainous terrain by imbuing the artist's use of hue and perspective with psychological intensity. "For Hartley paints mountains because he wants to live with them, because they reconcile him to life. . . . He has achieved that transference of self, that identification of the artist with an object, which to me is the one quality that can make painting a vital form of communication." He concluded his essay by casting Hartley's emotional landscapes as a journey of spiritual enlightenment, underscoring his interpretative agenda through language that recalled biblical cadences.

[Hartley] lifted my eyes to the hills and from them, thru my most tormented years, came peace. . . . I can think of no one . . . who has expressed with more finality of form and color than Hartley, the meaning of mountains, or so completely revealed the forces that draw our feet to them, lift up our hearts and free our minds in their sight.⁶⁴

Simonson poetically summarized the ideas that had informed interpretation at the Intimate Gallery for the previous four seasons. By emphasizing the physical immediacy of work by O'Keeffe, Marin, Hartley, and Dove—by calling attention to the artists' ability to infuse their subject matter with a vibrant, animated sensibility—Stieglitz's pamphlets presented the art, in turn, as an animating agent for the viewer. The viewer's empathetic response was meant to cultivate an embodied awareness of the physical world and, from the spiritual resonance of that physical world, an experience of oneness with both the natural and the divine.

The *Equivalents*, too, participated in this matrix that connected the natural world, physical sensation, and spiritual enlightenment. As Rosalind Krauss has argued, the photographs that comprise the *Equivalents* often seem calculated to induce a sense of vertigo.⁶⁵ In their resolute smallness and their frequent lack of orienting anchors, they provoke in the viewer the dizzying sensation of tilting one's head back to face the sky and losing sight of the very ground that anchors one's feet. In *Equivalent 222A* (1931), Stieglitz captured an unusual formation of thin clouds to create a sense of the sky speeding by at great velocity (Fig. 14). The glimpse of tree at lower right only further destabilizes the viewer's orientation, since its contour could be either horizontal or vertical; Stieglitz's camera, and the viewer's body, might have just pivoted off axis and are catching the clouds streaking by as both fall to the ground. Other photographs from the series provide as much cognitive confusion as bodily disorientation. In the impressionistic *Songs of the Sky in Five Pictures (No. 5)* (1923), the clear, open sky—which, when viewed in person, would be more enlivening than a view of thick clouds—manifests a far darker, colder tone than the clouds (Fig. 15). The clouds, counterintuitively, become a warmer, more hospitable place with their subtle, textured layers.

Some of the *Equivalents* seem to depict an open, airy sky, capturing the clouds in almost playful formations. In *Equivalent* (1925), clouds trail across the sky in wisps that resemble

a pair of legs dancing on tiptoes (Fig. 16). Stieglitz focused on the "legs" as they pulled away from the body of the cloud in the lower left of the photograph to dissipate into thin strands across the lower right; the clouds seem to perform a story of gracefully dissolving into the light of the open sky, much like the model of spiritual epiphany promoted in the Intimate Gallery. Indeed, Stieglitz took this optimistic image during the summer that he decided to open the Intimate Gallery for those artists who, as he said, were "free souls."⁶⁶ In contrast to the expansiveness of such images, other photographs from the series are explicitly claustrophobic. In *Equivalent, Set G (Print 3)* (1929), taken the summer after he had to close the Intimate Gallery (and during O'Keeffe's first lengthy visit to the Southwest, leaving him alone at Lake George), the rippling dark clouds chase across the sky (Fig. 17). Stieglitz has frozen their gathering mass at an indecisive moment, perhaps about to overtake the faint sun in the upper left, perhaps repelled by the pure white circle of its form.

For Stieglitz, the bodily and intellectual disorientation that his animated cloud images provoked, as well as their vast expressive potential—conveying either joy or dread—all served as instruments to bring visitors as close as possible to an awareness of the awesome infinity beyond their immediate existence. He later described one of his *Equivalents* as "reaching up beyond the sun, the living point, into darkness, which is also light."⁶⁷ His ambiguous reference to the merging of light and dark can be understood, within the broader context of his spiritual interests, as an allusion to a spiritual realm where all opposites are reconciled into a harmonious whole; this ideal realm was similar to the concept of a unified spiritual cosmos that he promoted at the Intimate Gallery. Crane was affected by the spiritual content of these photographs when he first saw them in the 1920s and described them in a draft of an essay using similar terms of fused opposites: "the hundredth of a second caught so precisely that the motion is continued from the picture infinitely: the moment made eternal . . . we are thrown into ultimate harmonies by looking at these stationary, yet strangely moving pictures."⁶⁸

The emphasis on primary experience at the Intimate Gallery contained strains of both anti-intellectualism and anti-materialism. Stieglitz frequently condemned various artists and critics for being overly concerned with theories and not consumed enough with the passions and inconsistencies that are a part of all life. To his mind, an art motivated by theories would be unable to speak to any viewer, as he complained about the editors at *Vanity Fair*: "The trouble with these people is that they know so damned much they experience nothing—so know really nothing."⁶⁹ Furthermore, he believed that American society, overly obsessed with money and superficial appearances, had a pressing need for an antitheoretical art that addressed authentic, noncommercial experiences. His disparaging comments about the general American public are often cited as evidence of his alienation from popular culture, and remarks such as "Every time I see a Ford car something in me revolts—I hate the sight of one because of its absolute lack of any kind of quality feeling" certainly indicate his disapproval of American commercialism.⁷⁰ Stieglitz nonetheless glimpsed moments of passion in the Ameri-



12 John Marin, *Near Great Barrington*, watercolor on paper, 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ in., 1925. Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection (© 2003 Estate of John Marin / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)

can public, and this was the redeeming quality that he hoped to tap through the art in the Intimate Gallery:

Yesterday afternoon as I went for the mail the drugstore was filled with villagers listening to the Radio—Baseball.—Washington. My heart nearly stood still when I was informed that it was the last half of the 11th inning—tie. . . .

Of course while listening for the final return of the baseball Drama I was wondering would a crowd of Americans ever stand before a picture of real value with a fraction of the enthusiasm spent on baseball. Or read a real book with enthusiasm so genuine—so palpitating?⁷¹

What was the value of this anti-intellectualism, with its emphasis on physical experience and the natural world? Put simply, Stieglitz believed that physical sensation was one of the common roots of human experience. Commercialism, social convention, and intellectual theories were structures

arbitrarily imposed on humanity, which, because of their distance from the energies of lived experience, served only to isolate people from one another.⁷² By focusing on the shared reality of bodily existence, he sought to evoke an awareness of the deeper forces that forge a human community. The intended result for visitors to the gallery was thus the discovery of their individual self as a part of a larger human whole—the discovery that their “palpitating” passions were the threads that made up the fabric of an authentic American experience.

Stieglitz also exercised interpretative control over the art in the Intimate Gallery through his self-proclaimed temperamental sales technique. As he liked to boast, he judged potential buyers on the sincerity of their desire for the art and would sell only to those he felt would appreciate the work in an appropriate manner. As early as 1908, a newspaper interview recorded his assertion, “I could sell any picture here [at



13 Marsden Hartley, *Mt. Ste-Victoire, Aix-en-Provence*, oil on canvas, 25½ × 31⅞ in., 1927. Private collection (courtesy of Martha Parrish & James Reinish, Inc.)

291] to anybody. But I won't do it. People who do not feel that they cannot get along without a picture have no right to it."⁷³ Stieglitz himself was fond of recounting the tale of a wealthy collector coming to his gallery during a Marin exhibition and asking his opinion on which painting she should buy. In his indignation that she did not have a personal, and therefore genuine, response to any particular painting, he refused to sell her anything in the room. Conversely, Herbert Seligmann's parablelike narrative of the Intimate Gallery opens with an account of Stieglitz selling a Marin to a young woman for as much as she could afford—fifty dollars, paid as she could get it to him, starting with five dollars on that day. The dealer then commented, "That's what is called a sale here. . . . As for keeping books in this place, only a poet could do it."⁷⁴ In evaluating potential buyers by their sympathy with his agenda, Stieglitz sought to perpetuate his vision of the art beyond the walls of the gallery: those who he felt misunderstood the art were not allowed to buy it, an act that would only abet the propagation of their misconception; those whose thinking followed his own were rewarded with a purchase and the assumption that they would go forth in the world circulating the proper interpretation of the object.

Of course, the commercial base of the Intimate Gallery also posed a significant conflict with its loudly touted themes of spirituality. A few critics questioned then, and many scholars have criticized since, Stieglitz's ability to reconcile the financial drive of his business with the antimaterialistic, spiritual claims he made for its art. Recent scholars have argued that Stieglitz was merely a cool, manipulative dealer who knew how to cajole prospective buyers into paying record-breaking prices for contemporary American art. In this interpretation, Stieglitz's discussions of the spiritual value of the art were a ruse to incite the emotions of patrons and avoid arguments

about the work's merit on more "objective" grounds, such as intellectual theory or aesthetic sophistication.⁷⁵ Indeed, throughout his personal and public writings and correspondences, Stieglitz thoroughly intertwined references to financial and spiritual value. A 1926 letter to a colleague is typical of his rhetoric: "I know that you said to me that nothing is priceless. You must understand that to me some things have a religious significance and such things are priceless even if circumstances force one to put a price on them."⁷⁶ In such comments, Stieglitz often appears to be the consummate master in conflating the spiritually invaluable and the materially valuable, the priceless and the very highly priced. He seems to have convinced his patrons that they were rebelling against the materialism of American culture by spending large amounts of money on paintings from his gallery. These works were, in effect, a specialized commodity aimed at the niche market of wealthy patrons in search of spiritual sustenance.

Yet closer scrutiny of Stieglitz's record as a salesman reveals a more complicated relationship between the "spirit" he so intently promoted and the prices he charged for art. If, as Timothy Rodgers claims, his talk of spirituality was merely a pitch to the pockets of insecure patrons, then one is left with no explanation for the situations when Stieglitz refused to sell a work on the grounds of a patron's supposed spiritual insufficiency. Although one must be wary of accepting Stieglitz's dramatic stories as factual truth, such parables reveal a value system that accords with other aspects of his gallery venture. First, Stieglitz understood that the ability to command high prices conferred prestige on an artist, and he tried to use sales throughout his career to establish the artistic equality of American modernists with their European counterparts. Second, Stieglitz's ultimate goal was to provide the artists in his



14 Stieglitz, *Equivalent 222A*, photograph, gelatin silver print, 1931. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature

stable—at least the three closest to the hearth, Marin, Dove, and O’Keeffe—with a guaranteed, salarylike income. He believed that artists were “workers” like any other in society and as such should have consistent financial remuneration.⁷⁷ Toward that end, he was always scheming to set up artist funds, gathered from several sources, or individual patron-artist relationships that would provide stable income for the painters. In 1922, for example, he culled small amounts from various patrons to establish the Marin Fund, which provided income to the artist over three years.⁷⁸ In 1926 he brokered an arrangement between collector Duncan Phillips and Dove that provided essential income to the artist until his death in 1946.⁷⁹ The artist Stieglitz disliked selling individual paintings—the aim of the dealer Stieglitz—as commodities divorced from the total sum of life work they represented. His repeated claims for the spirituality of any given work of art can be seen as his conflicted way of reconciling these competing interests, of reinscribing the individual piece into the larger whole of an artist’s life and work while, simultaneously, allowing it to be sold as a single object.⁸⁰ Indeed, if a primary agenda at Stieglitz’s gallery was to cultivate a model of national spiritual expression, then his insistence on the spirituality within the commodity was an effort (albeit naive and self-serving) to bring higher substance to the main mechanism of American society, the marketplace. An interview from 1935 perhaps best explained the spiritual morality Stieglitz sought to impose on the buying and selling of works of



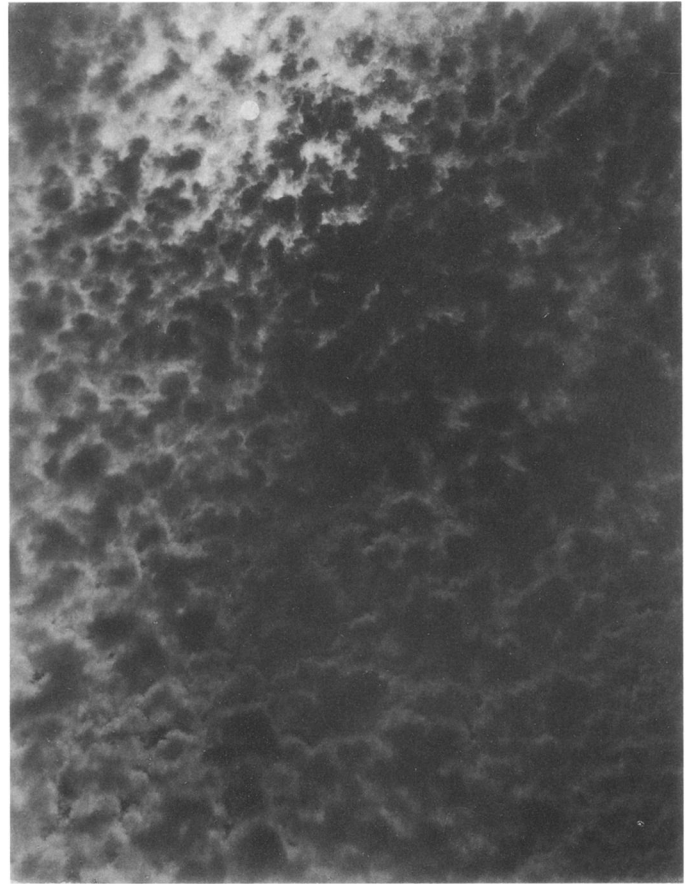
15 Stieglitz, *Songs of the Sky in Five Pictures (No. 5)*, photograph, gelatin silver print, 1923. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Alfred Stieglitz (photograph © 2003 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

art: “Stieglitz says quite frankly that a work of art has no money value. He and his gallery function as the medium of exchange between the patron’s money (good for the artist’s body) and the artist’s picture (good for the patron’s soul).”⁸¹

Finally, a belief in the spiritual content of art was fostered at the Intimate Gallery through means other than its pamphlets, its particular selection of art, or Stieglitz’s sales talk. The physical environment at the extraordinarily small gallery added an essential ingredient that contributed to and reinforced such ideas. The only contemporary account of the Intimate Gallery’s decor is found in a December 1925 review: “The gallery itself has undergone a change under [Stieglitz’s] hand, the plush being covered with a light gauze which doubles its size and eases the breathing.”⁸² A review written several years later describes the interior of *An American Place*, the gallery Stieglitz opened after he was forced to close the Intimate Gallery, and inadvertently offers some retrospective hints about the previous space. The reviewer described *An American Place* as “the simplest: no red plush draperies, no velvet carpets, no rosy spotlights; everything is as bare as an operating room.” The walls were painted in “severe” gray and white, with the result that it was “one of the most striking galleries in the city if not the most human.”⁸³ If the industrial minimalism of *An American Place* seemed somewhat cold and inhuman, then perhaps the textured walls of the Intimate Gallery fostered an atmosphere of warmth. Its small size could have bred either coziness or



16 Stieglitz, *Equivalent*, photograph, gelatin silver print, 1925. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature



17 Stieglitz, *Equivalent, Set G, Print 3*, photograph, gelatin silver print, 1929. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Miss Georgia O'Keeffe (photograph © 2003 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

claustrophobia, which Stieglitz took pains to influence through his choice of title. “The Intimate Gallery” proved to be not only a clever description of the size of the room but also a persuasive interpretation of the quality of that size: the name connoted a delight with smallness, the treasures of the intimate scale, and left “no room” for desires of a larger space. It encouraged visitors instead of feeling cramped to relish the intimate physical interaction with the works of art and with each other that the space allowed. The title celebrated the physical experience of a small space in much the way that the art on the walls celebrated the physicality of the natural landscape and the bodily reality of human existence.

The arrangement of the art at the Intimate Gallery echoed the message of its title. Stieglitz, as noted, tended to leave some paintings leaning in piles against the walls rather than hang them, an invitation for the visitor to “browse around and find the things that pleased him.”⁸⁴ This was a less formal presentation of art than practiced in many galleries of the day.⁸⁵ Moreover, it encouraged different kinds of looking: some pictures were observed on the wall from a distance; others were held in one’s hands and examined closely. These different ways of looking at art functioned to remind visitors, as they lifted a picture in their arms or stepped up close and then back to evaluate a picture on the wall (perhaps bumping into others in the limited space of the room), of their physical embodiment in the space of the gallery. This charged atmo-

sphere, cultivated by Stieglitz, again underscored the themes of physicality and its relation to spiritual unity put forward in the art and pamphlets. The gallery itself became an animating zone for the visitor.

The pattern that Stieglitz created as he hung pictures on the wall made its own contribution to these ideas. In contrast to the improvisation inherent in browsing through pictures piled in the corners of the gallery, Stieglitz had a particular method of hanging art, which, as his work at 291 attests, he had developed over years of thoughtful practice. Although he never described it directly, a contentious note to Duncan Phillips from 1927 reveals certain guiding principles:

As for your Red Canna [by O’Keeffe] and your not being able to hang it with other pictures, I told you at the time when you bought it that it would cause you trouble if you did not understand the modern way of hanging pictures. If you had seen how O’Keeffe’s Show was hung, you probably would have learned something which would have enabled you to hang this Red Canna of hers without disturbing anything around it.⁸⁶

The foundation of Stieglitz’s “modern way of hanging pictures” was to arrange together works that shared palette or compositional devices and divide up others based on their size and shape. On the seamless expanse of the Intimate Gallery’s walls, missing the dado rail of 291, this “modern



18 Stieglitz? *Ansel Adams: Exhibition of Photographs*, installation view at An American Place, New York, 1936. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Yale Collection of American Literature

way” created a larger composition that encompassed the entire gallery, no object “disturbing” any around it (Figs. 6, 7, 18).⁸⁷ As at 291 and *An American Place*, he probably sometimes spaced pictures evenly, in a single row, across the wall; other times (or along a different wall in the same exhibition) he would have clustered them tightly side by side and above each other, frames almost touching, the entire group forming a wider line across the middle of the wall. Both styles of hanging, against an uninterrupted wall, emphasized the vision of the person who arranged it (Stieglitz or, in O’Keeffe’s exhibits, O’Keeffe herself): the evenly spaced pictures were subordinated to a larger organizing schema of balance and symmetry, while the closely clustered pictures demanded that viewers see works through the same set of associations as the hanger.

Although this effect—setting off the individual image while clearly connecting it with a larger vision—was similar to that at 291, the organizing principle in each gallery differed. At 291, the larger vision in which the works were situated was one of open debate and challenged preconceptions; the hang came to represent a field of art leveled of hierarchies and ready for fresh evaluation. At the Intimate Gallery, the organizing concept that brought the individual objects together was Stieglitz’s vision of an organic cosmos, unified by omnipresent spiritual forces, and the hang underscored these themes. Whether drawn out or pulled tight, the hang functioned in many ways like a sentence: the works could each be examined alone, a single word with meaning sufficient unto itself, or they could be read as units of a single thought, arrayed in rhythms and nuances around the room. Each individual word, according to the rhetoric of the gallery, made an allusion to an organically complete universe. And the sentence syntax—colors flowing from one canvas to the next, forms mirrored and inverted, shapes ordered in rhythmic cadences—literally built an organic whole out of

those disparate objects. Thus, the hang, weaving a larger—or, one could say, expansive—aesthetic and spiritual experience out of the individual works, performed the message of potential oneness hidden within each painting.

As at 291, Stieglitz appears to have preferred that all the pictures for a show be framed in a consistent style, usually in simple, squared frames; the artists chose their own frames but in general shared his aesthetic.⁸⁸ Some artists, particularly Marin, painted their frames with abstract designs, as if to push the boundaries of their art all the way to the gallery wall, subsuming ever larger amounts of space into the unified world of the artist’s vision. The presence of a single, standardized (undecorated) frame around every object in the gallery also created a larger sense of unity: the single frame imposed a likeness on diverse images that otherwise might not exist, turning a gallery of varied works into variations on a theme. Thus, in an entire gallery arranged by Stieglitz, the artists’ frames contributed to the larger sentence constructed with the individual words of the art.

Although Stieglitz never exhibited the *Equivalents* in the Intimate Gallery, his tendency to group them into series—when giving them to friends or showing them later in the 1930s—had an effect analogous to his hanging style: it explicitly situated the individual work of art within a larger conceptual and formal statement, weaving a sentence out of autonomous words. Furthermore, the standard white mats on which he mounted all of the *Equivalents*, providing a 3-to-4-inch margin on each side, can be compared to the frames at the Intimate Gallery: their consistency pulls each individual image into a larger unified aesthetic expression. The only known images of Stieglitz’s own hanging of the *Equivalents* (in a series of poorly developed negatives housed at the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, Arizona) depict a series of eight cloud photographs at *An American Place*, matted and framed identically, hung with their edges abutting in a

row except for the center two images, which are hung one above the other.⁸⁹ This cluster of eight appears to be separated from other works on the wall, making a single statement, which in turn might be a phrase within the larger sentence encompassing the entire gallery.

The vision of an organic cosmos that was created by the array of paintings at the Intimate Gallery (or the cluster of *Equivalents* at An American Place) was, it should be remembered, Stieglitz's own. As director of the gallery, he did more than merely choose the works to be shown; he provided an entire intellectual and architectural apparatus with which to understand the art. One additional aspect of the Intimate Gallery—one that lies between the intellectual (pamphlets) and architectural (arrangement of the paintings) presentations, and is all but lost to history—must be considered: the incessant monologue with which Stieglitz filled the space. He was in almost constant attendance at the gallery throughout its four seasons, as his numerous references to “report[ing] for duty” and being “on deck” or “in harness” attest.⁹⁰ Perched in a large chair in the corner of the gallery, he sustained a tireless conversation with whoever entered the room (fittingly, there is no evidence that he felt moved to observe the “hours of silence” announced on the gallery manifesto). His talk only occasionally addressed the art on the walls directly, more frequently turning to the abstract themes of spiritual freedom and the transcendence of materialistic reality through physical, immediate sensations.⁹¹ Although he asserted to Waldo Frank at one point that he was not a “Lecturer,” only a “Talker,”⁹² his voice was an inseparable part of the gallery experience, and his opinions could not but influence visitors' interpretations of the art. The critic Ralph Flint eloquently summed up the power of his dialogue in 1926: “Mr. Stieglitz is a persuasive and dignified expounder of those artistic matters that do not come readily to the surface, and so, under his expert guidance, one becomes half inclined to suspect a hidden wealth of meaning where, alas, it may not so appear.”⁹³

Indeed, Stieglitz's talking shaped the atmosphere of the gallery not only with its intellectual content but also by screening out an audience that could not tolerate its distracting presence. Gorham Munson voiced a complaint of many when he wrote in his memoirs of Stieglitz's

incessant talk, which interfered with the visitor's contemplation of the art on the walls of his gallery. It was as if the pictures were only bait to lure people within the range of Stieglitz's voice. There were some—probably many, and I among them—who could not listen indefinitely to Stieglitz's monologues. That required a passivity, a discipleship.⁹⁴

In Stieglitz's view (not surprisingly), the self-selected community at the Intimate Gallery was of the highest quality. After bragging to Mabel Dodge Luhan that he had spent 211 consecutive days during the 1927–28 season at the gallery greeting 21,000 people, he assured her it had been “a high type audience—old & young.”⁹⁵ It would appear, from the elaborate interpretative mechanisms that surrounded the gallery, that Stieglitz viewed himself as the possessor of a particular vision of American art that could not be shared in pieces

with just anyone, but must be accepted in its entirety by enlightened followers.

The Oceanic

In short, the peculiar way in which Stieglitz promoted his spiritual beliefs about art left no room for critics who wished to analyze the works in his gallery on other terms. All of the devices he used to inculcate his views—from nurturing the artists and selecting and hanging their work, to overseeing the emotional conditions of sales, to fostering an intense gallery atmosphere—demonstrate classic symptoms of what might be called Stieglitz's narcissism. These actions presume that everyone visiting the gallery could be made to see the art the way Stieglitz himself saw it, that the power of his vision would be overwhelming, all-encompassing, indeed, boundless, sweeping up everyone around him in its oceanic flow. In Stieglitz's ideal view, visitors would have revelations that not only would assert their oneness with a spiritual universe but would more particularly yield to a sensation of oneness with the small universe that was the Intimate Gallery.

A return to the term *oceanic*—and its provocative double valence—yields further insight into Stieglitz's artistic projects of the 1920s. As noted, Romain Rolland used the term *oceanic* in a letter to Sigmund Freud to refer to the intense emotionality that accompanies a religious epiphany of oneness with the universe. The idea of the oceanic also, as we have seen, played a central part in the religious schemas of the Theosophists, who believed in a single, originating spiritual force from which all humans are descended and that binds us all together. The oceanic also appeared in less occult religious practices; owing to a combination of influences, including Transcendentalism and Theosophy, by the turn of the twentieth century, mainstream Protestantism had internalized the vision of a united, organic, spiritual cosmos and promoted the idea of a “harmonious” universe to which congregations tuned their lives.⁹⁶ The spiritual cosmos of which Stieglitz spoke when he described room 303 as “free in the deepest organic sense” was related to all of these oceanic visions.⁹⁷

Freud used his ruminations on Rolland's “oceanic” as a departure point for *Civilization and Its Discontents*. This book and Rolland's *Prophets of the New India* came out within months of each other, the latter reinforcing the idea of the spiritual oceanic with biographical fact and unrestrained religious fervor, the former refuting the religious oceanic with equal fervor.⁹⁸ Freud's discussion, an attempt to establish a “scientific” explanation for the feeling, built on his ego/id structure. The mature adult ego, Freud hypothesized, is normally quite aware of the boundaries that define it and separate it from the external world. But such an ego is the result of growth and development, originating with the earliest moments of an infant's life, nursing at the mother's breast. “An infant at the breast,” he pointed out, “does not as yet distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensations flowing in upon him.”⁹⁹ It is the process of gradually distinguishing which sensations are external—and over which one has no control—and which are internal that marks the maturation of the boundaried ego. However, no individual's ego matures or develops at the same rate throughout its psychic landscape, and thus even in an adult there are moments when the ego appears to have no bound-

ary and one feels a seamless part of a larger whole—a feeling of “limitlessness and of a bond with the universe,” as he put it.¹⁰⁰ It is these instances of “primary ego-feeling” that are Freud’s explanation of the “oceanic.”¹⁰¹

We can use Freud’s model to pursue further the experience of both the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents*. Stieglitz’s beliefs had an insatiable, ever-expanding presence in the gallery, as he devoted himself for hours a day to conversing with all who entered. By his own account, the intensity of these dialogues came close to draining all awareness of boundaries within him: “Giving oneself without losing oneself to as many people as I do is quite a task.”¹⁰² Waldo Frank, writing for the *New Yorker*, apparently had a corollary experience and expressed some anxiety over losing himself at the new gallery in 1925: “You will see now why Stieglitz’s talk differs from that of other men. . . . Stieglitz will talk to you for two hours. At the end whereof, you may be exhausted: but he knows you. His words have agglutinated you, digested you, swallowed you. If you let Stieglitz talk to you for a year, you will have become wholly a part of Stieglitz.”¹⁰³ The spiritual enlightenment that visitors were supposed to experience in the Intimate Gallery meant setting aside their identity in the outside world and losing themselves in the art on the walls and the conversation in the room.

The *Equivalents* shared with the Intimate Gallery a desire to force viewers to adopt the eyes and mind of the artist. Viewers of the cloud photographs, to Stieglitz’s delight, professed to experience limitlessness and openness before them, and often claimed they lost all sense of individual bearing on the world. Constantin Brancusi’s reaction to them was typical: “One feels oneself in another world, an unknown world. There is no limit.”¹⁰⁴ Yet even when the image was of a sunny, open sky, Stieglitz’s camera captured it as a flat, dark expanse (Figs. 14, 16), and in his images of cloudy skies (Figs. 1, 17), he often printed the clouds in a way that emphasized their darkness. Stieglitz’s cloud photographs are so persistently difficult to read, demanding that the viewer reconcile figure and ground among varying shades of darkness, that one could just as easily have felt trapped beneath the oppressive weight of a wrathful natural world on encountering them. Thus, viewers were not only losing themselves in the sensations they described, they were also giving themselves over to Stieglitz’s personal interpretation of the sky as an awesome expanse. They were being encouraged to see it as he saw it—through his eyes, as it were.

Both the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents* aspired to large-scale revelations and sensations completely out of proportion to their actual size. Even though the Intimate Gallery’s space was so confined that paintings were always piled up along the bottoms of the walls,¹⁰⁵ critics consistently described the room as infinitely spacious, and Stieglitz himself compared it to a cathedral. The *Equivalents* elicited similar associations of infinite space and time—yet these pictures of the expanse of the sky were a series of small, 4-by-5-inch contact prints, not even enlarged for public display. What sense are we to make of this discrepancy between the size of the artwork and its aspirations of meaning? The unavoidable smallness of the Intimate Gallery and the photographs could be construed as a persistent reminder of the ultimate impossibility of capturing spiritual enlightenment: these small

works can only hint at the magnitude of cosmic awareness, they can never replicate it. As Stieglitz explained to Anderson in 1923, as he embarked on the cloud project, he was trying to “see what ‘bigness’ *might* be coaxed out of small areas.”¹⁰⁶

This smallness can also be understood as serving to lead toward spiritual enlightenment. The tiny print of the photograph and the tiny space of the Intimate Gallery forced an intimate bodily encounter between the viewer and the art. In a doctrine that preached the indivisibility of physical and spiritual existence, these heightened physical experiences were meant to prompt or encourage spiritual awareness. With their small format, the *Equivalents* demanded that viewers stand very close to the framed works on the wall or else hold them right up to their noses, ensuring that only inches separated the human eye from the disorienting, mystifying images. Indeed, we can speculate that Stieglitz never showed his *Equivalents* at the Intimate Gallery because he felt they were sufficiently potent on their own—that they were most effective when held in one’s hand, in fact, and did not need the physical environment of “the Room” to enhance the viewing experience they produced. In the Intimate Gallery, the close proximity of many people with strong ideas, pressed up close to the pictures on the walls, close to each other in places where the tight picture hang forced them to crowd, or holding pictures in their hands as they excavated the works piled on the floor, created an overwhelming, intoxicating environment—“throbbing, pulsating” as Stieglitz put it—intended to be a true sanctuary outside the materialistic everyday world. The cloud photographs and the gallery were meant to evoke oceanic vastness, not a forbidding sky or claustrophobic room. In both projects, Stieglitz’s views were the expansive medium into which everyone else was invited to dissolve.

The definition of spiritual enlightenment offered at the Intimate Gallery—the complete loss of boundaries and a Nirvana-like sensation of oneness with humanity and the universe—was far from original in its day; it was deeply intertwined with numerous mystical theories current in Western society throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. More unusual, perhaps, was Stieglitz’s emphasis on realism as a pathway—via physical empathy—to that moment of epiphany. These beliefs suffused the aesthetic experience that Stieglitz hoped to cultivate in his two major artworks of the later 1920s: the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents*. In both of these projects, heightened physical sensations were meant to induce a spiritual experience of oneness with a cosmos—or, at least, of oneness with Stieglitz’s definition of the cosmos.

Stieglitz’s spiritual beliefs carried with them an explicitly modern air: they were tinged with anxieties about the loss of human reality in a postwar age of extreme mechanization, and they were infused with an incongruous market sensibility. Much as Stieglitz ridiculed the relentless American marketplace, even he succumbed to the idea that some aspects of spiritual enlightenment could be bought. Of greater importance is the fact that his preoccupation with spiritual vitality was a product of a broad cultural moment in the United States, in which the role of religion was heatedly debated. While Stieglitz and his circle may have been, at heart, cultural elitists, his own understanding of modern art was intimately

wrapped up in the concerns of the larger population: he believed that modern art could be used to relocate the spiritual energy of a moribund society. As such, the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents* offer an example of the way many modernists in the post–World War I United States thoroughly engaged with mainstream debates in an effort to demonstrate the relevance of their work to the general public. Stieglitz capitalized on a widely perceived sense of spiritual confusion, and added not a small amount of his own theatricality, to argue for the indispensability of his circle of modernism to the nation’s cultural horizons.

Kristina Wilson received her Ph.D. in the History of Art from Yale University in 2001. She is the Marcia Brady Tucker Post-doctoral Fellow in American Art at the Yale University Art Gallery, where she is completing a book on 1930s American modern design [Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn. 06520-8271, kristina.wilson@aya.yale.edu].

Frequently Cited Sources

- ASA/YCAL: Alfred Stieglitz Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, New Haven, Beinecke Library, Yale University
- Brennan, Marcia, *Painting Gender, Constructing Theory: The Alfred Stieglitz Circle and American Formalist Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001).
- Connor, Celeste, *Democratic Visions: Art and Theory in the Stieglitz Circle, 1924–1934* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- Greenough, Sarah, *Alfred Stieglitz, the Key Set: The Alfred Stieglitz Collection of Photographs*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art and Harry N. Abrams, 2002).
- Greenough, Sarah, and Juan Hamilton, eds., *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1983).
- Lynes, Barbara Buhler, *O’Keeffe, Stieglitz, and the Critics, 1916–1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
- Norman, Dorothy, *Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer* (New York: Aperture, 1990).
- Seligmann, Herbert, *Alfred Stieglitz Talking: Notes on Some of His Conversations, 1925–1931* (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1966).

Notes

I conducted the research for this article as a Summer Fellow at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University in 1999. The Society for the Preservation of American Modernists provided publication support for this article. An earlier version was presented as a talk at the Frick Collection in 2000. For their comments on earlier drafts of the manuscript I would like to thank the following: H. Perry Chapman and the anonymous reviewers for *The Art Bulletin*, Sarah Greenough, Alexander Nemerov, Tim Barringer, Jonathan Weinberg, Alan Trachtenberg, Ned Cooke, Susan Greenberg, Jessica Smith, and David Geist. For helpful conversations on the subject I would like to thank Patricia Willis, Daniell Cornell, Lisa Hodemarsky, and Lucy Soutter.

1. Stieglitz to Sherwood Anderson, Dec. 9, 1925, ASA/YCAL.
2. The sensory disorientation provoked by Stieglitz’s cloud photographs has been commented on in Rosalind Krauss, “Stieglitz/*Equivalents*,” *October* 11 (winter 1979): 129–40; and Daniell Cornell, *Alfred Stieglitz and the Equivalent: Reinventing the Nature of Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1999).
3. For many years, the most influential history of Stieglitz’s work at 291 has been William Innes Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977). An exhibition catalogue published in 2000 by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., offers a comprehensive assessment of 291’s impact on American modernism, taking into account the most recent scholarly findings and making use of current theoretical models; it stands to become the new definitive history of the 291 years. See Sarah Greenough, ed., *Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York*

Galleries (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art and Bulfinch Press, 2000). Other standard histories of Stieglitz’s career were written by friends and relatives: see Norman; and Sue Davidson Lowe, *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983).

4. Wanda Corn has recently given a convenient moniker to the group that gathered around Stieglitz in this later phase of his career: she calls them Stieglitz’s “second circle.” See Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915–1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3–40. There are two recently published studies of the Stieglitz “second circle” that contribute greatly to our understanding of this period, by Brennan and Connor. For a contemporary account of life at the Intimate Gallery, see Seligmann.

5. In the ample literature on Stieglitz, scholars have tended to focus on either his photographic work or his gallery agendas, putting one in the service of the other and rarely considering them as equally powerful vehicles of a single artistic voice. Jonathan Weinberg offers an exception to this trend. In his recent work on Stieglitz’s *Portrait of O’Keeffe*, he sets up a provocative comparison between the possessive desire enacted in the photographs and the photographer’s activities as a dealer. Weinberg, *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 86. Stieglitz’s own biography could be invoked as an excuse for this monocular vision: his strongest periods of photographic creativity rarely overlapped with his most active gallery work. In the instance of the Intimate Gallery and the *Equivalents*, though, we have a perfect coincidence of Stieglitz’s two forms of artistic work.

6. Stieglitz to Hart Crane, Dec. 10, 1923, in Greenough and Hamilton, 208.

7. Norman, 132, whose narrative is not always reliable, quoted Stieglitz as saying, “My cloud photographs are *equivalents* of my most profound life experience, my basic philosophy of life.” Sarah Greenough interprets his project by saying that he “claim[ed] that these . . . images were equivalent to his feelings.” Greenough, “How Stieglitz Came to Photograph Clouds,” in *Perspectives on Photography: Essays in Honor of Beaumont Newhall*, ed. Peter Walch and Thomas F. Barrow (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 152; see also Krauss (as in n. 2).

8. My thanks to Alex Nemerov for suggesting the phrase “interanimating zone” in a conversation about this project. Stieglitz was, of course, a man of keen and voracious intellect; at no time in his life is it possible to say that art and artistic practice meant only one thing for him. Indeed, he often seems more internally contradictory than consistent. For the contradictions in his formalism, see Brennan; and Sarah Greenough, “Alfred Stieglitz and ‘The Idea Photography,’” in Greenough and Hamilton, 11–32. For a very skeptical account of the contradictions in selling spiritual art, see Timothy Robert Rodgers, “Alfred Stieglitz, Duncan Phillips and the ‘\$6000 Marin,’” *Oxford Art Journal* 15, no. 1 (1992): 54–66; and idem, “False Memories: Alfred Stieglitz and the Development of the Nationalist Aesthetic,” in *Over Here: Modernism, the First Exile*, ed. Kermit Champa (Providence: Brown University, 1989), 59–66. Celeste Connor discusses Stieglitz’s ambitions for a truly democratic art, but often without the skeptical eye that his words seem to demand. See Connor, esp. chaps. 1, 4.

Stieglitz’s spiritual beliefs have, typically, been sidestepped by historians—no doubt in part because his overblown rhetoric often strikes us as awkward and indicative of the inchoate, emotional quality of religious faith. Yet art historical literature has evinced a slowly emerging interest in situating religious faith within the scholarly dialogue. David Lubin, for example, commented on the “mystical or transcendental sensibility” that he gleaned from the oeuvre of Thomas Eakins in a review of the recent Eakins retrospective. See Lubin, “Projecting an Image: The Contested Cultural Identity of Thomas Eakins,” *Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 510–22. In a more direct fashion, a new anthology raises some of the same issues: David Morgan and Sally M. Promey, eds., *The Visual Culture of American Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). See also Promey, “The ‘Return’ of Religion in the Scholarship of American Art,” *Art Bulletin* 85 (2003): 581–603.

9. In response to these new hours, Henry McBride commented, “If Llewellyn Powys ever hears of this he will be more than ever convinced that the Stieglitz Group is a religious organization.” McBride, “Modern Art,” *Dial* 82 (Mar. 1927): 262–63, reprinted in Lynes, 267. The hours of silence may also have had something to do with Stieglitz’s (in)famous rambling dialogues with visitors to the gallery; some found such conversation distracting (see below).

10. “Notes by Arthur G. Dove,” in *New Paintings by Dove*, exh. cat., Intimate Gallery, New York, Apr. 9–28, 1929, ASA/YCAL (unless otherwise noted, all exhibition pamphlets for the Intimate Gallery can be found in ASA/YCAL).

11. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson: An Organic Anthology*, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 108; see also David M. Robinson, “‘A Religious Demonstration’: The Theological Emergence of New England Transcendentalism,” in *Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts*, ed. Charles Capper and Conrad Edick Wright (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1999), 60–61.

12. Throughout the 1920s, for example, society’s spiritual atrophy was discussed in a variety of popular periodicals. Among the many: William Lyon Phelps, “The Life of the Spirit,” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, June 1925, 14ff.; and K. Norris, “Young America and the Church,” *Collier’s*, Apr. 3, 1926, 5–6. See also T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

13. Sherrye Cohn, “Arthur Dove and Theosophy: Visions of a Transcendental Reality,” *Arts Magazine* 58 (Sept. 1983): 86–91. See also Charles C. El-

dredge, "Nature Symbolized: American Painting from Ryder to Hartley," in *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting, 1890–1985*, ed. Maurice Tuchman (New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Abbeville, 1986), 113–30.

14. Stieglitz to Paul Rosenfeld, Oct. 21, 1923, ASA/YCAL.

15. The phrase "usable past" was first coined by the critic Van Wyck Brooks in 1917 and was much used in the subsequent decades. Brooks, "On Creating a Usable Past," *Dial*, Apr. 11, 1918, 337–41.

16. Waldo Frank, *Our America* (1919; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1972), 184.

17. Norman, 152; Guy Eglington, review of a John Marin exhibition, *American Art News*, Dec. 12, 1925, reprinted in *Recent Paintings by John Marin*, exh. cat., Intimate Gallery, New York, Dec. 7, 1925–Jan. 11, 1926.

18. Murdock Pemberton, review of a John Marin exhibition, *New Yorker*, Dec. 19, 1925, reprinted in *Recent Paintings by John Marin* (as in n. 17). Stieglitz later recalled, "There was not overmuch space. Pictures hung on the walls, stood on the floor, lay on shelves. They were everywhere." Norman, 152.

19. Stieglitz to Sherwood Anderson, Mar. 11, 1925, ASA/YCAL.

20. Stieglitz to Dorothy Brett, Nov. 27, 1928, ASA/YCAL.

21. Dorothy Brett, "The Room," in *America and Alfred Stieglitz: A Collective Portrait*, ed. Waldo Frank et al. (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1934), 259.

22. Claude Bragdon, *An Introduction to Yoga* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933), 31.

23. Stieglitz to Claude Bragdon, Feb. 18, 1933, ASA/YCAL.

24. Moreover, Stieglitz's vignette of reading in the elevator as it ascended would have reminded Bragdon of their shared belief that the top floors of the skyscraper provided a platform for the unmediated experience of nature's powers. Bragdon had written in a 1925 article on the Shelton Hotel that "the high-perched denizen of one of its thousand cubicles . . . receives the sun's first rays long before they penetrate into the city canyons, and all day long he gets the bright radiance of an unobstructed and unafflicted sky." Claude Bragdon, "The Shelton Hotel, New York," *Architectural Record* 58 (July 1925): 18. Some months later, Stieglitz described living "high up in the Shelton Hotel" and made a similar observation about the immediacy of nature: "The wind howls & shakes the huge steel frame—We feel as if we were out at midocean—All is so quiet except the wind. . . . It's a wonderful place." Stieglitz to Sherwood Anderson, Dec. 9, 1925, ASA/YCAL.

25. The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by the Russian eccentric Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (who called herself Madame Blavatsky or HPB) and the American lawyer Henry Steel Olcott. See Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revisited: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993); and R. Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

26. Although the passage was footnoted with a mere "Translated from the German," it is likely that Stieglitz himself did the translation (his German was fluent from his years spent as a student in Berlin, and he conducted his correspondence with Kandinsky in 1913 in German). The German edition of this treatise had been published in late 1911 or early 1912, and Stieglitz's extract appeared several years before the first English translation. See also Rose-Carol Washton Long, "Kandinsky and Abstraction: The Role of the Hidden Image," *Artforum* 10 (June 1972): 42–49; and Gail Levin, "Marsden Hartley and Mysticism," *Arts Magazine* 60 (Nov. 1985): 16–21. Other articles from *Camera Work* that hypothesize a relationship between art and spirituality are Benjamin De Casseres, "The Unconscious in Art," 17, and "An Extract from Bergson" (excerpt from *Creative Evolution*), 20, both from *Camera Work*, no. 36 (Oct. 1911).

27. P. D. Ouspensky, *Tertium Organum: The Third Canon of Thought; A Key to the Enigmas of the World*, trans. Nicholas Bessaraboff and Claude Bragdon, 2d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922). The English translation sold well enough in America to generate royalties for Ouspensky. Hart Crane and Frank both read *Tertium Organum* and loaned it to friends in New York; D. H. Lawrence also read the book (and made extensive margin notes) when he visited Mabel Dodge Luhan's Taos enclave. See Washington (as in n. 25), 198; Waldo Frank, *Memoirs of Waldo Frank*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 196; and E. W. Tedlock Jr., "D. H. Lawrence's Annotation of Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 2 (summer 1960): 206–18. For a more comprehensive account of the intellectuals and artists interested in mysticism in the 1920s and 1930s, including Crane, Jane Heap, and Hugh Ferriss, see Kristina Wilson, "Exhibiting Modern Times: American Modernism, Popular Culture, and the Art Exhibit, 1925–1935," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2001, chaps. 1, 4.

28. On Gurdjieff's career as a mystic, see James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G. I. Gurdjieff, P. D. Ouspensky, and Their Followers* (Boston: Shambhala, 1980); Margaret Anderson, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962); and Fritz Peters, *Balanced Man: A Look at Gurdjieff Fifty Years Later* (London: Wildwood House, 1978).

29. Hart Crane to Grace Hart Crane, Feb. 3, 1924, in *O My Land, My Friends: The Selected Letters of Hart Crane*, ed. Langdon Hammer and Brom Weber (New York: Four Walls, Eight Windows, 1997).

30. Corn (as in n. 4), 6.

31. Stieglitz to Hart Crane, Aug. 15, 1923, ASA/YCAL.

32. Hart Crane to Stieglitz, Aug. 25, 1923, ASA/YCAL.

33. Stieglitz to Marsden Hartley, 1928, quoted in Greenough, vol. 2, 677.

34. At Frank's behest, Rolland wrote a manifesto-style essay for the first issue (Nov. 1916) of *Seven Arts*, entitled "America and the Arts." Frank (as in n. 27), 86.

35. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), 11–12.

36. Romain Rolland, *Prophets of the New India*, trans. E. F. Malcolm-Smith (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1930), 329–50.

37. Stieglitz to Paul Rosenfeld, Nov. 14, 1923, ASA/YCAL.

38. For example, another prevalent line of thinking held that a work of art was an expression of the artist's psychological inner world, and that audiences should respond to works as singular, personal statements, adopting the artist's point of view when possible. For Gabriele Buffet, the only way for viewers to appreciate the artist's personal expression was to silence their own emotional subjectivity: "[O]ne should try to suppress one's own personality in order to understand that of the artist. One should try to reconstitute his thought, his need and the need of the epoch in which he lived. . . ." Buffet, "Modern Art and the Public," *Camera Work*, special issue, June 1913, 10.

39. "What Is '291'?" *Camera Work*, no. 47 (July 1914): 16, quoted in Greenough, vol. 1, 283.

40. The first "photo-secession" gallery, opened in 1905, occupied three rooms on the top floor at 291 Fifth Avenue. In 1908, the gallery was moved to a single room across the hall, technically at 293 Fifth Avenue. Edward Steichen designed the decor of the first gallery, which Stieglitz duplicated in the second space. In the first gallery, olive-grays and gray-blues dominated (*Camera Work*, no. 14 [Apr. 1906]: 48). In the second gallery, the walls were light gray ("291: The Mecca and the Mystery of Art in a Fifth Avenue Attic," *New York Sun*, Oct. 24, 1915, 6, ASA/YCAL). For a discussion of Alfred Barr and the effects of the Museum of Modern Art's early gallery decorating schemes, see Wilson (as in n. 27), chap. 3.

41. Stieglitz was very particular about the manner in which he hung art in his gallery. In 1922 he claimed that he allowed only Steichen and Max Weber to arrange hangs at 291. Alfred Stieglitz, "The Story of Weber," typescript, ca. 1922, ASA/YCAL.

42. Martha Ward, "Impressionist Installations and Private Exhibitions," *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991): 599–622; and Anne Koval, "The 'Artists' Have Come Out and the 'British' Remain: The Whistler Faction at the Society of British Artists," in *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 90–111.

43. The Metropolitan moved toward a single-row hang in many of its galleries after World War I.

44. "He has the true scientific attitude," commented one reporter, "no dogmas or preconceived theories, but an open mind on every question, a desire to learn the truth by scientific method, experiment. His own definition of his little garret is 'an experimental laboratory.'" "291: The Mecca and the Mystery" (as in n. 40).

45. William B. McCormick, "Patron's Vote to Decide Fate of Photo-Secession Gallery at No. 291 Fifth Avenue," *New York Press*, Oct. 4, 1914, 3, ASA/YCAL.

46. Sarah Greenough points out the significance of these articles in Greenough (as in n. 8), 20.

47. "[T]he photographer puts himself in front of nature, and without preconceptions, with the free mind of an investigator with the method of an experimentalist, [and] tries to get out of her a true state of conditions." Marius De Zayas, "Photography and Artistic Photography," *Camera Work*, nos. 42–43 (Apr.–July 1913): 13–14.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Marius De Zayas, "Photography," *Camera Work*, no. 41 (Jan. 1913): 18: "Art has taught us to feel emotions in the presence of a work that represents the emotions experienced by the artist. Photography teaches us to realize and feel our own emotions."

50. For an account of Stieglitz's literary interests during the early 1920s, see Sarah Greenough, "From the American Earth: Alfred Stieglitz's Photographs of Apples," *Art Journal* 41 (spring 1981): 46–54.

51. Wilhelm Worringer argued for the affinity between spiritualism and abstraction in his 1906 dissertation, *Abstraction and Empathy*. "Whereas the precondition for the urge to empathy is a happy pantheistic relationship of confidence between man and the phenomena of the external world, the urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world; in a religious respect it corresponds to a strongly transcendental tinge to all notions." Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock (1908; reprint, Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1997), 15. This connection was also obviously the organizing theory behind the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's 1986 *Spiritual in Art* exhibition. My claim that empathy was a vehicle for spiritual enlightenment in the Stieglitz circle, needless to say, contradicts Worringer's formulation.

52. Marcia Brennan offers a related account of the role of embodiment (specifically that of gendered bodies) in Stieglitz's theories of art, although she emphasizes its role in his formalism rather more than in his spiritual beliefs. See Brennan.

53. Connor, chap. 4, addresses the uses of realism—relating it to a larger goal of a democratic, legible art—in the Stieglitz circle of the 1920s. While

legibility was certainly one goal of Stieglitz's realism as I understand it, I do not agree that his support of a truly democratic art was as single-minded as Connor presents it.

54. Hart Crane to Stieglitz, Aug. 11, 1923, in Hammer and Weber (as in n. 29), 161.

55. Greenough (as in n. 8), 22–23. Stieglitz had begun working with straight, or realistic, photography in the early 1910s, when he met Paul Strand, whose work deeply impressed him. Strand's photography directly opposed the impressionistic aesthetics of pictorialism, the photographic mode Stieglitz had championed since the turn of the century.

56. Stieglitz to Hart Crane, Dec. 10, 1923, in Greenough and Hamilton, 208.

57. Stieglitz to Paul Rosenfeld, July 30, 1928; and Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, July 27, 1928, ASA/YCAL.

58. D. H. Lawrence to Stieglitz, Aug. 15, 1928, ASA/YCAL. Lawrence and Stieglitz discussed during the summer of 1928 the possibility of an exhibition of Lawrence's paintings at the Intimate Gallery. Stieglitz suggested to Lawrence that he might not have room in his gallery schedule, nor could he guarantee any sales; however, Lawrence's paintings are also of indisputably poor quality, and although Stieglitz never professed such an opinion in writing, it seems a more likely reason for his refusal than such polite excuses. See also Bonnie L. Grad, "Georgia O'Keeffe's Lawrencean Vision," *AAA Journal* 38, nos. 3–4 (1998): 2–19.

59. Stieglitz to Herbert Seligmann, Aug. 26, 1928, ASA/YCAL.

60. Oscar Bluemner, "A Painter's Comment," in *O'Keeffe Exhibition*, exh. cat., Intimate Gallery, New York, Jan. 11–Feb. 27, 1927.

61. Lewis Mumford, "O'Keeffe [*sic*] and Matisse," *New Republic*, Mar. 2, 1927, 41–42, reprinted in Lynes, 265–66.

62. Marsden Hartley, "The Recent Paintings of John Marin," in *Fifty New Paintings by John Marin*, exh. cat., Intimate Gallery, New York, Nov. 14–Dec. 31, 1928.

63. *Ibid.*: "He produces by chaste movement and harmony the requisite completeness of sensation."

64. Lee Simonson, foreword to *Hartley Exhibition*, exh. cat., Intimate Gallery, New York, Jan. 1–31, 1929. Several phrases in Simonson's text echo particular passages from the Bible, although undoubtedly his intended effect was more one of general allusion than specific reference. Psalm 121 begins with the verse, "I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help" (*The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, by Noah Webster, LL.D.* [New Haven: Durrie and Peck, 1833]), and Lamentations 3:41 contains the phrase, "Let us lift up our hearts, not our hands, to God in heaven" (*The New English Bible*). The Eucharistic Prayer read responsively in the Episcopal Service also includes the phrases "Lift up your hearts" and "We lift them up to the Lord." In all of the Gospel accounts of the days before the Crucifixion, there are repeated references to Jesus and the disciples looking "to the hills" or retreating "to the hills" (see, for example, Matt. 24:16, *New English Bible*).

65. Krauss (as in n. 2).

66. Sarah Greenough, vol. 2, 640, has dated this image to 1925. Another print of this image bears an inscription to Dorothy Norman "from the Room."

67. Alfred Stieglitz, quoted in Nancy Newhall, "Equivalents for the Museum of Modern Art Collection," in "Notes for a Biography of Alfred Stieglitz," typescript, ca. 1943, 134, Department of Photographs, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. My thanks to Sarah Greenough for sharing this manuscript with me.

68. Hart Crane to Stieglitz, Apr. 15, 1923, ASA/YCAL.

69. Stieglitz to Paul Rosenfeld, Aug. 16, 1922, ASA/YCAL. His opinions on this issue were so strong that they formed their own kind of reactionary theory—a theory that all theories were worthless—prompting a frustrated Thomas Hart Benton to write, "About a word of yours the other day. Theory is a necessity for a person of intelligence—only the dullard, the actor and the hack can live without attempting to order their experience. . . . You must pardon me for saying that you too have plenty of theory, Stieglitz." Benton to Stieglitz, Feb. 13, 1921, ASA/YCAL.

70. Stieglitz to Sherwood Anderson, July 7, 1924, ASA/YCAL.

71. Stieglitz to Sherwood Anderson, Oct. 11, 1924, ASA/YCAL.

72. Indeed, in light of the importance attributed to physical sensations at the Intimate Gallery, it is unsurprising that many critics—writing both for and about the gallery—interpreted the art on its walls in highly sexual, gendered terms. In addition to O'Keeffe's art (whose gendered criticism has been a topic of discussion since the 1920s), the work of Marin and Dove was frequently analyzed in a framework of stereotyped gender. For O'Keeffe, see, for example, Lynes; Anne Wagner, *Three Artists (Three Women)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), chap. 2; and Anna C. Chave, "O'Keeffe and the Masculine Gaze," *Art in America* (Jan. 1990): 115–25ff. For Marin, see Jonathan Weinberg, "Why Marin?" *Black Points* 1, no. 1 (1993): 20–33. For Dove, see Debra Bricker Balken, "Continuities and Digressions in the Work of Arthur Dove from 1907 to 1933," in *Arthur Dove: A Retrospective* (Andover, Mass.: Addison Gallery of American Art, 1997), 17–35. Brennan argues that it was precisely these gendered readings that formed the foundation on which all supposedly "neutral" formalist discussion of the Stieglitz circle's work were built. See Brennan, chaps. 4–6.

73. "Alfred Stieglitz, Artists, and His Search for the Human Soul," *New York Herald*, Mar. 8, 1908, ASA/YCAL.

74. Seligmann, 11.

75. Rodgers, 1989 (as in n. 8).

76. Stieglitz to Philip Goodwin, Nov. 21, 1926, quoted in Rodgers, 1992 (as in n. 8), 57.

77. Celeste Connor and Sarah Greenough have both described the Intimate Gallery as a type of cooperative financial venture. While I agree that Stieglitz seems not to have demanded large commissions on sales, his indisputable authority at the gallery meant that it was far from an intellectually cooperative experience. See Connor, chap. 3; and Greenough (as in n. 3), 318–19.

78. Rodgers, 1992 (as in n. 8), 60.

79. Balken (as in n. 72), 10.

80. When Stieglitz was the buyer, he thought of his purchase less as an individual commodity and more as a piece in a larger statement by the artist. When he bought a painting by Kandinsky from the Armory Show in 1913, his correspondence with the Russian painter reveals precisely this attitude. He bought the picture, he asserted in one letter, not only because he liked it but also because he wanted to introduce American audiences to Kandinsky's work in general; he saw his purchase as a calling card for the larger sum of the artist's production. He also proposed a show for Kandinsky at 291, which he hastily explained would be an effective way of presenting the breadth and depth of his ideas—that is, the entirety of his emotional and spiritual oeuvre—but might not be financially beneficial: "Of course as we are not a business I can promise you no sales, but what I can promise is that your work will be introduced in the proper spirit and with understanding." Kandinsky replied favorably to this proposal, and described Stieglitz's approach to buying paintings and owning a gallery as following an "ideal purpose." Stieglitz to Wassily Kandinsky, May 26, 1913; Kandinsky to Stieglitz, fall 1913, ASA/YCAL. The show at 291, for reasons unknown, never happened.

81. Carl Zigrosser, "Alfred Stieglitz," *New Democracy*, Apr. 15, 1935, 65–67, ASA/YCAL.

82. Eglinton (as in n. 17). Dorothy Norman, 152, quotes Stieglitz on the room as well in her occasionally revisionist, later-life biography: "One corner room was available, about twenty-six by twenty feet. It was one-third windows and door, and had a high ceiling. The walls were covered with stamped black velour. The floor was black, the wood-work dark oak. We made no changes except to cover the walls with white cheesecloth."

83. Lloyd Goodrich, "In the Galleries," review of a John Marin exhibition at An American Place, Dec. 1929, *Arts* 16 (Jan. 1930): 345.

84. "New York Exhibitions," review of a John Marin exhibition at the Intimate Gallery, *Arts* 9 (Jan. 1926): 40–42.

85. Many reviews referred to the "informality" of the new gallery: "John Marin's work, not hung in any formal way" ("New York Exhibitions" [as in n. 84]); "delightful informality" (Forbes Watson, "Seven American Artists Sponsored by Stieglitz," *New York World*, Mar. 15, 1925, 5M, reprinted in Lynes, 235); and "his new gallery wears an informal air" (Eglinton [as in n. 17]).

86. Stieglitz to Duncan Phillips, Mar. 11, 1927, ASA/YCAL.

87. Oscar Bluemner described the visual chaos of a less varied hang in a letter to Stieglitz about the Independents show of 1922: "[The works were] arranged, 250 in 3 rooms in 3 rows this way [horizontal] and no row this way [vertical] but all packed like bricks in a prison wall or said subway. So that one never can see one picture but only at least 5 at a time." Bluemner to Stieglitz, Oct. 17, 1922, ASA/YCAL.

88. For a discussion of Hartley's frames, for example, see Stephen Kornhauser and Ulrich Birkmaier, "Marsden Hartley's Materials and Working Methods," in *Marsden Hartley*, ed. Elizabeth Kornhauser (New Haven: Wadsworth Atheneum of Art in association with Yale University Press, 2003), 265–77.

89. I am grateful to Sarah Greenough for sharing with me these images, which she found at the Center for Creative Photography.

90. Stieglitz to Arthur Dove, Oct. 18, 1928, and Apr. 6, 1927, in *Dear Stieglitz, Dear Dove*, ed. Ann Lee Morgan (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1988), 152, 136.

91. Brett (as in n. 21), 262. For extended transcriptions of conversations held in the room, see Seligmann. Greenough (as in n. 3), 316, cites more commentary (and complaints) about Stieglitz's talking.

92. Stieglitz to Waldo Frank, Aug. 5, 1926, ASA/YCAL.

93. Ralph Flint, review of a Charles Demuth exhibition at the Intimate Gallery, *Christian Science Monitor*, Apr. 14, 1926, ASA/YCAL.

94. Gorham Munson, *The Awakening Twenties: A Memoir-History of a Literary Period* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 51.

95. Stieglitz to Mabel Dodge Luhan, July 15, 1928, ASA/YCAL. His elitism was equally evident in his complaints that the "mob" might overrun the small gallery during the O'Keeffe show in January 1927. Stieglitz to Duncan Phillips, Jan. 12, 1927, ASA/YCAL.

96. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), chap. 60. William James noted that sensations of oneness with an organic universe were the recurring trope in countless individual testimonies of revelation: "This overcoming of all the usual barriers between the individual and the Absolute is the great mystic achievement. In mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness." James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902; reprint, New York: Modern Library, 1999), 457. For a history of interest in the occult in America, see Moore (as in n. 25). For an account of the increasingly personalized relationship with God that pervaded late-19th-

century United States, see Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977; reprint, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998).

97. Stieglitz to Sherwood Anderson, Dec. 28, 1925, ASA/YCAL.

98. David S. Werman, "Sigmund Freud and Romain Rolland," *International Review of Psycho-Analysis* 4 (1977): 229.

99. Freud (as in n. 35), 14.

100. *Ibid.*, 16.

101. An elaboration on Freud's theory of the oceanic, to which my discussion is indebted, is Hans Loewald, "Ego and Reality," *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (1951; reprint, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 3–20.

102. Stieglitz to Mabel Dodge Luhan, July 15, 1928, ASA/YCAL.

103. Search-light [Waldo Frank], "Profiles: 291: Alfred Stieglitz," *New Yorker*, Apr. 18, 1925, 9–10, ASA/YCAL.

104. Constantin Brancusi, quoted in Seligmann, 69.

105. Weinberg (as in n. 5), 83, offers the compelling idea that the smallness of all of Stieglitz's galleries may have been intended to establish a smaller art form—that is, the photograph—as standard. Photographs would not be overwhelmed in his small galleries, and, indeed, he only showed smaller paintings (more on the scale of a photograph).

106. Stieglitz to Sherwood Anderson, Sept. 2, 1923, quoted in Greenough, vol. 2, 540.