

Norton Simon Museum For Immediate Release

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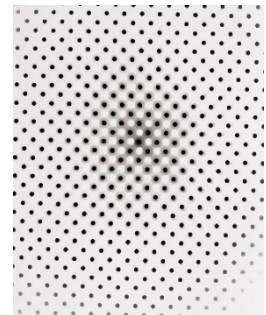
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Beyond the World We Know: Abstraction in Photography

November 22, 2019–April 20, 2020

Pasadena, CA—The Norton Simon Museum presents *Beyond the World We Know: Abstraction in Photography*, an intimate exhibition featuring innovative and experimental artworks by some of the 20th century's most celebrated photographers, including Barbara Morgan, Frederick Sommer, Arthur Siegel, Minor White and Edward Weston. Seen together, the works on view demonstrate how abstraction as a nonrepresentational, visual language played a significant role in bending the expectations of the medium esteemed for its ability to record what the eye sees.



Arthur Siegel (American, 1913–1978),
Lucidagram #6837, 1967, gelatin silver
print, Norton Simon Museum, Gift of the
Artist, © Estate of Arthur Siegel

The photographs featured in *Beyond the World We Know* present a range of subjects transformed by varying degrees of abstraction. For example, Frederick Sommer produced small oil paintings on cellophane paper, which he then placed between sheets of glass. By means of an enlarger, he printed the images onto sensitized paper. His camera-less photographs are known as cliché-verres. Edmund Teske employed the Sabbatier technique—a process of chemical toning and solarization, in which the print is exposed to bright light during its development, introducing painterly elements and unusual spatial juxtapositions.

In other cases, artists employed cropping and novel framing devices, previsualizing the result. Framing the details of his subject tightly, Aaron Siskind captures the hieroglyphics of urban life—graffiti, sidewalk markings—creating photographic depictions that, in such extreme close-up, call to mind the gestural paintings of the Abstract Expressionists. Intricate patterns in nature and manmade objects stimulated Brett Weston's keen interest in emphasizing photography's tonal capabilities and dramatizing its contrast range. Whatever the stimulus, the subject is distanced from recognizable contexts. These

strategies defamiliarize the principal object. As a result, viewers are encouraged to take in the image and see beyond the ostensible subject.

In their integration of the visible world and abstraction, the gelatin silver prints on display in *Beyond the World We Know* demonstrate that the simplest subjects can be evocative works of art when composition, texture, tone and light are handled by artists of great imagination and virtuosity.

Beyond the World We Know is organized by Curator Gloria Williams Sander. It is on view in the Museum's small exhibition gallery on the main level from Friday, November 22, 2019 through Monday, April 20, 2020. Related events and programs can be found online at nortonsimon.org/events.

About the Norton Simon Museum

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum's collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. Two temporary exhibition spaces feature rotating installations of artworks not on permanent display.

Location: The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 W. Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena, Calif., at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit www.nortonsimon.org. **Hours:** The Museum is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from noon to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed on Tuesday. **Admission:** General admission is \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors. Members, students with I.D., and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m. All public programs, unless stated otherwise, are free with admission. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free, and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** Pasadena Transit stops directly in front of the Museum. Please visit <http://pasadenatransit.net> for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line, the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, is located at 125 E. Holly St. at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit www.metro.net for schedules.