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Capturing Motion: A Catalog Raisonné of the Photomontage Works of
Barbara Morgan 1935-1980

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Elizabeth Ellen Franks

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The Thesis of Elizabeth Ellen Franks is approved:

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The New Function of the Catalog Raisonné

The catalog raisonné in general, and as it pertains to this project, is part of a detailed history regarding the documentation and collection of art. This gathering of works of art has changed over time, culminating in the modern definition of what the catalog raisonné is. What is also interesting is the role of the catalog raisonné in the field of photography—or, more accurately, the problems that arise when attempting to create a catalog raisonné of a photographer’s work. Provenance, copies, and the photographer’s purpose and intent all pose problems. Because of this, the role of the catalog raisonné must be amended to be useful in the field of photography. A catalog raisonné can be a useful tool for students, scholars, and other artists, and, in the case of photography, this idea still holds true. However, it is necessary to reshape the ways in which the catalog raisonné is understood and thus, how it functions.

It would seem that the catalog raisonné, in its historical form, has become obsolete. Jonathan Franklin, author of the article “From Inventory to Virtual Catalog: Notes on the ‘Catalogue Raisonné’”, concisely defines the catalog raisonné as something that is “conveniently used to denote a catalog of the output of a single artist, including works in many collections.” The catalog raisonné is distinct from, say, an exhibition catalog.¹ Rather than catalog an exhibition, the catalog raisonné seeks to catalog and document an artist’s work and life.

The catalog raisonné, in its truest form, has become obscure in the contemporary art world. In order to understand the catalog raisonné, it is important to know its origins.

The term catalog raisonné originated in Paris, and the first person to make use of this was Edme-François Gersaint, who collected art and other “curiosities.”² Gersaint cataloged the work of printmaker Jacques Callot as part of a 1744 sales catalog.³ The catalog raisonné was born from the distinction between an “inventory” and a “catalog”. The inventory was merely a list, “as found,” of the works and objects to be sold at an auction. Franklin stresses the distinction between this inventory list and the more thought-out catalog, which was more organized and included more information. The catalog raisonné evolved from this catalog, as it includes information on the works listed, as well as background on the artist’s life, style, and oeuvre. Again, Gersaint was the first person to use the catalog in a new way. Franklin cites Gersaint’s *catalogue d’une collection considérable de curiositez de differens genres*, from 1737, where he states “to satisfy all tastes, I shall mix up the items in the course of the sale, so that on any one day everyone can have the opportunity to strike lucky with something in his field of collecting.”⁴ In other words, Gersaint utilized the catalog to purposefully rearrange and display the works, goods, and objects to be auctioned. The inventory listed these items, but it did so without recognizing the profitability of presentation. By presenting the items to be auctioned in a more appealing way, Gersaint was able to sell more by reaching more potential buyers. Thus, he was able to control and maximize his profits. Franklin goes on to define three main aspects of the eighteenth century catalog raisonné, and, more

¹ Franklin, Jonathan. “From Inventory to Virtual Catalog: Notes on the ‘Catalogue Raisonné,’” *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* Vol. 22 (Spring 2003): 41-45.

² Franklin, “From Inventory to Virtual Catalog,” 41-45.

³ Adam Lauder, “‘Liberty of the Compiler’: Catalogue Raisonné as Metaphor for Collaborative Design,” *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* Vol. 30 (Fall, 2011): 15.

⁴ Franklin, “From Inventory to Virtual Catalog,” 41-45.

importantly, differentiate it from the basic inventory. These are: order, detail, and credibility. I already mentioned order; Gersaint is known for having organized his auction lists in ways that would be appealing and interesting to potential buyers. Detail is also interesting, particularly with regard to the contemporary catalog raisonné and how it is used today. While inventory lists usually just included a brief description of the work, such as “a fruit piece” or “landscape,” the catalog entry gave much more of a description. In fact, the term “catalog raisonné” is connected to the later nineteenth century term “*catalog descriptif et raisonné*.”⁵ The word raisonné means reasoned or well thought out in French, indicating that the catalog raisonné itself was a text that gave rational meaning to the scope of an artist’s work. The catalog raisonné is carefully organized and includes very specific information. This term lends itself to the fact that these catalogs, now more descriptive and detailed, include more information on each work. This is very similar to the catalog raisonné as it has been used in the art world since then.

The catalog raisonné is more detailed than the inventory, and is also more structured and thoughtfully laid out. It is also credible. This third aspect is perhaps the most important, especially today. The way in which the catalog raisonné functions calls for credibility; the information contained inside must be as accurate as possible, and it must reflect the most current understanding and scholarship on the given artist. The eighteenth century catalog raisonné differed from the inventory, or, as Franklin describes it, the descriptive catalog, simply because its writer consciously included accurate and

⁵ Ibid., 41.

credible information, or “the correct identification of the objects it describes.”⁶ This identification was based on the “notes accompanying the catalog entries, debating the attribution of a painting to ‘x’ or ‘y’.”⁷ Franklin further explains that this aim for accuracy was not always the case with inventory lists. Oftentimes it was the seller of the auction goods that paid for the inventory or catalog, meaning that it was possible and often probable that the information within would be twisted in order to sell more items at a higher price. The catalog raisonné is structured and organized, like the auction catalog and inventory lists, but the goal of the author is accuracy and integrity instead of profit. It is important to note that the idea of structuring an auction catalog for maximum profit does still exist today. In fact, this is one of the biggest differences between the contemporary auction catalog and the exhibition catalog or catalog raisonné.

The idea behind the catalog raisonné is straightforward, but even with an understanding of it, and Franklin’s definition, it is difficult to make it relevant in today’s art world. Franklin’s three aspects—order, detail, and credibility—are the three aspects that differentiate the catalog raisonné from a simple inventory list. They begin to explain how a catalog raisonné functions, and why it is so important in the art world. But of course the catalog raisonné has evolved since its advent in both structure and function. However, the ways in which the function, uses, and format of the catalog raisonné are different in the modern art world are far less obvious.

In the contemporary art world, the catalog raisonné, as Franklin simply puts it, “is conveniently used to denote a catalog of the output of a single artist, including works in

⁶ Ibid., 42.

many collections.”⁸ In other words, a catalog raisonné tells the story of the artist’s oeuvre, as cohesively and inclusively as possible at the time of the catalog’s creation. Basically, in the contemporary art world, “the term ‘catalogue raisonné’ is conveniently used to denote a catalog of the output of a single artist, including works in many collections.”⁹ In this sense, the catalog raisonné is easy enough to understand. However, when it comes to how the catalog raisonné really functions, things get a little more complicated.

The catalog raisonné functions as a tool for scholars, students, collectors, and many others interested in the works of an artist. In a way it has become obsolete; a clunky, outdated mode of reference and documentation in the contemporary art world, due to the wide existence and accessibility of information on the internet. For example, online catalogs are prevalent in today’s art world. They are cheaper for the viewer, easier to create, and much more widely accessible. If one is interested in the listings at a fine art auction house like Sotheby’s, rather than order and wait for a hard copy of a catalog, he simply has to do a quick search on the company’s website. This method fits with today’s fast paced lifestyle. What is more, it is “green” approach to documentation. An artist can catalog his work online rather than use reams upon reams of paper printing versions to be sold. Art historians can do the same thing, websites and online or electronic catalogs can be created to document and catalog an artist’s life and work. Although online catalogs are

⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁹ Ibid., 41.

more flexible and easily accessible, this idea goes beyond the general obsolescence of printed catalogs and texts, though.

There are problems with the catalog raisonné in contemporary art history, though. Franklin describes the catalog raisonné as collection of credible information and accurate identification of works of art. Thus, the authenticity and importance of a work of art is grounded in authorship. This is problematic in contemporary scholarship, after Barthes' "Death of the Author," because the idea of authorship itself no longer exists in the same way it did in the eighteenth century. The article, written by French theorist Roland Barthes, was published in 1967 during a time of transformation in the field of art history. Barthes calls for the appreciation, critique, and understanding of an artist's work outside of the artist's life and experiences. Importance is placed on the work itself, effectively reconstructing and ultimately removing the role of the artist.¹⁰ This goes hand in hand with the idea of the retrospective exhibition, and the idea of a catalog raisonné made after an artist's life. There was a shift in authority from auction house to museum; the importance of an artist's work is not solely dependent on its monetary value, but also on its artistic value. In other words, the importance of a work of art was dependent on its "exhibition value". The evolution of the inventory list to catalog raisonné mimics this. On the other hand, both the monetary value and artistic value of a work mirror each other. These two values could correspond; that is, a work of high artistic value will also be worth more money than one that is seen as not as artistically well made. Art museums,

¹⁰ Roland Barthes. "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text* (Hill and Wang, 1978).

like art galleries, are institutions of both culture and commerce. A work of art may be an example of “good art,” and thus will fetch a higher price at an auction.

Another problem arises, though, in the realm of the catalog raisonné. Is it even possible to create a catalog raisonné on photography? Ever since its advent, photography has not sat well within the art world. In his essay “On the Museum’s Ruins,” Douglas Crimp discusses the fact that art museums were historically structured around painting, and photography’s entrance into the art world upset this.¹¹ André Malraux, in his *Museum Without Walls*, idealizes photography as a vehicle of documentation of other art, one that homogenizes the art world.¹² However, he himself admits that once photography enters the art world as more than a mere vehicle, this homogenization is upset. As an art form, photography challenges some of the most important, presupposed ideas entrenched in artistic practice—authorship, originality, and uniqueness are all challenged in the practice of photography. As previously discussed, authorship is an issue, and because photography is a mechanical form of art, not an expressive one, problems arise with attributing the work. There are also issues with determining whether or not a photograph is meant to be documentation or an actual work of art. Also, ever since its advent, there are debates surrounding photography’s status as an art form. One of the biggest issues, though, is the issue of whether or not the photograph in question was actually meant to be a work of art, or was merely a draft. The term draft, in this sense, means any photographic bit—whether a negative, photograph, or picture—that was not intended as a

¹¹ Douglas Crimp, “On the Museum’s Ruins,” in *On the Museum’s Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 44-64.

¹² André Malraux, *Museum Without Walls* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967). Crimp discusses Malraux’s *Museum Without Walls* in “On the Museum’s Ruins,” 54.

final work of art. Although this problem further complicates the catalog raisonné, it actually argues for the necessity of it in art history, especially today. One of the most important steps in creating a successful catalog raisonné is studying the artist's work itself. By doing so, the person working on the project is able to know exactly which works are meant as art, and which bits are merely steps in the process leading up to the final product. This idea of the draft is especially pertinent in photomontage, where photographs are often layered to create the final product. A photographer may take two photographs that alone are just images, or drafts, but together make up a final work of art. Another issue that arises in a catalog raisonné on photography is uniqueness. Photographs are so easily reproduced, which lessens the value of the original work. This leads to issues of provenance, which deals with the history of ownership of a work. If there are several copies of an original photographic artwork, are there still only one original and some copies, or are there now several originals? These issues all lend to the complications surrounding what to include in a catalog raisonné, and what to leave out.

After taking all of this into consideration, the catalog raisonné can absolutely be applicable to photography. The function of the contemporary catalog raisonné, as described here, lends itself to photography and those who work in the field of photography. Photography remains different; it is not as easily categorized or explained as other art forms. Photography, as it were, breaks the rules of art. For one thing, a photograph can be easily, mechanically duplicated. A photograph is not inherently artistic, but is a mechanical work that exists as documentation as well. Because of this, photography cannot be cataloged the same way as other art forms. Photography exists

alongside other, new forms of art, such as installation and performance—these works of art break the preexisting molds of the art world and cannot be compartmentalized along with, say, painting and sculpture. When an artist creates a photographic work, there are some big issues that come into play. These not only interfere with how the work is cataloged, but how it is perceived as well. The catalog raisonné has the potential to function in a way that is conducive to this type of art, but it must be amended and created in a way that recognizes and discusses the issues that exist. The catalog raisonné is important and should be a starting point for anyone studying an artist. However, the catalog raisonné should be understood as an open work, one that is informative and interactive. It shouldn't seek to affix one authoritative understanding to an artist's life and work. This fundamental function of the catalog raisonné goes for photography, too. The goal of this project is simple—anyone in the future who is studying Barbara Morgan should be able to look at this book first, and then build upon it in their own research. The catalog raisonné should function in this way; it should give a person a cohesive knowledge of an artist's life and work, with regard to the artist's medium, regardless of what that may be. The goal of this project is to create a contemporary catalog raisonné that will enable future scholars to further study the photomontage works of Barbara Morgan.

In actuality, though, the printed catalog raisonné has not become obsolete; rather, it has shifted in function and use in order to fit the ever expanding and evolving art world. The contemporary catalog raisonné has changed from a set definition of an artist's oeuvre to a more malleable look at the work and evolution of an artist. It is open to interpretation

and reworking, making it extremely useful for scholars. For example, instead of fixing one meaning to the life and work of an artist, the contemporary catalog raisonné can function as a tool, enabling future scholars to understand the life and work of an artist from one person's perspective. This in turn allows these scholars to formulate their own interpretations, which will ultimately lead to a greater understanding of the works of artists.

The contemporary catalog raisonné exists in a very particular theoretical framework. The work of an artist is in movement; it is always open to new critiques and analyses. The main goal of this project is to create a catalog raisonné that displays Morgan's work as it is—an "open work" to be studied and analyzed.¹³ In short, this catalog raisonné itself is a reference for future scholars. Morgan's photomontages have been organized in a way that is useful for those that might be interested in her work—this catalog raisonné is up to date, and includes information on Morgan's life and work—but it is not the be all end all of her work. There is more research to be done, and this catalog raisonné seeks to be the starting point for future studies. And these future studies will be plentiful and ongoing. In the words of Umberto Eco: "every work of art, even though it is produced by following an explicit or implicit poetics of necessity, is effectively open to a virtually unlimited range of possible readings, each of which causes the work to acquire new vitality in terms of one particular taste, or perspective, or personal performance."¹⁴ Eco's theory of "The Open Work," asserts that an artist's work is always open to

¹³ Umberto Eco, "The Poetics of the Open Work" in *The Open Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

discussion and analysis. Accordingly, I am providing the reader with a background on Morgan, as well as the history of photomontage and how it pertains to her work. I am discussing the catalog raisonné, and am including the complete set of Morgan's photomontage works. I am in no way prescribing one set meaning to her work, and I am not closing the door on research on her work or life. This catalog raisonné provides the reader with a look at Morgan's work in the field of photomontage that overarches her whole career. In this way, the contemporary catalog raisonné is something new, but in order to fully comprehend what it has become, it is important to understand its history.

The catalog raisonné is alive and well, and should be in the realm of photography as well. This calls for, as I have explained, a contemporary catalog raisonné, with its own, new functions that differ from that of the classic version. According to Adam Lauder, in his 2011 article titled "Liberty of the Compiler: Catalogue Raisonné as Metaphor for Collaborative Design," the catalog raisonné functions as "both a marketing tool and a model of genuinely interactive and responsive scholarly communication."¹⁵ What is more, Lauder argues that this two dimensional functionality of the contemporary catalog raisonné is what gives it its staying power—the catalog raisonné, as it were, exists as a useful tool regardless of the technological state of the world.¹⁶ This project will work in this way. This is a contemporary catalog raisonné that looks at the photomontage work of Barbara Morgan, including her dance photomontages. I will include every photograph that was printed as a finished work. As I mentioned earlier, with photography, defining a piece as a finished work can be painstakingly difficult. Fortunately, Morgan's work is

¹⁵ Lauder, "Liberty of the Compiler," 18.

rather straightforward, and she herself made many statements about her own work. These facts make it possible to begin determining which examples of her work qualify as finished works of art. Likewise, I will be looking at the photomontage works of her career in its entirety. By looking at all of her photomontage work, not just that of one subject or period in her career, I will establish a comprehensive collection of her work in the field of photomontage. In turn, this will help future studies of Barbara Morgan. That said, the works included span Morgan's whole career, and are dated as early as 1945 and as late as 1963. Structurally, this catalog raisonné is straightforward. There will be one photograph per page. Along with the photograph of the work, I will list the title and the date the image was made, along with any other information that was known at the time of the catalog's creation.

While Barbara Morgan herself has written several books and essays on her work, there has been relatively little attention paid to her work. By creating this catalog raisonné, I will be making her work more accessible, a resource future scholars can build on. Morgan, while relatively well known, contributed a great deal to the history of photography, and her work should be studied as such.

¹⁶ Ibid., 18-19.

A Life in Motion

Barbara Morgan lived a truly remarkable life, a life that leaves a lasting legacy in the field of photography. Morgan's personal and professional lives intertwined, producing a rich life full of art. Understanding Morgan's most vital influences and experiences is extremely important. Her entire life was influenced by motion and movement: from understanding atoms as a child to taking dance classes in college to conveying movement through time in some of her later works. Understanding Morgan's experiences as well as the influences that affected her throughout her life are key in fully understanding her work, in particular, her work in the field of photomontage.

Barbara Brooks Johnson was born in 1900. In the same year, her family moved from the farmland of Kansas to a Southern California peach farm.¹⁷ Not much is known about Morgan's early life, but there are a few aspects of her childhood that are important to her later life as an artist. For instance, it is said that she took an interest in making art at the young age of four, when she saw a painting of a tree by her great uncle Benjamin hanging in her bedroom. Morgan further describes this experience in the monograph of her work in *Aperture* magazine:

“Above my bed hung a wash drawing. It was a foliage study of a tree, by Benjamin Coe. Morning after morning, I would look up at it, tracing the twigs and limbs and cracks in the bark, seeing how the color washed thin, how little dabs of paint would seem to be leaves or the tip of a twig. Too young to understand more

¹⁷ Debra P. Patnaik, *Barbara Morgan* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1999), 5.

than that it was a painting of a tree, I gradually began to feel that I knew how it felt to move a brush.”¹⁸

Then and there, the young Morgan decided she would be an artist, just like her great uncle Benjamin. Her parents nurtured this interest in making art, and bought her paints, brushes, canvases, paper, and other supplies.

In 1919, Morgan enrolled at the University of California in Los Angeles, where she majored in art. She took several classes in prehistoric and Asian art history, and was also interested in poetry, as she was when she was a child. She and some colleagues formed a Manuscript Club, which ultimately helped her to realize her interest in imagery. She explains that “it was then that I realized my written poetry was a backflash from the visual metaphor that I was seeing in my mind’s eye when writing a poem.”¹⁹ This is the moment imagery clicked for her; at this point in time, Morgan linked written imagery to the visual imagery that would appear in her artwork.

The interest in movement showed early, when along with art and poetry, Morgan studied dance, in order to understand movement of the human body. For over a year she attended a weekly dance class taught by Bertha Wardell, who had studied under dancer Isadora Duncan. Here she and a few of her friends, who were also artists, learned about movement, rhythm, and Duncan’s idea of “life spirit,” or the expression of the spirit through movement of the body.

¹⁸ Barbara Morgan, *Barbara Morgan* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1964), 6. This is a special issue of Aperture that was written by Morgan herself.

¹⁹ Berenice Abbott and Margaretta Mitchell, *Recollections: Ten Women of Photography* (New York: Viking, 1979), 179.

Much of what Morgan studied at UCLA was centered on art synthesis, and her instructors focused both on abstract and figurative art.²⁰ The idea of art synthesis was formulated by Arthur Wesley Dow, a prominent figure in the California arts and crafts movement. Dow had sought to synthesize Eastern and Western art, emphasizing handcrafted arts and “pure design.”²¹ “In this approach,” Morgan recalled “abstract design was considered fundamental to all art structure, styles, and media, and was taught parallel to realistic drawing and painting.”²² While at UCLA, she was also introduced to the Japanese idea of *Esoragoto*, which she learned from a Japanese student studying at the university.²³ *Esoragoto* is a Japanese painting tradition in which the artist does not produce a copy of the image being painted, but rather, conveys its essence and sentiment. What is more, every painting must enact *Esoragoto* in order to be effective.²⁴ Along with this, Morgan studied the Chinese Six Canons of Painting and was thus introduced to the idea of rhythmic vitality, which easily resonated with her interest in dance. The most interesting aspect of her experience in the art department at UCLA is the fact that she was taught all of these methods, movements, and styles without dominance of the European tradition that was common at the time.²⁵ Her schooling was part of a modern art style that was unique to Southern California, and although Morgan left UCLA in 1923 as a student, it would only be a couple of years before she returned as an instructor.

²⁰ Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 6.

²¹ Frederick C. Moffatt “Arthur Wesley Dow and the Ipswich School of Art” *The New England Quarterly* 49 (1976): 339-355.

²² Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 9.

²³ Abbott and Mitchell, *Recollections: Ten Women of Photography*, 179.

²⁴ Henry P. Bowie, Iwaya Sazanami, and Hirai Kinza, *On the Laws of Japanese Painting: An Introduction to the Study of the Art of Japan* (Nabu Press, 2010)

²⁵ Patnaik, *Barbara Morgan*, 5-6.

In 1925, Morgan joined the faculty of the art department at UCLA. She began teaching basic design, landscape painting, and woodcut printmaking, and also worked as a curator, hanging the work of other artists in the UCLA art department gallery. She was interested in modern art movements at a time when many around her were still working in more traditional ways.²⁶ In the decade leading up to this pivotal point in Morgan's life, there were several prevalent art movements in Southern California, and these years can be seen as the time in which modernism was truly brought to the forefront there. Impressionism and Post-Impressionism were dominant, and many artists interested in the work of Monet latched on to these styles. These artists were interested in landscape, beauty, and color. Synchronism, a painterly style developed by Stanton Macdonald-Wright and Morgan Russell, and touted as the "earliest modern art movement created by Americans" (although it was developed in Paris), was also very popular among artists and critics in Los Angeles.²⁷ Synchronism then evolved and began to invoke Cubism and the work of Cézanne. Macdonald-Wright ultimately appears to be one of the biggest champions of modern art in southern California, and was concerned with the function of art. He "spoke of art as expressing the balance between opposite but complementary realms."²⁸ Southern California grew to be a melting pot of artistic movements.

Throughout the evolution of artistic style in southern California, the one feature that never changed was the experimental spirit among artists. Artists in southern

²⁶ Curtis L. Carter, "Barbara Morgan: Philosopher/Poet of Visual Motion Barbara Morgan," in *Barbara Morgan: Prints, Drawings, Watercolors & Photographs* (Milwaukee: Patrick & Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, 1988), 6-21.

²⁷ Sarah Vure et al. *Circles of Influence: Impressionism to Modernism in Southern California Art, 1910-1930* (Newport Beach: Orange County Museum of Art, 2000), 84-92.

²⁸ Vure, et al., *Circles of Influence*, 84-92.

California, such as those in the California Progressives and the Group of Independent Artists experimented with movements that were introduced from other regions, as well as those that were created in the area. From the start, Morgan herself can be seen as experimental, and part of the movement to expand the art styles and movements in southern California. Much of her artistic inspiration and influence comes from her schooling and subsequent exposure to all of the different artistic movements visible in southern California, however, she also drew inspiration from her own life; her travels, her surroundings, and her personal experiences shaped her as an artist. However, when looking at her work, it is easy to see that she was influenced by several international artists and movements, as well as the prominent art movements in Southern California. Many of these international artists were moving to the United States at the time, which did a lot to shape North American art. For example, her experimental spirit has been linked to the Dadaists, and her uses of rhythmic motion recall the futurist movement.²⁹ Her own artistic style evolved throughout her lifetime, spanning international movements as diverse as German Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, and Surrealism, as well as the Social Realist art of Mexico.³⁰ It is necessary to understand that Morgan experimented with all of these styles and took cues from many different artists, but in such a way that she was able to successfully establish her own place in the world of modern art. As Curtis Carter has pointed out, so many different styles are visible in her work, and her work is akin to so many different artists because she “accepts with the pioneers who generated these various aspects of modern art, the necessity for

²⁹ Carter, "Barbara Morgan," 10.

experimentation and individuality as integral components of any serious approach to art.”³¹ Her openness to the work of others brought a variety to her own work, and exposed her to new artistic media and styles.

Aside from being influenced by other artists, Morgan also drew inspiration from the southwestern landscape. In an essay she wrote in 1964, Morgan discusses writers and artistic ideas that shaped her work, but goes on to say that “deeper art influences stemmed from earliest memories of the radiant Southern California landscape” and from the “Spanish atmosphere.”³² By helping her husband photograph architecture, Morgan even learned a great deal from Frank Lloyd Wright.

Around this time, Morgan started exhibiting her work on the west coast, particularly in Southern California. She exhibited her work regularly from 1923 to 1929. These exhibits included two at the Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, which is now the San Diego Museum of Art, in 1926 and 1927.³³ At this point, Morgan was not making photographs and was only exhibiting her paintings, woodcuts, and drawings.

In 1925, Barbara Johnson married Willard Morgan, a writer who illustrated his magazine articles with his own photographs, and who tried to convince his wife to make photographs as well as paintings. Morgan recalled: “Willard saw prophetically the importance of photography and was determined to convert me to his medium, which he claimed was the real Modern Art of the Twentieth Century.”³⁴ However, at this time,

³⁰ Ibid., 10.

³¹ Ibid., 10.

³² Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 9.

³³ Carter, “Barbara Morgan,” 10.

³⁴ Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 9.

Morgan was still painting, and saw photography as more of a means of record keeping, although she enjoyed helping Willard take photographs for his articles.³⁵

In 1926, a very important event happened in Morgan's life, which ultimately changed her mind about photography: she curated an exhibit of photographer Edward Weston's work at UCLA. Morgan recalls:

“the director of the art department told me that although the university trustees would object to photography being exhibited as art, she was going to take the risk, because she felt deeply that the photographs of Edward Weston, just returning from Mexico, were truly creative art.”³⁶

At this point in time, at UCLA and throughout the United States and Europe, photography was not regarded as art. While Alfred Stieglitz had struggled on the East Coast to validate photography as art through the first decades of the century, his legacy on the West Coast had not yet taken hold. Morgan goes on to say that although Weston was not well known at the time, she was “instantly inspired” by his work. Up until this point, in spite of her husband's influence, she had remained unmoved by photography as an art; even after her exposure to the Photo Secession and Alfred Stieglitz's Camera Work. She claimed, “photographs seen only in reproduction made no real breakthrough.”³⁷ But then, Weston's “rich, brilliant prints of Californian and Mexican subject matter” impressed her with their visible essence and “thingness” of the images, and sparked her understanding of photography as art.³⁸ Weston and Morgan hung the

³⁵ Ibid., 9.

³⁶ Abbott and Mitchell, *Recollections: Ten Women of Photography*, 179.

³⁷ Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 9.

³⁸ Ibid., 9.

show together, and became lifelong friends. From Weston she learned that photography had the capability to convey a message and an emotion -- that it could be used as a form of expression. She realized that familiar objects and imagery could be transformed through the medium. For Morgan, Weston's "creation, his images, obviously are recognizable objects, but they go beyond the obvious and so they contain a symbolic or further meaning, in other words, they have another dimension."³⁹ Not only did Morgan take from Weston a new respect for photography as something more than mere documentation, she was also able to understand it in a way that abetted her own art making. It seemed to Morgan that Weston had "made essence visible," and "express[ed] the 'thingness of a thing'."⁴⁰ This affected Morgan on a very personal level. Yet Weston's work and his relationship with and portrayal of "essence" led Morgan to understand photography in her own way. She states: "I knew that if I should ever seriously photograph, it would be from the opposite pole—motion, the flux of things. I wanted then, and still do, to express the 'thing' as part of total flow."⁴¹

Morgan had a foundation in this way of thinking of the world in terms of dynamics in place since she was a child. Morgan's work is grounded in rhythm and movement; objects may appear static at first, but give off the feeling and idea of movement. This is an idea that is very evident in her dance photography, but is also visible in her photomontage work. For example, her 1941 photomontage *Pure Energy and Neurotic Man* (fig. 1), which is a work that also incorporates light drawing, exudes

³⁹ Leonard N. Amico, Barbara B. Morgan, and Stephen R. Edidin, *The Photographs of Barbara Morgan* (Williamstown: Williams College Museum of Art, 1978), 1.

⁴⁰ Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

movement and energy. The hand, which has been placed at the top right corner of the image, grabs at the light which moves erratically across the picture plane. What is more, even the most solitary object is still made up of many different, smaller parts. Likewise, Morgan's later work, *Icons in Time-Stream*, of 1963, shows a building juxtaposed with an ancient sculpture of a human figure. This work portrays movement through time, but the lines of the building also give off the feeling of physical movement through space. Whether it is the physical movement of an object, or the passage of time, Morgan's work incorporates movement. The idea of atoms, or smaller bits, coming together to create something larger is important too, because it can be tied to her creation of photomontages.

While living on the west coast, Morgan had an established a career and was relatively well known in the art world, in part due to her specific training and the exhibitions of her work. This was a time of Morgan's life that was devoted to primarily woodcuts and painting. However, at this time, Morgan balanced her work as an artist with her work at UCLA, and art making was primarily a summertime activity for Morgan and her husband. The two traveled throughout the southwest, and were particularly interested in Native American locations, which Morgan found to be evocative of the primeval. In the monograph of her work, which Morgan herself designed, wrote, and produced, she recalls, "These southwest experiences went deep. The stratification of the Grand Canyon and Monument Valley attuned me to geologic time; Mesa Verde Cliff Dwellings to ancient human time. The Navajo and Pueblo Indian tribes who danced their rituals...simply as partners in the cosmic process, attuned me to the universally primal—

rather than to either the ‘primitive’ or the ‘civilized’.”⁴² Morgan goes on to explain that the realizations she came to while exploring the southwest stayed with her, even when she eventually moved to the big cities of the east coast. These experiences ultimately helped her frame and locate her work: “These two basic poles—the prehistoric and the space age—when juxtaposed, form a working threshold from which I am now trying to think and create.”⁴³ What is more, these travels nurtured her curiosity toward photography. Her husband had an extra camera, and she began taking photographs. Although she spent these summers painting, this is when she herself began experimenting with photography.

By 1928, Morgan was highly acclaimed in California. She was well respected and known for her visionary use of, and interest in, modern art styles and techniques. She became an outspoken advocate of modern art, and many claimed her work was experimental.⁴⁴ For example, Los Angeles critic Prudence Wollet remarked that Morgan, “an experimenter worth watching, is a remarkably independent artist who takes great liberty with her work.”⁴⁵ Morgan was indeed watched; her career flourished as she continued to experiment. She was experimental in the sense that she was well aware that art and processes and practices were always changing and evolving. In an interview, Morgan made the poignant comment that “we get along very well with art as long as it stays in the art histories, for there it is tabulated like the parked cars we pass” -- she was very much against the compartmentalization of art into specific timeframes and

⁴² Ibid., 9.

⁴³ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁴ Carter, "Barbara Morgan," 10.

⁴⁵ Carter, "Barbara Morgan," 10. Prudence Wollet is quoted in Carter's article.

movements. Instead, Morgan argues in favor of the constantly evolving art world, certainly a modern and experimental position to take at the time.

Morgan and her husband moved to New York in 1930, and the latter part of her career began. The move took place because Willard Morgan was offered a job publicizing the Leica camera, and Morgan spent her days exploring and her evenings helping him give presentations on the cameras. In these marketing demonstrations she witnessed people from many different fields interested in using photography; specialists in many fields including everything from photojournalism to biology attended Willard's lectures in earnest.⁴⁶ This helped her begin to realize the "impact that the 35mm revolution was bringing to science and art."⁴⁷ She was met with many new experiences after the move, and these situations helped solidify her interest in photography. For example, Morgan got the opportunity to photograph the art collection of Dr. Albert Barnes in Pennsylvania. Here, while snapping photographs of artifacts, she learned something important about photography; "using lights, I discovered that I could make these ritual sculptures seem either menacing or benign, simply by control of lighting. This was a new shock to me to realize how tremendously subjective this supposedly objective medium could be."⁴⁸ For a while, even after the move to the east coast, Morgan continued painting and exhibiting her painted works. At this time she continued to experiment with photography, but in 1935, it became her primary medium.

⁴⁶ Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

This shift happened for several reasons. The Morgans had two children, and while raising her sons, Barbara wanted to continue to make art. She found that photography best suited her life as a busy mother; she simply did not have the time to devote to painting. More importantly, the sights and experiences she was met with in New York City made her feel that painting would not be a proper means of expression. She was moved by the despair she saw in the city in the wake of the Great Depression, and wanted to capture it directly and accurately. Morgan describes what she saw, and how it differed greatly from the poverty she had witnessed in the west:

“Day after day men out of work shuffled listlessly through Madison Square. In the west I had witnessed dire poverty, especially among many Mexican families, but despite physical want they still enjoyed sitting in their doorways soaking up the sun, singing impassioned songs to guitars. There was not the claustrophobic, spiritual poverty of the city breadlines in a machine world.”⁴⁹

In an interview from 1938 with Etna M. Kelley, Morgan described the challenges presented by the city; “I felt the conflict between the heroic proportions of the structures as against the people, who were hurried, subordinate, not masters of themselves... I wanted to paint it all, but when I tried, I could not express what I felt”. In the same interview, Morgan goes on to state “I want to express the conflict between the people and their environment... to subordinate technology to human values, to dignify and glorify man. There’s no justification for our mechanized world unless it contributes to a good

⁴⁹ Carter, "Barbara Morgan," 15.

way of living. I want to show that in my photographs.”⁵⁰ And “show that” Morgan does, for many of her works display that sheer desperation she was met with in New York City. It is interesting, though, that Morgan wanted to use her work to raise humanity above technology, yet she found the best medium for doing so was photography, a technological medium. Perhaps Morgan was admitting the necessity of technology and was accepting the fact that evolution through time inevitably involves technological advancements. Maybe she was attempting some sort of irony in her work. It is hard to know for sure, but either way, Morgan wholeheartedly took up the mechanical medium.

Perhaps part of the reason why Morgan became more open to photography was her husband’s growing connection to the medium. After years of photographing and working with cameras, Willard was given a new opportunity. In 1943, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City opened a Photography Center, of which Willard was appointed Director.⁵¹ During his short lived, yearlong career as Director, Willard scheduled many lectures, including some by Ansel Adams.⁵² Willard also planned an American folk art exhibition titled *The American Snapshot*, which was well received by visitors, but also criticized.⁵³ Although Willard’s career at MOMA was short lived, Barbara herself would later exhibit her dance photography at the same museum.

⁵⁰ Etna M. Kelley, “Barbara Morgan: Painter Turned Photographer.” *Photography* (September 1938, 6): 6. Cited in Carter, “Barbara Morgan: Philosopher/Poet of Visual Motion,” 5.

⁵¹ Michael Shuter. “Willard D. Morgan.” (M.A. Thesis, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1995) 77. Accessed July 2013, Rochester Institute of Technology Digital Media Library Repository.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 78.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 81.

A Photographer's Influences

The first thing to consider when looking at Morgan's photographic work are the myriad influences in her life and how they culminate in what has been described as "expressionist photography," that is, it is not merely a "vehicle for documentation, but aims for interpretation."⁵⁴ Expressionist photography is made to be interpreted, the meaning of these works reaching beyond the image itself to symbols that are used to express personal ideas and values.⁵⁵ In this way, Morgan's work shares aspects with two well-known photographers of her time, Ansel Adams and Minor White, both of whom attest to Morgan's amazing ability in the field of photography.⁵⁶

In spite of these strong alliances, Morgan utilized different ideas and blended different artistic movements in her work, bending established artistic conventions to create her own photographic language.⁵⁷ She used different photographic processes in unique ways to create her works, many of which depict the ideas of dance or the dynamism of the city.⁵⁸ Expressionist photographers find meaning not only in the photograph itself, but in symbols "expressing personal vision and cultural values."⁵⁹ For these artists, photography becomes an extremely personal means of expression. The works are not objective; they are the artist's interpretation of the subject being photographed. What is more, these works are meant to be interpreted by the viewer. Morgan's work does not eliminate or minimize the personal role of the photographer—in

⁵⁴ Carter, "Barbara Morgan," 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

other words, this trained painter has successfully begun to use photography in the same way; rather than documenting what she sees, Morgan imbues her work with a deep sense of personal expression. The camera is no longer meant only to take documentary snapshots, but becomes a medium through which the artist can express herself, activating those feelings in the viewer.

That being said, a good portion of Morgan's work has served as a record, documenting dances and performances of the time. For example, some of Morgan's most well-known dance photography documents the work of Martha Graham. This work exhibits the desire Morgan had to document performance and dance, and also reiterates her interest in movement. Morgan also saw dance as a means of expression in a time of depression. In the midst of the despair in the city, Morgan recalls that these dancers "forged life-affirming dance statements of American society in stress and strain". These dances also reminded Morgan of the Native American dances she had experienced in the west, dances that "invigorate the tribe in drought and difficulty."⁶⁰ However, the main draw to dance was the energy that is conveyed by the body in motion. She states at the beginning of her book *Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs* that Graham's work invokes the ritual dances of the Southwest Native American people. These ritual dances "conveyed a cosmic synthesis rhythmically unifying the people with the sun, the earth, and the fertility of all life," as "it is with Martha Graham's dances, which evoke spiritual-emotional energy."

⁶⁰ Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 14. Morgan discusses in several of her writings the impact Native American dance had on her and her decision to photograph dance.

Some of Morgan's greatest and most interesting works are the manipulated photographic works. Morgan used several manipulation techniques in her work, but none are as intriguing as her work in the field of photomontage. According to Dawn Ades, photomontage is essentially the idea of assembling artworks. Although "manipulation of the photograph is as old as photography itself", photomontage was created by the Dadaists of Germany began layering photographs with their artworks.⁶¹ Morgan had her own definition for photomontage, which is "an interrelated visual combination, of which part or all of the composition is photographic... photomontage may be a combination of photo, type, and hand drawing or painting in which all the forms are thoroughly knit even though some are in different media."⁶² In this case, photomontage in Morgan's work is any image that has been altered by incorporating one or more images into, or onto, the original photography. Morgan also created a photomontage effect in some of her works by utilizing reflections, often in windows. These works will also be included in this catalog, as they fall into the timeline of her work and experimentation, and also help to describe the relationship she had with photography and photomontage. It is clear that Morgan had a deep knowledge and understanding of the history of photomontage and the photomontage process, and she successfully utilized this medium and process to express her own ideas. In a short essay that serves as the foreword to an exhibition catalog, Marianne Fulton Margolis tackles Morgan's photomontage work head on, and helps the reader fully understand the complicated process and intentions of the artist. Morgan's

⁶¹ Dawn Ades, *Photomontage* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1978), 7.

⁶² Barbara Morgan, "Photomontage" in *Miniature Camera Work*, ed. Willard Morgan and Henry Lester (New York: Morgan & Lester, 1938), 146.

photomontage work “is the end-product of a series of complex decisions beginning with the concept,” Margolis writes. She continues by describing Morgan’s process; “the exposure and selection of the negatives follow, and the design is rendered through such carefully chosen printing procedures.”⁶³ In short, Morgan’s photomontages are not the work of accident or chance, they are very purposefully thought out and then created in order to tell a story or make a statement. This project catalogs Morgan’s photomontages; however, it is important to note that many of Morgan’s light drawings are also photomontages. For example, her *Serpent Light-III* (fig. 2), from 1948, is a photomontage that also utilizes light drawing to create a design.

Most important to Morgan’s development as a photomontage artist was her relationship with László Moholy-Nagy and his wife Lucia, who nurtured her interest in the field. She was interested in the European avant-garde and worked with photomontage even when it was mostly unknown to North American artists.⁶⁴ In 1936 art historian and curator Beaumont Newhall included photographs by Moholy in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and within a year, Moholy had emigrated from London to Chicago.⁶⁵ Morgan was already on the East Coast by the time these events took place. While Moholy was in Chicago, he was creating photograms and photomontages that inevitably influenced Morgan’s own work.⁶⁶ It can be surmised that Morgan met Moholy at this time, most likely in Chicago where he was establishing the

⁶³ Marianne Margolis and Barbara Morgan, *Barbara Morgan: Photomontage* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y: Morgan & Morgan, 1980), 1-5.

⁶⁴ Patnaik, *Barbara Morgan*, 8.

⁶⁵ Terence A. Senter, “László Moholy-Nagy: The Transnational Years,” in *Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2006), 85-91.

⁶⁶ Renate Heyne et al. *Moholy-Nagy: The Photograms* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009)

New Bauhaus. Morgan was also well read in experimental photography, thanks to Moholy's articles. Morgan has praised Moholy's work and life in many of her writings. She has stated that even though there were many European pre- and post-war artists experimenting with their art and dabbling in photography and montage, Moholy "not only was of the first to experiment in various types of photomontage and photograms, but also contributed to the basic philosophy upon which it has come forward."⁶⁷ Morgan understood the ways photomontage could depict the multiplicity of city life, and her exposure to Moholy's work enabled her to utilize more experimental forms of photography even before they were prevalent in the United States.

Morgan had a very specific attitude regarding photomontage; she called it a "natural of our times," and stated that "it is the inevitable next step in photography."⁶⁸ Photomontage addresses the "complexity and multiplicity of the modern world," which, according to Carter, explains why Morgan chose this medium to "express multiplicity in thought and emotion."⁶⁹ A photomontage is similar to this idea; although it may be a single, static work of art, it is made up of different layers that tell different stories and convey different emotions, all with the ultimate goal of making a statement. In her essay in Willard's book, Morgan makes it clear that she is not suggesting montage takeover regular photography, or that one is somehow more expressive than the other. Rather, she seeks to "make of the photographic process a rounded medium which can flexibly use the straight single picture when that is valid, or montage when the designer's mind has

⁶⁷ Morgan, "Photomontage", 147.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 147.

⁶⁹ Carter, "Barbara Morgan," 14.

coalesced multiple images in the service of an imaginative conception.”⁷⁰ In short, the photomontage looks like a single, “straight” or regular photograph, but it is made up of several parts or images that the artist has designed into one cohesive work of art. Again, Edward Weston’s work influenced her own. By looking at the artist’s work, Morgan realized that photography went beyond copying nature; it had the potential to be art in its own right. What is more, his work helped her define her photomontage work. Weston’s works, which “contain a symbolic or further meaning,” and are based on his own definitions of object and essence, helped her to define her own work and her own styles.⁷¹ Morgan sought out the essence of the imagery or object she was photographing by studying the motion and flux of these, objects were not simply static. It was at this point that Morgan successfully determined her own relationship to photography. This also calls forth the idea of rhythmic vitality, which she was exposed to as a student at UCLA. In fact, rhythmic vitality is arguably the most important aspect of her work. She explains “whether my work is large or small, abstract or realistic, the one thing that must be present is rhythmic vitality,” and goes on to state that “there always has to be the presence of energy.”⁷² Abstraction is another aspect of her photomontage work, which is another way she was influenced by Moholy’s work.

An important aspect of Morgan’s work with photomontage is what it meant to her, and how she utilized it. To reiterate, she looked to photomontage as the answer to “the complexity and multiplicity of the modern world.”⁷³ She needed to find a way to

⁷⁰ Morgan, “Photomontage”, 140-150.

⁷¹ Patnaik, *Barbara Morgan*, 7-10.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

express this multiplicity in a single work, which led to “simultaneous multiple perspective”. She felt that typical works, or in other words, “sequences of separate images,” could not properly convey the interrelationships of modern life. According to Carter, Morgan was drawn to photomontage because of its ability to create both tension and empathy, a theme that is visible in much of her work, including the photomontages included in this catalog.⁷⁴ Morgan’s work is “as much about time itself as about the subjects that time intersects.”⁷⁵ Tension, apathy, time, the passage of time, and the effects of time are some recurring themes in Morgan’s photomontage work, as is the juxtaposition of ancient landscape and objects with details of modern life.

This taking up of photomontage as a means of expression correlates to Morgan’s reaction to life in New York City. Much of her photomontage work looks at humanity in its relation to architecture, or nature crossed with manmade elements of life. When Morgan was living in California, she was able to travel around the desert and take in the sights and experiences of ancient culture and landscape. On the East Coast, however, she was exposed to crowds, poverty, and the sheer sadness that overwhelmed the big city. In short, Morgan was moved by what she referred to as “massive human tragedy” while in New York City. Morgan’s photomontages most effectively convey these ideas because they enable her to make juxtapositions—whether it is between man and machine, corporation and individual, ancient and modern—Morgan’s photomontages show the viewer the multilayered view of the city she sought to express.

⁷⁴ Carter, "Barbara Morgan," 14-17.

⁷⁵ Margolis and Morgan, *Barbara Morgan: Photomontage*, 1-5.

Morgan died on August 17, 1992. Overall, she made a huge contribution to the art world and the world of photography. She has influenced other artists, such as Annie Leibovitz, who also creates dance photography. She also helped to found *Aperture*, a photography magazine, wrote for them, and designed, wrote, and produced the issue that served as a monograph of her work. Morgan also greatly contributed to the world of dance as well. Through her own photography and artwork, she documented dances, dancers, and other historiographical aspects of dance. For example, she worked hand in hand with Martha Graham to document and catalog dance and choreography. Morgan's work was also exhibited at museums and galleries at every point in her career; there is no doubt that it influenced its viewers.

Barbara Morgan avoided photography for years, although she was surrounded by it, because of her belief that it could not—and should not—be a form of art. It wasn't until several factors came together and forced the camera into her hands that she truly understood the possibility of the medium. After seeing the work of Edward Weston, and the possibilities of photography, experiencing life in the big cities of the East Coast, and the challenges of parenthood, Morgan realized the potential of the camera. She turned to photography at a time when she was not able to make art in other ways, and not only did it satisfy her practical needs, it enabled her to ultimately make some of her most fascinating works, her photomontages.

Figures



Fig. 1: *Pure Energy and Neurotic Man*. Barbara Morgan, 1941, gelatin silver print.

Information courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, www.moma.org.

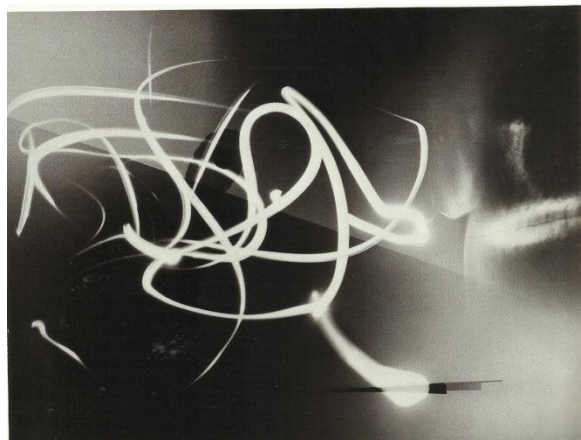


Fig. 2: *Serpent Light- III*. Barbara Morgan, 1948, photomontage-light drawing.

Closing Remarks

From a childhood raised by parents who encouraged her desire to paint and draw, to the last decades of her life, in which she switched back to her first medium, Barbara Morgan lived a life full of learning and art making. Throughout this life she was struck by so many influences, and worked in several different media. After years of painting, drawing, and printmaking, and believing that a mechanical object could not make art, a number of reasons culminated in Morgan's move to photography as her primary medium. After making some of her most groundbreaking images documenting dance, Morgan turned to photomontage. Photomontage made the connection between painting and photography, and allowed Morgan to fully make the move to photography as her main medium. In fact, she recalls in a 1978 interview that "practically and personally, photomontage was the crucial agency which helped [her] switch from a life of painting to a life of photography".⁷⁶ In this way, Morgan's craft blossomed.

After decades of making photomontages and documenting dance, Morgan returned to painting in 1955. Reuniting with her first medium was a remarkable experience, but soon Morgan realized she could paint and photograph. She states, "all resentment was gone... no longer will photography thwart painting. I need both. I will do both."⁷⁷ Morgan lived the rest of her years in harmony, painting and photographing.

⁷⁶ Amico, Leonard N., Barbara B. Morgan, and Stephen R. Edidin. *The Photographs of Barbara Morgan* (Williamstown, MA: Williams College Museum of Art, 1978) 2.

⁷⁷ Morgan, *Barbara Morgan*, 36.



Martha Graham: Lamentation

1935

Printed 1979



Spring on Madison Avenue

1935

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

Image: 18 in x 22 1/16 in; mat: 23 7/8 in x 30 in; paper: 19 15/16 in x 23 3/4 in (information courtesy of The Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Third Avenue El

1936

Printed 1979

Photomontage mounted on board

12 x 8 1/2 in

Signed, titled, and dated on mount recto; signed, titled, and dated on mount verso: Artist stamp on mount verso, annotations on verso.

(information courtesy of the Bruce Silverstein gallery)



City Street

1937

Printed 1979

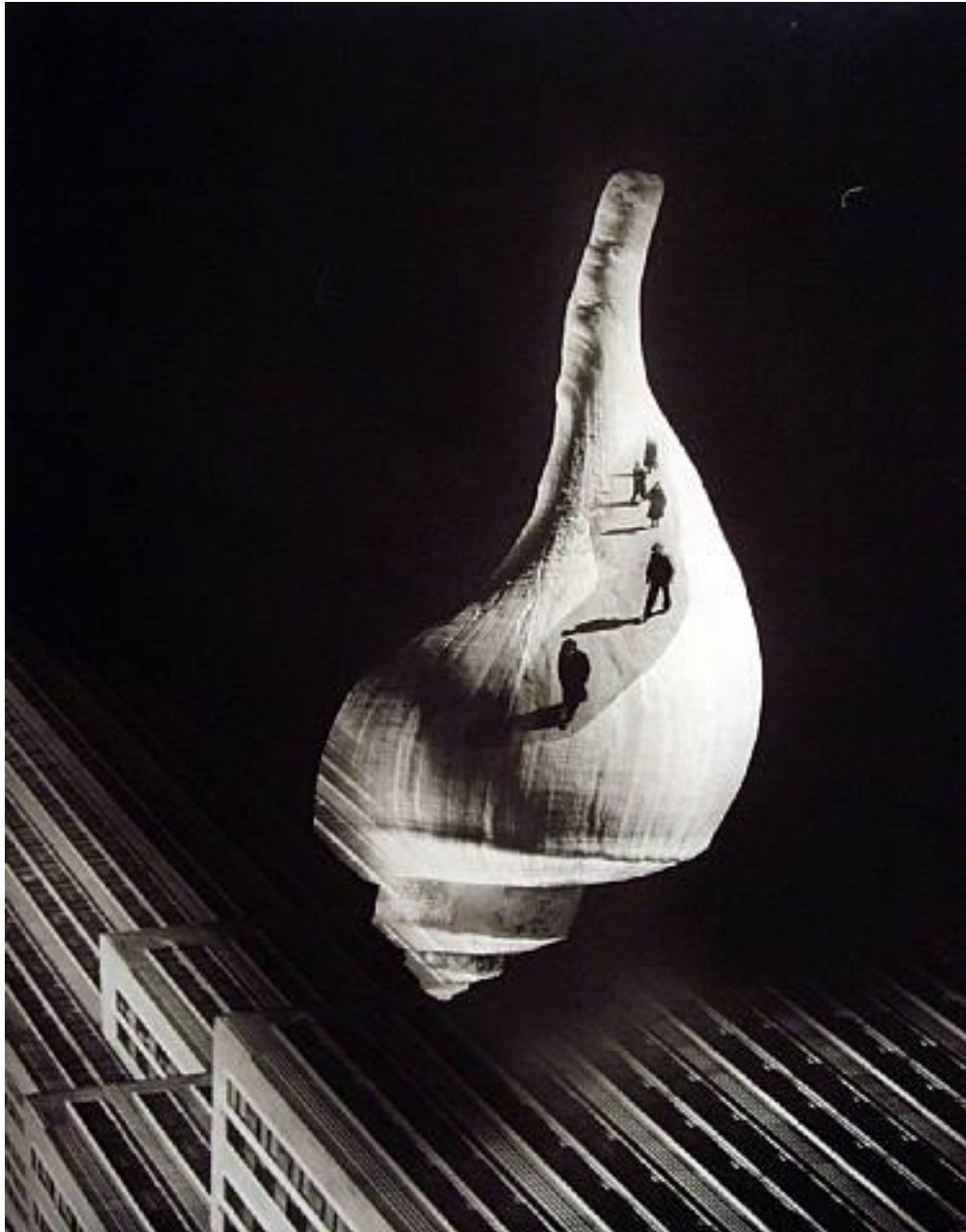


Martha Graham: American Document

(Trio)

1938

Printed 1979



City Shell

1938

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

Image: 15 1/2 in x 12 1/4 in; paper: 20 in x 16 in

(information courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Spring on Madison Square

1938

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

Image: 12 13/16 in x 15 9/16 in; paper: 16 in x 20 in

(information courtesy of Christie's online past sales catalog and the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Hearst Over the People

1939

Printed 1980

Photomontage mounted to board

Image: 12 in x 15 in; paper: 16 in x 20 in

Signed on recto; Signed and dated on mount recto; Artist stamp on mount verso

(information courtesy of the Bruce Silverstein gallery and the Museum of Contemporary
Photography in Chicago)



Macy's Window

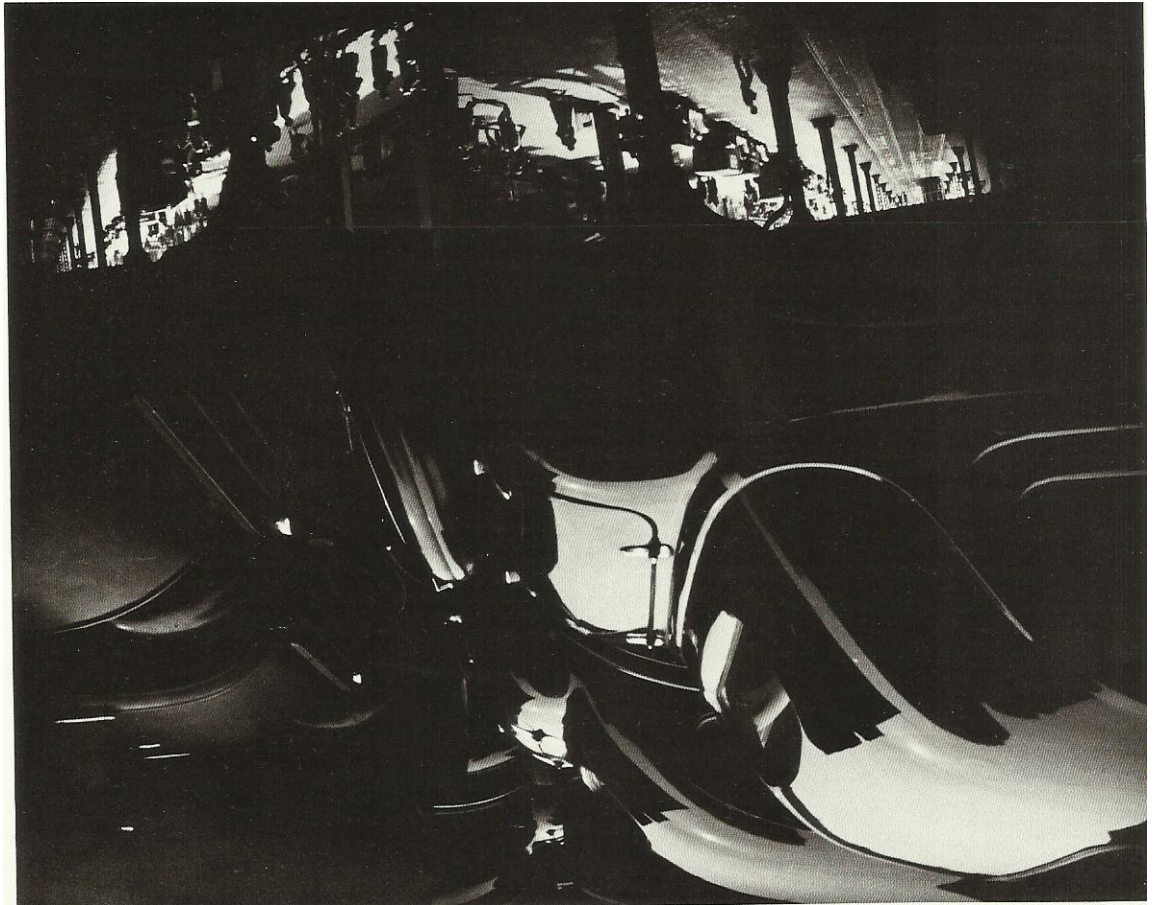
1939

Printed 1972

Found photomontage, gelatin silver print

16 in x 20 in

(information courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Third Avenue El With Cars

1939

Printed 1972



Cadenza

1940

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

16 1/8 x 13 5/8 in

(information courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Kleenex

1940

Found photomontage



Protest, 1940

1940

Printed 1980

Silver gelatin print

16 x 20 in

Signed, "Barbara Morgan" and dated "1940" on Lower right ; Titled "Protest" Lower Left;
Inscribed, "Protest - (1940-c.1980) (Photomontage) Barbara Morgan" on verso

(information courtesy of Artnet Auctions)



Pure Energy and Neurotic Man

1940

Gelatin silver print mounted to board

13 1/2 x 10 1/2 in

Signed, titled and dated on mount recto and verso

(information courtesy of the Bruce Silverstein gallery)



Saeta: Ice on Window

1942

Printed 1972

Found photomontage



Solstice

1942

Printed 1972

Found photomontage



Briarlock

1943

Printed 1972

Negative, positive photomontage



Use Litter Basket

1943

Gelatin silver print

10 1/4 x 12 1/16 in (26.0 x 30.8 cm)



Valerie Bettis: Desperate Heart- I

1944

Printed 1972



Valerie Bettis: Desperate Heart- II

1944

Printed 1972



Humphrey-Weidman: Rehearsal Nightmare

(Humphrey: "Inquest"-Weidman: "Daddy Was A Fireman")

1944

Printed 1978



Jose Limon: Cowboy Song

1944

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

20 x 16 in

(information courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Opacities

1944

Printed 1979

Serial photogram



Merce Cunningham: Root of the Unfocus I

1944

Printed 1979

Planned double image single negative



Merce Cunningham: Root of the Unfocus II

1944

Printed 1979

Planned double image single negative



Corn Stalks Growing

1945

Printed 1979



Martha Graham: Deaths and Entrances

(Departure of lover with Hawkins)

1945

Printed 1972



Martha Graham: Deaths and Entrances

(group)

1945

Printed 1972



Fist

1945



Layout

1946

Printed 1979

Photogram



Serpent Light- III

1948

Printed 1979

Photomontage-light drawing



Free

1952



Incoming

1956

Printed 1978

Photomontage-photogram drawing

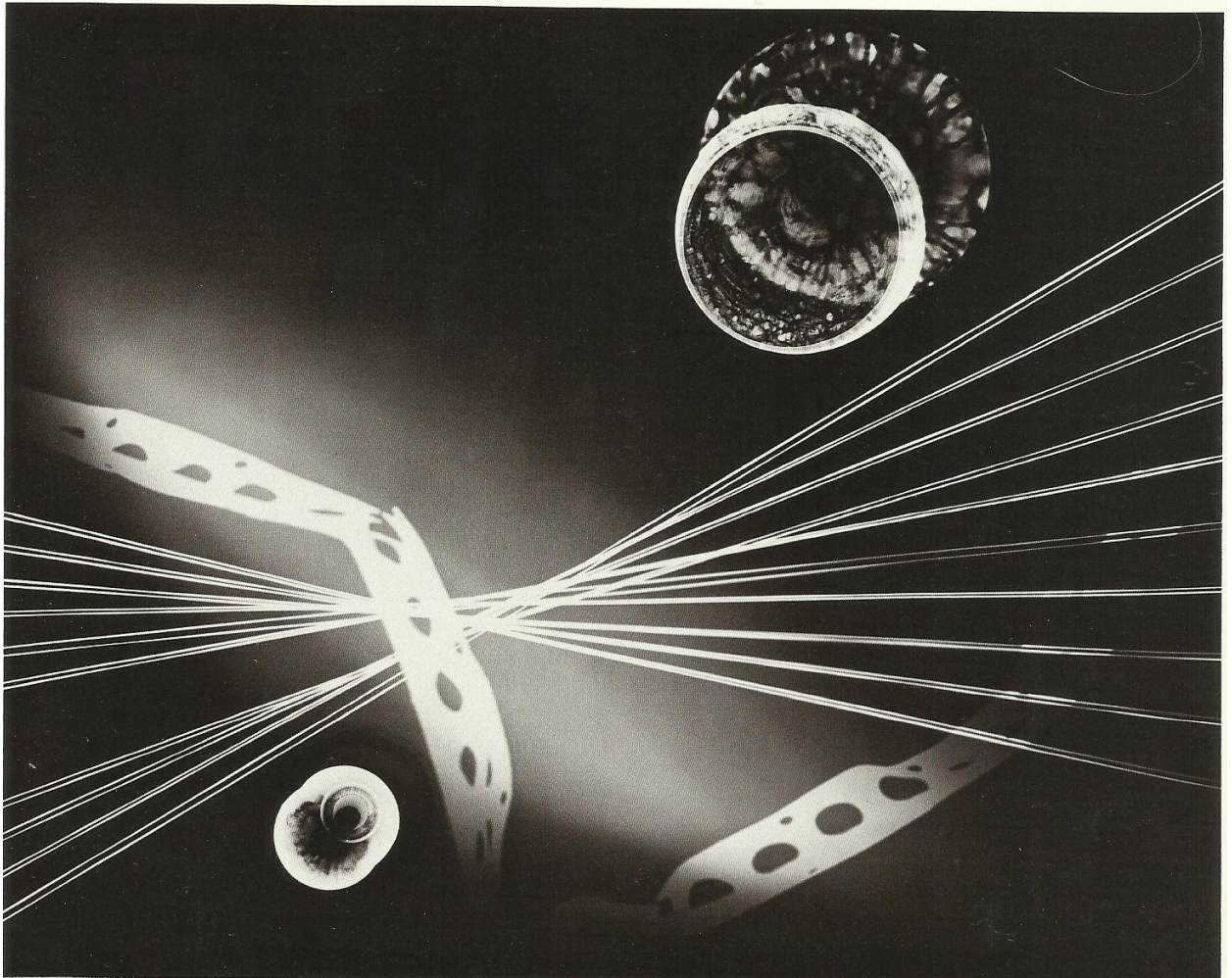


Yin Yang in Flight

1956

Printed 1979

Photomontage-photogram



Transference

1956

Printed 1971

Photomontage-photogram



Hullabaloo

1959

Printed 1979

Photomontage-photogram



Reticulate (Willard Morgan's Face)

1960

Printed 1978

Photomontage mounted to board

20 x 16 in

Signed, titled, and dated on mount recto; Signed, titled, and dated on mount verso: Annotations on mount verso, artist stamp on mount verso.

(information courtesy of the Bruce Silverstein gallery)



Brainwashed

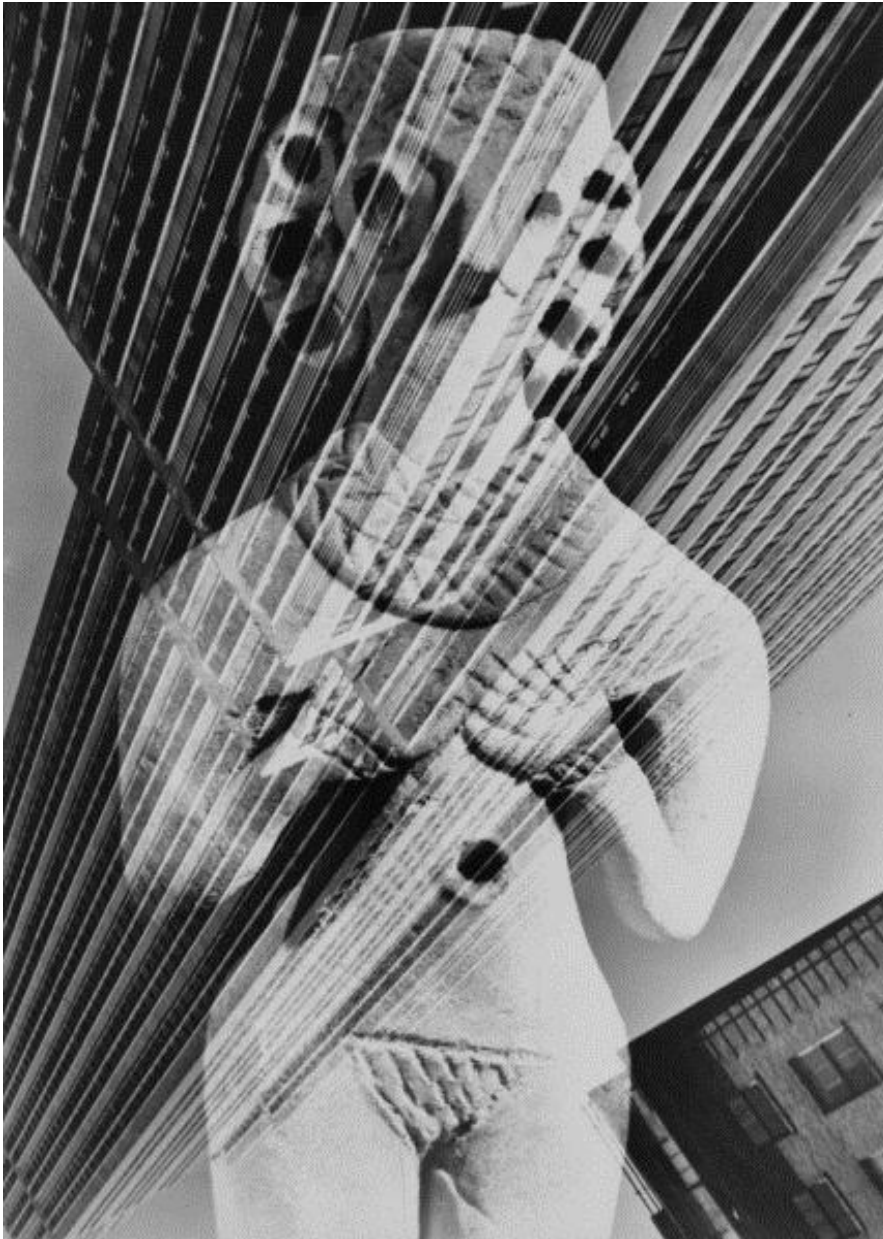
1961

Printed 1969

Photomontage mounted to board

16 x 20 in

(information courtesy of the Bruce Silverstein gallery)



Icons in Time-Stream

1963

Gelatin silver print

8 15/16 x 6 3/8 in (22.8 x 16.2 cm)



Cosmic Effort

1965

Photogram, light drawing



Fossil in Formation

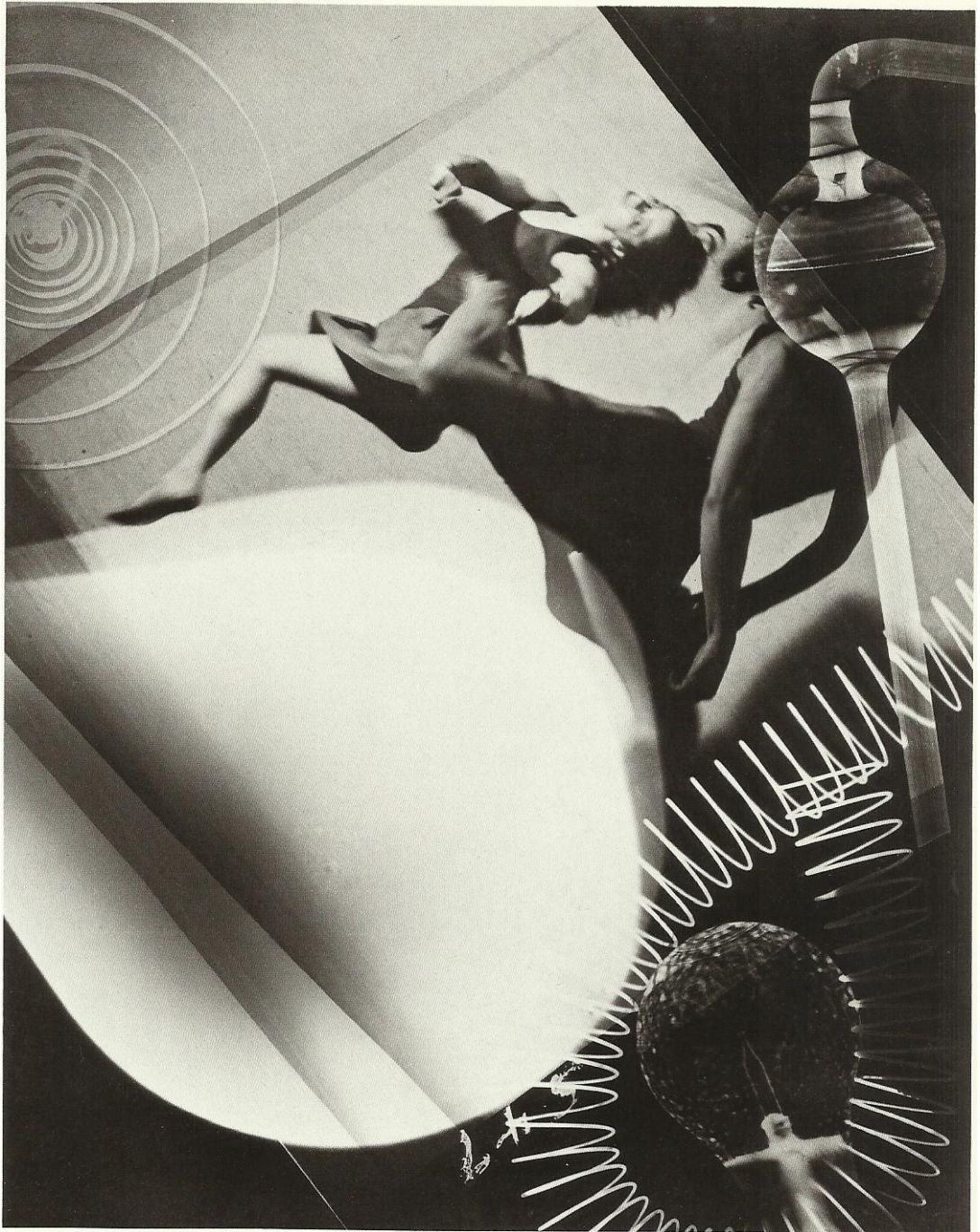
1965

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

Image: 13 3/8 in x 17 1/4 in; paper: 16 IN x 20 in

(information courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Frolic in the Lab

1965

Printed 1979

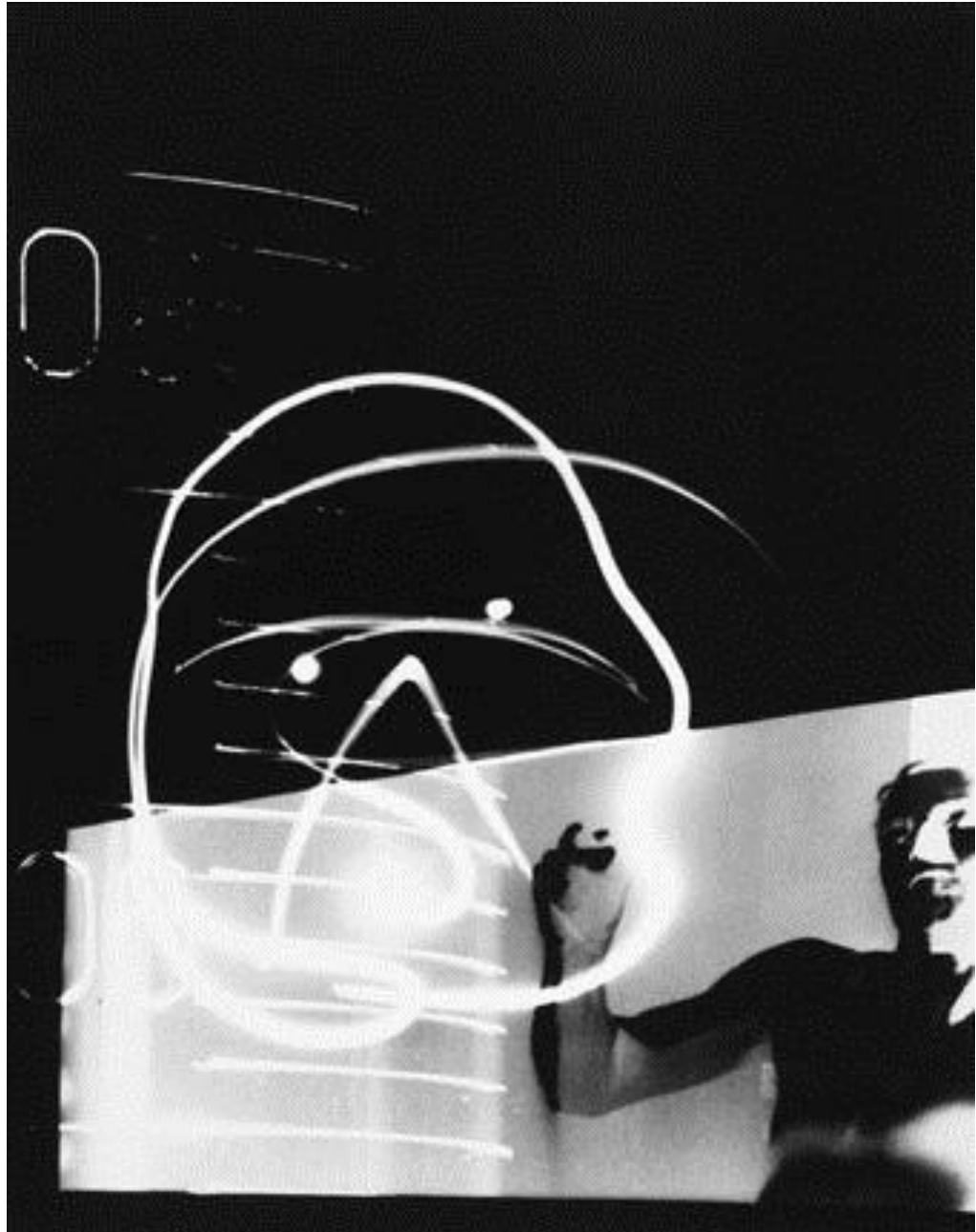
Photomontage-photogram



UFO Visits New York

1965

Photomontage-light drawing



Artificial Life from the Lab

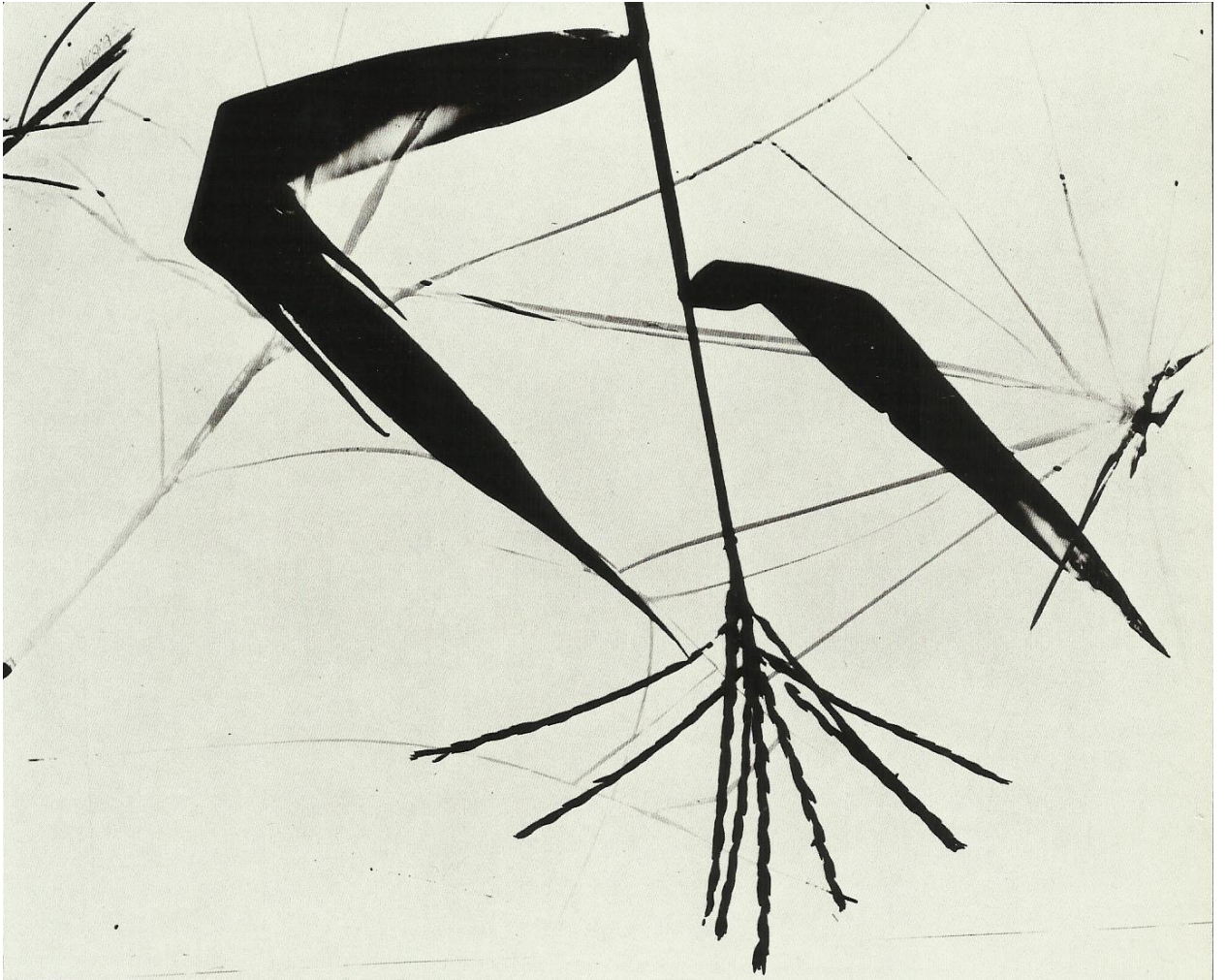
1967

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

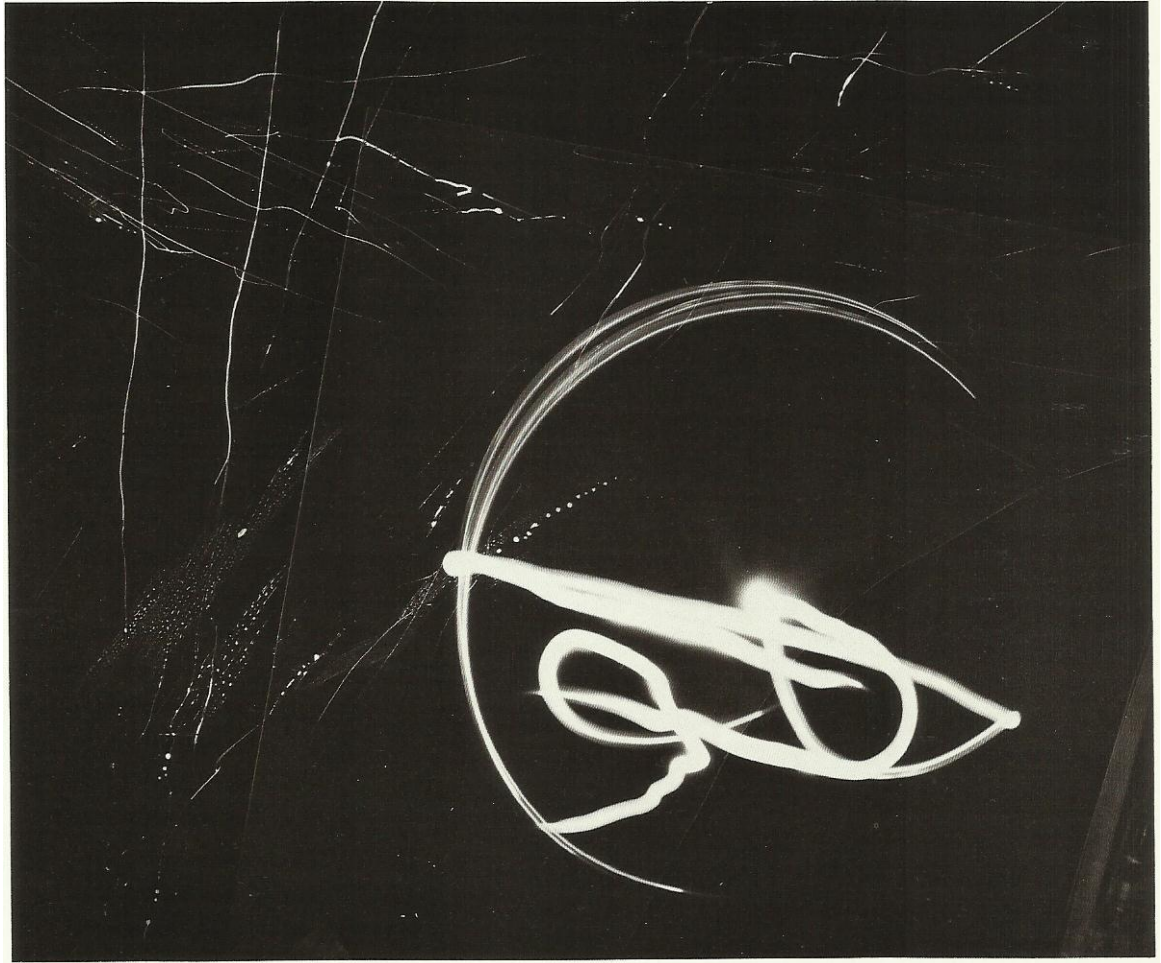
16 x 20 in

(information courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Corn Tassel Through Broken Windshield

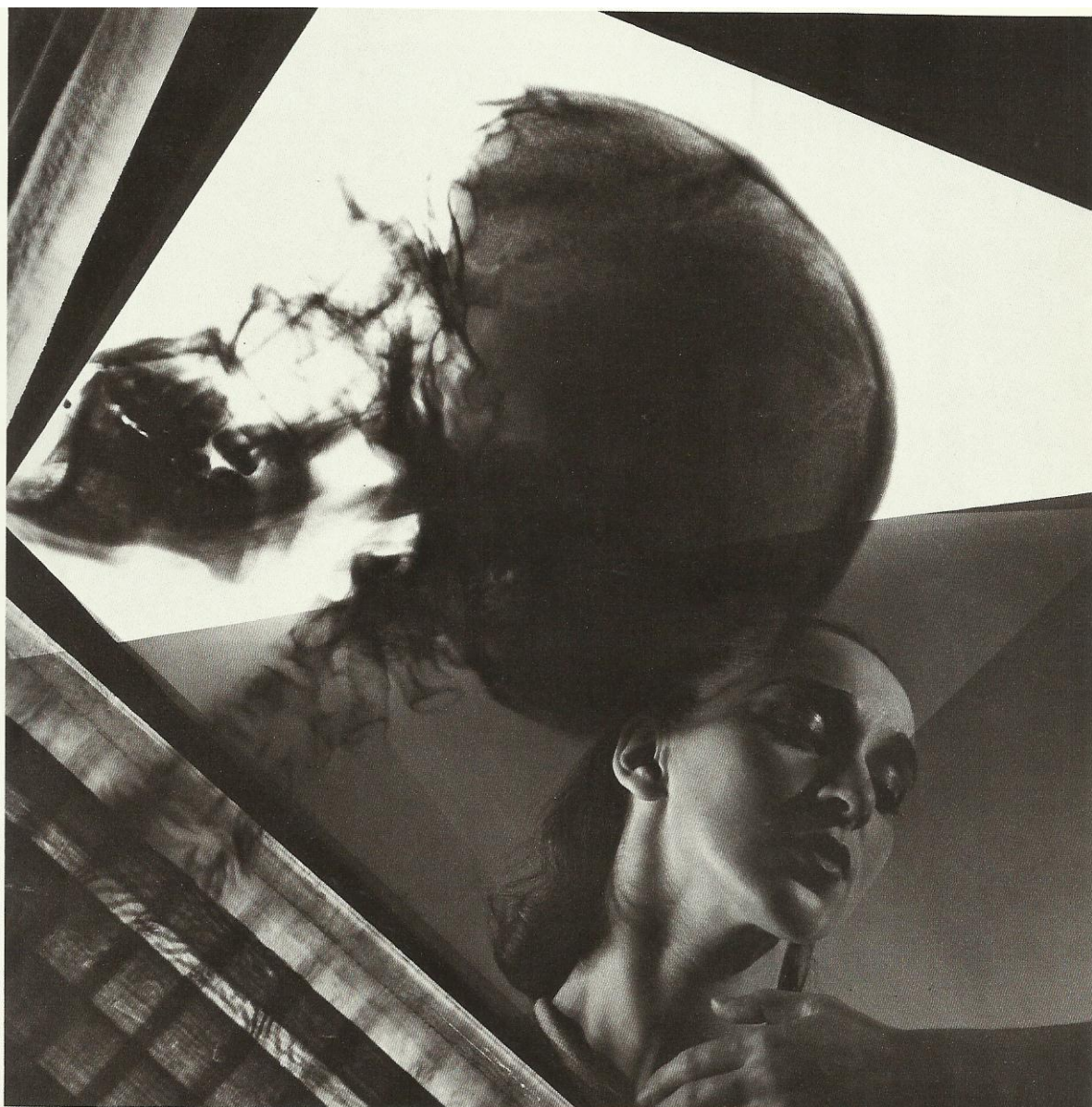
1967



ESP Breaking Through

1969

Photogram-light drawing



Confrontation

1970



Inner Stratas

1970

Reflective photogram



City Sound

1972

Printed 1980

Gelatin silver print

Image: 16 15/16 in x 11 1/4 in; paper: 20 in x 16 in

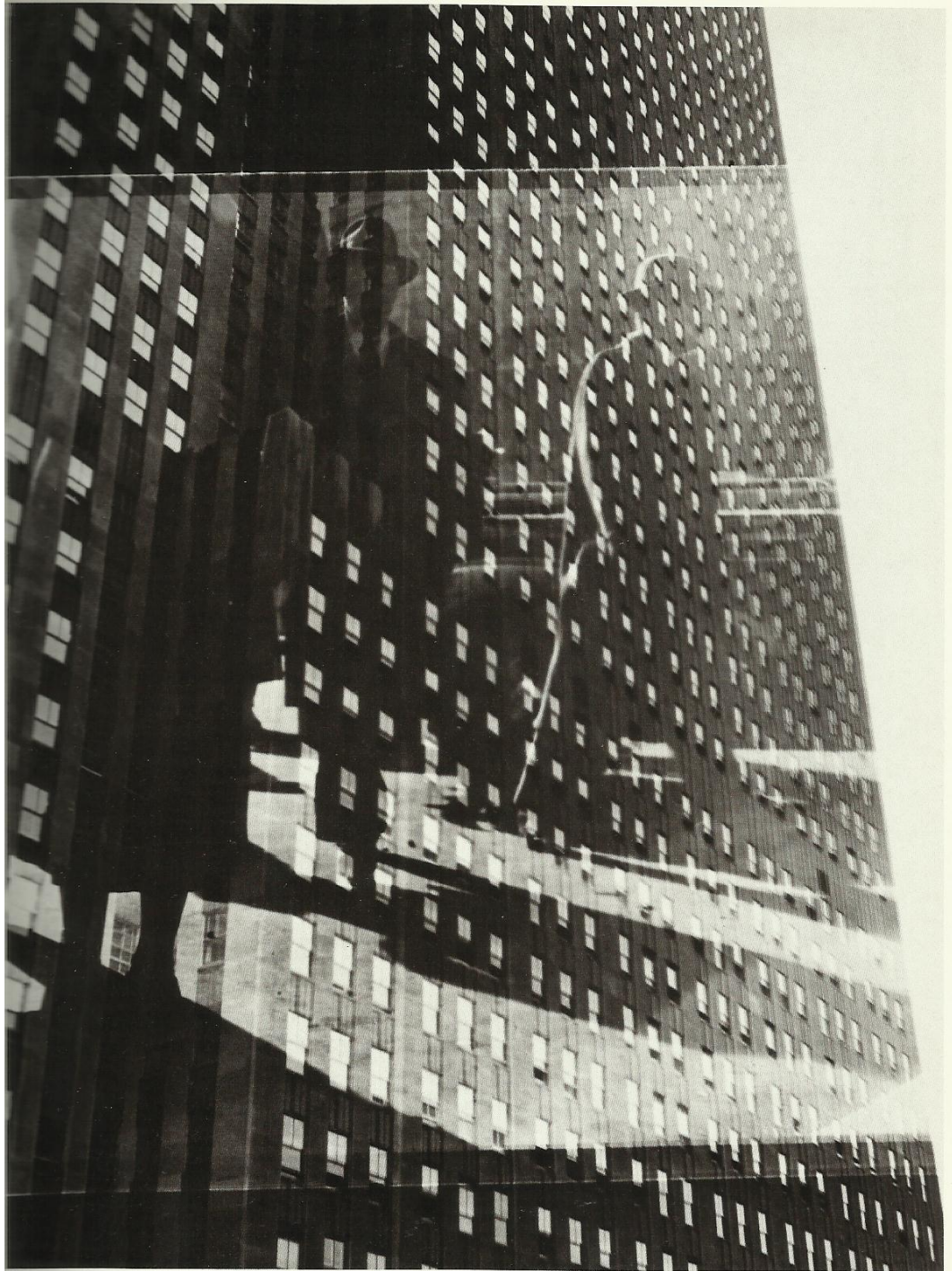
(information courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago)



Leaf Floating in City

1972

Photomontage-photogram



Computerized Manhattanites

1973



Crystallized Skyscraper

1973

Photomontage mounted to board

13 x 10 in

Signed, titled and dated on mount recto and verso.

(information courtesy of the Bruce Silverstein gallery)



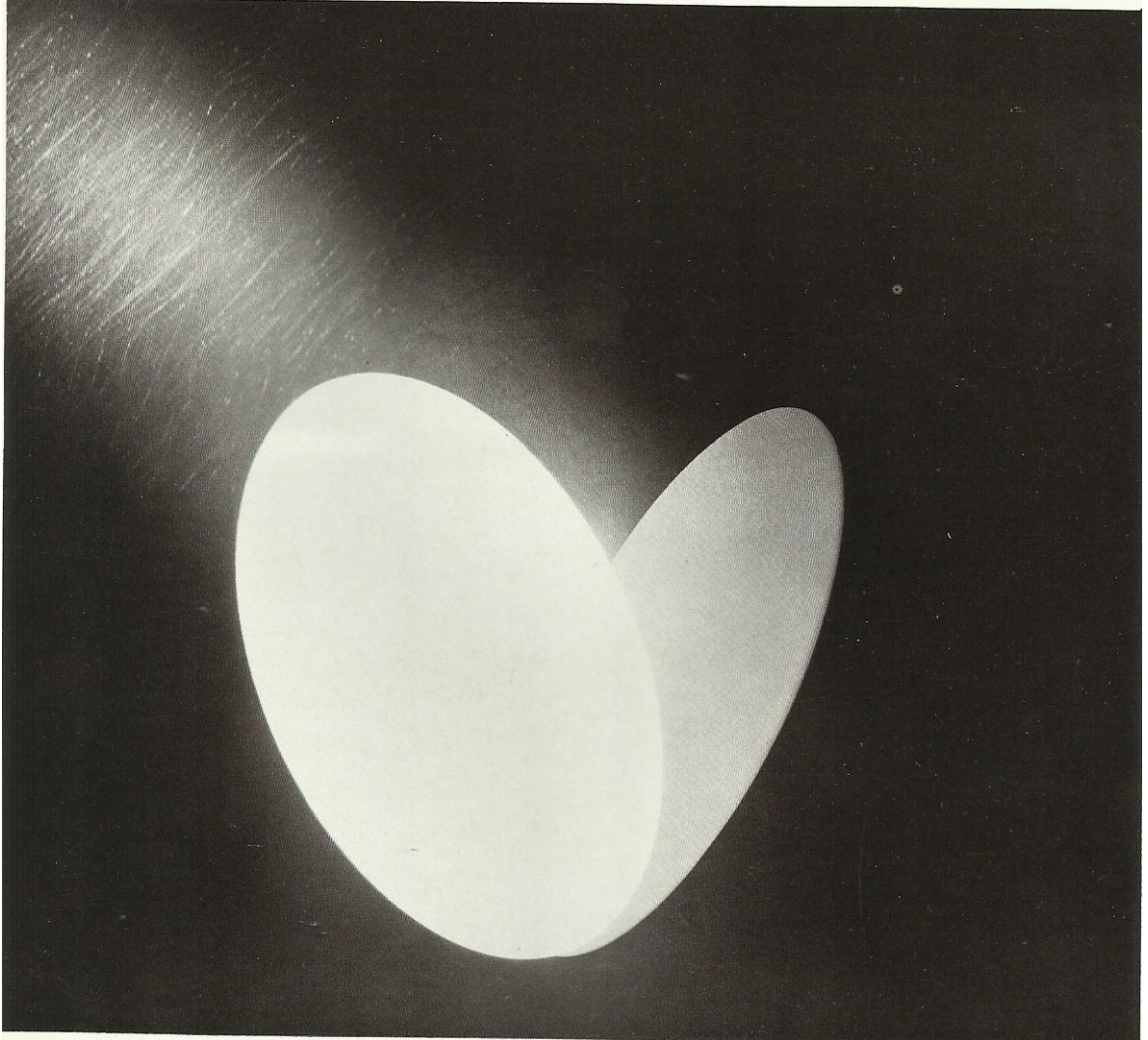
Ghost of the Accident

1978



Emergence

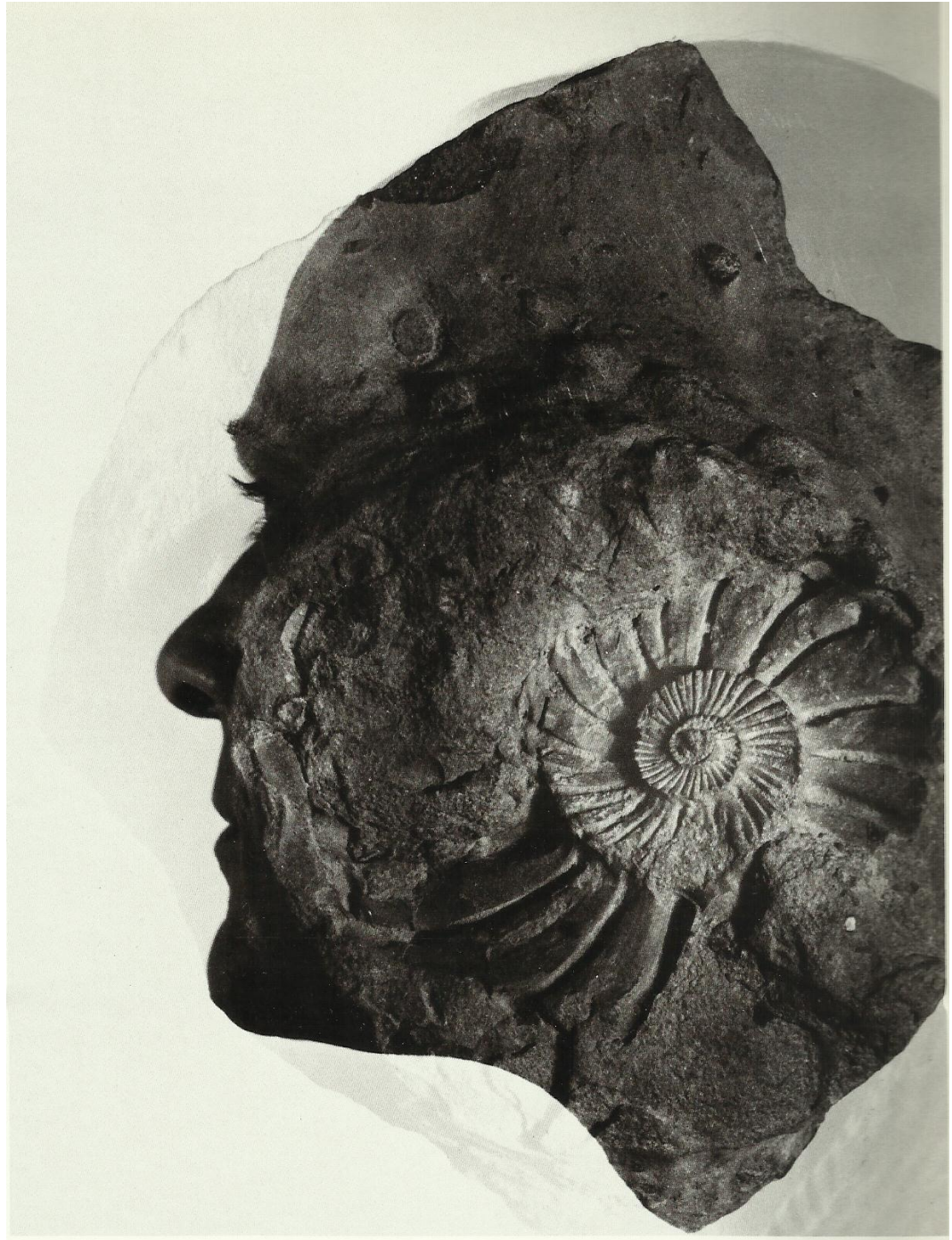
1979



Emerging

1979

Photomontage-photogram



Nuclear Fossilization- I

1979



Nuclear Fossilization- V

1979



Searching

Printed 1979

Photomontage-photogram

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Images- all images, unless otherwise stated on catalog page, were scanned from *Barbara Morgan: Photomontage or Aperture Masters of Photography: Barbara Morgan*.

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Chronology

1900 Born Barbara Brooks Johnson on July 8 in Buffalo, Kansas. Same year family moved to West Coast. Grew up on peach ranch in Southern California.

1919-1923 Student, University of California, Los Angeles, majoring in art.

1923- 1924 Taught art in San Fernando High School, San Fernando, California.

1925 Married Willard Morgan.

1925- 1930 Joined art faculty, UCLA. Taught design, landscape, and woodcut. Published, Block Print Book, containing work of woodcut students. Served variously as writer, managing editor, and editor for Dark and Light Magazine, Arthur Wesley Dow Association, UCLA. Painted and photographed in the Southwest with Willard in the summers. Met Edward Weston and realized photography as a medium for artistic expression.

1930 Moved to New York City. Traveled for Willard's Morgan's Leica Lectures. For study, photographed Barnes Foundation art collection, Merion, Pennsylvania.

1931 Established a studio in New York for painting and lithography. Exhibited graphics at Weyhe Gallery, New York, and other galleries.

1932 Son Douglas was born. Continued to exhibit paintings.

1934 One-person painting and graphics exhibition, Mellon Gallery, Philadelphia.

1935 Son Lloyd was born. Saw Martha Graham perform "Primitive Mysteries." Began photographing Martha Graham dances.

1935-1941 Photographed, exhibited pictures of city themes, dance, children, photomontages and light drawings.

1940 Solo exhibition Dance Photographs, Black Mountain College, North Carolina, circulated to over 150 colleges, museums and galleries until 1943

1941 Moved to Scarsdale, New York. Published book, *Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs*. Awarded American Institute of Graphic Arts Trade Book Clinic Award.

1942-1955 Continued photographic projects and exhibitions. Published second book, *Summer's Children: A photographic Cycle of Life at Camp*. Picture-edited and designed book by Erica Anderson and Eugene Exman, *The World of Albert Schweitzer* (Harper & Row, N.Y., 1955)

1945 Solo exhibition Modern American Dance, Museum of Modern Art, NY.

1961 One-person painting and graphics exhibition, Sherman Gallery, New York.

1967 Willard D. Morgan passes away.

1968-1988 Prepared major exhibitions and delivered numerous lectures and seminars.

1970 Elected Fellow of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

1975 Received grant from National Endowment for the Arts.

1977 Created *BARBARA MORGAN DANCE PORTFOLIO*.

1978 Received honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, Marquette University, Milwaukee.

1978 Included in book and exhibit , *RECOLLECTIONS: Ten Women of Photography*, International Center of Photography, New York.

1988 Awarded Lifetime Achievement Award by American Society of Magazine Photographers, Washington, D.C.

1992 Barbara Morgan died