

DANZIGER GALLERY
527 WEST 23RD STREET
NEW YORK NY 10128

Edward Steichen – The Last Printing

George Tice – Seldom Seen (In the Print Room)

September 15 – October 29.

Danziger Gallery opens our fall 2011 schedule with a show of 84 Edward Steichen photographs printed by the renowned photographer George Tice. Tice was the last person to print for Steichen in his lifetime. These prints not only remind us of Steichen's genius but also highlight the formidable quality of printing that George Tice has been known for throughout his career.

In conjunction with Steichen's work, the gallery is also pleased to present 12 rarely seen George Tice photographs in our new print room along with his classic signature image, "Petit's Mobil Station, Cherry Hill, NJ, 1974."

Steichen was born Édouard Jean Steichen in Bivange, Luxembourg in 1879. His family emigrated to Chicago in 1881 and moved to Milwaukee in 1889, when Steichen was 10. In 1894, at the age of 15, Steichen began a four-year lithography apprenticeship with the American Fine Art Company of Milwaukee. A precocious and talented draftsman, Steichen initially saw himself as a painter, but in 1895 he bought his first camera, a secondhand Kodak box "detective" camera, and began experimenting with the still relatively new medium.

In the small world of American turn of the century photography, Steichen met Alfred Stieglitz in 1900, while stopping in New York City en route to Paris. In that first meeting, Stieglitz expressed praise for Steichen's painting but bought three of his photographic prints.

The two remained in contact and in 1902, when Stieglitz was formulating what would become *Camera Work*, he asked Steichen to design the logo and help edit the magazine which went on to become arguably the most influential journal of photography ever published.

While Stieglitz sat firmly in the fine art camp, Steichen was interested in expanding his reach, influence, and connections. Never averse to the commercial world, by 1910 Steichen was happily taking on editorial assignments and indeed his photographs of Paul Poiret dresses in the magazine *Art et Décoration* in 1911 are regarded as the first modern fashion photographs ever published.

By the mid-1920s Steichen was the highest-paid photographer in America. In 1923 he was hired as chief photographer for Condé Nast Publications, and at one point in the 1920s he earned \$100,000 a year from his advertising work alone.

Though his commercial success meant a break with the high-minded view of the medium espoused by his mentor Alfred Stieglitz, Steichen had come to the conclusion that

photography's natural function was utilitarian: a thoroughly modern means of human communication. For the next fifteen years, Steichen would take full advantage of the resources and prestige conferred by the Condé Nast empire to produce an oeuvre of unequalled brilliance, putting his exceptional talents and prodigious energies to work dramatizing and glamorizing contemporary culture and its achievers -- in politics, literature, journalism, dance, theatre, opera, cinema, and the world of high fashion.

Steichen's portraits have survived the test of time. He had an uncanny intuition for how to distill the public personae of the famous and make them at once familiar and iconic. It was this that makes him the founding father of our present-day cult of celebrity. His portraits have an extraordinary place in our visual memory – his startling depiction of J.P. Morgan as the archetypal robber baron, clutching the chair arm that resembles a gleaming dagger; his close-up of a feline Gloria Swanson, glowering behind black-lace foliage; his restrained observation of an impossibly handsome and debonair Gary Cooper.

Steichen's ingenuity in portraiture was coaxing his sitters into heightened expressions of their innermost character. He once considered going into the movies, and there was indeed a cinematic quality in much of his work. As Greta Garbo told him after one shoot: "You should be a motion-picture director. You understand." Sometimes performing artists even made his ideas their own. Steichen's portrait of Fred Astaire silhouetted against his own larger-than-life shadow was the inspiration for similar setups in the dancer's later films.

At the outbreak of World War II, Steichen became chief of Navy combat photography – a job he relished. After the war, Steichen gave up assignment work altogether and turned to what he saw as his crowning achievement: a grand thematic project that would advance the cause of world peace. Titled "The Family of Man" - the exhibition comprised 503 pictures taken by 273 photographers from 68 countries. Debuting at The Museum of Modern Art in 1955, the show strove to depict experiences common to all mankind and reflected in diverse cultures. The show traveled to 72 foreign venues over the next decade and was seen by nine million people. Some critics found its earnest message naive and out-of-touch with the complexities of a world in chaotic change. However it remained a vast popular success selling two and a half million copies in its book form.

Shortly thereafter, George Tice came to Steichen's attention when he saw Tice's dramatic photograph of an explosion aboard the U.S.S. Wasp on the front page of the New York Times and acquired it for MoMA's collection. Tice was 20 years old at the time.

After Steichen's death in 1973, Tice continued to work on Steichen projects. In 1997, Steichen's widow Joanna engaged Tice to print all the photographs for her retrospective memoir "Steichen's Legacy" released in conjunction with the Whitney Museum's 2000 Steichen retrospective. These prints have never been exhibited until now.

For more information please contact Danziger Gallery at 212 629 6778 or e-mail info@danzigergallery.com