

AS Photography: **Landscape**

Early Landscape Photography

Romanticism

The Romantic painters of the 18th Century focused on a more **sensuous depiction of nature** and this influenced photographers to try and capture the natural landscape in a similar vein.



'Das Komfeld'
John Constable, 1826



'The Fighting Téméraire tugged to her last Berth to be broken up'
J. M. W. Turner, 1838

Countryside Daguerreotypes

Some of the earliest natural landscape photographs were **daguerreotypes** and taken by American and French photographers such as Samuel Bemis and Alexandre Clausel. John Ruskin, the British art critic, used to make his own daguerreotypes as **preparation for drawings** for his books on architecture.



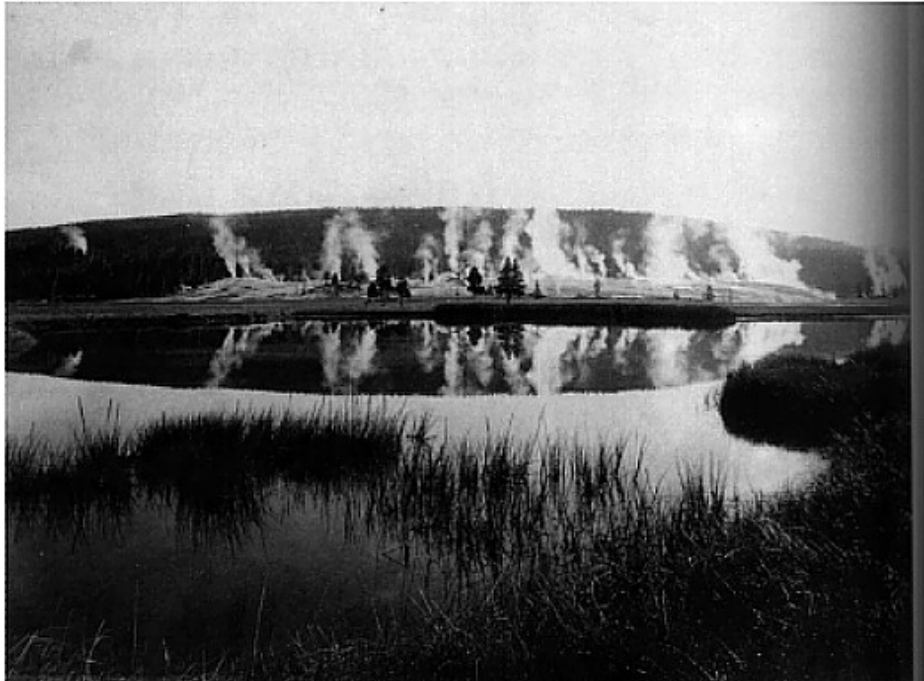
'Farmhouse'
Samuel Bemis, 1840



'Landscape near Troyes, France'
Alexandre Clausel, 1855

Western Panoramas

Many photographers chose to document the **wilderness of their own countryside**. This was particularly true of American photographers, who had a vast and varied natural landscape to document.



'The Bhive Group of Geysers/Yellowstone Park'
William Jenry Jackson, 1872



'Lake Tear of the Clouds'
Seneca Ray Stoddard, Late 19th Century

Early Portraits of the City

In addition to photographing the countryside, the city was also of great interest to photographers. Suddenly, images of **the city and its landmarks could be distributed throughout the world**. However, due to having to use such long exposures, it was difficult in the early years to capture people without them blurring.



'View of Paris Boulevard
Louis Daguerre, 1839



'Bridge and Boats on the Thames'
Jean Baptiste Louis Gros, 1851

Cityscapes with People

As technology improved and film became more sensitive, photographers were able to capture **city street scenes with people** moving around.



'New York Street Scene'
Edward Anthony, 1859



'Covent Garden Market'
Unknown, 1860

The Traveling Photographer

Expeditions overseas were expensive, so the few photographers that were wealthy enough to travel outside Europe and America set out to **capture exotic landmarks** that would allow people to see the 'wonders of the world.'



'The Colossus of Abu Simbel'
Maxime Du Camp, 1850



'Ruins of the Kabah Palace'
Desire Charnay, 1858

Industrial Revolution

The 1800s brought about many technological changes as the Industrial Revolution changed the landscape of the city and suburbs, leading to vast industrial structures and factories being built.



'Exposition: Palais du Champ du Mars'
Louis Emmanuel Alexandre Quinet , 1878



'Great Eastern Under Construction'
Robert Howlett , 1857

Aerial Views

As air flight became possible and structures grew, photographers were able to get to great heights and take **photos from aerial viewpoints**.



'Boston from the Air'
James Wallace Black , 1860



'Montmartre'
Nadar , 1868

Adding colour to landscapes

From as early as the 1860s photographers were adding colour to their prints, painting with dyes. They then started to experiment in the darkroom, adding **coloured pigments** to their positive prints.



'Vue d'Agen'
Louis Ducos du Huron, 1874



'Odawara'
Felice Beato, 1864

20th Century Landscape Photography

Impressionism

In the world of Fine Art, many painters **rejected realism** as a result of the efficiency with which photography could replicate scenes in such vivid reality. Instead, they decided to paint more **impressionistic interpretations of the environment**, focusing on light and atmosphere.



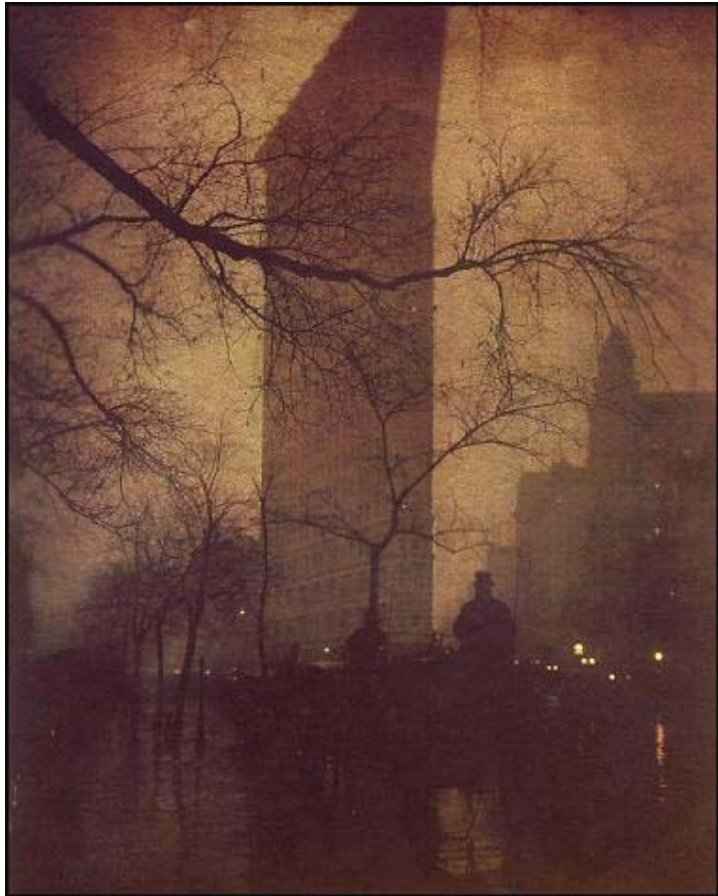
'Cornfield with Cypress'
Vincent Van Gogh, 1889



'Houses of Parliament'
Claude Monet, 1906

Pictorialism

Some photographers were also keen to **define photography as something unique** and not just a scientific representation of the world. They tried to capture the **mood and atmosphere** of a scene similar to the impressionists. This photographic movement came to be known as 'Pictorialism'.



'The Flatiron'
Edward Steichen, 1905



'The Onion Field'
George Davidson, 1890

Atmosphere & Lighting

Brassai was a French photographer, who became famous for his ominous and atmospheric portraits of Paris.



'Paris in Fog'
Brassai, 1934



Modernism

As modernism took its roots, art work become more and more **abstract**, which influenced some photographers to focus on more formal elements such as **line, form and space**.



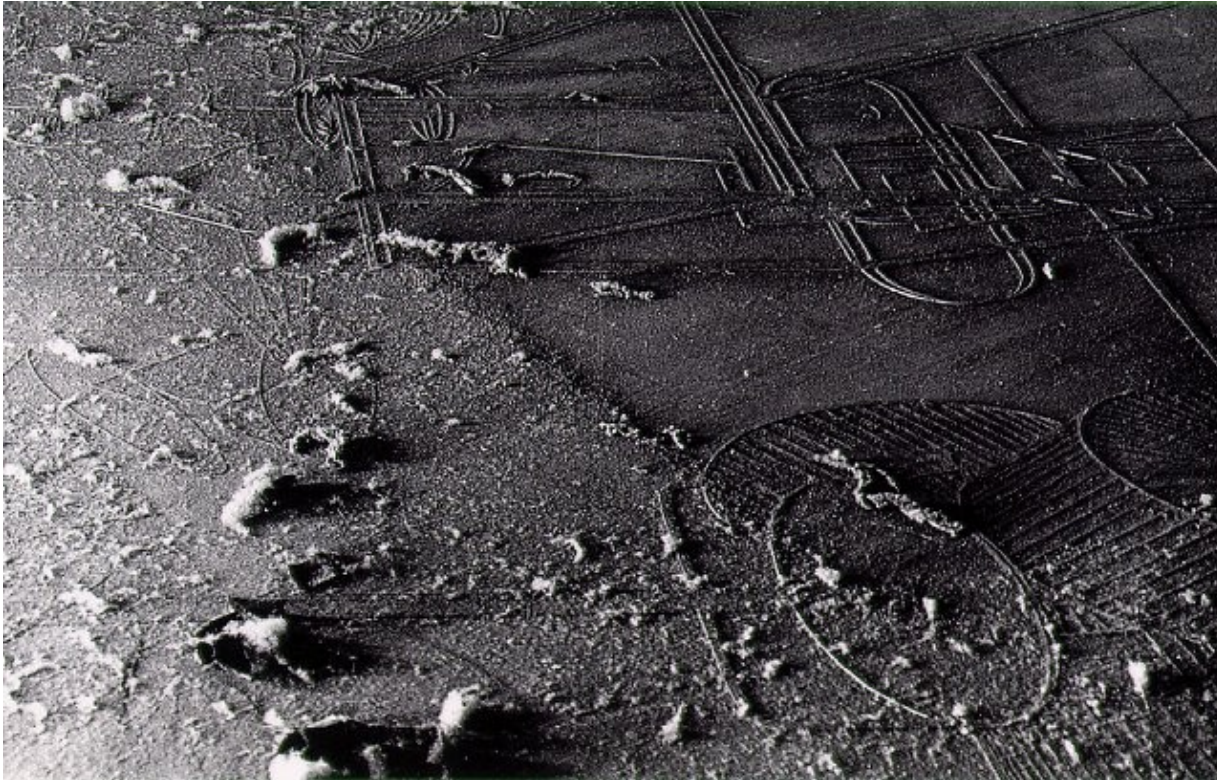
'Equivalent'
Alfred Stieglitz, 1926



'New York Skyscraper'
E.O Hoppe, 1920s

Modernism

Many artists started to experiment with a range of different media, not restricting themselves to a career in one medium. A **new generation of photographers** started to express their ideas through photography. The concept of a landscape came to refer to anything from the surface quality of an object to the abstract shadows from a building.



'Dust Breeding'
Man Ray, 1920



'Porch Shadows'
Paul Strand, 1916

Unconventional Perspectives

In the early part of the 20th Century, photographers were keen to show that photography was a **distinct art form** and not just a tool of scientific documentation or romantic glamorization of the countryside. This led to a high regard for **unconventional compositions and perspectives**, often focusing on modern architecture and the industrial world.

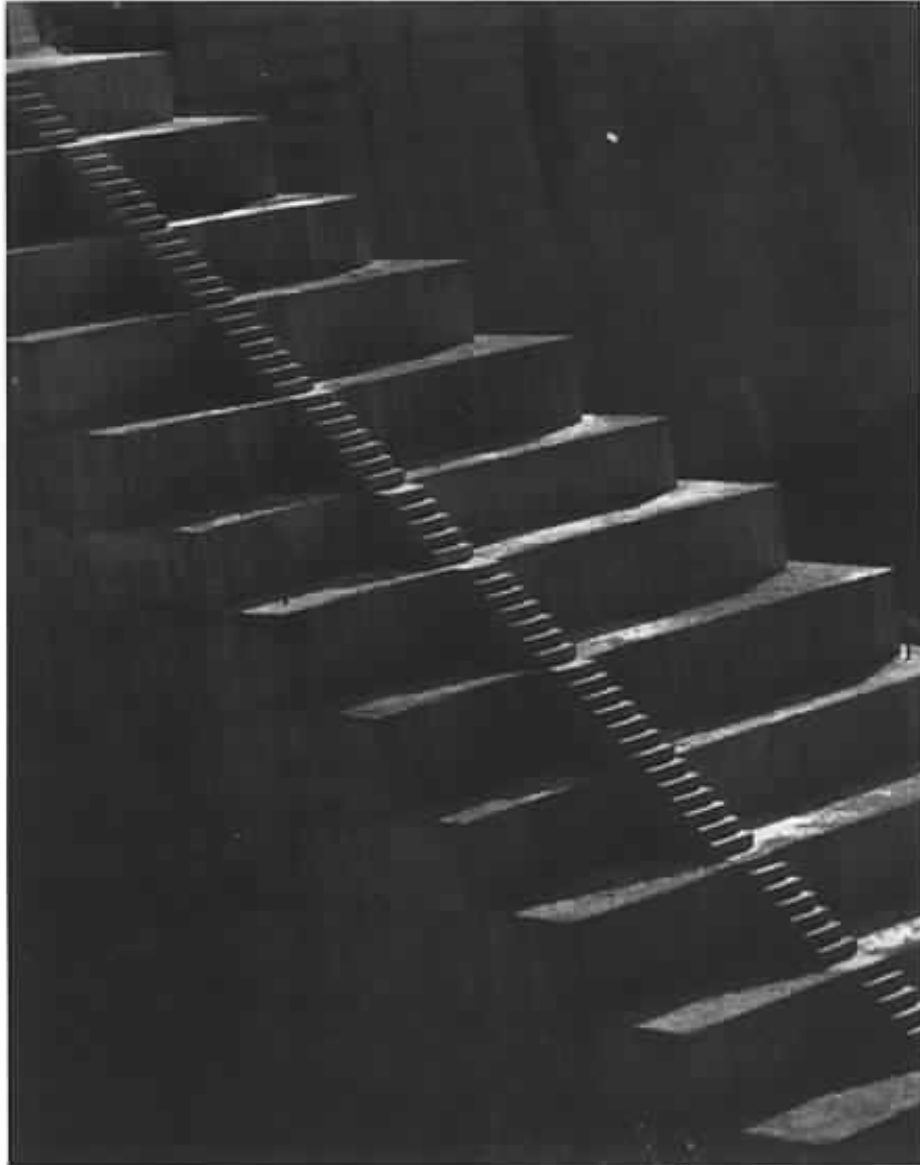


'Under the Eiffel Tower'
Andre Kertesz, 1929



'Blast Furnace and Dust Catcher - Ford Plant'
Charles Sheeler, 1927

Unconventional Perspectives



'Calveras Dam II'
Alma Lavenson, 1932



'New York at Night'
Berenice Abbott, 1933

The Constructed Landscape: Photo Montage

Artists started to respond to the hopes and fears of the modern world and used photo montage as a way of **constructing realities** to reflect utopian and dystopian society. These artists were often referred to as **'Constructivists'**



'City, Mill of Life'
Kazimierz Podzadecki, 1929



'Pushkin Square'
Alexander Rodchenko, 1932

Documenting and Recording History

Not all photographers were interested in experimental photography and preferred to use it as a **means of recording the environment** and **documenting history**.

Eugene Atget was known for his vast archive of photographs of 'old Paris', choosing to record places that were shortly afterwards demolished and re-built.



'Au Tambour'
Eugene Atget, 1908



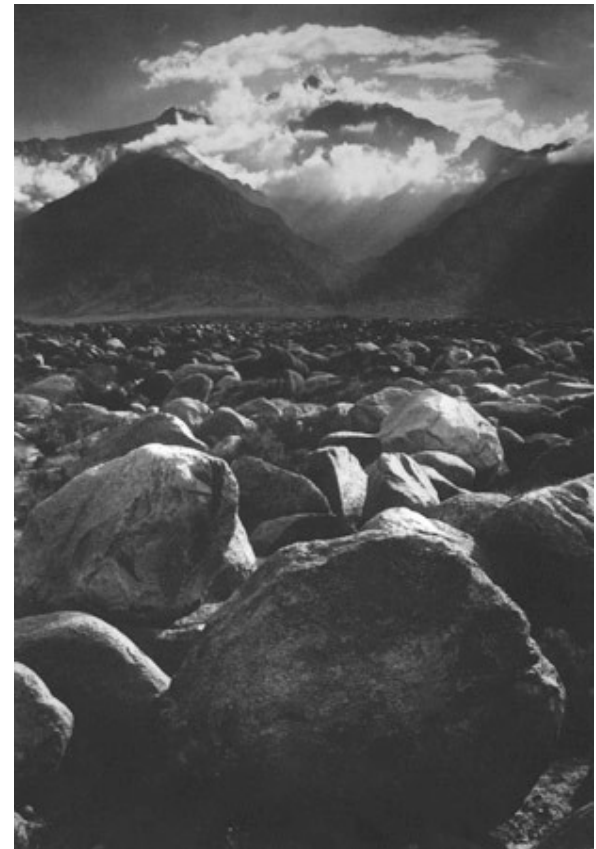
Untitled
Eugene Atget, Early 1900s

A Return to Nature

Although many photographers were interested in documenting the city, as this is where they saw the greatest changes, photographers such as Ansel Adams were infatuated with trying to **document the beauty of nature**. He refined a technique he called the '**Zone System**' to achieve an excellent tonal balance and great depth of field.



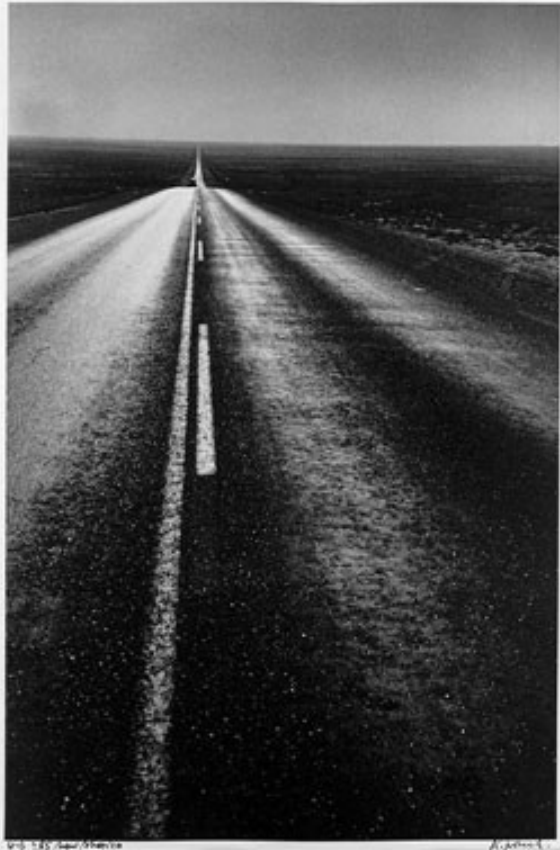
'Moonrise over Hernandez'
Ansel Adams, 1941



'Mt. Williamson, Sierra Nevada'
Ansel Adams, 1944

On the Road

In American during the 1950s, the time of Jack Kerouac and the Beatnik generation, the idea of traveling and documenting the world from a **candid point of view** excited photographers. Equipment such as the Leica made in easy to travel and shoot. Robert Frank was one of the first photographers to travel America and present a personal and critical view of America.



'US.285, New Mexico'
Robert Frank, 1955



'Crosses'
Robert Frank, 1955



Me, Myself and the Landscape

Increasingly, art works came to be seen as a direct **extension of the artist** and this affected the way that artists produced work including **autobiographical** elements. Lee Friedlander used to capture himself as part of his landscapes, reminding you of his presence behind the camera.



'Route 9 W. New York'
Lee Friedlander, 1969

A Dialectic Struggle

From the 1960s onwards, photography became increasingly **conceptual** and photographers resisted being labeled. Photographers started to define themselves as either professionals working vocationally or fine artists who use photography to express their ideas.



'Southwest Wall, Ware'
Lewis Baltz, 1974



Conceptual Photography

Conceptual art tended to be deadpan and ridicule itself, often choosing to focus on the **mundane and ordinary**. German photographers, Bernd and Hilla Becher, set out to document defunct industrial structures in a systematic and ordered way. They photographed objects from the same perspective, producing a catalogue of images often presented formally as a grid.



'Typologies - Gravel Plants'
Bernd and Hilla Becher, 1981

Direct intervention

Some photographers view themselves objective and act as 'recorders of truth'. Conversely, some photographer choose to see themselves a artists that **construct a scene**, preferring to highlight the **subjectivity** through which we see the world. Robert Smithson and John Pfahl like to question our ability to discern spaces by using props to optically trick us.



'Seventh Mirror'
Robert Smithson, 1969



'Australian Pine'
John Pfahl, 1977

Direct intervention



Conical
Gordon Matta-Clark, 1975



Where is Landscape photography today?

Landscape photography has many forms, but is primarily concerned with recording the environment. It is perhaps best to think of it as being distinct from the other common forms of photography I.e. portraiture, documentary, photo journalism, etc... There are many contemporary artists who cross between these different types of photography.

End

EXERCISE

Use some or all of these photos below to tell the history of 'landscape photography' as you understand it. Stick them in your Photo Diary.

