

**PICTORIAL
PHOTOGRAPHY IN
AMERICA, 1922**

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Pictorial Photography in America, 1922 by Various

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VARIOUS

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IN AMERICA**

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1922



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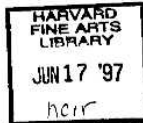
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SINCERITY



ART that endures is sincere. It is universal in its appeal though it may have been produced in a remote corner of the world by one who was unacquainted with the work of artists.

I remember going with a friend into a picture gallery in Chicago, where an artist—I think his name was Bradford—was showing some sketches he had brought back from the arctic regions. “How true these are” I exclaimed. “How do you know?” said my companion, “you have never been to the North Pole.” “That is not necessary” I rejoined. “These studies have the truth written in every inch of them.” The work proclaimed the sincerity of its maker.

He who reverently observes life and wrests from its verities those elements which are in tune with his “ego”—transposes these into some concrete form without the damning desire for self aggrandizement, pretense, or mere seeking for originality—is building on good foundations. It is from an over-weening desire for originality that most of the affectations of so called “Modern Art” proceed.

Natural individuality—the sincere personal vision of the artist—is an inherited asset. His work is the acquiring of a technique, the constant patient practice and experiment in his particular craft. This unending exercise gives the artist power to state his message clearly—in the simplest way.

The graphic artist is concerned with “*pictorial*” ideas. These are necessarily limited; they must be ideas possible of expression by light and shade, by line, by form, by color. The artist's vision includes his point of view. He receives an impression and simultaneously determines how he will express it. He has, as it were, analyzed his subject and decided at once on the form of its presentation—in the clay, on the canvas, in the drawing or photograph.

Given the most favorable mechanical contrivances which science places today at the disposal of the painter or photographer, the latter may proceed in his work under the same maxims, the same theories, that guide the painter. His design may be as interesting, his key as aptly chosen, his black and white (values) as colorful, his composition in the space as distinguished.

If over and above his technical skill the photographer starts with a "vital idea," he may like the painter convey with his photograph "*the moving thrill*" which is the final test of any work of art.

Then perchance, working patiently along the lines here barely indicated, the artist may one day unconsciously achieve that coveted note of true originality which marks a forward step to be hailed and recorded in the great tradition.

ALBERT STERNER.