

Photography without a camera

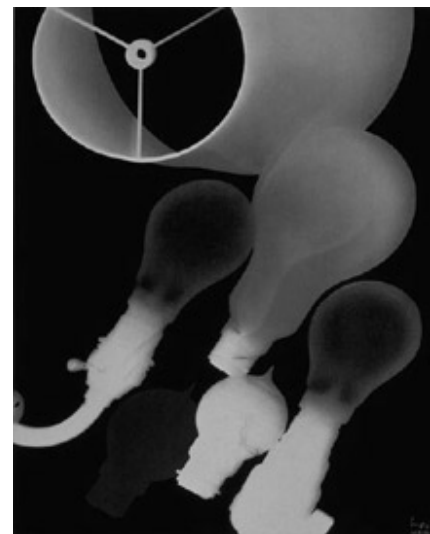
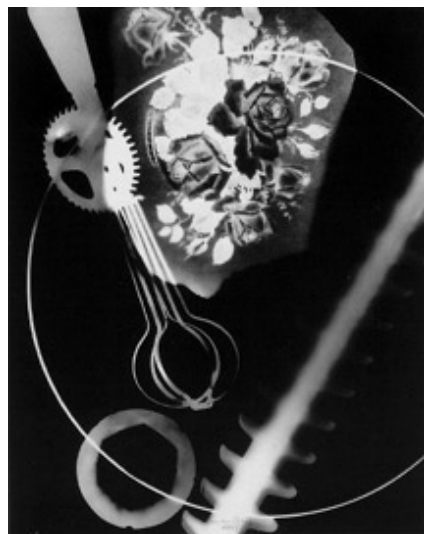
Renewing the Photogram

A Photogram is a unique photograph created without a camera by placing opaque or translucent objects on the surface of light-sensitive paper. When the objects and paper are exposed to light, the resulting image is created. Flat white areas appear where opaque objects had been, midtones from translucent objects and various shadow patterns, and darker areas where the paper was exposed to light. After exposure, the image is developed and fixed normally.

While shadow images have been captured on paper throughout the history of photography, photograms are best known as an avant-garde expression used by artists in search of an abstract vocabulary just after World War I. "Rediscovered" independently by Christian Schad (1894-1982), Man Ray (1890-1976), and László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946), photograms are also known as "Schadographs" or "Rayographs" after Schad and Man Ray, who practiced the technique in the 1920s.

Photograms have borne a number of names. Henry Talbot made "photogenic drawings" in the 19th century. Christian Schad, a German artist, made "Schadographs" after World War I. He exposed chance arrangements of found objects and waste materials (such as torn tickets, receipts, and rags) on photographic film. U.S. artist Man Ray undertook similar experiments, which he called "Rayographs," that were effected by arranging translucent and opaque materials on photographic paper. Lucia Moholy and Lazlo Moholy-Nagy's cameraless images bore the name that we most often use now with this class of images, "Photograms." They were interested in photography as a medium of light and form, not sentiments or personal feelings that are the concerns of other art forms. Lotte Jacobi called her lyrical abstractions, made in the 1940s and 1950s, "photogenics." *

For this assignment you will create at least 10 photograms on 8x10" resin coated paper and 5 on fiber-based paper that is at least 11x14" up to 20x24". (See supplies list.) We will critique the smaller images first then you will go back to the darkroom and make the larger images for a later critique.



Man Ray

* *A World History of Photograph*, Naomi Rosenblum,