Arnold Newman At Work

HARRY RANSOM CENTER

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PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES

Jessica S. McDonald, Series Editor

By Roy Flukinger

INTRODUCTION BY
Marianne Fulton

HARRY RANSOM CENTER
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Arnold Newman At Work

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ENDSHEETS

Arnold Newman, Details of his manuscript pocket calendar, January 1976–January 1978.

PREVIOUS PAGE SPREAD

Arnold Newman, Self-portrait, October 19, 1987. Original color transparency strip of two exposures on 120 roll film, in its protective sleeve with Newman's original manuscript markings.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Mort Kaye Studios, Inc. Arnold and Augusta Newman at the opening of *Arnold Newman: Five Decades* in Palm Beach, Florida, 1987. Final print. Newman's manuscript note on the verso reads, "Gus's favorite!"

FOLLOWING PAGE SPREAD

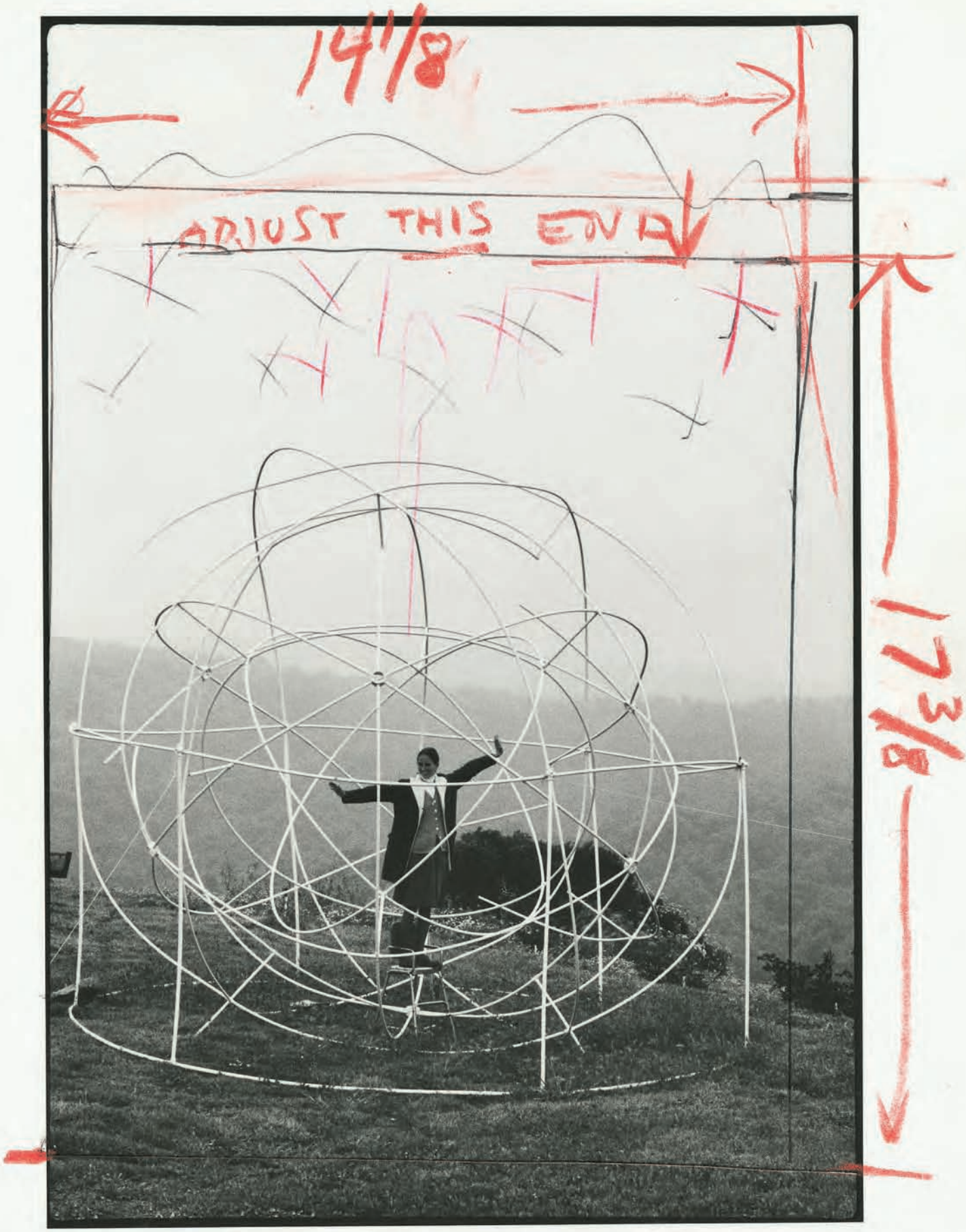
Arnold Newman, Nancy Cowan, a mother, in a playscape, San Diego, California, April 13–15, 1976, for the Kinney Shoes "Great American Faces" series. Work print with Newman's manuscript printing and cropping instructions for his assistants.

For Arnold and Augusta

Why am I writing this book—these memoirs? Simple, I've had a helavalot of fun living my life and doing my work. I've had a helavalot of fun talking about the wonderful sometimes crazy things that have happened to me—and the listeners seemed to [be] fascinated by it all—and everybody start[ed] telling me—why don't you write a book about it! . . .

Besides I want my grandchildren to know [the stories] —so maybe they will understand me—and their grandma (she's much too "young" to describe her that way). . . . I want them to really know about us and how much we enjoy our lives together.

—ARNOLD NEWMAN, UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT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Arnold Newman, Self-portrait with piano and his classic portrait of Igor Stravinsky, September 20–21, 1979. Four Polaroid test prints from the session.

Archiving Arnold Newman

ROY FLUKINGER

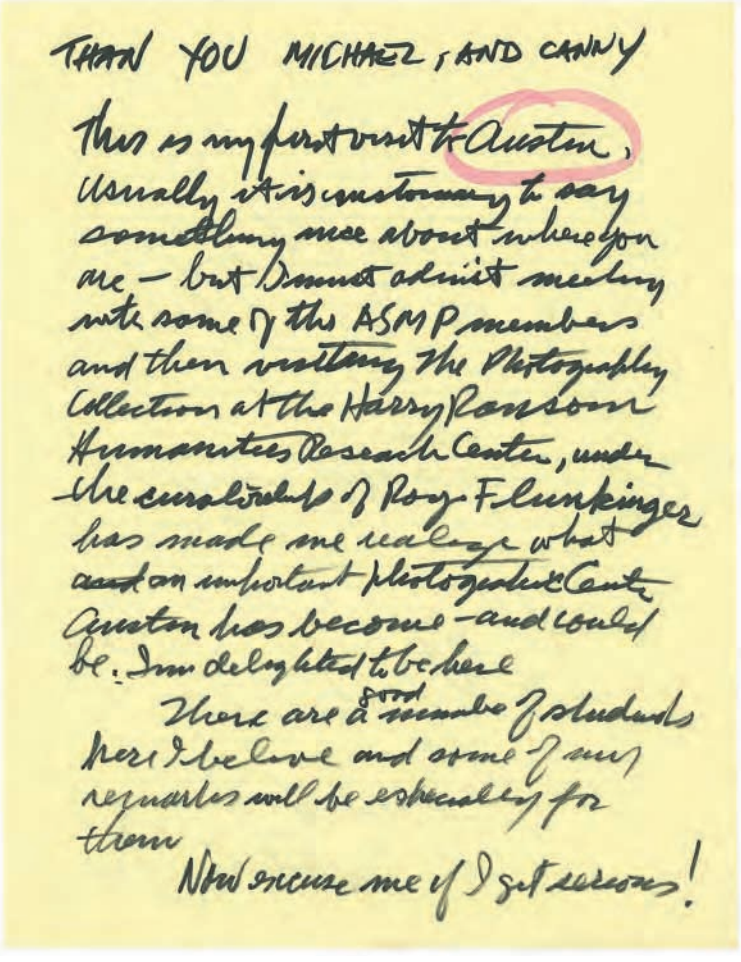
> *The photographer must be a part of the picture.*
>
> —ARNOLD NEWMAN

The Harry Ransom Center began the acquisition of the Arnold Newman archive in late 2006, just a few months after the photographer's passing. For the next three years, under the auspices of his sons, David and Eric, and the good work of the Arnold and Augusta Newman Foundation, many more shipments of boxes arrived at the Center. Starting from that time the Center's staff has continued the complex task of processing and preserving the photographs and many associated materials that remain from this artist's illustrious career.

Portraiture in photography has seen very few individuals who could rival the impact of Arnold Newman. Starting with his earliest work in the late 1930s, the photographer soon found an immediate attraction to the challenge of depicting the human face—and the character of the sitter as well. Years of commercial experience and self-taught mastery, combined with his final move to New York City in 1945,[1] led to his eventual emergence as one of the twentieth century's greatest photographers.

Concentrating chiefly upon portraiture—certainly the first widely established genre in the medium's bountiful history—Newman triumphed as the most original and influential master of the form in the twentieth century. He was a patient and innovative portraitist who found the faces of his subjects, whether celebrities or relatively unknown individuals, to be only the beginning of his artistry. Other factors that soon set his vision apart from his contemporaries would include the combination of such vital components as lighting, composition, expression, form, and the final placement of his subjects within their surrounding environment.

Predominantly it was this last facet of his image-making that led to his being often credited, albeit erroneously, as the founder of


THANK YOU MICHAEL, AND CANNY

This is my first visit to Austin, usually it is customary to say something nice about where you are – but I must admit meeting with some of the ASMP members and then visiting the Photography Collections at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, under the curatorship of Roy Flukinger has made me realize what a good and important Photographic Center Austin has become – and could be. I'm delighted to be here

There are a good number of students here I believe and some of my remarks will be especially for them

Now excuse me if I get nervous!

Arnold Newman, page 1 of the manuscript notes for a lecture delivered to the Austin/San Antonio chapter of the ASMP (American Society of Media Photographers), ca. 1992. This lecture marked his first visit to Austin, Texas, and to the Ransom Center, which would eventually become the permanent home for his archive.

an entire discipline dubbed "environmental portraiture." Arnold always disliked this term, often complaining that it "pegged him for life." Though the phrase did bring him an increased business and growing fame, Newman was enough of a devoted historian of the art to know that many earlier photographers had experimented with and refined this specialized form.[2] Honoring them, not to mention earlier generations of painters, he once replied to an inquiring student that his primary artistic influence had always been Vermeer.[3]

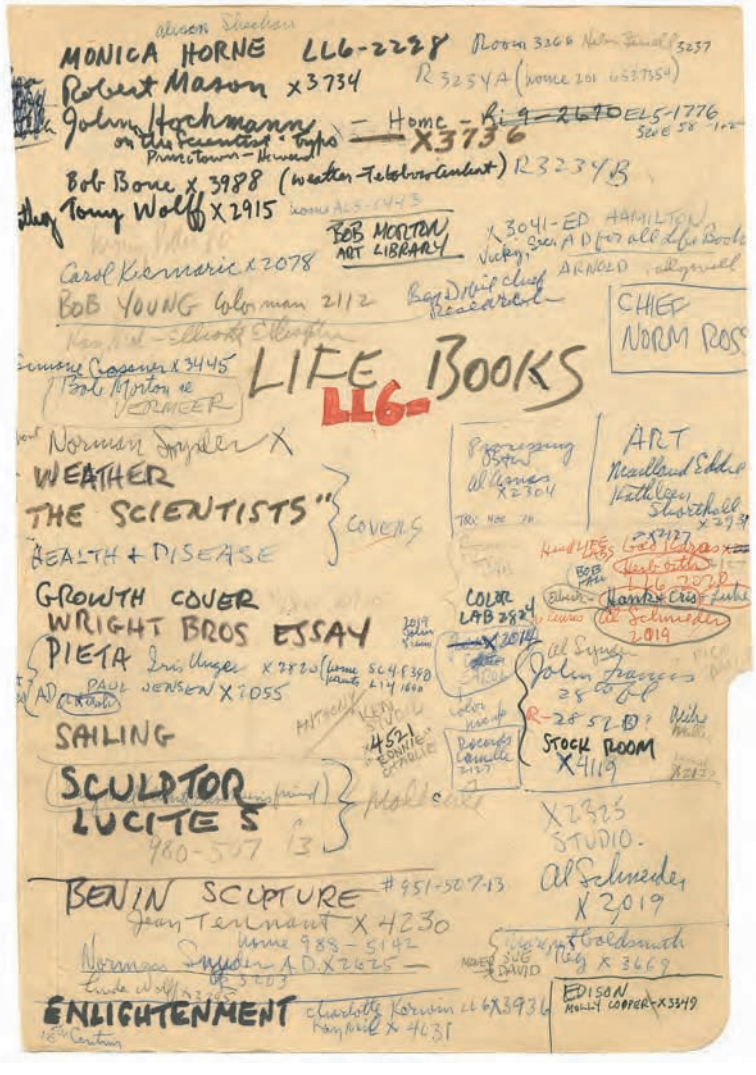
In terms of its significance to the study of modern photography, the archive of Arnold Newman joins a prestigious number of other Ransom Center collections. Contemporary photographic archives already available at the Center provide a rich context to the study of the field, including the photojournalistic archives of David Douglas Duncan and Eliot Elisofon, the massive documentary work of the Magnum picture agency, and the vast holdings of a wide range of twentieth-century artists such as Anne Noggle, Fritz Henle, and Elliott Erwitt. An additional association stems from the nature of portraiture itself, for many of Newman's sitters—drawn from among many of the twentieth century's important artists, writers, and celebrities—are individuals whose works and archives already live on in the Center's holdings. Standing for their portraits before Newman's cameras were many of the decade's most celebrated figures in culture, the arts, politics and the sciences, and it is not unusual to find the artifacts of their lives and careers numbered among our vast collections.

Several types of imagery and a wide array of other materials are combined within the Arnold Newman archive. Housed and carefully preserved original photographic matrices range from the photographer's initial negatives and transparencies up through his final work and exhibition prints. Other photographic formats that add to the collection's historical merit include contact prints, slides, Polaroid test shots, and even proof prints and experimental work. Large files of periodical tear sheets, runs of magazines, catalogues, and books all reflect the wide range of his published imagery. Ephemera of the broadest nature, ranging from films and

taped recordings through awards, certificates, and associated artifacts, all can now contribute to the supplementation and enhancement of our studies of Newman, his creative work, and the eras (fully one third of the entire history of photography) in which he lived.

Equally enriching are the boxes of manuscripts, correspondence, notebooks, files, and business records that add an even wider and more personal dimension to his imagery and his career. "I'm a saver," Newman once commented. "I don't throw anything away. I'm too attached to the damn thing."[4] As a result the photographer has left us with a rich archive—intimate in its detail and all encompassing in its range—that will be made more available in the years ahead as the Ransom Center archivists and librarians complete their work on the final Newman finding aid.

Arnold Newman's entry into the publishing of his photographs was inevitable, for he always held a deep affection for books. From his youth he always recalled with warm affection the "great excitement and love of the smell of the Carnegie Library—to me the smell of books in the library is the most wonderful thing in the world."[5] Although he had a well-established and successful reputation over the initial thirty years of his career, Newman knew that he was not then well known beyond the Rolodexes of a number of editors and some museum curators. As he put it, "who pays attention to credit lines and so on?" Finally, in 1974 he amassed some of his most notable photographs and, under the auspices of David R. Godine, published *One Mind's Eye: The Portraits and Other Photographs of Arnold Newman*. The book was an instant hit that secured his worldwide fame; or, as he would later recall, "It was like a rocket. My reputation took off."[6]



Arnold Newman, manuscript notes with contacts and phone numbers scribbled atop a "*LIFE* Books" file folder, ca. 1967.

Throughout the final three decades of his life he would actively participate in the production of nearly a dozen more books of his photographs. Most, like *Artists: Portraits from Four Decades* (1980) or *Arnold Newman's Americans* (1992), covered a broad selection from his years of portraiture. Others, like *The Great British*

OPPOSITE PAGE

Photographer unidentified, Arnold Newman with George Perry and Michael Rand, laying out Newman's book *The Great British*, December 7, 1978, with Newman's manuscript notation. Work print.

(1979) or *Faces USA* (1978), featured works that were predominantly produced with a specific subject or theme in mind. Finally, more critical works—among them Arthur Ollman's *Five Decades* (1986), Bruce Weber's *Arnold Newman in Florida* (1987), and Howard Greenberg and Ron Kurtz's posthumous *Arnold Newman: The Early Work* (2007)—would feature a more scholarly editing of his oeuvre by other notable curatorial eyes. Nearly all of the later publications—including the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography's current exhibition/publication, *Masterclass: Arnold Newman*—feature significant essays about the photographer together with a formal, gallery-like presentation of the artist's exhibition prints.

Arnold Newman: At Work attempts to probe deeper into the archival nature and range of the artist and his photographs. As its subtitle implies, this book strives to reveal further dimensions to Arnold Newman's work—and to the character and career that shaped some of the greatest camera portraits of the twentieth century. The book draws upon the combination of his words and pictures, his published imagery and his exhibition prints, and his contact prints as well as many previously unseen or unpublished photographs. An archive as rich as Newman's provides us with the unique opportunity to step back from the finished portrait in order to gain a deeper sense of the character, circumstance, and creativity that impelled this modern master. And the more that we can study Newman's life and career with such depth, then the more we can become aware of the entire process which led to the evolution of his particular vision. The archive will continue to provide us with this profoundly unique opportunity—to follow the photographer from the initial planning of a portrait sitting, through the complex processes of human interaction, technical innovation, image selection, cropping, and editing—all ultimately leading to the realization of the image into its final printed or published form.

In the latter half of his career Arnold spoke frequently of his enjoyment of being able to teach others. He recognized that behind every good photograph, every honest photograph, there could be found a meaningful purpose or reasoning from which each of its future viewers could learn more and grow accordingly. As he would prophesize: "New ideas will be discovered by the generations to come."[7] Through the perpetuation and accessibility of his archive at the Ransom Center, Newman will continue to teach and enrich future generations of scholars, students, and the public at large. As he once related so succinctly: "To us that is what a museum is all about. A learning process."[8]

NOTES

1. Of special note is *LIFE* photographer Eliot Elisofon, who was very influential in convincing Newman to make his final move from Miami to New York City in 1945. Elisofon's archive came to the Ransom Center's photography department in 1992.
2. Some of these portrait pioneers include: David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, J. J. E. Mayall, Henry Maull and George Henry Polyblank, Lewis Carroll, John Thomson, H. Walter Barnett, and Felix H. Mann.
3. Observed by Marianne Fulton in a RIT photography class.
4. Arnold Newman, interview with Will Stapp, February 1991, tape #2.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., tape #3.
7. Ibid., tape #2.
8. Ibid.

Work area
33 W 67

Arnold Newman, Self-portrait at his darkroom work desk in New York City, June 10, 1955. Work print with Newman's manuscript notation.

INTRODUCTION

Arnold Newman Works

MARIANNE FULTON

A creative medium gives you the chance to be alive.

—ARNOLD NEWMAN

For most of his professional life, Arnold Newman was a large, rotund, happy man. He had a beard, curly dark hair, and a penchant for cigars. He loved to tell stories, often on himself. The stories would later constitute his lectures about sitters, who were often quirky in a very human way. The story of his life was intertwined with the stories he told.

Although he was called "the father of the environmental portrait," Newman maintained that he was not the father of something the Dutch painters had done hundreds of years earlier and that *environmental* wasn't the right word. Occasionally he even took exception to the word *portrait*. His grudge match with these words was a function of his belief that labels of any kind were restrictive: "The minute you put a label on something there is no room to move . . . I never thought in [those] terms and I refuse to think in terms [of] labels."[1]

He was a worrier; he fretted over money, jobs, the state of photography—the state of *his* photography. A great photographer, Newman had phenomenal drive and could work long hours to accomplish the task he had set for himself. Inexhaustible curiosity about people pulled him forward. And, his perfectionism caused him to stress over every detail. He peppered his speech with Yiddish words such as *macher*, *meshuggener*, *bisel*, and *schmata*.[2] George Perry described Newman thusly: "By nature Arnold Newman is restless, creative and charged. His work programme has horrified younger men, and he is at his best when the adrenalin [*sic*] is flowing strongly."[3] He was a master of balance; like a man on a tightrope in the circus, he triumphed under sometimes-complicated circumstances.

Newman was twenty-three when his creative career as a portraitist began but he had already labored for years. Newman would work his

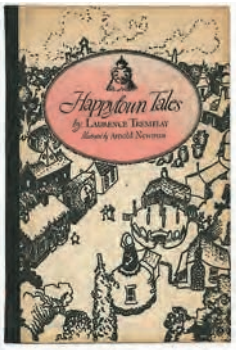
Photographer unknown, Arnold Newman age 16 or 17 in Miami Beach, Florida, ca. 1934–1935. Work print.

entire life—the work would change, sometimes gradually, but it would always be the basis of his life. His early handwritten and typed notes on the beginnings of his portraiture and his first ideas about photography are filled with the word *work* and its variations: *work*, *worked*, *working*, and *workable*. This was not due to a paucity of vocabulary—Newman was well read and a serious autodidact his entire life—but rather because, as Arthur Ollman noted with great insight in *Arnold Newman: Five Decades*, "for Arnold Newman, people and their work are inseparable. For him the work we are known by is a product of who we are, not synthetically generated by outside forces."[4]

EARLY LIFE

Born in New York City in 1918, Arnold Newman was only eleven in 1929 when Wall Street crashed and the Depression began. The panic affected the entire country, but it struck the Newman family especially hard because they had not recovered from an earlier financial blow. Newman said that his father, Isidor, had "twice lost a good amount of money." Newman's father owned a clothing manufacturing company. As Newman tells the story, during World War I, "the navy ordered tons of navy uniforms and then wouldn't take [them] because the armistice came unexpectedly, and [the navy] wouldn't pay him anything." Isidor was too proud to file for bankruptcy, however, and started a small dry goods business in Atlantic City. Apparently, just as the Depression started he sold that business and had some money for the family to live on, but then the banks closed and, as Newman describes it, "[we had] not a cent."[5] Within ten years of losing everything, the family had to start all over again. Isidor and his wife, Freda, leased a small hotel in Atlantic City and worked there during the summer. Later, Isidor was able to lease a place in the South, and in winter the family moved to Miami Beach. The number of tourists and the amount of cash taken in at the hotels must have been a constant topic, judging by his mother's letters to Arnold in the 1940s. In a little over ten years after the stock market crash, Isidor was dead.

The story of Newman's early years has been told before but these experiences are crucial to understanding his attitudes about money and his work ethic. As Newman says, "I was brought up in the [D]epression when my father lost everything. We were literally penniless, particularly when the banks closed down. So I still have that [D]epression psychology."[6] His father worked hard both creating and taking jobs that would support the family. Money was always very tight.



LEFT

Arnold Newman, Pencil drawing, December 3, 1936.

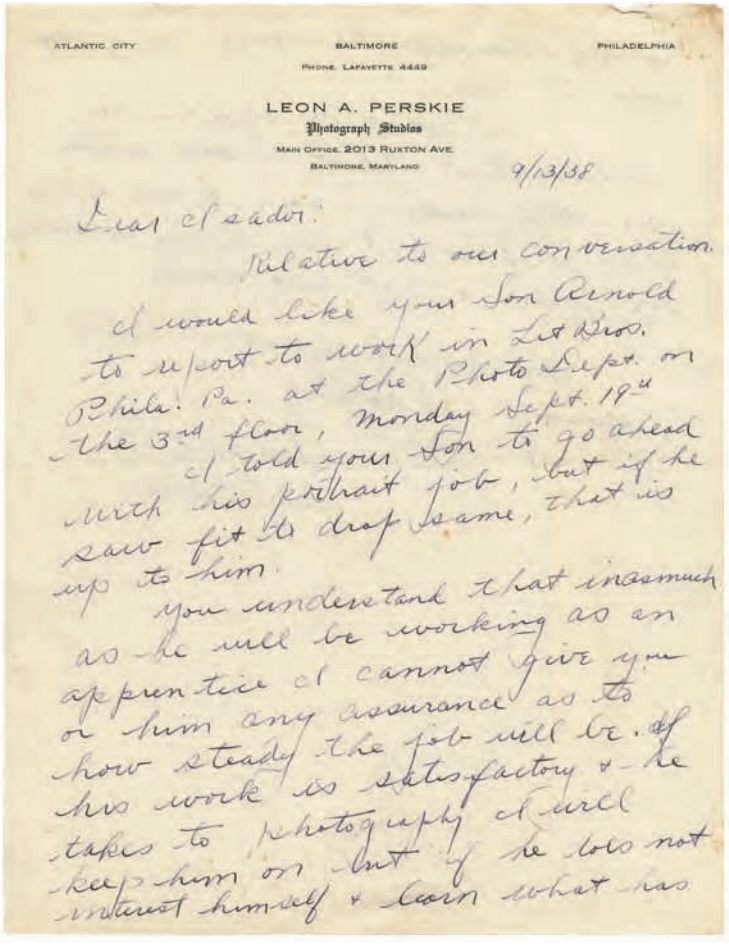
RIGHT, TOP

Arnold Newman, Drawing, 1942.

RIGHT, BOTTOM

Laurence Tremblay, *Happytown Tales*, Illustrated by Arnold Newman, Coral Gables, Florida, 1944.

Newman graduated from Miami Beach High School in 1937 and went on to the University of Miami on an art scholarship. He didn't have much time to sit around and contemplate art, though; he worked "hiring models, organizing classes, designing and painting scenery for the University's theater and even executing landscape ideas for the main building's patio."[7] In addition, he worked in a bookstore. There was "no feeling sorry for ourselves, it was just a matter of working as hard as you could to keep it up.[8] But, the Depression and his father's failing health took their toll and Newman dropped out of school and took a photo studio job with a family friend, Leon Perskie, in the Lit Brothers Department Store in Philadelphia.



ATLANTIC CITY BALTIMORE PHILADELPHIA

PHONE, LAFAYETTE 4449

LEON A. PERSKIE

Photograph Studios

MAIN OFFICE, 2013 RUXTON AVE.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

9/13/38

Dear Isador:

Relative to our conversation. I would like your Son Arnold to report to work in Lit Bros. Phila. Pa. at the Photo Dept. on the 3rd floor, Monday Sept. 19th I told your Son to go ahead with his portrait job, but if he saw fit to drop same, that is up to him.

You understand that inasmuch as he will be working as an apprentice I cannot give you or him any assurance as to how steady the job will be. If his work is satisfactory & he takes to photography & will keep him on, but if he does not interest himself & learn what has

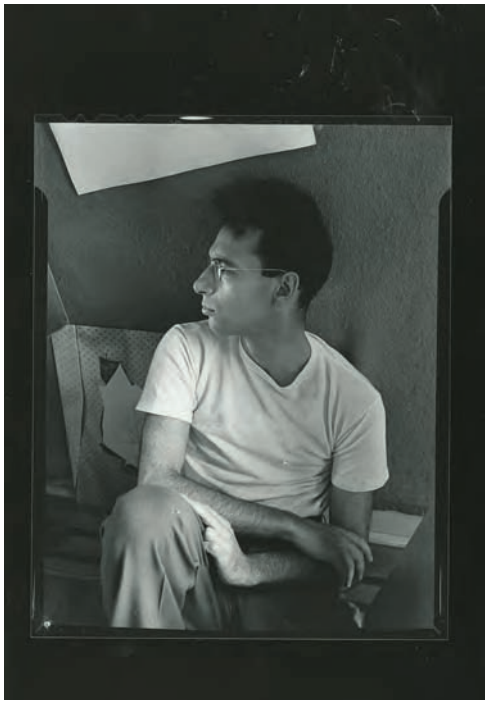
Leon Perskie, page 1 of manuscript letter to Isador Newman, September 13, 1938.

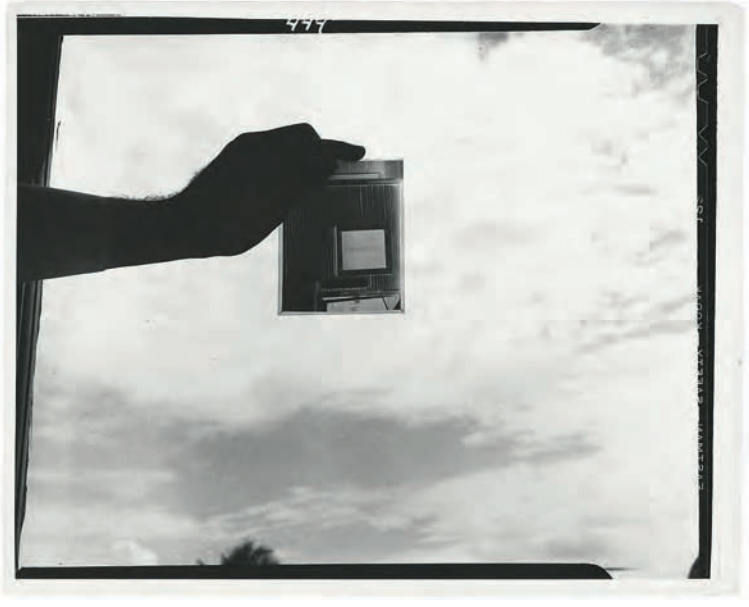
ABSTRACTIONS AND SOCIAL REALISM

The job at Lit Brothers was Newman's first encounter with photography; he learned his craft by photographing sixty to seventy subjects a day at forty-nine cents per photo. He shared a room with Ben Rose, a boyhood friend from Atlantic City, at Rose's brother and sister-in-law's house. At their house, Newman remembers, "we got breakfast and dinner . . . and I think it was like eight bucks a week. For another ten dollars a week, he continues, "they let [Ben] have a darkroom downstairs and it was that night I said this is it[—] I was watching [Ben] print up his pictures."[9] The friends went to secondhand bookstores and magazine shops to look at reproductions and buy magazines. Newman said, "I was buying reproductions which I still have; I pasted them in books."[10] Among the magazines was *LIFE*, for which Newman ended up doing art stories years later. Edward Steichen and Man Ray's pictures, as Newman said, "opened up my eyes to what was possible."[11]

Ben, who studied with Alexey Brodovitch, art director at *Harper's Bazaar* and an instructor at the School of Industrial Arts, and other art students shared their excitement over modern art with Newman. Through them, he came to understand the new ideas. The group also went out to take pictures in the evenings. The first time Newman went along, he had no camera of his own; however after that first time and the experience of watching Ben print his photographs, he borrowed a camera from his uncle and began to make his own images. As he says,

> I began to experiment in abstractions, abstract realism, and social realism, if one must pigeonhole definitions. I became fascinated





> with the control of the camera and the ability to make it see as I saw. . . . I read and looked up everything I could find on photography, going back to its beginnings as well as contemporary workers. . . . My interest burned strongly within. I went to museums and bought and clipped magazines like *Vanity Fair* . . . a strong influence on me.[12]

However, what had the biggest impact on him, he wrote, were the photographs of the Farm Security Administration (FSA).

The FSA photo unit was a small part of what was originally called the Resettlement Administration (RA) of the New Deal Program in 1935. President Roosevelt's New Deal consisted of a series of economic programs. The larger RA/FSA made loans to farmers who were impoverished by drought, soil erosion, and economic disaster in the region that would consequently become known as the Dust Bowl, and which encompassed large areas of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado. The Great Depression had many facets besides the Wall Street crash. The FSA photographic section employed such photographers as Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Arthur Rothstein, Marion Post Wolcott, and Walker Evans. Their work, led by Roy Stryker, was to systematically record the trials of the farmers and bring about an understanding of the terrible situation. It was also a statement of support for the government programs. The photographs were frequently published in *LIFE* and many other periodicals. Newman would have seen this work while working in Philadelphia. Walker Evans's work was especially powerful for Newman. He wrote that Evans's book *American Photographs*, published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1938, "was my most constant reference source during this period."[13]

Newman's studio job took him to Baltimore and eastern Pennsylvania, where there were other stores in the chain. Newman later wrote:

LEFT

Arnold Newman, Ben Rose, September 1941. Contact print.

RIGHT

Arnold Newman, hand with sheet film negative, ca. 1940. Contact print.

"I found my basic personal approach to people today [was] developed through the contact with the thousands of strangers with whom I was confronted under such pressured conditions [in] these commercial portrait studios."[14] The experience also required that he "know every phase of the dark room and know the use and meaning of every chemical that lined the shelves."[15]

After a year he left to accept a managerial position in a similar studio in West Palm Beach, Florida. He made enough money now to buy a 4 × 5 Speed Graphic camera that would function as his sole camera. Outside the studio, he experimented with abstractions—"in reality," he said, "the exercise of controlling and seeing."[16] West Palm Beach was a segregated city and he "discovered" the other side of town and its many buildings and junkyards that provided a lot of material with which to work. He began to include the black residents of the city in his images, not unlike the photographers who worked for the FSA. As he says, "This period was extremely fruitful as a bridge between my abstracts and the portraits."[17] Newman's period of experimentation was not without incident, however, as he was eventually arrested because of the amount of time he spent on that side of town. He was released from jail and allowed to continue, "but under great suspicion of being an agitator." The arrest clearly resonated with Newman, as he says, "I have always felt strongly on the subject of human and civil rights and this incident solidified my thinking [but] I found that it was difficult to present these ideas in emotional terms with my camera, despite the many tries after this incident."[18]

What Newman did not say was that, as a Jew, he himself had experienced the pain of exclusion. During an interview for the American Jewish Committee he said, "I deeply resented the fact [that] when I went up beyond a certain point in Miami Beach in the early days it was 14th Street, and then it was 23rd Street . . . there were signs on the hotels [and] apartment houses." On the more elegant hotels the signs said, "Restricted." If the hotels were "not so elegant," the signs would say "[N]o Jews."[19]

NEW YORK: A BREAK

Arnold Newman often said that three days in 1941 changed his life. He had been working alone in West Palm Beach on his abstractions and documentary-style photographs, and as he wrote in an early loose-leaf journal, "at last the time has come for the judgment." He took the train to New York City with over "two years of work, desires, dreams . . . tucked beneath [his] arm."[20] On the morning of June 17, 1941, Newman went to see Beaumont Newhall, curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art. Newhall asked him to take a seat and started going through the photographs. "Oh Lord—" Newman wrote, "he paid no attention—just took a glance, hesitated then went on to the next in deep silence." At last Newhall spoke. "These are unusual, imaginative," he said. Newman "was petrified."[21]

Newhall also told Newman that the prints were very good, but "you've got to learn what good print quality is." Newman continues:

> so we went [into the print room] and he pulled out a whole bunch of boxes . . . my eyes lit up because I'd never seen good prints before. . . . I was beginning also to find out what good photography was about and I got very excited . . . it was a reaction, against all these terrible commercial portraits [that Newman had to make in the department

TOP

Arnold Newman, Men and Ladders Against a Wall, Allentown, Pennsylvania, Fall 1939. Final print.

BOTTOM

Arnold Newman, Railway Sign Abstraction, West Palm Beach, Florida, Spring 1941. Final print.

657

655

656

> store] . . . every negative had to be absolutely identical so they could all be developed the same way and . . . [so the printers in the darkroom] would not have to raise the enlarger up and down.[22]

Newhall suggested that Newman show the work to Alfred Stieglitz, master photographer, editor, publisher, and gallery owner.[23]

This wouldn't be the first time Newman had visited Stieglitz's An American Place gallery. The first was very likely during a New York visit in spring 1939. He wrote that this first meeting with a man he esteemed so highly was "an event of great importance."[24]

> I walked into his "An American Place" 509 Madison Ave. with but a few months of photography experience behind me and also no pictures under my arm. Confronting me was the man himself wearing a woman's apron [that] he later explained, he was doing some printing. I asked to see his prints, none of which were on the walls, and he allowed his assistant to show them to me. I will never forget my first impression of him—it was dominated by the vision of a tremendous amount of hair growing out his ears. Such [are] the first thoughts of one when he meets face to face, one of his idols.[25]

Stieglitz also showed him his darkroom.

Newman recalled the incongruities, the surprises presented by "The Grand Old Man" and his workspace on this first visit. He noticed Stieglitz' apron and that he was working on his famous images in a very tiny darkroom, that he later described as a "little alcove or large closet, a curtain across it."[26] On this second visit, Newman says, "I walked the two blocks over to [An American Place] and as if he was waiting all that time for me . . . Mr. Stieglitz was still in his office resting on his couch."[27] The young man stumbled through his request for Stieglitz to look at his prints and afterwards asked for an opinion.

> "Well," Stieglitz began, "You're beginning. Here and there you are beginning to come thru. Of course, I still would not want to live with any of them, but, you're coming along—Take the better work being done today, yours is definitely better than them."
>
> I could of [*sic*] shouted—I could of [*sic*] melted—but I just stood there, unconscious of all the world except he, myself and my prints.[28]

ABOVE

Arnold Newman, Alfred Stieglitz in his An American Place Gallery, Spring 1944. Detail of contact print mounted with others on a work board.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Arnold Newman, Beaumont Newhall at the Museum of Modern Art, October 1941. Contact sheet showing three variations with Newman's manuscript numbers.

Notes on Artists Series

c June '39
Probably first meeting

In June 1941 I met Alfred Stieglitz. To me the first meeting of a person so high in my world of art was an event of great importance.

I walked into his "An American Place" 509 Madison Ave with but a few months of photographic experience behind me but alas no pictures under my arm. Confronting me was the man himself wearing a woman's apron which he later explained, as he was doing some printing. I asked to see his prints, none of which were on the walls, and he allowed an assistant to show them to me. I will never forget my first impression of him — it was dominated by the vision of a tremendous amount of hair growing out his ears. Such is the first thought of one when he meets, face to face, one of his Idols

Later Stieglitz himself came in to see what I was taking so much time for — and remained to talk photography with me. We decried the over emphasis on lab technique — tho its importance we did not deny. The Grand Old Man then mentioned something I have heard him repeat on later meetings — "I don't care what you did or how you did it — I'm only interested in the finished picture." Then he took me into his little dark room. I shall never forget it. Three trays with the shelves stocked with what he said could be bought in any drug store. No tricks. Imagine my excitement as I recognized prints on the walls so familiar to me. One was of O'Keefes hands, and then, the girl sitting near the window with the light thrown on her and the wall broken into long strips by the lattice. He explained the Museum of Modern Art

In one day, Arnold Newman had received positive comments on his first work from arguably the two most prominent men in creative photography. To top that off, the next day Dr. Robert Leslie of *A-D Magazine*[29] and A-D Gallery offered Newman a two-man show with Ben Rose in September. There were few venues for photography in 1941; having a gallery show was a significant accomplishment. Things were starting to happen.

Back in Florida, Newman prepared for his upcoming exhibition and began to conceive of a portrait series on artists. In September, Newman quit his job and moved to New York —for the first time (his young, migratory life wasn't quite over). He lived with a cousin in Brooklyn but felt quite alone in the art and photography world of Manhattan. From the start he said, "for some strange reason I had my own vision."[30] Perhaps he thought it strange because growing up he lived in Atlantic City on the beach and could rarely go to museums. Instead, he pored over books, storing up images and the history of painting. At the same time he took a job with a photographic studio in Newark to support himself.

There was a sad note to the otherwise exciting exhibition at the A-D Gallery: four days before the opening, Isidor died. Newman suggested that the exhibit be postponed but, he writes, "my mother brushed aside my suggestion of delaying the opening—and refused to appear in mourning clothes."[31] Freda Newman was her son's biggest fan and she made sure his first opening went off as planned and without attracting attention to her sorrow. If in later life Newman, the "famous environmental portraitist," acted like he was waiting for the bottom to fall out, he had had plenty of experience.

Many of the works in the show featured cutouts. While he later used this type of handwork in a few portraits, the form predated the portrait series. He estimated later that he had made cutouts in 1939 and possibly a few in 1938. "I don't think [the cutouts were] original particularly, but it was a lot of fun to do."[32] Now Newman could start exploring his ideas about an artists' series. The exhibition of abstractions and early documentary work drew top art directors, magazine editors, artists and photographers as well as Beaumont Newhall and Ansel Adams, who selected work for the Museum of Modern Art's collection.

He had several motives in doing an artist series, he wrote in an early typed manuscript. Foremost was "the tremendous curiosity I had as an art student [about] these men who actually . . . created the work I had studied. In addition to this I had already begun to think of experiments in photographic portraiture and the thought of such tremendously interesting

ABOVE

Arnold Newman, Installation view of the Arnold Newman and Ben Rose joint exhibition at the A-D Gallery, New York City, September 1941. Contact print with Newman's manuscript number.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Arnold Newman, "Notes on Artist's [*sic*] Series," ca. 1942. The first page of Newman's original manuscript about his earliest encounters with artists in New York City, describing his first meeting with Alfred Stieglitz.

ABOVE

Arnold Newman, Charles Burchfield, September 1941. Cropped contact print mounted on a separate sheet of paper.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Arnold Newman, Raphael Soyer, September 1941. Detail of contact sheet.

subjects excited me." And, he went on, "Selfishly, it was a wonderful opportunity to meet these men."[33]

The first opportunity to photograph an artist happened suddenly, just after Newman moved to Brooklyn, and he had to seize the moment. Attending an exhibition of Charles Burchfield's paintings at the Rehn Galleries, he saw the artist himself. Burchfield agreed to be photographed but said it would have to be that same day because he was about to leave town. This meant that Newman had to go back to Brooklyn to pick up his equipment and return (living outside of the city got old fast and he moved into town after two months). It was a rush but he made his first portrait of an artist in the back room of the gallery.

In the early days Newman carried what he described as a "heavy old leather bag" for his Speed Graphic, one lens, film holders, and "an old leather suitcase" full of lights for commercial work.[34] Soon after the portrait of Burchfield, Newman wanted to start exploring his ideas about artists in their own spaces. He had spent much too long taking pictures quickly against a uniform background, now he wanted that space to have meaning. "I wanted to show the space, because we live in space." Further, "False lighting, artificial poses, uniformly clothed subjects, blank meaningless background, or even worse, bad 'acceptable' poses and expressions have produced a sterile medium devoid of vigor and lacking in maturity."[35]

In September of 1941, following his first exhibit, he went to No. 1 Union Square to make the acquaintance of Reginald Marsh and see about making a portrait. Marsh was out, but he met Raphael Soyer who had a studio in the same building. It was another pivotal introduction. Soyer showed the young man his work and, more importantly, he listened to the photographer's ideas. In the 4 × 5–inch contact prints of Soyer, we see the artist sitting, standing close to his paintings, and looking into a mirror, his back to the camera. The two became friends and Soyer, as well as his twin brother Moses, were often photographed by Newman.

Newman quit his Newark studio job to concentrate on his creative work and in January 1942 he moved into the city to share an apartment with a friend. As he describes that period, "I quit the job and between unemployment compensation and eventually a few small jobs here and there, I managed to scrape by during that year, living hand to mouth."[36]

Soyer proved an excellent early mentor, advising Newman to trade work with the artists he photographed—and to not underestimate the