

*E. O. Hoppé's Amerika*  
Modernist Photographs from the 1920s  
April 5 – May 12, 2007  
Opening: April 5<sup>th</sup>, 6 – 8 PM

Silverstein Photography is pleased to announce *E. O. Hoppé's Amerika*, an exhibition of rare and previously unknown vintage photographs taken by the German-born British photographer during his travels around the United States in the 1920s. This groundbreaking exhibition, the first in the United States of the photographer's work in over 80 years, places the newly rediscovered photographer squarely at the origins of Modernist photography, and provides evidence of his influence on such notable American artists as Walker Evans, Charles Sheeler, Edward Weston and Ansel Adams.

At the time of his arrival in America in 1919, months after the First World War ended, Emil Otto Hoppé (1878 – 1972) was arguably the most famous photographer in the world. Countless celebrities visited his studios in London, including royalty, literary figures, dancers, and film stars. Lured to New York to set up a satellite studio, Hoppé quickly fell in love with the people and places of the United States. He began by photographing homeless men in the Bowery, and continued by taking breathtaking views of architectural landmarks such as the Brooklyn Bridge and Grand Central Station. When the publisher Orbis Terrarum commissioned him to photograph the entire United States, he eagerly accepted, criss-crossing the country by car and rail. He spent nearly five years photographing all over America, from New Hampshire to the Florida Keys, and from Seattle to San Diego.

Hoppé's monumental survey anticipated similar efforts by members of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) during the years 1935-1943. The FSA included famed photographers Dorothea Lange, Arthur Rothstein, Ben Shahn and Marion Post Wolcott. Above all, Hoppé's project foreshadowed the extraordinary, lyrical photographs of maverick FSA photographer Walker Evans (1903-70), whose 1938 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, *American Photographs*, with its accompanying catalogue, constitutes one of the undisputed landmarks in photographic history.

Just like Walker Evans and Robert Frank after him, Hoppé's goal was to capture the character of the American people and their circumstances. He found little interest in tourist views, preferring to focus on the realities of day-to-day life in the country, its triumphs, its failings, and the contradictions engendered in its people. He found interest in unobvious places. So, at the same time he photographed spectacular places such as the Ford Factory in Detroit and the Grand Canyon, he also found meaning in the pleasing pattern of bolts and girders on buildings under construction, the irony of advertising posters, or the geometry of stones on a rocky trail. Hoppé was especially interested in the consequences of rapid economic growth. A major theme of his photography was the potential for alienation and isolation in the face of industrial progress.

In the course of his work, Hoppé crossed swords with the doyen of American Modernism, Alfred Stieglitz. But he also won prominent converts, such as Gertrude Käsebier and Alvin Langdon Coburn. The full extent of Hoppé's influence on American photography may never be fully understood. This exhibition, and the accompanying catalogue written by critically acclaimed art historian Phillip Prodger, attempt to redress the oversight of one of photography's pivotal figures.

A new book of the same title published by W. W. Norton will accompany the exhibition.

**Upcoming Exhibitions**

Zoe Strauss: May 17 – June 23, 2007

