

The New Criterion

Art

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Exhibition Notes

by [W. S. Di Piero](#)

On "John Szarkowski" at The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

"John Szarkowski: Photographs"
at the San Francisco
Museum of Modern Art.
February-May 15, 2005

Attack, heightened nerves, a quivering alertness to patterns of relatedness, a tasteless (or taste-free) acquisitiveness ... these are what I like and value most in modern American photography. Image-makers like Walker Evans and Edward Weston were artists with a sliver of ice in their hearts, but their images are fat with feeling, in part because they were impatient with cultivated delay and selectivity. They had a big appetite for visual information, and we see that drivenness in the tremendously poised immediacy of their language. The same appetite and drive race through the work of jumpier, more eruptive photographers like Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander, both unstoppable archivists of accident and happenstance. In such work discrimination seems beside the point.

The curator large ...

W. S. Di Piero's *Chinese Apples: New and Selected Poems* will be published in February by Knopf.

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