

# &SCHEINBAUM RUSSEK LTD

Select Contemporary and Vintage Photography

## **Edward Weston: The Photographer** **and Friends**

We are so appreciative of the wonderful responses we have received on our “history of photography” email blasts! Thank you.

Your comments were so positive that we will continue in this vein.

We don't know if the response was to Beaumont's Martini recipe or the information about Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke. Maybe both! Many of you told us that you were unaware of Willard and Ralph's importance in the formative years of Documentary Film.



Edward Weston  
*Oceana*, 1936

Willard was Edward Weston's apprentice in 1928 and a co-founder of f64 in 1932. In 1935 Willard moved to New York to pursue his Documentary Film career. He served as cameraman on *The River* (1938) directed by Pare Lorentz, and in 1939 made *The City* with Ralph Steiner (which was in last week's email). He produced and directed many films, mostly for television for the next 20 years before he began his Directorship of the Department of Film at the Museum of Modern Art in 1965.

In 1983, during a break in The Friends of Photography f64 workshop, a video was made in Ansel Adam's backyard with Beaumont Newhall and Ansel discussing Willard's role in the founding of Group f64, and his life in both film and still photography. During that interview Willard stated, "The effects of the Depression were very disturbing to me. I felt anxious to promote change. He went on the say, "I was young and impatient, and felt that the documentary film would more effectively communicate issues to more people then would still photography." He went on to discuss with Beaumont and Ansel that he now had doubts about that decision. He used Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* photograph as an example of a still image that is still affecting viewers with its powerful message and wondered if there were films that were made in those years that have a similar impact today. Ansel and Beaumont assured Willard that they felt his roles in still and moving image were a major contribution to both medium's history!



Willard Van Dyke  
*Virginia City Interior*, c. 1933

In 1948, Willard was commissioned by the USIA (United States Information Agency) to produce the film: *The Photographer*. This film serves as both a film "about a photographer" but also serves as a tribute to his mentor and friend Edward Weston. The film is shot mostly at Weston's beloved Point Lobos and at his home on Wildcat Hill. It includes rare footage of Weston working in both the field and darkroom. Enjoy.



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### **Beaumont and Nancy Newhall**

During a 1940 visit to Ansel and Virginia Adams in California, Beaumont and Nancy met Edward Weston for the first time. This visit to Edward Weston's home was the beginning of the Newhall's lifelong friendship and collaborations with Weston on publications and exhibitions, including his 1946 exhibition at MOMA and the editing and publication of his *Daybooks*. During the visit Edward photographed Beaumont and Nancy in his outdoor studio and on the rocks of Point Lobos. Beaumont photographed along the beach himself and was invited to use Edward's darkroom to develop and print one of his images. Beaumont realized at the time that rather than make versions of "Weston" subjects he would direct his camera on the Weston's home. These photographs made in Weston's personal space give us great insight into Charis and Edward's life and personalities.

Beaumont excerpted the following from his journal in his autobiography, *FOCUS: Memoirs of a Life in Photography*, Bulfinch, 1993 (which we highly recommend).





Edward Weston  
Nancy Newhall, Wildcat Hill, 1940



Nancy Newhall  
Edward Weston, Wildcat Hill, 1940

*... Almost immediately we became friends. We abandoned our original plan of visiting relatives and traveling to Oregon and the Canadian Rockies; instead we stayed in the nearby Highlands Inn for about two weeks. Every morning we walked down to the little one room house in which the Weston's lived with their cats... sometimes Edward would invite us to go photographing with him on Point Lobos, a peninsula that is now a state preserve a few miles south of Carmel... Edward used a large view camera for 8 x 10 inch sheet film... Edward could study the detail of the image formed on the ground glass and maintain that he can visualize exactly what the fine print would look like.*



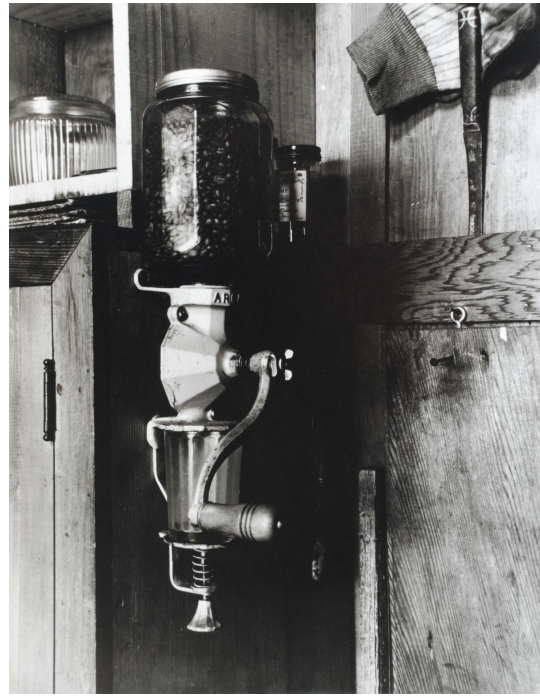
Beaumont Newhall  
Edward Weston, Point Lobos, 1940

*... I felt bashful with my 9 x 12 – centimeter folding-plate camera and made only a few exposures of Point Lobos, for it seemed to me that Edward had photographed everything. I was so strongly influenced by his vision that I found myself imitating*

him. I decided instead to make a number of photographs of the outside and interior of their Wildcat Hill house: the stove, the coffee grinder, Charis' typewriter, Edward's darkroom.



Beaumont Newhall  
*Edward Weston's Kitchen, Carmel, CA, 1940*



Beaumont Newhall  
*Edward Weston's Coffee Grinder, Carmel, CA, 1940*



Beaumont Newhall  
*Charis Weston's Typewriter, Carmel, 1940*

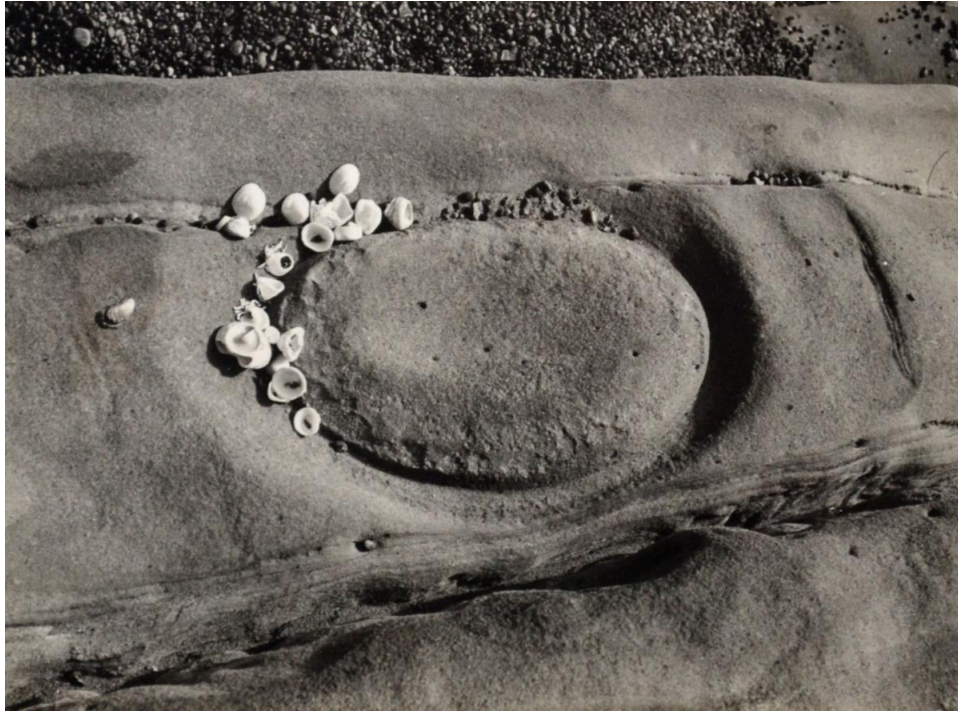


Beaumont Newhall  
*Edward Weston Looking Out of His Darkroom Window, 1940*

... Edward very generously invited me to use his darkroom to develop my negatives. He showed me how he worked, even gave me the formula for the pyro developing solution he favored. When I had developed my exposed film he found the negatives satisfactory, and asked, "Aren't you going to print them?" And showed me how he used the light of a plain overhead light bulb for exposure. So I made a few



prints. He looked at them critically. “Why didn’t you dodge them?” he inquired, suggesting the process of shading areas of the image that were weak so as to maintain detail in the print. “Why dodge, Mr. Weston?” So he took me back into the darkroom and taught me how to do it. It had never occurred to me that it was “ethical” in the canon of straight photography to dodge a print. Weston, it turned out, dodged his prints heavily, and also “burned in” dense areas that required more light. ... He taught me more than any other photographer I have known for he demonstrated to me – rather than just telling me about – his brilliant technique.



Beaumont Newhall

*Nest of Wild Shells, Point Lobos, California , 1940*

This is the print that was made in Edward Weston's darkroom in 1940 (see above)

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## **Sonya Noskowiak**

Sonya Noskowiak (1900-1975) was born in Leipzig Germany. In 1915 her family settled in Los Angeles. In 1919 she moved to San Francisco and soon became a receptionist in Johan Hagemeyer’s photographic studio. Her interest in photography grew and in 1929 she met Edward Weston and became his model, muse, pupil and assistant. She was taught to spot his photographs and he soon gave Sonya her first camera. For several months without film in the camera she “photographed” while he taught her the mechanics of photography. Her progress was quick and she soon developed her own style in the landscape and honed her craftsmanship in the darkroom. In 1932 she became one of the organizing members of Group f64 along with Willard Van Dyke, Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, Edward Weston and his older son Brett, and exhibited in their inaugural exhibit at the M. H. de Young Museum in San Francisco.



Sonya Noskowiak  
*Untitled (Tree Trunk)*, 1938

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## **Dody Weston Thompson**

Dody Weston Thompson's (1923-2012) interest in the arts was kindled at the legendary Black Mountain College which she attended from 1941-1943. Many of her faculty members were former Bauhaus instructors and stressed "Simplicity and Functionality". In 1946 she attended an Edward Weston Retrospective exhibition organized by Beaumont and Nancy Newhall at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She was transfixed by his imagery. In 1947 she sought out Edward Weston and soon became an apprentice of his. Besides working closely with Edward Weston, she also assisted Ansel Adams and collaborated with Brett Weston whom she later married. The California photographic community recognized her photographic works and she was included by the remaining members of Group f64 in an "emerging" photography exhibition in 1949.





Dody Weston Thompson  
*Dew, Nasturtium Leaf*, 1952

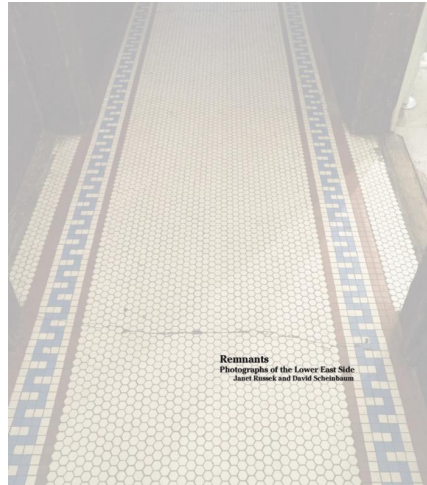


Dody Weston Thompson  
*Horse Tail Ferns*, 1956



## **Remnants: Photographs of the Lower East Side**

We don't typically promote our own endeavors as photographers on the Scheinbaum & Russek pages, but last evening Darius Himes, International Head of Photographs at Christies included our book among his daily readings on Instagram. If you don't follow him already you should check out these wonderful tributes to "The Photo Book". It's a great honor for our book to be included.



We link to his reading [\*\*here\*\*](#) and also link to [\*\*Radius Books\*\*](#) the publisher for more information about it.