



## The Terminal

**Artist:** Alfred Stieglitz (American, Hoboken, New Jersey 1864–1946 New York)

**Date:** 1893, printed 1911

**Medium:** Photogravure

**Dimensions:** 12.1 x 16.0 cm (4 3/4 x 6 5/16 in.)

**Classification:** Photographs

**Credit Line:** Gift of J. B. Neumann, 1958

**Accession Number:** 58.577.11

### Description

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As proprietor of the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession and publisher of the photographic journals *Camera Notes* and later *Camera Work*, Stieglitz was a major force in the promotion and elevation of photography as a fine art in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His own photographs had an equally revolutionary impact on the advancement of the medium.

Stieglitz took this picture using a small 4 x 5 camera, an instrument not considered at the time to be worthy of artistic photography. Unlike the unwieldy 8 x 10 view camera (which

required a tripod), this camera gave Stieglitz greater freedom and mobility to roam the city and respond quickly to the ever-changing street life around him. The Terminal predicts by over a decade the radical transformation of the medium from painterly prints of rarified subjects to what the critic Sadakichi Hartmann dubbed "straight photography." This new photography would take as its subject matter the quotidian aspects of modern urban life, using only techniques that are unique to the medium. At the same time, in this and other photographs he made around the turn of the century, Stieglitz used natural elements such as smoke, rain, and snow to soften and unify the image into a pictorially pleasing synthesis.