



## Untitled

### Date

1965

### Primary Maker

Arthur S. Siegel

### Medium

Gelatin silver print

### Description

Photograms are “cameraless” photographs made by placing an object or objects on photosensitive paper and then exposing the ensemble to light; the parts of the sheet not covered by objects become black, while the covered parts remain white or turn darker or lighter shades of gray depending on the translucency of the

objects that cover them. Famously, Man Ray and László Moholy-Nagy both made photograms in the 1920s, in Paris and at the Bauhaus in Germany, respectively, which Ray called “rayographs.” The American photographer Arthur S. Siegel also produced intricate examples, such as this untitled work, in which he placed a number of overlapping screens on a sheet of photographic paper and exposed it to create an abstract pattern. In the same year, he conducted experiments with the dye-transfer technique (printing color photographs with a separate dye-soaked matrix for each color in the additive spectrum—red, green, and blue); in addition, over the span of his career, he explored the possibilities of color film, combination printing, and backlighting and made photographs of nudes onto which he projected striking patterns of light and dark. Born in Detroit, Siegel was an active photographer even before he attended Wayne State University, graduating in 1936 and then briefly teaching photography there. In 1937, he continued his studies with Moholy-Nagy and György Kepes, another pioneer of experimental photography, at the New Bauhaus in Chicago (renamed the Institute of Design in 1944, then merged with the Illinois Institute of Technology). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Siegel contributed images to a variety of periodicals, including *Fortune*, *Life*, and the *New York Times*. He taught at the Institute of Design from 1945 to 1949 and introduced an innovative course entitled “New Visions in Photography.” The school was a bastion of cutting-edge photography at a time when many staid institutions did not consider the medium to be on a par with the arts of painting and sculpture. In 1967, after working commercially for many years, Siegel returned to the Institute under the leadership of another important abstract photographer, Aaron Siskind. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, *INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS*, 2017)

### Dimensions

Image: 14 1/16 x 17 in. (35.7 x 43.2 cm) Sheet: 14 1/16 x 17 in. (35.7 x 43.2 cm)