

Illinois University

January 24, 1963.

Mr. James R. Shipley, Head,  
Department of Art,  
The University of Illinois,  
Urbana, Illinois.

Dear Mr. Shipley:

It is a pleasure to hear of the proposal to appoint Art Sinsabaugh Associate Professor. Ever since meeting Mr. Sinsabaugh in 1960, I have been much interested in his progress and hopeful of his success.

As a photographer, his conscientiousness and respect for the medium qualify him admirably for carrying further the significant work he has begun. In the last thirty years landscape photography has become repetitious and monotonous and Art Sinsabaugh has approached it with a new viewpoint which has sound esthetic ingredients, entirely free of the anti-art affectations and frivolities of the present day avant-gard. Also, he recognizes the unique gifts of the camera and does not adulterate them with borrowings from painting. It is certain he will go far with this and produce photographs which will enliven the atrophied practice of landscape photography. What makes this even more absorbing and useful is that he has chosen the neglected landscape of Illinois as his subject. His work, produced by contact printing from unusually large negatives, is meticulous and compelling and I am awaiting an opportunity to have an exhibition of it here at The Art Institute of Chicago.

I was introduced to him by Harry Callahan and had heard much of him from Aaron Siskind. As a teacher, I feel he is gifted for obtaining the confidence of his students and thereby bringing out their best qualities. It is always reassuring to encounter some new teacher who senses the responsibility of his calling and who is both intelligent and not confused in a time when too many bring to their profession the difficulties and disorders of problems which they are trying to solve and settle within themselves.

With his many gifts, I am sure Art Sinsabaugh would be a valuable member of the staff of any institution which might be so fortunate as to have him.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography,  
Associate Curator of Prints & Drawings.

October 24, 1963.

Mr. Art Sinsabaugh,  
1409 West Healy Street,  
Champaign,  
Illinois.

Dear Art:

I enjoyed very much spending the evening with you and am unusually happy today about the beautiful print you gave me. I will try to obtain action on those purchased by the Art Institute as soon as possible for it seems a long time now that I have wanted them in our collection.

The entire experience of the show was most satisfactory and I shall not forget it nor will the public. Only one of the gratifications was that Walker Evans viewed the exhibition on his own initiative and expressed such enthusiasm for it. This is rare for him. So I wish to thank you for all you have done for us - and for photography. You were helpful and cooperative in every way and I appreciate everything you did. I feel one of the best testimonials for the excellence of your work is the continued demand of the public to see it.

Mrs. Regenstein's address is Mrs. Joseph Regenstein, 209 Last Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois, and I am sure she would appreciate hearing from you. She is very interested in what you have done and what you will do in the future.

I have just talked with Mr. Miller and he says Monday, November 18, will be the best time for the awarding of the Chicago Arts Festival prizes. He hopes you will be here the next day also as there is to be some kind of opening party, etc. Art Siegel has sent in his acceptance.

If I go to New York, it will be on Tuesday or Wednesday of next week and I shall be back on November 7th. There is so much to do here I am afraid the photography gallery may disappear if I leave. So, you see, I am in quite a state.

I'll talk with you again very soon. My best to you and to Fran and I wish she had been here in the 1920 restaurant last night.

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

November 5, 1963

Mr. Hugh Edwards  
Curator  
Department of Photography  
The Art Institute of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Hugh:

Thank you very, very much for your very wonderful letter. It was so full and overflowing I simply can never begin to comment on all of your statements.

I shall write a letter to your Patron when the deal is firm. I think this to be more proper than now and have your Board turn the gift down.

Verbal thank yous are good and pleasant but for the record I can't say how much the show of my work in your gallery has meant to me. I had expected it to be hung pleasantly but I surely wasn't prepared to see the elegant qualities which you managed to bring about by the placement of one photograph in relation to another and the ingenious spacing which created another kind of rhythm.

Letters still trickle in from interested parties and perhaps some will make the Chicago project possible someday.

I shall see you on that fateful date of November 18th at approximately 9:30 a.m. in McCormick Place.

Meanwhile I hope you are having a grand and glorious time in New York City and I shall be looking forward to hearing your attitudes and reactions to the Landscape Show.

Very sincerely,



Art Sinsabaugh

P.S. Would you be kind enough to send me a few of my show announcement cards? I have several requests on hand and no cards. Thank you again.



Art

April 8, 1964.

Mr. Art Sinsabaugh,  
1409 West Healy Street,  
Champaign,  
Illinois.

Dear Art:

Just a note to tell you how happy I am about the calendar. It makes me very proud to be one of the 500 who are to possess it and I spent a long time with it last night. Your pictures make endless revelations and I have long wanted to own a number of them. The excellence of the reproductions and the handsome format make this a calendar for all the years to come. And thank you always for my small part in the undertaking and your gratifying acknowledgement of it in the text.

David Swan has told me how busy you are, so I do not know when this will reach you. I hope to see you soon. All the best now to you and to Fran.

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards.

Sinsabaugh

January 8, 1965.

Dean H. E. Carter,  
Graduate College,  
330 Administration Building,  
University of Illinois,  
Urbana,  
Illinois.

Dear Dean Carter:

Art Sinsabaugh has informed me he wishes to apply for an associate membership in the project of the Center of Advanced Study and I am writing to tell you how pleased I am to hear this.

Art Sinsabaugh's photographic work on the Midwest landscape has proved his rare ability in developing new possibilities of the camera as well as for revealing the value of his insight and understanding in enlightening his subject so that it is elevated to a plane far above the documentary.

It is hoped he will receive every possible encouragement for his future work. His serious enthusiasm for what he undertakes arises from conscientiousness and discernment. One awaits anything he might do with confidence and anticipation and any organization concerned with furthering it may be assured of bringing itself credit and appreciation.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

Sinsabaugh

April 21, 1965.

Mr. James R. Shipley, Head,  
The Department of Art,  
College of Fine Arts, 143,  
The University of Illinois,  
Champaign, Illinois.

Dear Mr. Shipley:

It is a pleasure to make a statement in regard to Art Sinsabaugh whom I have known for several years and whose work has been of much interest to me.

When we exhibited his prints as a one-man show at the Art Institute, the public response to them was highly gratifying. They opened the eyes of many people to the exceptional character of the Midwest landscape which has always passed unnoticed because of some unquestioned and unexplained prejudice. There is no doubt as to the excellence of his pictures, his skill and patience, and his abilities for esthetic expression. None of these admirable qualities are ever carried to the point where the idea - the "wholeness" - of his work is compromised. We are happy to own five of his prints and the continued requests on the part of the public to see them are a convincing testimonial of the lasting impression they have made.

Having known Art Sinsabaugh personally in many situations which made demands on different resources of his character, I have found he can be recommended - and this has already been of value in his work with students - for positions which require relationships with others and an understanding of them. His comprehension of photography in both its history and methods would be of benefit to advanced students anywhere. And his natural enthusiasm and exuberance are useful attributes which are firmly grounded in logic and good sense.

Art Sinsabaugh in his work as a significant photographer deserves and should have every possible encouragement and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Associate Curator of Prints and  
Drawings; Curator of Photography.