



Contribution ID: 17

Type: **not specified**

The electromagnetic field photographed by Berenice Abbott

Thursday, September 10, 2020 5:25 PM (25 minutes)

In the 1960s the American photographer Berenice Abbott (1898-1991) took photos of the electromagnetic field for the Physical Science Study Committee project developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The project became a reform program in the teaching of physics that influenced the teaching of the subject all over the world, also reaching Italy thanks to Giampietro Puppi.

Abbott was famous for her black and white photos of New York City architecture documenting the change in the city according to the New Deal, while her passion for scientific photography was a key chapter in her art since 1939. In fact, she brought her vision of unity between science and photography to MIT. She invented experiments and built her tools to photograph invisible and difficult to capture phenomena. With her originality Abbott managed to express the poetry of science and its contents. In particular, she captured the essence of the movement in the form of the wave and managed to merge the undulatory and corpuscular nature of light in a single photo.

References

MIT Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Oral History Program, Oral History Interviews on the Physical Science Study Committee, MC 602, Box X.

NY Public Library, Manuscript and Archives Division, Berenice Abbott's Papers, Box 10, Folder 6, "Photography and Science", New York City, April 24, 1939.

Abbott B., Documenting Science, ed. R. Kurtz, Steidl, Göttingen 2012.

Campanile B., Fermate il tempo! La fotografia ad alta velocità, in F.P. de Ceglia, L. Dibattista (a cura di), Il bello della scienza. Intersezioni tra storia, scienza e arte, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2013, pp. 189-204.

Comitato per lo studio della scienza fisica (PSSC) (a cura di), Fisica, voll. 1 e 2, Zanichelli, Bologna 1963.

Daston L., Galison P., Objectivity, Zone Books, New York 2010.

Haafte J. (van), Berenice Abbott: A Life in Photography, W. W. Norton & Company 2018.

Primary author: CAMPANILE, Benedetta (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

Presenter: CAMPANILE, Benedetta (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

Session Classification: Didattica e divulgazione in Fisica

Track Classification: sisfa 2020