

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS LARGE ONE-MAN EXHIBITIONOF PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWARD WESTON

A great Mexican painter, Siqueiros, has written of a great photographer of the United States:

"In Weston's photographs, the texture, the physical quality of things is rendered with the utmost exactness: the rough is rough, the smooth is smooth, flesh is alive, stone is hard. The things have a definite proportion and weight and are placed in a clearly defined distance one from the other....In a word, the beauty which these photographs of Weston's possess is photographic beauty!"

A large retrospective exhibition of the work of Edward Weston opens at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, Tuesday, February 12, and will continue through March 31. Comprising 259 photographs, the exhibition includes examples from all of Weston's periods starting with a landscape made in 1903 when he was sixteen and ending with photographs taken in 1942-45 when he was engaged in civilian defense activities and confined his photography chiefly to his backyard in Carmel, California, where he made camera satires, pictures of his vast family of cats, portraits, and nudes in landscape.

For nearly four decades one-man shows of Weston's work have swept spontaneously from Berlin to Shanghai, from Mexico to Vancouver. Born of New England descent March 24, 1886, in Highland Park, Illinois, he has lived so long in California that he is often referred to as "the California photographer." Mexico also has a friendly claim on him. Its leading artists welcomed him as one of their own and in 1922 his one-man show in Mexico City was enthusiastically received; in fact, in 1930 Orozco arranged and installed Weston's first New York solo exhibition.

Weston was the first photographer to be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship--in 1937 and extended in 1938. During that two-year period he covered 35,000 miles and made 1,500 negatives--in effect, a cumulative and multifarious portrait of the American West.

Nancy Newhall, director of the exhibition, has written the foreword to the Weston catalog which the Museum will publish shortly after the exhibition opens. She writes in part:

"The evolution of Edward Weston as one of the great con-

temporary photographers presents in essence the story of the artist in the twentieth century. Since 1906 he has met the perennial problem of earning a living and at the same time continuing his creative development. Except for three free years, his personal work, astounding in its range and power, has been produced in the intervals of professional portraiture.

"Early in his career, he reached international heights of commercial and academic success, and abandoned them. Impelled by his first contact with modern art and thought, he began, after he was thirty, to discover his own direction. Through periods of growth which alarmed his friends, through waves of acclaim from photographers and painters, critics and public alike, he persevered, eliminating from his life and technique every evasion and illusion, every impeding process or device. After long conflict, he succeeded in maintaining his high personal standards in his professional work. His mature approach, basic in its simplicity and integrity and concentrated on creative vision, stands as a challenge and inspiration to younger photographers.

"On March 24, 1946, Weston will be sixty. For him, the long vista of growth focuses on today; in a recent letter he wrote, 'I am a prolific, mass-production, omnivorous seeker.' His latest work surges with new themes. All the signs point toward fresh horizons."