

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## "IN AND OUT OF FOCUS" PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A wide survey of photography today, including prints by 76 photographers from many parts of the country, the first large exhibition organized by Captain Edward J. Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, will open to the public today, April 7, in the entire first floor of the Museum of Modern Art. The photographs will remain on view until July 11.

This exhibition continues a series begun last fall with a showing of the work of three young photographers done on special theme assignments. The series, the purpose of which is to indicate directions, tendencies and phases in contemporary photography, will continue with future Museum exhibitions in special fields.

The exhibition includes many well-known names and also presents a large number of newer photographers seldom or never seen here before; it includes acclaimed and accepted photographs as well as the new and experimental. Subject matter in this comprehensive view of today's creative photography ranges from meticulous realism to complete abstraction, from electron micrographs for scientific uses to highly sensitive mental or emotional concepts. The frozen action of the strobe lights is shown contrasted with the blur or repetition of action in longer exposure, the crusading documentary photograph is here with purely objective reportage. One of the photographers exhibiting has received a Museum of Modern Art fellowship, six have received Guggenheim Fellowship awards and one a Julius Rosenwald Foundation fellowship.

Five mural size color transparencies have been made especially for this exhibition. An advance showing of some of the material for two book projects offers a new juxtaposition of texts and pictures. The installation was designed by Mr. Herbert Matter, well-known photographer.

Captain Steichen comments on the display of photography:

"Any rational evaluation of contemporary photography must be premised on an informed approach. Before we can evaluate we should know and compare all its phases and directions.

"Here for the first time, we are able to have an over-all look at a collection covering much of today's photography. These

photographers claim attention by the evidence of their skill, imagination, aspiration, understanding and sincerity.

"The breathtaking effect of the large color transparencies represents a new outpost in naturalistic representation and possibly the ultimate solution of the term 'holding the mirror up to nature.'

"At the very opposite pole, and in violent contradiction to all naturalistic photography, is the work of the abstractionists where all semblance of a representational nature has disappeared. Including and between these poles, today's creative photographers have found fruitful fields of exploration and experiment and at times remarkable and incisive achievement.

"Since assuming charge of the Museum's Department of Photography, I have felt the need of an opportunity to see and study such an exhibition as this; and I hope photographers, editors, art directors, publishers and the public may find it as informative and inspiring as I do. There is evidence here of the rich fulfilment of experience among recognized photographers, and there is heartening encouragement in the achievements, the potentialities, the experiments and the aspirations of the newer and younger exhibitors.

"There are certain phases of photography which will be considered further in future exhibitions of specialized kinds of illustrations and industrial photography as well as "The Great News Photographs" which will be the theme of the next large scale exhibition of photographs at the Museum."