

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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When the Exhibition of American Art, 1609-1938 opens May 24 in the Jeu de Paume Museum in Paris it will include a section devoted to the development of American photography. The most highly prized item in this section is a daguerreotype portrait made by the American, Charles R. Meade, in 1848, of Daguerre himself who, ninety-nine years ago in Paris, gave his invention to the world. No invention has ever been received at the outset with such wild acclaim and no nation was more enthusiastic in its adoption and the subsequent development of photography than the United States.

Assembled by the Museum of Modern Art at the request of the French Government, the Exhibition of American Art, 1609-1938 will be on view at the Jeu de Paume in Paris from May 24 until July 17. In addition to 200 oils and watercolors, 40 sculptures, and 80 prints, it includes sections on the development of American architecture, photography, and motion pictures.

The section on photography has been selected and arranged by Beaumont Newhall, Librarian of the Museum and acting curator of photography. Sixty photographs will be shown in this section. Half of these are by living photographers; the others represent work which has won international fame for this country--daguerreotypes of the 1850's, photographs of the Civil War, and Muybridge's experiments in the photography of animal locomotion made in the 1880's. Among the important daguerreotypes, in addition to the portrait of Daguerre, are portraits of Daniel Webster, Longfellow, and an intimate self-portrait of Matthew Brady with his wife and sister. Brady, less known for his brilliant portrait work than for his remarkable pictures of the Civil War, is represented by seven wet-plate photographs of the soldiers and battlefields of the Civil War. Another group of photographs that show not only the development of American photography but that reflect American history in the making are pictures by Russell of the building of the Union Pacific Railroad.

"Modern photography begins, technically, with the perfection

of instantaneous exposures; esthetically with the work of Alfred Stieglitz," writes Mr. Newhall in an article in the Museum's Bulletin. "Two of his original photogravures ('Steerage' and 'Excavating') have been extracted from Camera Work, organ of the Photo-Secession group which he founded in 1902. From the same magazine Steichen's portrait of J. P. Morgan, his remarkable early color photograph of Shaw (1908), and two photographs by Paul Strand have been chosen. The continuation of the esthetic tradition of the Photo-Secessionists may be seen in prints by Ansel Adams, Ira Martin, Charles Sheeler and Edward Weston.

"Although records have long been made by the camera, only recently has a conscious esthetic been based on the photograph's value as a sociological document. Lewis Hine studied child-labor exploitation with the camera as early as 1908; since then Berenice Abbott, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn and others represented in the exhibition have photographed America from this point of view for government agencies or for newly founded picture magazines--two forces which have fostered the remarkable popularity of photography during the past few years."