

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 35

FOR RELEASE:

JACOB ISRAEL AVEDON: PHOTOGRAPHED BY RICHARD AVEDON TO BE PRESENTED AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

An exhibition of Richard Avedon's photographic portraits of his father, Jacob Israel Avedon, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from May 1 through June 16.

Avedon photographed his father on many different occasions during the last six years up until the week of his father's death on September 1, 1973, just before his 84th birthday. This exhibition, designed by Marvin Israel, consists of eight pictures chosen from those sittings.

John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography, says, "Photographic portraiture, pursued with the high ambition that tradition suggests, is an enormously difficult art. It is most difficult when the photographer and the subject know each other well; in such cases each recognizes and nullifies the other's little tricks of style -- the stuff of our personae. In these circumstances only acceptance and trust can succeed. Richard Avedon's portraits of his father are the deeply moving record of such a success."

Avedon, in speaking of this exhibition, said recently, "At first my father agreed to let me photograph him but I think after a while he began to want me to. He started to rely on it, as I did, because it was a way we had of forcing each other to recognize what we were. I photographed him many times during the last year of his life but I didn't really look at the pictures until after he died. They seem now, out of the context of those moments, completely independent of the experience of taking them. They exist on their own. Whatever happened between us was important to us but it is not important to the pictures. What is in them is self-contained and, in some strange way, free of us both."

Richard Avedon was born in New York City in 1923. He served as a photographer

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PRESS PREVIEW: Tuesday, April 30 - 11am-4pm

in the Merchant Marine during World War II and later studied and worked with Alexey Brodovitch. He became a staff photographer for Harper's Bazaar in 1945 until 1965 when he joined Vogue. He has published two books of his photographic portraits: "Observations" with text by Truman Capote and "Nothing Personal" with text by James Baldwin. He edited Jacques Henri Lartigue's "Diary of a Century" and last year published a book of his photographs of The Manhattan Project's production of "Alice in Wonderland," with text by Doon Arbus.

In 1970, there was a retrospective exhibition of his portraits at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. This is his first exhibition in New York.

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 Photographs and additional material available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director,
 Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St.,
 New York, NY 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7501; 956-7504.

JACOB ISRAEL AVEDON: PHOTOGRAPHED BY RICHARD AVEDON

May 1 - June 16, 1974

Wall Label

Biography of Richard Avedon's Father

Jacob Israel Avedon

Father: Israel Avedon Mother: Mathilda Sater

Siblings: Dora, William, Ida, Samuel

- 1889 Born in Lomzha, Province of Grodna, Russia, October 21st
- 1890 Father emigrates to America
- 1891 Mother and family leave for America on Nord Deutscher Lloyd
Line boarding at Hamburg, Germany to join father at 413
Grand Street, New York City
- 1893 Father deserts family
- 1894 Sent to Jewish Child Care Association Orphanage, with older
brothers, William and Samuel
- 1898 Returns to family on Grand Street
Attends P.S. 192 on Ridge and Broome Streets
- 1902 Graduates as one of three students accepted at Townsend
Harris High School
- 1905 Enters College of the City of New York
- 1909 Passes State Pedagogy Examination and qualifies as teacher
- 1910 Works as substitute teacher at P.S. 17 in Hell's Kitchen
Assigned as permanent teacher at P.S. 43 in the Bronx
- 1913 Establishes Avedon's Blouse Shop at 110th Street and Broadway,
with brother Sam
- 1917 Establishes Avedon's Fifth Avenue, a woman's speciality shop,
at 39th Street and Fifth Avenue with brother Sam
- 1922 Marries Anna Polansky, January 28th
Moves to 142 West 87th Street

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- 1923 Son, Richard, born May 15th
- 1925 Daughter, Louise, born April 2nd
- 1926 Moves to Villa Place, Cedarhurst, Long Island with family
- 1930 Closes Avedon's Fifth Avenue due to bankruptcy
Sells insurance for Connecticut Mutual
- 1931 Returns with family to New York City to live at 16 East
98th Street
- 1932 Becomes buyer for the Tailored Woman, 57th Street and
Fifth Avenue
- 1934 Moves to 55 East 86th Street with family
- 1937 Establishes Avedon's Woonsocket, a woman's dress shop
Commutes weekly from home to Woonsocket, Rhode Island
- 1951 Suffers heart attack
- 1952 Separates from wife, Anna
Moves to Tamiami Circle, Sarasota, Florida
Sells mutual funds for Waddell & Reed
- 1956 Takes Florida Stock Broker Test and passes first in state
Becomes broker for Jules Bache & Company
- 1957 Divorces wife, Anna, June 7th
- 1959 Meets Eleanor Sorenson
- 1968 Daughter, Louise, dies at Rockland State Hospital, New York,
January 18th
Suffers second heart attack, November 30th
- 1969 Marries Eleanor Sorenson, March 29th
Moves to 280 Golden Gate Point, Sarasota, Florida
- 1970 Establishes real estate partnership with son, Richard, to
purchase Havana Heights property
- 1972 Enters Sarasota Memorial Hospital for operation on primary
cancer of the liver, December 16th
Operation unsuccessful
Returns home
- 1973 Dies, Sarasota Memorial Hospital, September 1st