

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
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MAJOR PUBLICATION ACCOMPANIES *ROY DeCARAVA: A RETROSPECTIVE*

The Museum of Modern Art is publishing a major catalogue to accompany the exhibition **ROY DeCARAVA: A RETROSPECTIVE**, on view at the Museum from January 25 to May 7, 1996. Comprising two essays and nearly 200 meticulously reproduced plates, it is the first book to examine the full fifty-year career of this leading American photographer. The book features essays by Peter Galassi, Chief Curator, Department of Photography, who organized the exhibition, and Sherry Turner DeCarava, an art historian, curator, and author of several essays on DeCarava's work.

ROY DeCARAVA: A RETROSPECTIVE and its accompanying publication are supported by a grant from Metropolitan Life Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Born in 1919, DeCarava was trained as a painter and printmaker. He turned to photography in the late 1940s and in 1952 won the first Guggenheim Fellowship awarded to an African-American photographer. His early photographs of life in Harlem, at once tender and unsentimental, announced a powerful new talent when they were published in 1955 in *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, with text by Langston Hughes. In 1956 DeCarava began his extraordinary series on jazz musicians -- Billie Holiday, Milt Jackson, John Coltrane, and many others -- which was shown in 1983 at The Studio Museum in Harlem as *The Sound I Saw*.

DeCarava is, above all, a photographer of people. In his pictures of couples and children, of workers and civil-rights protesters, he presents a compelling unity of private feeling and social conviction. A lifelong New

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Yorker, since 1975 the artist has taught photography at Hunter College, where he is Distinguished Professor of Art of the City University of New York.

The exceptional reproductions in *Roy DeCarava: A Retrospective* convey the subtleties of the artist's richly tonal prints, while the two essays offer new information and interpretation. In his essay, Mr. Galassi traces the evolution of DeCarava's work and career, including such neglected episodes as the pioneering photography gallery he established in the 1950s. In her essay, Ms. DeCarava offers new insight into the development of the work by reaching back to DeCarava's earliest artistic efforts, before he turned to photography.

Following its MoMA showing, **ROY DeCARAVA: A RETROSPECTIVE** travels to The Art Institute of Chicago (June 8 - September 15, 1996); the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (November 14, 1996 - January 26, 1997); the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. (February 22 - May 4, 1997); The St. Louis Art Museum (June 15 - August 9, 1997); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (September 7 - November 16, 1997); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (January 22 - April 5, 1998); the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (June 27 - September 19, 1998); and The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (October 17, 1998 - January 4, 1999).

Published by The Museum of Modern Art, *Roy DeCarava: A Retrospective* contains 280 pages with 194 reproductions in tritone, 43 in duotone. The clothbound edition (\$60.00), distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and the paperbound edition (\$29.95) are available at The MoMA Book Store.

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