

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## FOUR PHASES IN PRESENT DAY PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWN IN MUSEUM EXHIBITION

A small exhibition of work by four present-day photographers, whose experience ranges from amateur to highly professional, will be on view on the 2nd floor of the Museum from July 27 to September 25. Assembled by Edward Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, the photographs are the work of Ralph Steiner, Wayne Miller, Frederick Sommer and Tosh Matsumoto.

Ralph Steiner, who at the age of 50 is almost an "old master" in photography, is well known for his pioneer work in documentary Americana. Working in both stills and films, Mr. Steiner has been photographing since 1917 and has been associated with the making of such outstanding documentary films as The Plow that Broke the Plains and The City. He is represented in this show by a number of recent portraits striking for their characterizations.

Wayne Miller, a Chicagoan aged 31 who became outstanding as a Navy photographer during the war, is already known to Museum audiences for his series on childbirth exhibited in Work of Three Young Photographers in the fall of 1947. The series to be exhibited is a part of his work on a Guggenheim Fellowship with the thesis "The Way of the Negro in the North." These are powerful portrayals by a social-minded photographer done with a directness and simplicity that add to their forcefulness.

Tosh Matsumoto is a Nisei who lived in California until the war forced him into a War Relocation Camp in Colorado. Permitted to use a camera, he worked with it seriously at the Camp. He came east 5 years ago after his release and now, at the age of 29, he supports himself and his wife at laboratory work in a fashion photography studio. In his spare time he uses his Leica as an amateur to record his sensitive and delicate impressions of many small, seemingly trivial things in everyday life that many people never even notice. The series to be shown records some phases of the hard life of a newspaper in the city. Matsumoto made his debut as an exhibitor in last year's large exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, In and Out of Focus.

Frederick Sommer, in his early 40s, lives and works in Arizona as both painter and photographer. Last year he exhibited work in both media on 57th Street. His work shows a calm, dispassionate approach

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that might be expected only from a man on another planet using some kind of super micro-telescope - for his work seems to show more detail than the eye can see. His emphasis of the minute with an almost unbelievable precision leads him away from photography of scenery in the usual sense. Views of miles of the non-pictorial desert land might almost be thought to be close-ups of one square foot of pebbles on a beach.

Mr. Steichen, commenting on the work of these four photographers, says:

"Differences in concept and approach to photographic realism are vividly demonstrated in the work of these four photographers.

"In Sommer's work the acid bite of the modern lens is carried to the ultimate in purely objective precision. The swift, free technique of the 35 mm camera used by Matsumoto reflects an imaginative precision of seeing and thinking. Wayne Miller's probing analysis of a disturbing social equation stands recorded. A plastic approach by Ralph Steiner gives a new emphasis to portrait photography."