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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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Four hundred photographs by 280 photographers taken in 68 countries have been selected for the Family of Man exhibition which will open at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, on January 26, 1955. The photographs in THE FAMILY OF MAN show, considered the most ambitious photography exhibition ever assembled, were selected by Edward Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, from several million unpublished and published pictures from this country and abroad. The exhibition will remain on view through May 8.

Preparations for the exhibition, which is one of the Museum's major 25th Anniversary Year shows, have been underway for two years. Wayne Miller is assisting Mr. Steichen in the project which has involved months of searching for photographs in picture collection, libraries, photography publications, picture agencies and in the files of picture publishers. Mr. Steichen toured Europe in search of photographs in 1952 and last year issued a world-wide appeal for material to which thousands of photographers responded.

Ten thousand photographs by over 900 photographers were selected from the millions in all these sources and held for further consideration and study. From this group the final selection was made, and we have notified the photographers whose work has been chosen for inclusion in the FAMILY OF MAN exhibition and have asked them to lend the Museum their negatives from which enlargements, some of mural size, will be made.

Commenting on the final selection, Mr. Steichen said:

"Whereas most previous photography exhibitions at the Museum presented the outstanding work of individuals, schools and periods of photography and were stressed as such, the Family of Man is a radical departure insofar as it stresses the art of photography in recording the world we live in rather than the art of a particular photographer. From the outset we wanted to give the theme the broadest possible scope. Therefore, our first selection of 10,000 prints included many variations such as man's habitat, his community, sports, even a splendid series on chairs.

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However, when it became apparent that the most important material we had collected or received was directly related to and a part of human relationships, most of these series had to be abandoned or reduced to the minimum.

"The Exhibition then began to form itself along the lines stated in the Museum's original announcement:

"The Family of Man Exhibition would consist of photographs made in all parts of the world of the gamut of life from birth to death with particular emphasis on everyday relationships, man to himself, to his community and to the world we live in.'

"The physical limitations of the Exhibition dictated a maximum of about 400 prints. The slow process of elimination became progressively more and more difficult and many of the prints eliminated were certainly the equal of comparable material that was selected.

"The factors in favor of the prints chosen are hard to describe, and often the decision to eliminate some of these was a heartbreaking one. In some sections or themes of the Family of Man exhibition we had many many photographs to choose from and in others we had relatively few.

"I sincerely hope that photographers whose work is not included in this exhibition will realize that this in no way reflects on the quality and importance of their photographs.

"I am deeply grateful to the many photographers and photographic groups and societies who have acted as collecting points for material, as well as to the individual photographers, editors, writers, social scientists, anthropologists, educators, parents and friends who have given us counsel and inspiration."