

The Museum of Modern Art

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209
NO. 70
FOR RELEASE;
JULY 7, 1971

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EXHIBITS THE WORK OF MANUEL ALVAREZ BRAVO

The work of Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Mexico's greatest twentieth-century photographer, will be exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art July 7 - August 25, 1971. The exhibition was organized and selected by Fred Parker, Curator of Photography at the Pasadena Art Museum where the exhibition first opened in May.

Mr. Parker stated in his introduction to the catalogue, "The unique importance of Manuel Alvarez Bravo's work was recognized in the late Twenties soon after he began his photographic career, by his artistic peers, Tina Modotti, Diego Rivera and Edward Weston. His remoteness from the established art centers of the world and his personal humility, however, have prevented the recognition his work deserves..."

The work of Alvarez Bravo was first shown at The Museum of Modern Art in 1940 in the exhibition Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art, and has been included in several subsequent exhibitions, most notably in 1956 in the four-man exhibition Diogenes with a Camera III with August Sander, Walker Evans and Paul Strand. His work has been represented in the Museum collection since 1942. The present exhibition represents his first major retrospective in the United States.

Alvarez Bravo has for forty years been concerned with photographing Mexico: its people, and their relationship to their land and to their heritage. Closely associated with the Mexican muralists, Alvarez Bravo shares their sense of humanity while expressing it through his own very personal poetic vision.

He purchased his first camera in 1924 and gave up his job with the Mexican government in 1930 to devote himself to photography. The next ten years were his most prolific. Almost half of the exhibition of 60 prints is drawn from these years, although the work continues up to 1970.

Alvarez Bravo says of his work, "Photography has been for me not only the manner of

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expressing my own concepts but also the vehicle which has served me essentially to understand the phenomena which surround me and their ultimate meaning." This ultimate meaning is intrinsically linked to the Mexican culture. As Mr. Parker of the Pasadena Art Museum states in the exhibition catalogue, "Alvarez Bravo's photography is in fact a culmination and distillation of the antecedents of his entire Mexican heritage, the mythology of his culture.

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