

The Museum of Modern Art

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

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT ADAMS AND EMMET GOWIN AT
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT ADAMS AND EMMET GOWIN will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from December 15 through February 29. The exhibition of 60 photographs is the work of two photographers not previously exhibited in New York. Each photographer is represented in the Museum Collections.

Peter C. Bunnell, Curator of Photography and director of the exhibition says that in exhibiting the work of these two photographers he is "pointing out the dissimilar motivations behind each while at the same time calling attention to the similarity of respect the photographers maintain for the single photographic tradition out of which these pictures come.

"Emmet Gowin in his photographs of familial situations gives us an intensely subjective vision of his own private world. Robert Adams, on the other hand, remains intellectually distant and objective in order that the viewer is given the opportunity to confront a kind of pure data. Each photographer, however, is deeply concerned with picture making and with the near mystery of the straightforward photographic technique through which their sensibilities and narratives are conveyed and given form."

The photographs exhibited by Robert Adams are part of a larger series begun about three years ago entitled "The New West." The work includes photographs of the landscape, urban-scape, and suburban environment in and around Colorado Springs and Denver, Colorado. Mr. Adams has observed that "whatever power there is in the suburban pictures seems to be bound to the closeness with which they skirt the ordinary. For a shot to be suggestive of more than what it shows, it has to come perilously near being bad, just a view of stuff."

Robert Adams was born in Orange, New Jersey in 1937. Educated in California, he received his Ph.D. degree in English from the University of Southern California. From the years 1962 until 1970 he was on the faculty of Colorado College in Colorado Springs. He

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is at present a free-lance photographer and writer. In 1970 he published the volume White Churches of the Plains.

Emmet Gowin's photographs are sensitive portraits of his family and friends, taken mostly at the family home in Danville, Virginia. The body of work represents examples of his major interests in photographing since 1965. Writing about his photographs, Emmet Gowin has said, "Before 1965 I had been involved with taking pictures of the momentary -- what Cartier-Bresson called 'the decisive moment.' After taking pictures this way for almost four years, taking pictures with a static camera of people who knew that they were being photographed, was for me an important change. ...Sometimes my photographs resemble home snapshots (which is one of the richest resources of strong images I know of). Many of the people in my pictures are my family or my wife's family or their friends and I make many pictures of my wife. But I always want to make a picture that is more than a family record. ... I address them to everyone, but they belong to me."

Emmet Gowin was born in Danville, Virginia in 1941. He received his B.F.A. degree from the Richmond Professional Institute in 1965 and his M.F.A. degree in 1967 from the Rhode Island School of Design, where he studied with Harry Callahan. He is presently teaching photography at Bucks County Community College in Pennsylvania.

Further information available from Diana Goldin, Coordinator for Press Services and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7297, -7501
