

The Museum of Modern Art

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JOHN SZARKOWSKI, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

John Szarkowski has been Director of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art since 1962, during which time the department has done more than 65 exhibitions at the Museum and many traveling shows. He has also been responsible for the continued development of the Museum's collection of more than 15,000 photographic prints dating from about 1840 to the present. The author of many publications, his highly acclaimed "Looking at Photographs: 100 Pictures from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art" was published by the Museum in 1973.

Among the major surveys directed by Mr. Szarkowski have been The Photographer and the American Landscape (1963), From the Picture Press (1973), and New Japanese Photography (1974). Others offered work by individual photographers: Dorothea Lange (1966), Cartier-Bresson (1968), Brassai (1968), Walker Evans (1971), and Diane Arbus (1972). Some have been concerned with characteristics belonging exclusively to the photographic medium such as The Photographer's Eye (1964), in which prints were selected to epitomize the visual and pictorial concepts peculiar to photography, and Once Invisible (1967), photographs revealing images that exist in the world but which cannot be seen by the human eye without the aid of photography. Many of these have circulated throughout the United States and abroad.

A continuing series of smaller exhibitions is presented in the Edward Steichen Photography Center, which opened at the Museum in 1964. These have included work by Aaron Siskind, Marie Cosindas, Jerry N. Uelsmann, Garry Winogrand, Ray Metzker, Berenice Abbott and Henry Wessel, Jr.

In addition, a rotating selection of about 200 photographs from the photography collection is always on view in the Steichen Center. The remainder of the collection, except for those prints in traveling exhibitions or on loan to other institutions, is available for study by appointment.

(more)

Reviewing Mr. Szarkowski's most recent publication "Looking at Photographs" in The New York Times, Hilton Kramer said that Mr. Szarkowski is "one of our best writers in the field -- a first-class critic, whose prose is as discerning as his eye I know of no better account of the meaning of artistic tradition 'Looking at Photographs' promises to become a classic in its field." Other books by John Szarkowski include "The Photographer's Eye" (1965), in which he investigates through text and pictures photographic style and tradition; "The Photographs of Jacques Henri Lartigue" (1963); "The Photographer and the American Landscape" (1963); "André Kertész: Photographer" (1964); and "Walker Evans" (1971). He wrote the introductory essay for "E. J. Bellocq: Storyville Portraits," photographs printed by Lee Friedlander from the original negatives, and for "The Animals" by Garry Winogrand. He also has contributed articles to many periodicals.

Mr. Szarkowski has taught the history of photography to graduate students of New York University's Institute of Film and Television and has lectured widely. He formerly taught at the University of Buffalo and the University of Minnesota. He also served as associate editor of the Walker Art Center's Quarterly.

Before joining the Museum staff, Mr. Szarkowski received two Guggenheim fellowships for his own photography. With the aid of the first he produced The Idea of Louis Sullivan (1956), published by the University of Minnesota Press; the second, in 1961, allowed him to photograph the Quetico wilderness area of western Ontario. He also wrote and photographed The Face of Minnesota (1958), which was financed by a grant from the University of Minnesota Press.

John Szarkowski was born in Ashland, Wisconsin, in 1925 and graduated with a B. S. from the University of Wisconsin in 1948. He is married to the former Jill Anson and lives in New York City.

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