

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

No. 43

FOR RELEASE:

May 19, 1961

or thereafter

STEICHEN THE PHOTOGRAPHER. Foreword by René d'Harnoncourt. Texts by Carl Sandburg, Alexander Liberman, Edward Steichen. Biographical outline by Grace M. Mayer. 80 pages; 55 plates. Paper. \$2.50. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed by Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Sixty-five years of photography by Edward Steichen are surveyed in Steichen the Photographer, an 80-page paperback published by the Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with its current exhibition of the artist's life work. Carl Sandburg, Alexander Liberman and René d'Harnoncourt discuss Steichen's contribution to the art of photography, also shown in 55 reproductions of the work which has made him world-famous. The book is available at the Museum for \$2.50; \$2.75 by mail.

Steichen, now 82, has been honored here and abroad as dean of photographers. With Alfred Stieglitz, he founded the famous Photo-Secession movement and pioneered in introducing to the United States such modern artists as Matisse and Cézanne. As Chief Photographer for Condé Nast publications he made an important contribution to the use of photography for advertising and became America's pre-eminent portraitist. He served as aerial photography specialist in World War I, and in World War II commanded Naval combat photography in the Pacific. As Director of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art since 1947, he has prepared 65 exhibitions including the "Family of Man" which has been seen by millions around the world.

The unique quality of Steichen's photographs is described by Alexander Liberman, Art Director of Condé Nast, in his essay "Steichen's Eye":

A Steichen photograph is first a study of light; the secret power of his work is in his instinctive knowledge of the exact moment when illumination fully reveals the subject....In a Steichen photograph one should look for the elusive but always present feeling of sacredness expressed through the humility of the artist and the vital simplicity of statement.

The fifty-five photographs reproduced include such famous early works as the 1903 portrait of J. P. Morgan, the Flat Iron Building (1905) and one of the series of pictures of Rodin's Balzac (1908); memorable portraits of Greta Garbo, Maurice Chevalier, Gloria Swanson and others taken for "Vogue" and "Vanity Fair" in the 20s and 30s; a life mask of Abraham Lincoln which Steichen considers his most profound photograph, and a well-known multiple portrait of his brother-in-law, the poet Carl Sandburg. Sandburg says:

A scientist and a speculative philosopher stands back of Steichen's best pictures. They will not yield their meaning and essence on the first look nor the thousandth--which is the test of masterpieces.

The book also includes a statement on photography by Steichen and an extensive biographical outline prepared by Grace M. Mayer, Special Assistant to Steichen. This chronology provides a record of his awards and exhibitions and includes excerpts from reviews of his work.

Photographs and review copies are available from Nancy Reed, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N.Y. CI 5-8900.