

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

May 1964

GRACE MAYER, CURATOR

DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Miss Grace Mayer's introduction to her museum career came as a volunteer at the Museum of the City of New York. She became a \$1-a-year "employee" and, liking the work, became a full staff member. As Curator of Prints at that museum, a position she held from 1931 to 1959, she organized about 150 exhibitions. Before entering the field of museum work, Miss Mayer had been the Executive Secretary to Dr. Leo Kessel at Mount Sinai Hospital where she had organized the follow-up clinic for Graves Syndrome patients.

In 1958, Miss Mayer met Edward Steichen while jurying a photography contest. At his request, she assisted him in The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition, 70 Photographers Look at New York. The following year, Miss Mayer became Special Assistant to Mr. Steichen, who was then Director of the Department of Photography of the Museum. In 1961 she became an Associate Curator and, in 1962, Curator of the Department. During this period Miss Mayer has assisted in the organizing of the exhibitions: The Sense of Abstraction in Contemporary Photography (1960), Steichen the Photographer (1961), the photography sections of Recent Acquisitions (1961) and A Bid For Space (4 installations, 1960-1963), Diogenes with a Camera V (1961), Photographs by Harry Callahan and Robert Frank (1962), Walker Evans: American Photographs (1962) and Ernst Haas: Color Photography (1962). She has organized and directed the current large exhibition of works in the Edward Steichen Photography Center, the first large exhibition of holdings in the Museum's Photography Collection.

Besides articles in the Bulletin of the Museum of the City of New York and articles in Antiques, Contemporary Photographer, Aperture and Audience, Miss Mayer, a native of New York, has written a book entitled Once upon a City: New York from

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1890 to 1910, with photographs by Byron and a foreword by Edward Steichen (The Macmillan Company, 1958). She is also responsible for the biographical outline in Steichen the Photographer, a selection of photographs by Mr. Steichen (1961), and the introduction to The Bitter Years: 1935-1941 (1962), both published by The Museum of Modern Art.

She has been a member of the Advisory Council of the Village Art Center and is a director of the Print Council of America.