

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 245-3200 Cable: Modernart

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PRESS PREVIEW:  
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About forty works by the young photographer William Gedney, intimate portrayals of the people of eastern Kentucky and of the San Francisco "hippie" scene, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from December 17 through March 10, 1969.

Gedney, who spent many months living among his subjects, has not created polemical or propoganda pictures; rather, with grace and clarity, he depicts the personal and universal aspects of two groups that society considers outside its value system: the San Francisco radicals who have dropped out by choice, and the mountain people who have been dropped out by the choice of history. "Gedney's pictures make it clear that the individuals are more complex and more interesting than the clichés," says John Szarkowski, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, who selected the show. "These are not photographs of hillbillies and hippies, but of people living precariously under difficulty. The pictures reward us with real knowledge of the lives of specific people."

The photographer's technique, whether in portraits or in renderings of groups of people leading their normal lives, is simple, direct, and unobtrusive. "Gedney, being a good witness, does not attempt to direct our verdict concerning the quality of these lives. He does allow us to see that they are in many ways much like our own."

William Gedney was born in Albany, New York, in 1932 and turned to photography seriously after 1959, having studied at Pratt Institute and worked in painting and graphic design. These extended photographic studies of two communities were made in 1964 and 1966. Mr. Gedney received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1966 and is co-author (with Eric Saltzman) of Modern American Composers, which will be published by Crowell Collier and Macmillan, Inc., in September. He lives in Brooklyn.

Eastern Kentucky and San Francisco: Photographs by William Gedney will be on view in the Edward Steichen Photography Center.

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Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, and Patricia D. Bauman, Coordinator, Press Services, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200

Eastern Kentucky and San Francisco:

Photographs by William Gedney

Edward Steichen Photography Center

December 17, 1968 - March 10, 1969

CHECKLIST

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS UNTITLED

1. Eastern Kentucky (girl), 68.1698
2. Eastern Kentucky (father and boy), 68.1707
3. Eastern Kentucky (pumping a tire), 68.1703
4. Eastern Kentucky (3 in the kitchen), 68.1710
5. Eastern Kentucky (washing hair), 68.1709
6. Eastern Kentucky (the platform), 68.1962
7. Eastern Kentucky (6 pairs of jeans), 68.1687
8. Eastern Kentucky (porch chat), 68.1689
9. Eastern Kentucky (cutting string beans), 68.1690
10. Eastern Kentucky (rolling a cigarette), 68.1702
11. Eastern Kentucky (3 on the porch), 68.1711
12. Eastern Kentucky (smoking), 68.1705
13. Eastern Kentucky (piggyback), 68.1701
14. Eastern Kentucky (leaning over the car), 68.1695
15. Eastern Kentucky (3 in the car), 68.1695
16. Eastern Kentucky (cleaning gun), 68.1691
17. Eastern Kentucky (on the porch), 68.1693
18. Eastern Kentucky (abandoned car), 68.1694
19. Eastern Kentucky (boy), 68.1704
20. Eastern Kentucky (boy), 68.1699
21. Eastern Kentucky (a drink), 68.1700
22. Eastern Kentucky (sleep), 68.1706
23. San Francisco (staircase of boys), 68.1668
24. San Francisco (father and son), 68.1666
25. San Francisco (3 resting), 68.1676
26. San Francisco (couple and purse), 68.1685
27. San Francisco (couple), 68.1664
28. San Francisco (Harlow and sign hanger), 68. 1673
29. San Francisco (2 boys in room, 1 reading), 68.1665
30. San Francisco (couple, girl awake), 68.1678

31. San Francisco (bug and hand), 68.1672
32. San Francisco (2 boys in crash pad), 68.1663
33. San Francisco (cat and sleeper), 68.1674
34. San Francisco (harmonica player), 68.1667
35. San Francisco (2 awake, 1 in sleeping bag), 68.1675
36. San Francisco (desk sleeper), 68.1671
37. San Francisco (5 on the beach), 68.1682
38. San Francisco (thinking), 68.1681
39. San Francisco (2 fellows), 68.1679
40. San Francisco (moving), 68.1683
41. San Francisco (couple), 68.1686
42. San Francisco (sitting), 68.1684
43. San Francisco (Prisoner of War), 68.1670

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## WILLIAM GEDNEY PHOTOGRAPHS OF SAN FRANCISCO AND EASTERN KENTUCKY

December 17, 1968 - March 10, 1969

### Wall Label

In 1964 and in 1966 William Gedney made extended photographic studies of two groups of Americans who live outside the value structure that most of their countrymen consider normal. The first of these groups was a community in the mountains of eastern Kentucky--a remnant of earlier agricultural and industrial systems. The second was a gaggle of young radicals in San Francisco, dedicated to challenging the traditional western virtues of ambition and success. The latter group had dropped out by choice. The former had been dropped out by the choice of history.

Both groups have been made pawns in the game of debating the state of the American experiment. Sunday supplements and scholarly journals have agreed that the people of both groups are important as symbols or as symptoms--that they are on one hand merely victims, and on the other merely protestors.

Gedney's pictures make it clear that the individuals involved are more complex and more interesting than the clichés. These are not photographs of hillbillies and hippies, but of people living precariously under difficulty. Rather than reminding us once more of the conventional assumptions we have been conditioned to accept, these pictures reward us with real knowledge of the lives of specific people.

Gedney, being a good witness, does not attempt to direct our verdict concerning the quality of these lives. He does allow us to see that they are in many ways much like our own.

John Szarkowski

William Gedney was born in Albany, New York, in 1932. He received his BFA from Pratt Institute in 1955 and worked as a painter and graphic designer until about 1959, when he turned seriously to photography. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship for photography in 1966. He is co-author (with Eric Saltzman) of Modern American Composers which will be published by Crowell Collier and Macmillan, Inc., in September. Mr. Gedney lives in Brooklyn.