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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

October 27, 1943.

TO City Editors
Art Editors
Photography Editors

Dear Sirs:

You are invited to come or send a representative to the preview
of our new

PHOTOGRAPHY CENTER

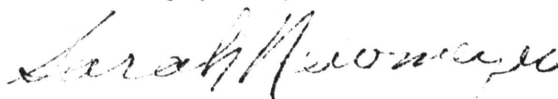
in the Museum of Modern Art Annex
9 West 54 Street

Wednesday, November 3
4 to 6 P.M.

In addition to the opening of the Center, an exhibition of
photographic portraits will be on view, and in the Museum
itself new photography acquisitions will be shown. The public
will be admitted beginning Thursday, November 4.

Glossy prints of the Center and of photographs on exhibition
will be available November 3. For further information please
telephone me at Circle 5-8900.

Sincerely yours,



Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

P.S. Enclosed in the envelope with this letter is an
invitation to attend the members' preview of the
Photography Center, from 5 to 7 P.M. on November 3, the
day of the press opening. Lunch will be served.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N.Y. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS PHOTOGRAPHY CENTER

ON WEST 54TH STREET

The Museum of Modern Art opens to the public ~~today~~ (Thursday, November 4, 1943) its new Photography Center at 9 West 54 Street. At the inauguration of the Center yesterday afternoon, when a preview-reception was held for members and friends, John E. Abbott, Executive Vice-President of the Museum, announced the appointment of Willard D. Morgan as Director of the Department of Photography and of the Center.

Mr. Abbott stated the purpose of the Center, in part, as follows:

"Contemporary photography is the casual pleasure of millions, the career of thousands. It is to be the Photography Center's function to help and encourage both amateur and professional photographers. To reach maximum effectiveness and expansion, the Center will need the support of the photographic industry and of photography's vast and devoted following. Given such support, the Center can become what its name implies; a focal point for activity in all promising directions open to photography--the most democratic and widely practised of the arts."

The Center occupies the first and second floors of 9 West 54 Street and the second floor of 11 West 54 Street. The second floors of the two houses have been joined by cutting an archway through the party wall. The third floor of 9 West 54 Street is occupied by the offices of the Magazine of Art and the remainder of the two houses is devoted to Museum storage purposes.

The first floor of the Center includes entrance galleries and a large office at the rear. The second floor contains, in addition to the offices of Mr. Morgan and Mrs. Nancy Newhall, Acting Curator, a large print room and library which will be used as the main exhibition gallery of the Center. On this floor also are the dark room, the mounting room, and storage rooms for the Collection.

The two houses were built by McKim, Mead and White in 1897 for Mr. and Mrs. James J. Goodwin and their eldest son. The site was the garden of the old building of St. Luke's Hospital, torn down in 1896. The Museum has leased the property from Philip L. Goodwin, a Trustee of the Museum and architect (with Edward L. Stone) of its building, and his two brothers, Walter L. and James L. Goodwin of Hartford.

The Department of Photography was founded in 1940 to study and

encourage creative photography. In the three years of its existence it has concentrated on building up its collection and preparing exhibitions. The establishment now of the Museum of Modern Art Photography Center is a further step toward the realization of the Department's twofold purpose: to help the individual photographer develop his original expression; and to help the vast audience which daily uses photography in a hundred forms to understand it as a medium and to participate in its creative possibilities.

The Department has acquired more than two thousand original photographs by nearly two hundred photographers. The collection is chiefly American and twentieth-century, although it includes outstanding examples of the work of other countries and earlier periods. Many of the prints were made especially for the collection. In the newly opened Print Room in the Photography Center, these photographs may be seen Monday through Friday from 1:00 to 6 P.M. and on Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

On the third floor of the main Museum building on West 53 Street, where a rotating exhibition from the Museum's Collection of Painting and Sculpture is always on view, a Photography Room has been installed. Here a small and frequently changing selection from the Museum's Photography Collection may be seen and studied in relation to directions and achievements in other media. The Photography Collection is also available to those who live at a distance, through circulating exhibitions. Any organization or institution whose request is approved may arrange for a special loan exhibition.

Large and small exhibitions presenting important trends in creative photography are a major function of the Department. The field they cover is roughly divided into four groups: historical, contemporary, educational, and one-man or group shows. In the Photography Center itself, informal exhibitions of particular interest to photographers will be held from time to time. New work by known or unknown photographers, technical developments, discoveries of early work or new fields of photographic endeavor, material of a challenging or enlightening quality are among the subjects contemplated.

To photographers, students, critics, collectors, teachers, and historians, the Photography Center offers its resources of information. Its growing archives include biographical and technical material gathered from photographers themselves; wide contemporary and historical information in the manuals, albums, periodicals, exhibition catalogs, and specialized publications in the library; the illustrated card

catalog of the Museum's collection of photographs and similar catalogs of other important collections; and lantern slides, either for individual selection or in lecture sets accompanied by text.

The Photography Center is intended to serve as a forum for photographers and all those interested in photography. The problems of photographers, creative, technical, research, and so forth, will be explored. Outstanding photographers will be asked to relate their experiences, express their opinions, and offer suggestions and criticisms. Creative workers in related fields, such as painters, writers, designers, sociologists, and educators, will be invited to enter into discussions on the nature and use of photography. Small meetings will be held in the Center, large gatherings in the Museum auditorium. Admission to both will be free to members of the Museum.

With the opening of the Center, the Museum presents a Portrait Exhibition of Photographs in the Center galleries, and an exhibition of new photographic acquisitions hung on the third floor of the Museum. Among the new acquisitions are photographs by Stieglitz, Strand, and Ansel Adams. Among photographers represented in the Portrait show are Berenice Abbott, Eugene Atget, Matthew B. Brady, D. O. Hill, Lisette Model, Man Ray, Charles Sheeler, Edward Steichen, and Edward Weston.

Willard D. Morgan, the newly appointed Director of the Department of Photography, has had a varied and highly successful career. He is an experienced professional photographer specializing at various times in travel photography, minicamera work and the photography of architecture and painting. In 1935 he co-edited the Leica Manual, and, three years later, Miniature Camera Work. Synchroflash Photography followed in 1939 and in 1940 he published Graphic Graflex Photography. Equally important as preparation for his Museum position were his two years as Contributions Editor of Life Magazine. Reviewing each week thousands of unsolicited photographs from all over the country he gained a thorough knowledge of American photography in its broadest and most democratic scope. In 1938 he selected and installed the First International Photographic Exhibition, the largest show of its kind ever held in this country. During the last three years he has been editor of a four-thousand page encyclopedia, The Complete Photographer. Although his activities have been chiefly in the technical, journalistic and popular fields, he has a lively regard for the history and study of photography as a fine art.