

Bruce Davidson

Author

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BRUCE DAVIDSON



An exhibition circulated by The Museum of Modern Art, New York

INTRODUCTION

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At its simplest and purest, photography is observation. Good photography has demonstrated that observation can be a creative act. Few contemporary photographers give us their observation so unembellished—so free of apparent craft or artifice—as Bruce Davidson does. In his work formal and technical concerns remain below the surface, all but invisible. The presence that fills these pictures seems the presence of the life that is described, scarcely changed by its transmutation into art.

Working fundamentally in the reportage tradition, Davidson has been one of those who have redirected that tradition away from a concern for dramatic narrative and toward a heightened awareness of photography's ability to evoke the indefinable sense of place, character, and relationship. His earlier work, as seen here in the English essay (1960), is spontaneous and intuitive; it delights in the fugitive and the evanescent. In comparison, the recent work is reflective and deliberate; the pictures are both more static and more insistent. In this more contemplative way of working, the picture becomes in a sense a collaborative venture between the photographer and the subject. A similarly unhurried reciprocity is necessary between the print and the viewer—these are pictures to be considered with attention.

J. S.

Bruce Davidson was born in 1933 in Oak Park, Illinois, and became committed to photography during childhood. After undergraduate study at the Rochester Institute of Technology (notably with Ralph Hattersley), he studied graphic arts and philosophy at Yale University. Since 1959 he has been a member of Magnum Photos, Inc. In 1962 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in photography. His work has been widely exhibited, and was the subject of a one-man exhibition at The Art Institute of Chicago in 1965.



South Wales. 1965

Cover: Spain. 1965

CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

Great Britain

- 1 *Along Brighton Beach*. 1960*
- 2 *Brighton Beach*. 1960*
- 3 *Brighton Beach*. 1960
- 4 *Brighton Beach*. 1960*
- 5 *Gamekeeper, Pitlochry, Scotland*. 1960*
- 6 *Hastings*. 1960
- 7 *Library in London*. 1960
- 8 *London*. 1960*
- 9 *London*. 1960*
- 10 *London*. 1960
- 11 *Moors, Cambeltown, Argyll, Scotland*. 1960
- 12 *Near Inverary Castle, Argyll, Scotland*. 1960
- 13 *Outside London Coffee Shop*. 1960*
- 14 *Pub in Scotland*. 1960
- 15 *Trafalgar Square*. 1960*
- 16 *Whitby, Yorkshire*. 1960*
- 17 *Women's Bowls, Hastings*. 1960*
- 18 *Blackpool*. 1965
- 19 *Tower in Blackpool*. 1965
- 20 *Wax Museum, Blackpool*. 1965

The Negro American

- 21 *Harlem*. 1962
- 22 *Park in Tennessee*. 1962
- 23 *South Carolina*. 1962*
- 24 *Central Park at 105th Street*. 1963
- 25 *15 West 47th Street, New York*. 1963*
- 26 *47th Street, New York*. 1963*
- 27 *New York*. 1963*

Wales

- 28 *Denise, South Wales*. 1965
- 29 *Father and Son, South Wales*. 1965*
- 30 *South Wales*. 1965*
- 31 *South Wales*. 1965
- 32 *South Wales*. 1965
- 33 *Wild Pony, South Wales*. 1965

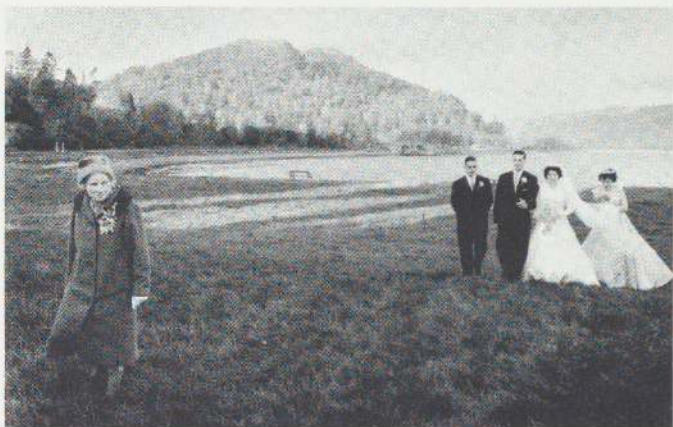
Other Places

- 34 *Sicily*. 1961*
- 35 *Near the Beach*. 1964*
- 36 *San Diego Freeway*. 1964
- 37 *Tract Development near Los Angeles*. 1964
- 38 *Secaucus, New Jersey*. 1965*
- 39 *Spain*. 1965*
- 40 *Hackensack, New Jersey*. 1966

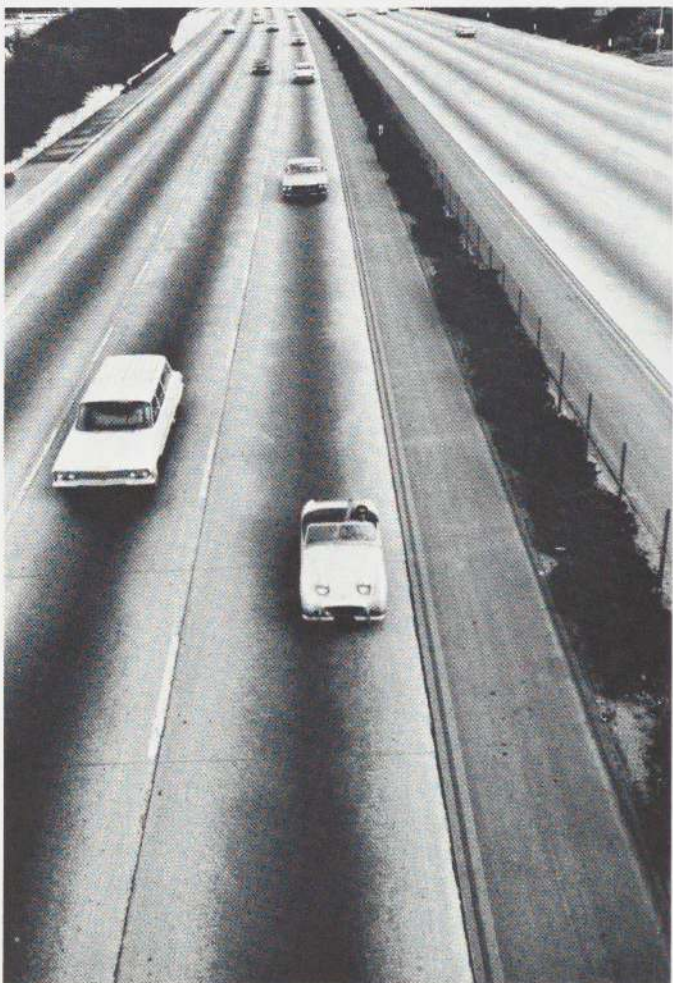
*Collection, The Museum of Modern Art

All other works are lent by the photographer.

All prints in the exhibition were made by Joseph Portogallo. The photographs of Blackpool and Wales are exhibited with the permission of *Holiday* magazine.



Near Inverary Castle, Argyll, Scotland. 1960



San Diego Freeway. 1964

The exhibition was selected by John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.
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