

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MEMORABLE PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS TO BE SHOWN AT MUSEUM

A series of panels composed of 187 photographs by 63 photographers have been selected for exhibition by Edward Steichen, Director of the Department of Photography, from tens of thousands that have appeared in Life magazine. They will be on view in the Auditorium Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from November 21 through December 11, after which they will travel to other museums in the United States.

The photographs, which are shown on the occasion of Life's 15th anniversary, represent a wide range of subjects, commented upon by Mr. Steichen. "Photographers working in the field of journalism have collectively made a major contribution to the art of photography. Photographic journalism...now regularly reaches audiences all over the world on a scale unheard of a decade or two ago. It is becoming a new force in the molding of public opinion, and in explaining man to man."

An important section is devoted to portraiture in all its many aspects. "Photo-journalism has moved us far away from yesterday's stereotyped portraiture. Portrait photography has become a vehicle in the communication of ideas. The kaleidoscope of faces and gestures we see today reflects and interprets a period, as well as the individual in relation to his period."

Selected by Mr. Steichen as "two of the finest examples of modern portraiture" are those by Alfred Eisenstaedt of Professor Norbert Wiener, M.I.T., and Professor Oswald Veblen, The Institute for Advanced Study. "Two mathematicians are objectively described and their personalities assessed." These photographs "are composed with an acute sense of spatial design." In Leonard McCombe's Pennsylvania politicians, 1950, "the faces and attitudes of these five politicians give their own report to the community."

Also shown are "faces and heads that are easy to look at" such as Bernard Hoffman's portraits of Carl Sandburg and of Harold Stassen's parents. Portraits that manifest special insight include

Eisenstaedt's King Gustaf of Sweden, "the simple dignity of a democratic king"; Margaret Bourke-White's Mayor Hague; "the arrogant power of a mayor"; W. Eugene Smith's Clement Attlee, "the bewilderment of a politician"; Arnold Newman's Dr. Vannevar Bush, "the serenity of a distinguished scientist." A section on names in the news includes photographs of LaGuardia, Bradley, MacArthur and Syngman Rhee, by William ShROUT, Robert Capa, Peter Stackpole and Howard Sochurek; portraits of Vice-President Barkley and of Walter Gieseeking by Lisa Larsen; and a series on Roosevelt by Thomas D. McAvoy - "this lively demonstration of the kinetic technique in candid portraiture puts us across the table from F.D.R."

Telling and sometimes moving observation is made in some photographs of which Mr. Steichen says "the journalist-photographer can comment as well as report on social and personal problems. His intellectual and emotional reactions may even take his personal comment to the point of becoming a crusade." Examples are McAvoy's Marian Anderson at Lincoln Memorial, Gordon Parks' Trapped Harlem Gang Leader, W. Eugene Smith's Spanish village scenes.

Varying techniques and approaches are illustrated in photographs that show the vigor of diagonals; landscapes from the sky that open "new horizons in our concept of the earth"; dramatic subjects dealing with sound and light that are "rendered and expressed in exciting pictorial organizations."

Among war photographs are a number shown recently in the Museum's "Faces of Korea" photography show, especially those by David Douglas Duncan and Carl Mydans: "desolation, death and destruction contrasted with the rescue of a tiny baby"; and Mydans' famous Korean woman "the timeless image of a young mother nursing her baby as again she flees before advancing armies. The final picture: a prayer of faith in the brotherhood of man."

The Museum's Photography Department will exhibit journalist photography from France in its forthcoming show Five French Photographers, December 19 through February 17.