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Photography* 113

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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"THEN (1839) AND NOW (1952)" PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

TO GO ON VIEW AT MUSEUM

A thumbnail historical survey of photography, under the title "Then (1839) and Now (1952)," will be on view on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from August 6 through ~~19~~¹⁷. The exhibition, comprising about 50 photographs selected from the Museum Collections, is being organized by Edward Steichen, Director of the Department of Photography, to coincide with the convention of the Photographic Society of America to be held in New York during this period.

Among the earliest photographic works are prints by English, French and American pioneers, such as Daguerre, Fox Talbot, Hill and Adamson, Henri Le Secq and Mathew B. Brady. Examples of early work forecast movements that were to come. A photograph by T.H. O'Sullivan made in New Mexico in 1873 is forerunner of the F-64 school. The famous "The Terminal" taken by Alfred Stieglitz in 1892 anticipates the modern candid snapshot.

One group of photographs, the earliest of which was made by Alvin Coburn in 1916, is abstract in the sense that the objects photographed do not themselves play any role, but the emphasis is rather on light and shadow pattern and design. These include works by Paul Strand, Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, Joseph Breitenbach, Aaron Siskind and Lotte Jacobi.

A section of the exhibition will be devoted to documentary photographs, news and journalistic photography, making it apparent how the one overlaps and impinges on the other. This group will include work by Jacob Riis and work from the Farm Security Administration by Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn and Arthur Rothstein and more recent prints by Helen Levitt, Walker Evans, Ansel Adams, Homer Page, Herbert Matter, Wayne Miller, Arnold Newman and Marion Palfi.

Four newcomers to the Museum's showings are included in the exhibition: George Daniell, with portrait studies of Georgia O'Keeffe; A. Hyatt Mayor, Leon Levinstein and Joe di Pietro.

Mr. Steichen, in commenting on the exhibition, says:

"Even this small and only partially representative collection covering the history of photography gives emphasis to the importance of the changes in techniques and equipment. The fact that Daguerre, Hill-Adamson and Cameron had to use up to 5-minute exposures must obviously have influenced the concept of these photographers just as the flash bulb used by Weegee and the high speed strobe light used by Harold Edgerton and Gjon Mili opened up new worlds and new areas of adventure for the photographer. The grainy prints from the paper negative, as made by Le Secq with a partially corrected monacle lens, as well as the tricky reflections of the daguerreotypes were determining factors then, just as are now the modern high speed photographic emulsion and anastigmat lens that are fully exploited in the prints exhibited here by Ansel Adams, Todd Webb, Irving Penn and Charles Sheeler.

"But in the final analysis, this collection emphasizes the fact that the art of the photographer takes precedence over any and all technical procedures."