

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

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No. 107

FOR RELEASE:

Tuesday, Sept. 26, 1961

PRESS PREVIEW:

Monday, Sept. 25, 1961

11 a. m. - 4 p. m.

THREE PHOTOGRAPHERS AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Photographs by Bill Brandt, Lucien Clergue and Yasuhiro Ishimoto will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, September 26 through November 12, in Diogenes With a Camera V, the fifth in a series of exhibitions conceived by Edward Steichen "to indicate photography's contribution to the search for truth." 184 photographs are included in the show, 42 by Brandt, a widely known British photographer; 66 by Clergue, a young Frenchman; and 76 by Ishimoto, an American who has lived and worked both in Japan and in the United States. Mr. Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, initiated the Diogenes series in 1952.

Bill Brandt is represented in the exhibition by selections from his "Perspective of Nudes," described by Lawrence Durrell as "a prolonged meditation on the mystery of forms." Using an old wooden camera, shutterless, with a wide angle lens and an aperture the size of a pinhole, Brandt achieved what he called "an altered perspective and less conventional image." He hoped through his ancient apparatus to see "perhaps like a mouse, a fish or a fly." Taken since 1945, the photographs, at first romantic, become increasingly stylized, abstract, and sculptural.

The photographs of Lucien Clergue, whose work shows a preoccupation with themes of decay and death, include vivid, desolate studies called "l'Etang" - reflections of trees and dead branches in a swamp, gnarled roots which appear engaged in combat. Also, in strong contrasts of black and white, are silhouettes of corn blown by the wind; mutilated bulls in a corrida; Harlequins reminiscent of Picasso's blue period; and animals and nudes in the sea, caught in the movement of surf.

In Yasuhiro Ishimoto's section of the current exhibition are photographs of people affected by city phenomena - partially demolished buildings, traffic, billboards and the clutter of the slums. Ishimoto seems particularly sympathetic toward children, and there is, among others, a remarkable series in which they are seen weirdly made up for Halloween. In a different vein, he has contributed a group of photographs depicting the peace and elegance of the Katsura palace near Kyoto, Japan.

Grace M. Mayer, Associate Curator of the Department of Photography, assisted Mr. Steichen with the exhibition. Kathleen Haven designed the installation.

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Born in England in 1906, Bill Brandt studied photography in Paris in 1929, returning to England two years later as a freelance. During the depression, he focused his camera on the industrial Midlands and Tyneside towns, and documented pre-war London. At the time of the Battle of Britain, he made documentary photographs of London under fire for the Home Office records, later working for the Ministry of Information, the National Buildings Record and the "Picture Post." After the war his work was seen in "Harper's Bazaar" and "Holiday". His photographic studies of "Literary Britain" appeared in book form in 1951. He has had a solo show in Paris, and was represented in a four-man exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in 1948. Since 1945 he has been concentrating on his "Perspective of Nudes," published this year by the Bodley Head in London, and Amphoto in New York. In the preface, Lawrence Durrell wrote: "...Brandt uses the camera as an extension of the eye - the eye of a poet; he is to photography what a sculptor is to a block of marble. His pictures read into things, try to get at the hidden presence which dwells in the inanimate object. Whether his subject is live or not - whether woman or child or human hand or stone - he detaches it from its context by some small twist of perception and lodges it securely in the world of Platonic forms...."

Lucien Clergue was born in Arles, France in 1934 and began his career in photography at the age of 14. Six years later, his initial sequence, "Jules César," based on the Arles production, won the approbation of Jean Renoir. From November, 1954 to July, 1955 he worked on a series entitled "La Grande Récréation," showing saltimbanques portrayed by five Arlesian children. In July, 1955 he realized his first interpretations of dead animals washed up by the Rhone. In November of that year he met Picasso at Cannes, and a few months later Jean Cocteau in Paris. Both give him wholehearted admiration and support. 1956 saw the "Nus de la Mer," which were used as illustrations for Eluard's "Corps Memorables." In 1957 he concentrated on a documentation of gypsies. He continues to develop his favorite themes - nudes, dead animals, cemeteries and gypsies. His book, "Poesie der Photographie," embellished with a cover design and title page by Picasso, and including tributes by Cocteau and Jean Marie Mignan, was published by DuMont Schauberg, Cologne, in 1959. He has exhibited widely abroad and has an extensive publication record. Here, his work has been seen at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and in several exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art.

Yasuhiro Ishimoto, an American of Japanese heritage, was born in San Francisco in 1921, and spent his early years (1924-1939) in Japan. Upon his return to the United States he entered the University of California, and following the interruption of World War II, resumed his studies first at Northwestern University and then at the Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology, graduating in 1952. The following year, he again went to Japan, where he worked as a free-lance photographer, and later taught basic design at the Kuwazawa Design School in Tokyo. In 1954, he made a masterly photographic study which resulted in the book "Katsura Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture" with an introductory essay by Walter Gropius and text by Kenzo Tange, published jointly by Yale University Press and Zokeisha Publications, Ltd., Tokyo, 1960. In 1958, he started an intensive camera study of Chicago under the auspices of the Minolta Camera Company. His work has been previously exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art ("Always the Young Strangers," 1953) and in 1960 he was accorded a one-man show at The Art Institute of Chicago.

Photographs and further information available from Herbert Bronstein, Associate
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