The Museum of Modern Art
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LEE FRIEDLANDER

Fifty photographs by Lee Friedlander taken during the past decade will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from December 9, 1974 through February 9, 1975. John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography who selected and installed the exhibition points out in the wall label that Lee Friedlander is one of the younger American photographers whose work in the early 60s defined a shift in photographic concern from an essentially romantic spirit to a more classical posture of discipline and reserve. "This work is a little more distanced, less willful, seemingly more objective and more sensitive to the exactions and the rewards of tradition," says Mr. Szarkowski.

Friedlander was not alone in recognizing that the most unexceptional and banal materials of contemporary life could justify disinterested artistic concern, but his resolution of the matter has been distinctive. According to Mr. Szarkowski, "He has disguised an uncompromisingly aesthetic commitment by a clinically objective photographic manner, and produced false documents full of elegance and irony.

"Seeing a decade of Friedlander's work in retrospect, one recognizes with some surprise what doubtless should have been obvious all along: Friedlander makes only photographs that give him pleasure. He is not concerned with the current market value of his material in social or political terms. This friendly, low-keyed hedonism is more surprising because his pictures often feed on the same subject matter and has nourished that more familiar style of contemporary expression identified by the spirit of desperate angst.

"Friedlander's willingness to take pleasure in the world he lives in, such as it is, is finally a private matter, beyond judgment. But the photo-

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graphs themselves are not merely private. However elliptical their relationship to the world of great events and large causes, they give precise and elegant form to their author's view of that point at which his life and photography's life converge. They define a new presence and a revised sense of possibilities for the half-sovereign world of pictures."

Lee Friedlander was born in 1934 in Aberdeen, Washington. He began photographing at the age of fourteen and later studied with Edward Kaminski at the Art Center School, Los Angeles. Since 1956 he has lived in the New York area. In 1960 and 1962 he received Guggenheim Fellowship grants in photography. His work has been widely exhibited and was shown at The Museum of Modern Art in New Documents (1967) and in Gatherings (1972). In book form his work was published in Self Portrait (1970, Haywire Press) and with Jim Dine in Work From the Same House (1969, Tigram Press Ltd.). A portfolio of original prints was issued in 1973 by Double Elephant Press.

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