

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
April 1990

JOHN GUTMANN: BEYOND THE DOCUMENT

April 19 - July 17, 1990

An exhibition of works by German-born photographer John Gutmann, who has resided in San Francisco since 1933, opens at The Museum of Modern Art on April 19, 1990. JOHN GUTMANN: BEYOND THE DOCUMENT features photographs that transcend photojournalism to reveal a poetic, often disturbing vision. The exhibition was selected from a larger exhibition organized by Sandra S. Phillips, curator of photography, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and coordinated by Susan Kismaric, curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art.

On view until July 17, JOHN GUTMANN: BEYOND THE DOCUMENT includes approximately sixty black-and-white photographs dating primarily from the 1930s and 1940s. Many of the works are rare vintage prints, and several images have never before been exhibited.

The works featured in the exhibition include photographs taken in San Francisco and during the artist's travels around the United States; images from his graffiti series; and images of circus performers and acrobats. Gutmann, who was in his late twenties when he left Nazi Germany to settle in the Bay area, observed American popular culture with the fresh perception of an outsider. From the drive-in movie theater and the ubiquitous automobile to San Francisco's active street life and waterfront, the artist captured on film the exuberant and often exotic character of his newly adopted home.

Gutmann's images have a dual nature: they are both documents of objective facts and open-ended riddles. The photographs embody an ambiguous and almost

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