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they have been placed in by agreeing to sit for Richard Avedon. In the catalogue to Avedon's show at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in 1970, the photographer wrote, "I often feel that people come to me to be photographed as they would go to a doctor or a fortune teller—to find out how they are." It is doubtful, however, that Edmund Wilson came to Avedon to find out that he was a fat old man whose pants didn't fit, or that Truman Capote came to learn that he was a careless shaver, or that Igor Stravinsky came to confirm that he was a deathly-sick old man in a wheelchair. In Avedon's pictures of his father, no such discrepancy (and dishonesty) was present, and they remain the best works of his career. There are a few people in the show (Vladimir Horowitz and Renata Adler, for example, and Robert Frank, Jean Genet, and a neighborhood caterer) who exhibit an individuality based on character rather than on peculiarities of physiognomy. One feels, however, that this comes of their own strong photogeneity, rather than of any slackening of the photographer's scientific method.

The three enormous group pictures that loom over the gallery (the largest is four hundred and twenty inches by ninety-six)—one of the Mission Council, another of the Chicago Seven, and the third of members of Andy Warhol's Factory—at once diminish the portraits' impact and magnify their problems. The Mission Council picture shows eleven men of various heights, weights, and middle ages, dressed in various garments, standing and facing the camera—nondescript men who could be eleven members of any bank or plastics firm or, if it comes to that, little magazine. The Chicago Seven picture shows seven typically dressed and bearded and mustached young men. The Factory picture, in which several of the hands have taken off their clothes, provides a similar yawn of recognition (though one lovely creature with long blond hair, a delicately made-up face, and an incongruous penis affords a certain sickening fascination). One feels about these pictures, as one feels about so many of the portraits, that the most enormous and elaborate lengths have been gone to—for too small returns. One finally balks at the low sensationalism that is being offered as high seriousness. A master of the dazzling legerdemain of fashion photography, Avedon remains a pupil of the light-of-day simplicity that is the proper study of the photographer and the glory of photography.

—Janet Malcolm

we get older we get worse-looking, marked by the indignities rather than the nobility of aging. Just as Muybridge's motion studies contradicted timeworn conventions of draftsmanship, so do Avedon's pictures contradict the humanistic traditions of portraiture; and just as many of Muybridge's contemporaries dealt with the embarrassment of his findings by stubbornly denying their truth (Rodin, for example, ingeniously argued that the "wrong" position of art is really the "right" one, since it accords with the synthesis of impressions that we get when we view motion—i.e., the eye never sees what the camera records), so do many of Avedon's critics deny the validity of his way of seeing.

To this writer's mind, Avedon's revelations about our poor corporeal condition are true (if not whole) statements about humanity, and are a genuine (if small) contribution to the body of photographic work that at once refines and expands the medium. But where Avedon can't be defended, and where he gives his critics all the ammunition they need, is in his persistent use of famous people to make these statements with. Why them? Why Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Alger Hiss, William F. Buckley, Jr., Harold Brodkey, Marilyn Monroe, Truman Capote, R. D. Laing, John Lindsay, Jean Renoir, Oscar Levant, Louise Nevelson? Why not ordinary people? An interviewer for the Sunday *Times* asked Avedon this question and received a very metaphysical and entirely uninformative answer about "the secret" that is in every photograph. Avedon's "secret" may lie in a simple and practical fact—namely, that it is easier to get a famous person to sit for a portrait than to stop someone in the street and make the request. The question "Why me?" that the nonentity will ask ("Because I want a man with your kind of skin disorder in my show"?) is never asked by the celebrity, who already knows—or thinks he knows—the answer. But Avedon doesn't play fair. It turns out that he is in no way photographing the great writer because he is a great writer, or the renowned statesman because he is a renowned statesman, but for reasons of his own, and the discrepancy between the photographer's intentions and the subject's (not to speak of the viewer's) expectations unavoidably colors the work. The look of bafflement—sometimes even of reproach—on many of the faces at the Marlborough show may well be there not as a reflection of their common human predicament but as a reaction to the special predicament

(such as "Woman Seated on a Mound," with her grotesquely large and flabby stomach and repulsively fat thighs, on which every crease, bulge, and even garter mark is shown), and in the way that the aging Swift did in his disgusting poem "The Lady's Dressing Room," with its horrific inspection of the lady's dirty secrets and its infamous lament, "Oh! Cælia, Cælia, Cælia sh---." Avedon's portraits of this period belong within this fierce didactic tradition; their savagery is directed not at the subject (he irritably points this out himself with his title "Nothing Personal") but at the vanity and hypocrisy of society. A series in "Nothing Personal" taken in a mental institution—including some of the most awful and powerful photographs of this kind in existence—hammers home the point, and also seems to be Avedon's own penance for his involvement, as a fashion photographer, in the bazaar of false values in which affluent America trades.

AVEDON has passed out of this railing and self-flagellating state, and for the past few years has been working in a new vein of portraiture, whose results, along with some carefully selected work of the past, are currently on view at the Marlborough Gallery. The recent portraits, all taken in daylight, are gentler and softer, and reflective of a larger intention, than their predecessors. Avedon now seeks the universality that is the portrait painter's difficult but achievable goal and the photographer's near-impossibility. Edward Lucie-Smith, in his study "The Invented Eye" (1975), acutely expresses the difference between the two mediums, observing that whereas "a portrait produced by a painter or sculptor is always a synthesis of impressions, and we assume that the artist is attempting a definitive view of the sitter—a verdict," the photographic portrait is limited to one impression and thus leaves the viewer with a sense of "the possibility of other views, other aspects of the sitter." A few photographers, nevertheless, have managed to break through the barrier of the partial view, and one of these masters—the German photographer August Sander (1876-1964)—has been selected by Avedon as a model for his own attempt. Sander, a commercial studio photographer, set out with characteristic Teutonic thoroughness to create a collective portrait of humanity by photographing every "archetype" he could find in Germany; he started out with the peasants and farmers in his native Westerwald and proceeded to artists, writers, statesmen, musicians, actors, shopkeepers, factory workers, industrialists, circus people, Nazis, and so on. Several hundred of Sander's portraits were collected in a book called "Men Without Masks: Faces of Germany 1910-38," published here in 1973, with a foreword by Golo Mann and a text by Sander's son. Anyone who expected to find a Grosz-like indictment of a nation in this collection of pictures received instead a chastening and complex statement about the human condition. Sander's portraits, marked by great beauty, simplicity of form, and veracity of emotional content, are permeated with a *sadness* that comes across not as a passing feeling experienced by the subject (or as a national characteristic) but as the permanent condition of mankind. Sander shows us that the human face in repose is tragic. When we remove the masks that we assume as social beings, we are left with our unalterable loneliness and alienation.

Avedon's identification with Sander is evidenced by the archetypal labels he planned, and inexplicably abandoned, for his portraits at Marlborough (identifying each subject simply as "writer," "actor," "secretary," "president," "professor"); by his adherence to Sander's formal head-on poses and eye-to-eye contact with the subject; and by the unrelieved sadness that runs through the selections. But Avedon's show at Marlborough produces a very different impression from that of "Men Without Masks."

The most striking difference is the enormous size of Avedon's prints (some portraits have been blown up to as much as forty-nine by sixty-one inches, with the average size being around twenty by thirty), which gives them a quality of impressiveness—almost of grandeur—that is never present in what we think of as the normal eight-by-ten- or eleven-by-fourteen-inch print. (This is leaving out of account, for the moment, three colossal, mural-size group pictures, which dwarf even the largest portraits.) The size of the pictures reflects, again, Avedon's instinctive feel for, and ability to connect with, the broader stylistic currents of the time; the show bristles with its connectedness to the morphologies of Warhol's "Chairman Mao," Christo's valley curtain, Smithson's earthworks, Chuck Close's Photo-Realism, the realism of William Bailey. More consciously and deliberately (and, again, characteristically), the prints reflect Avedon's grasp of the crucial importance of scale in the exhibition of photographs. Avedon has studied (as many gallery owners and museum curators have yet to

do) the difference between photography as a publishing form and photography as an exhibition form, and with this show he offers an object lesson in the conduct of the latter. Avedon didn't just send his photographs to the gallery, as photographers usually do, but created the show expressly for the large white spaces and architectural features of the Marlborough rooms. Marvin Israel was hired to design the maze of partitions that permits the showing of more than a hundred pictures, and to lay out a scale model of the gallery in Avedon's studio, so that the relationship of each print to its space and to its neighbors could be premeditated and perfected. As with scale, so with print quality: the prints in the show were made specifically for it (and under a set of criteria different from those governing the prints made for publication in magazines) at the Modernage laboratories, under the supervision of Avedon's chief technician, Gideon Lewin, and at Avedon's studio, and they are of an exquisiteness that sets a standard for exhibition printing. Nothing could be more alien to the fetish of inexpensive equipment and simple darkroom technique so beloved of the great and near-great of photography (Weston was proud of his five-dollar camera, and Stieglitz's darkroom was like a schoolboy's) than Avedon's D Day-like preparations for this show, in which every modern technological resource was utilized, thousands of dollars were ungrudgingly and carelessly spent, and spates of technicians, assistants, and secretaries were employed.

An on-the-face-of-it-puzzling affinity that Avedon says he feels with Julia Margaret Cameron—whose blurry, exalted portraits of Victorian poets and little girls seem entirely unlike Avedon's incisive, existential examinations of twentieth-century people—makes sense in regard to the boundlessly energetic, stop-at-nothing working techniques of the two photographers. Cameron recruited her hapless family for her photographic ventures in the same way that the richer Avedon recruits his paid employees, and nothing deterred her. For example (one of many such anecdotes related by her biographer, Helmut Gernsheim), the night before the poet Henry Taylor visited the Cameron house, on the Isle of Wight, Julia decided that the guest room was too dark for such a luminary to stay in, so she engaged carpenters to work all night adding a west window in time for the sunshine to be pouring in at the poet's arrival the next afternoon. For Avedon, too, nothing is impossible: he spent seven weeks in Saigon waiting for the members of the United States Mission Council, which was running the war in Vietnam, to come together for the picture he had specially flown out to take, and he twice drove out to Rockland County to photograph Alexandra Tolstoy, Leo Tolstoy's ninety-one-year-old daughter, because he didn't like the dress she had worn at the first sitting. (The second time around, he managed to sort through her closet.) And a week before the Marlborough show opened he decided that the metal screws holding the frames together were wrong, and he and his staff spent a frantic two days looking for plastic replacements. (They were finally unearthed in New Rochelle.) Yet one feels a subtle difference between the stories about Cameron and those about Avedon; while her extravagances emerge as the endearing willfulness of a lovable old eccentric, his have something of the off-putting compulsiveness of the boy who *has* to get an A in everything.

The portraits invite a similar antagonism. They bluntly raise (as Sander's portraits entirely evade) the question of the subject's attractiveness. From most of the pictures at Marlborough one gets the decided feeling that the subject looks considerably better in real life than he does here, that out of hundreds of possible aspects Avedon has chosen the least favorable one, that these enormous, artful pictures are really a kind of apotheosis of the "bad" picture of ourselves that we hastily pluck from the pile of snapshots to be pasted in the album—in contrast to the "good" selections that spare us the sight of our double chins, sunken cheeks, puffy eyes, bad complexions, peevish expressions, and so on. Although Avedon's approach has changed (he no longer photographs from below, or prints in the old dark, cruel way), his intention still seems unkind.

In fact, however, Avedon does not try to make people look bad; he simply doesn't do anything to make them look good. By eschewing all the painterly devices of lighting, pose, background, and printing that can produce a pleasing likeness—by simply taking straight pictures in the manner of a police photographer—he shows us to ourselves not as others see us but as the camera sees us. Like Muybridge's photographs of horses in motion (which revealed that the way horses had been drawn in art was all wrong), Avedon's pictures of men without props present an unpalatable truth. They show us that we are ugly creatures, and that as

work and the portraiture are stylistically and emotionally of a piece; both are animated by an innovator's spirit of experiment and risk-taking, and by a young man's wish to please and dazzle. Portraits of Fred Astaire, James Cagney, Alec Guinness, Kay Kendall, Vicente Escudero, Hermione Gingold, Charlotte Greenwood, Marian Anderson, and Anthony Quayle are some of the felicities of this exuberant period. Then, in the mid-fifties, Avedon's portraits begin to veer sharply in another direction. His subjects become older, and his camera dwells on the horrible things that age can do to people's faces—on the flabby flesh, the slack skin, the ugly growths, the puffy eyes, the knotted necks, the aimless wrinkles, the fearful and anxious set of the mouth, the marks left by sickness, madness, alcoholism, and irreversible disappointment. These pictures of people who no longer care how they look—or shouldn't if they do—were taken under the glare of strobe lights or in bright daylight, to pick out every degrading and disgusting detail; were often angled from below, to reveal the collapse of chin into formless flaccidity or to accentuate the tense, death-rattle attenuation of neck; and were printed in savage black contrast. Perle Mesta, Dorothy Parker, Coco Chanel, Isak Dinesen, Father Martin Cyril D'Arcy, and Somerset Maugham were some of the victims of this merciless inspection; they can be studied in the books "Observations," with text by Truman Capote (1959), and "Nothing Personal," with text by James Baldwin (1964). These portraits shocked and discomfited their viewers, and many people began to say of Avedon that he was mean and was "out to get" his subject—a reputation that still adheres to him.

A more charitable (and likely) interpretation of Avedon's motives in creating these distressing portraits is to see them as a reaction to the glut of idealized youth and beauty that fashion photography forces on its practitioners, and to the particular illusion of gaiety and pleasure that Avedon's own fashion photographs have fostered. Like the death's-head at the feast in medieval iconography, these pictures come to tell us that the golden lads and lasses frolicking down the streets of Paris today will be horrible old people tomorrow, that the pursuit of agreeable sensations and the worship of beautiful objects are all vanity. Avedon *means* to disturb and shock with these pictures, in the way that the young Rembrandt meant to disturb and shock with his anti-classical etchings of "real women"

Chinese Bar, where they acted as if they were at a Howard Johnson's; in the summer, they flew away not to dreary rich resorts but to earthy fun places like the Temple of Karnak; and when other entertainments failed they stayed home and played with their clothes and makeup, painting and arraying themselves to look like women in Japanese prints or in Nabi paintings (or, perhaps more to the point, in Irving Penn's painterly color photographs).

Avedon's innovations were quickly adopted by other photographers, and just as quickly dropped by Avedon, who, on the Red Queen's principle, was forever running in order to stay in place. Sometimes he ran straight into trouble—most conspicuously in the April, 1965, issue of *Harper's Bazaar*, which the magazine had foolishly entrusted to his "guest editorship," and from which it has yet to recover. In this self-indulgent mess, filled with bizarre space-age costumes set against Op and Pop Art backgrounds, with glossaries of "in" expressions like "groovy" and "make the scene," and with long patches of inane cool writing, Avedon revealed what lay on the other side of the edge he likes to skirt. Soon after this debacle, he moved to *Vogue*, where he was able (or was made) to pull himself together and—as the May, 1974, pictures demonstrate—to reassert his dazzling preeminence among fashion photographers.

IN that same issue of *Vogue*, a few pages after the sex-in-the-sand pictures, there appeared an even more shocking picture by Avedon: a portrait of his dying father, selected from a show of eight photographs then on view at the Museum of Modern Art which Avedon took during the last years of his father's life and which traced, with devastating clarity, the course of Jacob Israel Avedon's incurable cancer. These painful, fearful images of aging and suffering were a culmination of Avedon's corollary career as a portrait photographer, which he has consistently pursued and on which his claim to being a "serious" photographer has rested. This career has passed through several distinct stages.

The earliest portraits, most of them of famous stage and screen personalities, are characterized by their aliveness and (often exaggerated) expressiveness, and by the photographer's conception of the subject as the embodiment of what he does: comedians are shown mugging, singers singing, actors acting, professional beauties being beautiful. At this point, the fashion

PHOTOGRAPHY

Men Without Props

IN May, 1974, a series of fashion photographs appeared in *Vogue* which caused even the most impassive of vogue-followers to stare with astonishment. The first picture showed a tanned, bare-breasted girl with upraised arms, her chest marked by two glaring white circles created by her discarded bikini top, her rump pressed against the groin of a hairy man whose hand possessively curved around her thigh while his thumb poked into the corner of her bikini bottom, in the other corner of which she had tucked a comb, sunglasses, and a purse spray of the Lanvin perfume that was the nominal subject of the photograph. In other pictures, in aid of other scents, creams, and makeups, the girl lolled in the sand with this man and another one. Sometimes she sprawled over the prostrate body of one while resting her head on the shoulders of the other, or lifted her T-shirt to permit her stomach to be kissed; in a concluding picture, she sat holding up the two men, who seemed to have expired from heat, sex, or sheer boredom. Few readers had to look at the credit line to see who had taken these outrageous pictures. Richard Avedon's career as a fashion photographer—on *Harper's Bazaar* from 1945 to 1965 and on *Vogue* since 1966—has been consistently marked by its extremism and by Avedon's almost uncanny feel for the zeitgeist. In this instance, he had caught and crystallized, in all its unpleasantness and silliness, a moment in our national life when an unlikely but palpable pornographic spirit was in the air.

Although Avedon is one of the best known and least underrated of fashion photographers, his achievement is imprecisely understood. A common misconception—derived from the motion and the animation that are a signature of his fashion work—is that Avedon rescued fashion photography from a sorry condition of mannered rigidity and bloodless stasis and forged it into a medium of vital and forceful naturalism. In fact, when Avedon arrived at *Harper's Bazaar* as a nervous pupil and protégé of Alexey Brodovitch, the magazine's art director, fashion photography was at the peak of its efflorescence, and had just passed through a period whose best examples—by, among others, Baron Adolphe De Meyer, Edward Steichen, Cecil Beaton, George Hoyningen-Huené, Horst, Martin Munkacsi, and Louise Dahl-Wolfe—have never been surpassed. The stasis and rigidity that marked the fashion pictures of the twenties and thirties were the result not of ignorance and backwardness but of the stylistic conventions under which photographers, along with other decorative artists of the period, sedulously labored—the rectilinear forms (derived from Cubism, technological design, the Bauhaus, Russian Constructivism, American Indian art, and Aztec architecture, as well as from some of the period's more sinister political movements) that have recently been labelled Art Deco.

Avedon's achievement was to mark the passing of Art Deco and to grasp, before anyone else did, the outlines of its successor, for which a name has yet to be coined, but in whose thrusting curvilinearities we can read a recoil from the deprivations and politics of the war years and a foreshadowing of the escapist tendencies that shaped the next two decades—the privatism and the acquisitiveness; the obsessions with food, sex, children, and objects; the search for the "natural" and the "organic." Even at the start, when Avedon's fashion pictures were no better than those of other fashion photographers—and often, in fact, worse—they looked more *modern*. (Modern in relation to their own time, that is. Fashion photography's status as an art form is vividly demonstrated by a comparison of a fashion photograph of twenty years ago with an ordinary snapshot of a woman dressed in the style of that time; in the snapshot the clothes look peculiar and dated, while in the fashion photograph they have the timelessness and inevitability of the clothes in Renaissance or Empire paintings.) Avedon put his models into motion against blurred, smoky backgrounds for the sake not of naturalism but of style: his swirling capes and billowing ball gowns described the curves that major artists were dripping or slashing onto canvases and anonymous artisans were putting into things like sling chairs. Avedon's metaphors similarly drew on the spirit of the time; in place of the classical motifs, the Cubist designs, and the cold trappings of opulence that formed the settings of prewar fashion photography and projected an ideal of aristocratic remoteness and arrogance and languor, he created a no less preposterous but more *haemish* and democratic-looking vision of affluence. His Dior-dressed models strode down the streets of Paris, graciously mingling with shopkeepers, pausing to watch street shows of tumblers and strong men; at night, after the opera, they dismissed the chauffeur in order to gambol down the Champs-Élysées with their escorts and stop in for a nightcap at the

Newsday

Newsday Photo by Dick Yarwood

Avedon
Picture of a Photographer as a Portraitist

By Amei Wallach
Newsday Cultural Affairs Specialist

Richard Avedon is sitting for his portrait, and he is exceedingly uncomfortable. He rushes to comb his hair, takes his glasses off and puts them on again, alternates tapping fingers with clenched fists and offers the help of one of his assistants, saying, "This is very traumatic for me. I'm trying to be cool."

But in his own obliging way, the man with a reputation as the highest-paid photographer in the world is waging a silent battle with the newspaper photographer, who wants to catch his subject unaware.

The subjects of Richard Avedon's portraits are seldom unaware. They stare straight at the camera in sometimes rigid concentration for that one expressionless moment. So Richard Avedon wants to look straight at the camera, too.

This is his moment as an artist, and the portraits are his art. Starting Wednesday through June 16, the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan will exhibit eight of those portraits. They are special portraits, because they are of Avedon's father, Jacob Israel Avedon, who died Sept. 1, 1973, at 86. There have been numerous group shows at museums that included the work of Richard Avedon, starting in 1955 with "The Family of Man," but this is only his second one-man museum show. The first, in 1970, crowded portraits of the famous, the infamous and the unknown into eight enormous rooms at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the largest show ever given to a single photographer. But to Avedon's disappointment, the show never reached New York, and while some reviews were glowing, others couldn't get over the fact that Avedon's reputation so far rests largely on his work in fashion and advertising.

"The worst thing is to photograph someone who is doing something else," Avedon tells the newspaper photographer who is trying to catch him at ease at the antique Spanish refectory table that serves as desk, work space, eating place and entertainment center in the long room, one of two rooms in which he lives above his East Side Manhattan studio.

And yet, starting in 1945 at 22, Avedon became a star in the world of fashion by photographing beautiful women who were doing "something else." They weren't just standing there, reverently displaying the elegant clothes that they were trying to sell, as fashion models in magazines had until then. Against often blank gray or white backgrounds, they were laughing, shouting, leaping, stretching, jumping, dancing, embracing bicycle champions, addressing sphinxes, wheeling baby carriages. Avedon's techniques of casual theatricality, courageous colors and blurred images and a general aura of freedom and fun in a beautifully can't-we-just-hope-it's-real world of elegance and gaiety have influenced just about every fashion and advertising photographer working today.

Avedon still makes news for big-money contracts with the likes of Revlon and Chanel No. 5. He still uses—or creates—the top models working. Next year, he'll be bringing out a book on his fashion photography, "Avedon: 1945-1975," which could become an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in 1976.

But Avedon says now, "There's always been a separation between fashion and what I call my deeper work. Fashion is where I make my living. I'm not knocking it. It's a pleasure to make a living that way. It's a pleasure, and then there's the deeper pleasure of doing my portraits. It's not important what I consider myself to be, but I consider myself to be a portrait photographer."

"Pleasure" is a pale word to describe what photography is to Avedon. "I guess I've photographed every single day of my life since 1945," he says as he sits there, with stockinged feet propped on the table, a slight man with a boyishly studious look behind horn-rimmed glasses.

"I know that the accident of my being a photographer has made my life . . . possible," he wrote in the catalog for the Minneapolis show. "I think pho-

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tography is the only thing I'm really good at," he says now. "Some people are better at life."

So when his father died, Avedon was first able to delay his acknowledgment of that death and then to experience it through his photographs.

Avedon had been photographing his father for six years through perhaps 50 sittings. But after he learned that his father was terminally ill of cancer of the liver in December, 1972, he continued photographing but sealed the negatives and would not look at them. "When my father died, I opened up the photographs," he remembers. The walls of his long room are made of white bulletin-board material and are always covered with a changing assortment of photographs. For one month after his father's death, they were covered with portraits of Jacob Israel Avedon.

"For a month I lived here and worked here with no feeling of sadness of any kind," Avedon says. Then some friends from Greece came to town and he wanted to entertain them. "I put all the food on the table, and then I realized: 'They're going to think I'm peculiar, living with 100 photographs of my dead father.' It was the first time I thought of it as odd. I thought I'd take them down, and when I took the first pin out, it hit me. It really hit me. Until then, we'd been working together. After that, he was dead. He became a part of the history of my work. No longer a portrait of my father. The portraits in the show are not my father. They're just photographs. They're what I brought to the moment and what he brought—not the truth."

There is, in fact, a peculiar kind of untruth about a person staring straight at a camera, the same way there is about the self-portrait of an artist who paints himself while looking into a mirror. Both focus the attention into an intensity of staring eyes that may have a great deal to say about an abstract inner life, but little to divulge about character. Avedon's portraits are not really concerned with individual character—with what someone is like. They care about symbols and myths.

Even his photographs of people such as Dwight David Eisenhower and Truman Capote exist independently of the people who sat for them—the same way paintings do. Even after memories of those people begin to fade, the photos will still be what they are—something Richard Avedon saw, whether in himself, or in them or in the whole world or in all three doesn't really matter.

In his father, as in so many of the other portraits, it is terror, so naked and all-consuming that it leaves little room for other emotions. The eight photographs in the museum show are eight studies in time of how Jacob Israel handled that terror, with dignity, anger, thrusting defiance and denial, but always—always—by trying too hard.

Avedon did not really get to know his father until about 10 years ago. There had been a bleak and bitter childhood, while Jacob, who had been born in Lomzha in Russia in 1889, and brought up in an orphanage in New York after his father deserted his mother, tried to drum into his own son, Richard, all he had learned the hard way about making it in the world. Richard was given an allowance of five pennies, but only after he had presented his father with a budget, accounting for each penny.

"He was not an easy man," Avedon says now. Jacob carefully built up a retail dress business that became Avedon's Fifth Avenue, at 39th Street and Fifth Avenue. The name is still carved in stone on the same building. "Why, it's part of New York," Avedon says with palpable pride. Jacob went bankrupt, became a buyer for the Tailored Woman shop, started Avedon's Woonsocket in Rhode Island, and finally, at 62, suffered a heart attack, separated from his wife and moved to Sarasota, Fla.

During all that time, Richard Avedon was learning to become an artist. "When I was 7—or maybe 9," he says, "my grandparents lived in the same apartment house as Rachmaninoff, and a girl cousin and I used to sit on the garbage pails at the service entrance and listen to him practice, and we could hear when he made a mistake, he'd go over it again, and over it again and over it again.

"Then my parents took me to one of his concerts, and after the concert—I'd never actually seen him—I waited and asked him if I could take a picture of him with my box camera. Maybe that's where I learned about discipline and what's beautiful about rigor, what's compelling about craft, those months listening to him going over and over one phrase."

At first, Avedon wanted to be a poet. He was poet laureate of De Witt Clinton High School. That was bad enough for his father. "He had such a hard life himself that he wasn't really able to recognize me. He wanted me to be *his* kind of person, and to have a son who was an artist wasn't the best news," he says, and he stops worrying the rubber band he has been twisting, and laughs. "Particularly since this son flunked everything else." Son Richard dropped out of school, and, with the outbreak of war, joined the Merchant Marine. His father's haphazard gift to him then—a Rolleiflex camera—got him started on his career.

And by the time Jacob died, they were father and son in spirit as well as in fact. "I don't know if I really want to go into all . . . ," Avedon says, turning his face aside, again insistently twisting that rubber band. "This is very upsetting to talk about. I wasn't—oh, what the hell! I wasn't with my father when he died."

When he heard, Avedon and his own son, John, flew down to Sarasota. "We had some drinks on the plane and were laughing and telling stories about him. About how he'd go up to total strangers on the beach and say, 'That's my son who just came back from Paris.' Things are never the way you expect them to be. It was a celebration of a wonderful father, and a wonderful grandfather who died when he wanted to. At that moment, there was this relief that he hadn't suffered—you know," Avedon says, darting little licks at his lips. His father, it seems, had meant it to be a celebration.

"He did a very terrific thing. I was working in Paris that summer. And I got back and flew down with Johnny to see him and did the last sitting. The minute I left, he stopped eating. He waited for me to come back and waited for the last portrait, and that was enough. Seven days later, he was dead."

It had been Avedon who, close to a decade earlier, had decided that "it was just criminal for me! not to make the effort—to discover him. And I wanted a father. I realized it might not be possible but it was not up to him."

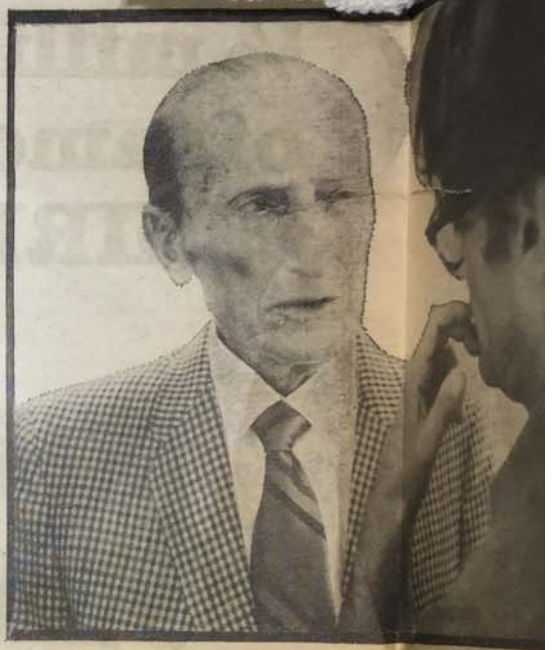
So he went to Sarasota and asked his father to go into the real estate business with him. "This old man picks his head up," Avedon remembers. They bought Havana Heights in Florida, and "we finally had something to talk about. Hundreds of phone calls. That's all we talked about, but I'd learned to talk his language."

Then at 83, Jacob remarried. "Eleanor. President of the garden club. The geranium goes like this," and Avedon allows his wrist to go limp. "She makes it go like that." He raises his hand erect. The couple made a scrapbook of snapshots of their vacations, and in one Jacob kept the first letter he had from his son.

"Dear Dad," Avedon says now, reciting the letter. "I've learned your business now. I hope you'll learn mine. After all, I'm a really good photographer and I hate giving the best that's in me to strangers and taking snapshots of you. I'd like to come down next weekend and do a portrait of you. A serious portrait. But you've got to realize that photography to me is what real estate is to you and that it will be very hard work for you. Let me know if it will be okay."

The next weekend, he went down with an assistant and a writer. The writer was Doon Arbus, daughter of photographer Diane Arbus, who remembers her role as an ambiguous one. It was really a family gathering, she says, but then "there was this forced thing that Dick's father was to get across what it was to be Dick's father."

Avedon also brought along an eight-by-10 camera that weekend, and for two weekends after that, "so there would be no confusion in his mind—'Oh, there's Dick taking snapshots,'" Avedon says. "It was through that that he first came to understand me. Through the work. I think the thing most important in both our lives was the work."



At the moment, it is one of the few things in Avedon's life. About a year ago, he moved out of the house on Riverview Terrace, overlooking the East River, that he had shared with his second wife, Evvie, whom he married in 1951.

Since then, he has lived, as he puts it, "over the store." "Would you like to see where I live?" he asks with the offhand honesty that once, the tale goes, caused him to send a newspaper reporter to his psychiatrist to get the full story.

In addition to the long room with the trestle table, where he lives is an eight-by-nine, neat, functional cell. It contains a bed meant for one, four empty suitcases, a clothes valet, pencils, papers, two telephones on the floor, a Soutine poster and a photograph of Avedon, his father and his son leaning against the wall.

"I've never been more content in my life," he says. "You understand, there are many rooms available to me, and I've chosen this room."

He will not speak of his own son, except to say he is 21 and a student at Sarah Lawrence College. "He's making his own identity in life and it's enough to have a father whose . . ." He pauses for a long time, then says, as though it were the least important phrase in the middle of a sentence, "He means more to me than my work. . . ."

"That's the only person that's true about," says Laura Kanelous, Avedon's friend and agent for 25 years. "And I'm surprised it's true about him. But it is."

Avedon never wants to stop taking pictures. "I can see myself as a very old man in a *terrific* wheel chair photographing," he says with a grin. "Only, I won't be photographing the tree outside my window, the way Steichen did. I'll be photographing other old people." /II

Richard Avedon, rig
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Israel Avedon are
resulting exhibit,
Wednesday at th
Modern Art in Ma

Newsday Photo by Dick Yarwood

Avedon

Richard Avedon, right, began taking pictures of his late father to teach him about his son's business. The two portraits of Jacob Israel Avedon are included in the resulting exhibit, which starts Wednesday at the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan.

PHOTOGRAPHIE

AVEDON

au musée d'art moderne de New York

New York, 2 juin (*de notre envoyé spécial*).

QUATRE expositions de photographies en même temps au musée d'Art moderne de New York, voilà qui témoigne d'un intérêt pour cet art encore assez mal compris en France, qui mérite d'être cité en exemple.

Le musée d'Art moderne, qui édite de remarquables ouvrages consacrés aux photographes les plus marquants depuis cent cinquante ans, présente ainsi un « hommage à Steichen », qui regroupe les noms les plus fameux et les photographies les plus représentatives d'un fonds extrêmement riche et qui est une (remarquable) leçon d'histoire de l'art. Il nous propose également une exposition Moholy-Nagy, Rochenko, Kertesz, un important ensemble japonais et neuf photographies signées Avedon, exposées dans une petite salle au rez-de-chaussée.

Si la jeune photographie japonaise doit sans doute à une sélection un peu trop officielle d'être en dessous de ce qu'on est en droit d'attendre d'elle, l'exposition consacrée à Moholy-Nagy, Rochenko, Kertesz, en revanche, est tout à fait passionnante. Elle permet de mesurer le génie de ces trois artistes d'Europe centrale qui, tous trois influencés par le *Bauhaus*, bouleversèrent la conception photographique des années 30 par des cadrages ingeants. Cette manière de cadrer leur permettait d'éliminer la ligne d'horizon, rendant l'orientation de l'espace difficile et vous faisait pénétrer dans un autre monde, à la limite de l'abstraction.

Les meilleures, les plus célèbres images de ces trois artistes incomparables sont là, prouvant la qualité et la sûreté de jugement de ceux qui ont réalisé la sélection.

C'est d'une manière beaucoup plus classique — du moins formellement — qu'Avedon nous bouleverse avec une exposition d'une telle force que neuf photographies suffisent.

Ce photographe de mode célèbre, portraitiste de la heute société, nous conte tout simplement (avec une terrible simplicité) les derniers mois de l'existence de son père.

1969, c'est le second mariage (à l'âge de 80 ans) de cet émigré russe dont la vie, résumée sur un petit carton à l'entrée de l'exposition, est assez étonnante. On le voit dynamique, le cheveu lustré, le regard perçant, extraordinairement vif et intelligent. Deux ans plus tard, rongé par on ne sait encore quel mal, le même homme est devenu un vieillard. Le regard est flottant, inquiet. Les cheveux sont tout à fait blancs. Opéré pour un cancer du foie en 1972, trois jours après il est encore photographié par son fils : Jacob Israël Avedon, coquettement vêtu d'un pyjama de soie, dresse sa belle tête de lutteur fatigué, mais le regard reste terne. Les deux dernières photographies sont terribles : le regard est un regard terrifié, et le visage annonce déjà le cadavre. Dans cinq jours il sera mort.

On répugne à parler d'art devant un témoignage d'une telle force. Jamais peut-être Avedon n'a été aussi sincère, aussi émouvant.

Michel Nuridsany.

Art News
New York, N.Y.
M. 40,000

SUMMER 1974

been successful by his own standards, and is almost apologetic for his commercial success. For all his acclaim, the fact that Avedon has never up till now had a museum show in New York does rankle and his work is often judged, he feels, by preconceived notions of "the perfumed halls" of women's fashion magazines.

His current show, at the Museum of Modern Art, consists of eight portraits of his father, Jacob Israel Avedon, taken when he was 81 to 87 years old. Jacob Avedon was born in the province of Grodna, Russia, in 1889. After immigrating to this country, he operated a blouse shop and, among other things, worked as a buyer for the Tailored Woman and as a substitute schoolteacher in Hell's Kitchen. He died last year.

Art News
New York, N.Y.
M. 40,000

SUMMER 1974

Portrait of the portraitist

"I think of myself as an underground artist—no one knows or has seen the kind of work, the portraiture that I've been doing for the past ten years." So says Richard Avedon, the fashion photographer, who adds that he has never been successful by his own standards, and is almost apologetic for his commercial success. For all his acclaim, the fact that Avedon has never up till now had a museum show in New York does rankle and his work is often judged, he feels, by preconceived notions of "the perfumed halls" of women's fashion magazines.

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"That is not my father on the wall," Avedon says. "They are photos of my father. They are the way in which I express my feelings about him, how he expresses his towards me, the way he reacts to being photographed—in the end it's something that has been made. It is not reality."

Avedon, an intense, attractive man of 51, was once high-school poet laureate of New York City and co-editor with James Baldwin of the DeWitt Clinton High School literary magazine. He has been a fashion photographer for such magazines as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* for almost 30 years.

"When I do an advertisement or a page for a fashion magazine," he said, "my function is to sell either the issue or the product. That's what I have to do, and I am good at it. But it's far from the most meaningful part of my creative life."

He sees the great advantage in being a fashion photographer as enabling him to be "my own Ford Foundation, my own Guggenheim granter," providing him with the only way he can afford to do the work that is most important to him. He notes that Edward Steichen, whom he admires greatly, started as a commercial photographer.

Richard Avedon, *Jacob Israel Avedon*, photograph, 1973.

"My fashion work is completely commercial photography—it always has been, and I separate that from the photographs that I am not paid to do. That's the work I'm most interested in."

He considers important his 9-by-35-foot photo tableau of the Mission Council in Saigon, the power structure that directed the United States involvement in Vietnam. (Why so large? "I see the group itself as being of mythical proportions"); portraits of Isak Dinesen, Oscar Levant, Andy Warhol, Stravinsky and Eisenhower.

"I work every day. I constantly photograph, the way some people speak. It is the language that I am most comfortable with. You should be reading the photos or listening to them. There's much more there to learn about me that way than by listening to me." ■

Review of Richard Avedon exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art on page 126.

Column: "Spot"
"Jacob Israel Avedon Exhibition" pictured by his son, Richard Avedon, has been held at a small booth in the New York Museum of Modern Art since May 1. Although it is a small and reticent exhibition collected only 8 pieces photograph, it is the first one-man show for Richard Avedon in the New York Museum of Modern Art.
There is much expectation to hold large-scale photograph exhibition of Richard Avedon, whose productions elude all attemps at imitation in the field of elegant fashion photograph and dynamic portrait, and has already published photo album with titles of "Observation", "Nothing Personel", etc. But, this small exhibition also gives us a real meaning of photograph deeply.

カメラ毎日
CAMERA MAINICHI
(東京・Tokyo)
Ed.
Date. 1974. 6. 月
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(110頁)

できた

代美術館で初個展

「ニュー・ジャパニーズ・フォトグラフィー」展の大会場へ向かう通路手前の小さな一室で、五月一日からリチャード・アベドンによる「ヤコブ・イズラエル・アベドン」展が催されている。展示作品は八点ほどの寡黙な写真だが、アベドの分野で、他の追従をゆるさぬ地位を保ち、すでに「オブザベーション」や「ナッシングパーソナル」などすぐれた写真集も出版しているリチャード・アベドンの業績を集大成した大規模な写真展への期待は高い。だが今回のこの小さな

はその名のとおり典型的な実業家である。

「私は長い間そのとしなかったし、としての息子に近った。しかし十年四十歳になって、が気がかりになはすでに七十六歳リダに引退していき不意に、自分のと思った。久しぶ想像していたよりいたことに驚いた

スポット

父の生き方を理解できた

アベドン、近代美術館で初個展

Jacob Israel Avedon photographed by Richard Avedon
The Museum of Modern Art New York May 1 to June 10 1974

「ニュー・ジャパニーズ・フォトグラフィー」展の大会場へ向かう通路手前の小さな一室で、五月一日からリチャード・アベドンによる「ヤコブ・イズラエル・アベドン」展が催されている。展示作品は八点ほどの寡黙な写真だが、アベドンにとっては近代美術館で開く初のワン・マン・ショーである。

この三十年間華麗なファッション写真やダイナミックな肖像写真の分野で、他の追従をゆるさぬ地位を保ち、すでに「オブザベーシヨン」や「ナッシングパーソナル」などすぐれた写真集も出版しているリチャード・アベドンの業績を集大成した大規模な写真展への期待は高い。だが今回のこの小さな写真展はまた、われわれに現代の写真の意義を感銘深く語りかけている。

ヤコブ・イズラエル・アベドンはその名のとおりユダヤ人であり、典型的な実業家として生きた人である。

「私は長い間その父を理解しようとしなかったし、父もアーチストとしての息子に近づくことはなかった。しかし十年ほどまえ、私が四十歳になって、急に父親のことが気がかりになったのだ。当時父はすでに七十六歳の高齢で、フロリダに引退していた。私はそのとき不意に、自分の父を知りたい、と思った。久しぶりに訪ねた父が想像していたよりもずっと老いていたことに驚いた。心臓がだいぶ悪いということだった。私は少し唐突だったが『ぼくが手伝うから、なにかまた仕事をはじめてみませんか』ときりだしたのだ。気むずかしい、とばかり思っていた父が『なに？』わたしがまた働くんだって』と目を輝かして応えてくれたのはうれしかった。それから二人は事業をはじめた。そこで父がなにをしてきたか、どう生きたのか、おくればせながら私は理解することができた。またその実務をとおして、法律や経済やその他もろもろ、いままで知らなかった知識を、父から少なからず学ぶことができた。

こんどは私が父に理解してもらう番だ。それには父を撮るしかないと思った。『さあ、ぼくがどんな仕事をしているのか知ってください』助手たちを連れ、8×10の大型カメラを持ちこんで私は『ヤコブ・イズラエル・アベドン』の撮影をはじめたのだ。最初のうちはカメラを意識したり、おそれたりしていたようだったが、何度かカメラをもって向き合っているうちに、いつの間にか写真に、そして息子の仕事に興味をもつようになり、それからの父は、むしろ自分のほうから積極的に撮られようとさえしてくれた。

この写真展のメインになっている二点の写真は、父が亡くなる五日まえのものだ。昨年の秋、ちょうどヨーロッパで仕事中の私のもとに父が危篤だという知らせが届いた。父は私が戻るのをとてもまちかねていた。もう食物ものどを通らない状態だったが、服を着てカメラの前に自分で立ってくれた。私はただシャッターを押すだけでよかった。

この写真展は、私の作品というより、自分の信念に生きた父親自身がつくりあげた展覧会というべきものかもしれない。ひとつだけ残念なことは、その本人には見ることのできない写真展なのだが……。私にとってミュージアム・オブ・モダンアートの展示室は、ちょうど教会のような意味がある」

父の晩年になってようやくお互いをわかりえた父と子、二人にとってそれは激しい時間の経過だったろう。アーチストとして到達した自信と最高の燃焼によって生み出されたその作品はまた、偉大な業績をもつリチャード・アベドンの仕事の系譜のなかでも、ひときわ重い、深い意味をもつものになろう。

以上のアベドン氏の話は、日本の写真展のオープンに関する仕事をおえて、ニューヨークを発つ前日（4月5日）、氏の仕事場にまねかれた折、個人的な会話のなかで語られたものです。話のあとで案内してくれた氏のスタジオには、すでに美術館と同じ規模の壁面がセットされていて、展示のためのサイズや調子などを、厳しく入念に検討をしているところでした。（Y）

日本展会場でのリチャード・アベドン氏

INTERNATIONAL PRESS-CUTTING BUREAU

Extract from
STUDIO INTERNATIONAL
-London-
- SEP 1974

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THE M
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Stravinsky – composer 2 November 1969

THE MATURE PORTRAITIST: RICHARD AVEDON

DORE ASHTON

When Richard Avedon was 19 he joined the Merchant Marine where he was assigned to make identity photographs, or 'mug shots'. He often refers to the experience: 'I must have taken pictures of maybe one hundred thousand baffled faces before it ever occurred to me I was becoming a photographer.' Some thirty years later, Avedon is still contending with the bafflement, coquetry and resistance of faces, but the situation has changed. The 'mug shot' has been transformed into a powerful and highly abstract conception of portraiture.

Avedon makes a sharp distinction between commissioned photographs – elegant and memorable shots of celebrities in *Vogue* and other slick magazines – and works he commissions of himself. Parallel to his professional life as photographer there has been his inner life as artist that sporadically assumes full possession. This artist is consumed with the furore to know the human condition through visible traces on the human countenance. The elusive problems that have preoccupied portraitists throughout history have converged in Avedon's mature life as artist. He has struggled with them and emerged using the same means as his painterly predecessors: increasing concentration, concision, daring and abstraction.

It doesn't require much specialized knowledge of the history of photography to recognize that banalities flood the field. Much photography – as was frankly admitted in the nineteenth century when such books as Francis Frith's 'The Gossiping Photographer at Hastings' appeared – is just that: gossip. It is commonplace small talk translated into images. But a few artists have always known that the camera can be as incisive a tool as a burin. Avedon, even in his earliest photographs of Italy just after the war (possibly inspired by Cartier-Bresson) knew how to accent and compose; how to take the cliché out of the cliché. At the outset of his career as a professional, he had already specialized in the two modes that have persisted in his work ever since: the one veering toward expressionism, with its distortions and caricatural propensities, epitomized by such studies as that of Oscar Levant; the other meditative and formal, as in the numerous portrait studies of writers.

During the past few years, however, Avedon has achieved an intensity in his portraiture that subsumes both modes. He has worked usually with what he once called 'earthly saints', or people who were obsessed with work of one sort or another. The quality of obsession is his theme. He scans for the marks of obsession, and in compiling them, is himself obsessed. Most of us recall a face in terms of an expression or characteristic we can name. Think of Auden's face, or Pound's. We have to 'think' it, make the ensemble in our minds, compose it into its characteristic expression which can be named. The artistic portraitist goes through the same process, but, obsessed as he is with precision, expends such concentration that the face is drawn mysteriously into a moment of highest revelation. It becomes, as Avedon says, a symbol of itself. 'If I could work with my *eyes* only!' Avedon exclaims. The camera, the tool, impedes. Symbolization is a split-second conjunction of myriad problems, and above all, moral problems.

In a way, Avedon sets his problem morally first. He is a studio photographer. He works as

Jacob Israel Avedon – businessman 25 August 1973

the old masters did in formalized sittings. There is a whole ritual of careful arrangement and long static moments while the two personalities ease cautiously into the special relationship of artist and model. He feels, and quite correctly, that sitters come to him as they would to a doctor or a fortune teller – to find out how they really are. 'So they're dependent on me. I have to engage them. Otherwise there's nothing to photograph. The concentration has to come from me and involve them. Sometimes the force of it grows so strong that sounds in the studio go unheard. Time stops. We share a brief intense intimacy. But it's unearned. It has no past . . . no future.' The moral commitment, then, is to art, to the fiction that a photograph of quality always is.

Among his highest fictions, and most moving, are portraits in which the interrogation of the signs of the face is made in a few tense, highly selective moments. I'm thinking above all of his triptych of Stravinsky portraits, made in November 1969, and the series of portraits of his father made over a period of six years, recently exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art. In both cases, Avedon strives to isolate the sitter, to suspend him in the artifice of timelessness and spacelessness – an artifice that we recognize instantly and unconsciously take into account. (The very faces, worked by time, belie the fiction, yet it is a fiction that we acknowledge). The artifice is emphasized by Avedon's insistence that the black borders denoting the frame on the roll of film, remain. He leaves the black borders as the painter leaves bare canvas at the edge : to reinforce the paradox of imagery on the two dimensional plane. Like the painter, also, Avedon reduces his means to heighten his artistry. In these late portraits, he arranges the tonal gradations with infinite subtlety, and plays them against the few compositional elements he allows himself.

Stravinsky: a wily old comedian, aware, imperious, ready to impose the pose. In 1958, Avedon photographed Stravinsky in three-quarter pose and Stravinsky won the *agon*. He stepped forward, grand impresario, lifting his dark glasses and commanding the photographer to see him as he, for the moment, saw himself. But in 1969, Stravinsky met his match. The photographer became artist and the contest was evened out. The three photographs are at once a study in values and composition, and a spiritual narrative. Avedon, with a minimum of compositional means, has produced an abstraction equal to a poetic portrait by Yeats or Eliot.

The plastic means are important: First, the horizontal white mass of shoulders running through the three frames to play against the very slightly oblique line of eyes and brows. These lines are the unifying agents; they remain stable throughout the composition while movement is initiated in light values alone. The stability of the main compositional lines is essential to the vision of the artist, for here, more than in any previous works, Avedon is posing the eternal question of the portraitist: who, exactly, is the sitter and if we don't know Stravinsky's face, what can the artist leave for us that remains significant? It is a question that veteran portraitists, such as Frans Hals, must have asked themselves at the end of their lives. When Hals did his group portrait of the corporation running the old people's home, he obviously regarded each aged face as both a particular

Jack and Richard Avedon 9 August 1967

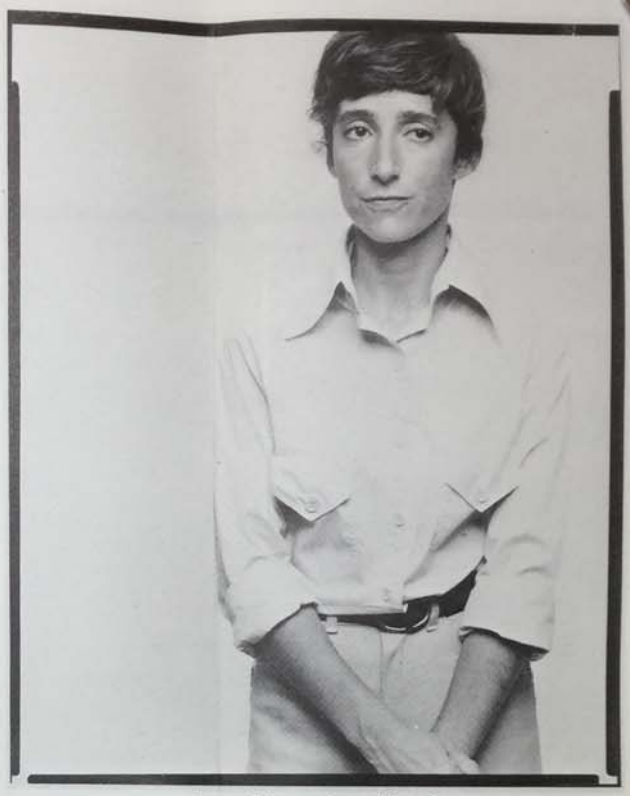
Jacob Israel Avedon – businessman 19 December 1972

visage and an emblem. Why else does this grave work remove itself from his oeuvre, and remain singularly memorable? (Significantly, when writers on Hals cite the painting, they rarely find much to say beyond remarking the extraordinary compositional play of face and hands, and the air of serious awe Hals inspires. Epitomes are hard to talk about.)

Avedon is studying Stravinsky, as Stravinsky is composing himself for Avedon's study. First, on the left, we read a composition containing the lightest values of the three frames. The evenness and lightness stresses the hooded eyes, the withdrawn quality of reverie. In the next image, the light is modelled very slightly; shadows on temple and cheekbone emphasize the dawning glint in Stravinsky's eye as he begins to emerge from reverie to confront Avedon's eye. Finally, Avedon deepens the values to an inflected chiaroscuro to emphasize the moment of total attention. He heightens the light behind the head, giving the illusion that the head has moved closer to the picture plane; and he deepens the shadows around the centrally important fact: the eyes that give, now, total attention to an interlocutor of great exigence. The still drama that has taken place goes beyond mere description. And Stravinsky becomes, as Avedon wills, a symbol of himself, remote from the actor who so often dominated the celluloid of countless photographers for countless decades.

Avedon's narrative of his relationship to his father is another matter. His father, Jacob Israel Avedon, was the one exception in Avedon's portrait career – someone he knew well. Or rather, someone he might have known well. The fact is that Avedon, when he embarked on this six-year self-assignment, set out to discover a father he had scarcely known; a father whose life as a business man had set him apart, and made him for so many years unknowable to the artistic son. (To the end the gulf remained, as the series' title *Jacob Israel Avedon, Business Man* asserts.) The series of sittings with this stranger-father was, as Avedon characterizes it, 'a competition between us to win the sitting.' While Avedon wanted to capture the older Avedon's anxiety, impatience and greed for life, his father wanted him to portray a wise old sage, Dr Schweitzer at least. Out of this tension, and from literally hundreds of posed portraits, Avedon drew the few photographs presented at the Museum of Modern Art. (Presented, by the way, in a scheme devised by his friend, the painter Marvin Israel, who hung the huge enlargements unmounted and hanging free in a closely sequestered chamber.) The effect was immense. Even those who neglected to read the wall label, in which Jacob Israel Avedon's life as an immigrant Jewish boy in New York who made his way through college, succeeded and failed in several businesses, retired to Florida and divorced his wife, remarried and for the last time went into business, this time shortly before his death from cancer, and with his own son Richard – even those who missed the vital data were held and awed by these portraits of age and death. It might have enriched the experience to have heard Avedon talk about his first visits to Florida, the awkward silences between father and son, the little Monopoly house with its furnishings of which they discussed and re-discussed the prices, and the ruse by which young Avedon reached an

Henry Miller – writer 24 September 1968



Renata Adler – writer 31 July 1969

derstanding of his father. He discovered, as he had in all his other sitters, the central passion, the obsession of his father's life, which was business. He proposed that they go into business together and the elder Avedon, already ill, moved with alacrity to enter the biggest business of all, at least in Florida – real estate speculation. The story of Havana Heights, one of the many illusory dream schemes in that never-never land, is sad and hilarious, but not absolutely essential to the exhibition, for what is essential is in the photographs: the face of a man with an obsession.

Avedon's study of this face, as it alters from shrewd, suspicious and disapproving response, to the enjoyment of the contest with the camera-son, is more intense than the narrative of death which is its inevitable accompanying theme. He carries out the study with the same sharp visual choices of tonalities and composition that occurred with the stranger Stravinsky. We find the characteristic white background, the void of which he says: 'There's nothing to help these people – there's nothing to help us.' We see the father first as remote. Gradually, in the huge close-ups which become progressively lighter, and in which the intonations become more and more subtle, we are forced to confront the gaze. In the final portrait, the highlights are like the lights on fine porcelain; the values are thinned to the highest degree and the eyes, even with their urgent look, are filled with a thousand benign reflections. The one who scans this face for clues will find not so much the particular Jacob Israel Avedon, as the personality of the artist portraying him. Avedon, artist, floods the final few portraits with searing light, and pries out a truth that we recognize as his: all of life, for him, is composed around the eyes, and it is in and through the eyes that whatever meaning the human visage can reflect can be extracted.

There isn't a town in America that doesn't have its own portrait photographer. It's a perennial and essential business. The portrait photographer in business is, as Avedon asserts, a cosmetician. A liar. The true portraitist must express himself through a confrontation. The old Avedon allegiance to the unassuming mug shot re-emerges in these late portraits which are unadorned and straightforward, literally, but yet arrive at a truth few can equal. The photographic portrait in Avedon's hands (and in the hands of perhaps half a dozen other photographers) becomes an art form.

'What is a face really?' asked Picasso. 'Its own photo? Its make-up? Or is it a face as painted by such and such a painter? That which is in front? Inside? Behind? And the rest? Doesn't everyone look at himself in his own particular way? Deformations simply do not exist.' And Cartier-Bresson wrote: 'It is true too that a certain identity is manifest in all portraits taken by one photographer. The photographer is searching for identity of his sitter and also trying to fulfil an expression of himself.' Finally, in the mature portraitist, whether painter or photographer, the expression of himself is manifest in style. Avedon's style is unmistakable, derives not from the alchemy of the darkroom – the grain and weight of the paper, or the work of the enlarger – or the technology of the machine which is his implement, but from the nature of the questions he poses about existence.□

PROVIDENCE, R.I.
BULLETIN
—D. 146,229—
PROVIDENCE METROPOLITAN AREA

NOV 1 1974

Photography

By Doug Gamage

Do 'Passport' Photos Pass as Art?

I MAY BE drawn and quartered by my colleagues for blasphemy, but I have to say it. I believe that much of what passes for professional photography today is a waste of good silver.

Witness the Oct. 21 issue of *Newsweek* — nineteen pages of a treatise on photography from Niepce to Now. "Now Photography" is a master like Avedon taking passport pictures of his father (called "Eight Searching Portraits" in the article) and exhibiting them in New York's Museum of Modern Art. "Now" is a series of pictures by Duane Michaels that look as if they were taken by a three year old with an Instamatic, suggesting a man eating a woman alive. "Now" is a picture by the great Walker Evans of a rusting auto front in the woods taken with a Polaroid SX-70. And "Now" is William Eggleston's picture of a green shower stall.

Perhaps I miss the point of all this, but after three decades of a love affair with photography, I have to wonder where it is going.

As a history, as a "who's who" in photography, as an exhibit par excellence of what is being done and has been done with the medium, the *Newsweek* article is a masterpiece.

Turn the pages and feast your soul on Ansel Adams' "Moon and Half Dome, 1960." See the stark, real horror of war from Matthew Brady at Petersburg to Donald McCullen in Vietnam. W. Eugene Smith almost sacrificed himself to his essay about the terrible effects of mercury poisoning on the people of Minimata, Japan. And Emmet Gowin who is described as a "young master" lives up to that lofty title with his soft, sensitive images of his wife, Edith. Incidentally, Gowin studied at the Rhode Island School of Design under Harry Callahan. There is no such place as the "Rhode Island Institute of Design" referred to in the article.

The writer asks, "Is photography really art?" Hardly an original question, and one still not resolved. If you wonder, look at the NASA photograph of the "Grand Junction, Colorado Area" or of Edward Steichen's 1905 color photograph, "Flatiron Building, New York," and draw your own conclusion.

THE OLD DEBATE—is photography art?—goes on. Well, friends, it depends on the picture.

I ask myself: If the same pictures of "Jacob Israel Avedon, 1973" were taken by Pete's Passport photo studio, would they have hung in the Museum of Modern Art? Or is it the name and reputation of the photographer rather than his work that puts his pictures on such hallowed walls? If so, legions of neophytes will emulate their masters in the mistaken belief that someday they too can wear the crown that allows them to turn out photographs which prostitute their talent. And the serfs will praise it as they did the Emperor's New Clothes.

SEND any of your questions on photography to Doug Gamage in care of the Evening Bulletin, 75 Fountain St., Providence, R.I. 02902. He will answer question of general interest in this column.

Art News
New York, N.Y.
M. 40,000

SUMMER 1974

Richard Avedon (Museum of Modern Art): Jacob Israel Avedon, the father of Richard Avedon, was not close or sympathetic to his son. Abandoned as a child by his father, Jacob dedicated his life to the textile business. Towards the end of his life, he retired to Florida, divorced his wife and became, for six years, his son's most powerful model. Unlike the *Vogue* mannequins who stare coyly into the distance, Jacob Avedon looks directly into the camera. The backgrounds are stark white. The edge of the film forms a bleak and black frame for the image. When Jacob Avedon fell ill with terminal cancer, the photographic sessions continued. His brow contracts. His skin turns white and transparent. His mouth twists in pain and paralysis. His face becomes a wide-eyed anguished skull. Richard could no longer bear to develop the film and simply stored the rolls after each session. Now, after Jacob's death, they are a remarkable elegy, an assertion not of life after death but of life in the face of death. ● MICHAEL ANDRÉ

AVEDON
Szarkowski

GARDEN CITY, N.Y.
NEWSDAY
D.444,148-S.338,639
NYC. Met Area

APR 08 1976

A study in artistry

Richard Avedon, who became a star in the fashion world by photographing beautiful women, will have a Museum of Modern Art show of eight portrait photographs of his late father. And despite his renown for his fashion work, he considers himself to be a portrait photographer.

PHOTOGRAPHIE

AVEDON

au musée d'art moderne de New York

New York, 2 juin *(de notre envoyé spécial)*.

QUATRE expositions de photographies en même temps au musée d'Art moderne de New York, voilà qui témoigne d'un intérêt pour cet art encore assez mal compris en France, qui mérite d'être cité en exemple.

Le musée d'Art moderne, qui édite de remarquables ouvrages consacrés aux photographes les plus marquants depuis cent cinquante ans, présente ainsi un « hommage à Steichen », qui regroupe les noms les plus fameux et les photographies les plus représentatives d'un fonds extrêmement riche et qui est une (remarquable) leçon d'histoire de l'art. Il nous propose également une exposition Moholy-Nagy, Rochenko, Kertesz, un important ensemble japonais et neuf photographies signées Avedon, exposées dans une petite salle au rez-de-chaussée.

Si la jeune photographie japonaise doit sans doute à une sélection un peu trop officielle d'être en dessous de ce qu'on est en droit d'attendre d'elle, l'exposition consacrée à Moholy-Nagy, Rochenko, Kertesz, en revanche, est tout à fait passionnante. Elle permet de mesurer le génie de ces trois artistes d'Europe centrale qui, tous trois influencés par le *Bauhaus*, bouleversèrent la conception photographique des années 30 par des cadrages ingeants. Cette manière de cadrer leur permettait d'éliminer la ligne d'horizon, rendant l'orientation de l'espace difficile et vous faisait pénétrer dans un autre monde, à la limite de l'abstraction.

Les meilleures, les plus célèbres images de ces trois artistes incomparables sont là, prouvant la qualité et la sûreté de jugement de ceux qui ont réalisé la sélection.

C'est d'une manière beaucoup plus classique — du moins formellement — qu'Avedon nous bouleverse avec une exposition d'une telle force que neuf photographies suffisent.

Ce photographe de mode célèbre, portraitiste de la heute société, nous conte tout simplement (avec une terrible simplicité) les derniers mois de l'existence de son père.

1969, c'est le second mariage (à l'âge de 80 ans) de cet émigré russe dont la vie, résumée sur un petit carton à l'entrée de l'exposition, est assez étonnante. On le voit dynamique, le cheveu lustré, le regard perçant, extraordinairement vif et intelligent. Deux ans plus tard, rongé par on ne sait encore quel mal, le même homme est devenu un vieillard. Le regard est flottant, inquiet. Les cheveux sont tout à fait blancs. Opéré pour un cancer du foie en 1972, trois jours après il est encore photographié par son fils : Jacob Israël Avedon, coquettement vêtu d'un pyjama de soie, dresse sa belle tête de lutteur fatigué, mais le regard reste terne. Les deux dernières photographies sont terribles : le regard est un regard terrifié, et le visage annonce déjà le cadavre. Dans cinq jours il sera mort.

On répugne à parler d'art devant un témoignage d'une telle force. Jamais peut-être Avedon n'a été aussi sincère, aussi émouvant.

Michel Nuridsany.

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A

ARTS

Photographie

AUTOPORTRAITS

EN voyant un peintre — un de plus — exposer des photographies dans une célèbre galerie de peinture (1), on pourrait facilement dauber sur la faillite de la peinture (ou du moins sur la crise qui l'ébranle) et entonner un péan de victoire en l'honneur de la photographie. On pourrait ricaner à propos du renversement de situation qui s'opère en faveur de ceux qu'on ne considère pas tout à fait encore comme des artistes et qu'on pille sans pudeur : le contentieux est lourd entre les deux frères ennemis...

La photographie est aujourd'hui en plein essor. Les collectionneurs aux Etats-Unis achètent (parfois très cher) des tirages. Les photographes exultent. Déjà certains, se découvrant une mentalité de revanchard, se voient envahissant les galeries d'art, jetant la peinture à la rue. C'est navrant. Car la photographie et la peinture ont tout à gagner à la confrontation. Elles doivent s'influencer et s'enrichir l'une l'autre.

Urs Lüthi n'est pas un peintre qui joue au photographe. (Si jeu il y a il est ailleurs) Non il se place d'emblée sur ce plan-là, à un bon niveau, rejoignant les préoccupations de la jeune photographie américaine telle qu'elle s'exprime notamment dans les livres édités par Lustrum Press.

On peut préférer, dans sa force, le classicisme d'Avedon qui, au musée d'Art moderne de New York, en huit photographies magistrales, bouleversantes, nous montre un homme détruit par la mort : son père. Mais les neuf portraits de lui-même que Lüthi nous propose ne sont pas sans qualité, loin de là. Le jeune artiste se présente à nous arrogant et fardé dans une pose qui aurait séduit Raphaël et finalement cassé le cheveu blanchi, ridé, au seuil de la mort. Entre les deux extrêmes la décomposition opère.

Chaque portrait est accompagné d'un paysage impressionniste (par exemple une image de route parcourue à vive allure pour la première photo) agissant comme révélateur et comme ces notes au piano vibrant « en sympathie » d'octave en octave lors qu'on touche l'une d'elle, prolongeant l'impression un peu brutale que le vieillissement artificiel provoque en nous.

Tout cela, en somme, est assez simple mais réalisé avec intelligence et une sensibilité narcissique et provocatrice qui n'est pas sans attrait.

Ce n'est pas là du grand art mais l'expérience et intéressante et montre, une fois encore, la richesse de la photographie et l'attrait qu'elle exerce sur tous les artistes.

Michel Nuridsany.

(1) Galerie Stadler, 51, rue de Seine.

Szarkowski

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1974

Photography

Avedon's Father, Adams' Nature, Siskind's Homage

Portrait of Richard Avedon's father, one month before he died of cancer.
"The sitter is not a celebrity, so there is no public image to contradict"

By GENE THORNTON

ONE thing that Ansel Adams, Richard Avedon and Aaron Siskind have in common is that all three are virtuoso performers with the camera. That is about the only thing they have in common, except the pure accident that all three are currently having exhibitions in New York.

Richard Avedon's show, at the Museum of Modern Art through June 16, is a small group of portraits of an old man dying. Six enormous shots, unframed and unmounted, hang limp and curling in a tiny gray-painted room with two smaller portraits conventionally mounted and framed. At the age of 79, when the first pictures were taken, the old man had just remarried. His hair is still dark (dyed?), his skin is tanned by the Florida sun, and he looks no more puzzled and lost than an average successful, still-active business man has a right to be.

He is, however, dying of cancer, as we learn from a helpful wall label, and in the portraits, even the portraits of his dying father, do seem to lack the classic, calm finality of truth that puts the superficially similar portraits of Diane Arbus in a class by themselves.

By GENE THORNTON

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He is, however, dying of cancer, as we learn from a helpful wall label, and in the next pictures, taken two years later, his hair is white, his skin pale and transparent, and the nervous distress evident even in the first pictures seems to have turned inwards. The third "take" is a single enormous head shot taken in the hospital three days after an unsuccessful operation for primary cancer of the liver. The old man is alert and almost determined. In the last group, however, taken less than a month before his death at 83, everything is faded and drowned in light. He is feeble and disorganized. The skull is visible beneath the skin, and the eyes bug out as if he were staring straight at the Angel of Death.

*

These pictures are taken in Avedon's ugly, distressing style in which every wrinkle and blemish is magnified and the subject is caught—or so this viewer suspects—in moments of wholly atypical dopeyness. Usually Avedon reserves this style for celebrities whose glamorous public image it contradicts, producing the effect of shocking revelation. In this instance, the sitter is not a celebrity, so there is no public image to contradict. However, he does happen to be the photographer's father, as the helpful wall label once again makes clear, so the average conventional viewer (whose voice I try to be) is bound to ask what kind of son it could be who would take such pictures of his dying father, yet.

This question distracts from the images themselves, but not enough to allay my suspicions that in these pictures, as in Avedon's down-putting celebrity portraits, the effect comes more from the virtuoso style than from any real penetration of the

portraits, even the portraits of his dying father, do seem to lack the classic, calm finality of truth that puts the superficially similar portraits of Diane Arbus in a class by themselves.

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This question distracts from the images themselves, but not enough to allay my suspicions that in these pictures, as in Avedon's down-putting celebrity portraits, the effect comes more from the virtuoso style than from any real penetration of the subject matter. Despite my admiration, I cannot rid myself of the suspicion that the bizarre twists and turns of expression, like the searching examination of stubble and pore, do not necessarily connect with the real thoughts and feelings of the sitter. When so much theatrical brilliance is offered one feels a censorious prig to ask for more. But Avedon's

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

May 6, 1974

PHOTOGRAPHY

RICHARD AVEDON—Eight extraordinary and disturbing photographs of Jacob Israel Avedon, taken by his son between 1967 and 1973, when the father died of cancer, at the age of eighty-three. These are not portraits of an individual but anatomies of aging, suffering, and fear of death; they are almost unbearably painful. Avedon is the most conceptual of photographic portraitists—all his portraits express ideas about humanity rather than the particulars of personality—but never, perhaps, has his transcendence been more effective and free of the artifice that adheres to many of his portraits of beautiful models and famous people. A chronology of Jacob Israel Avedon's difficult and outwardly unremarkable life has been printed up by the museum, and it reinforces, with its bare enumeration of sad and mundane occasions, the pessimism of the photographs. Through June 16. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. Weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9; Sundays, noon to 6.)

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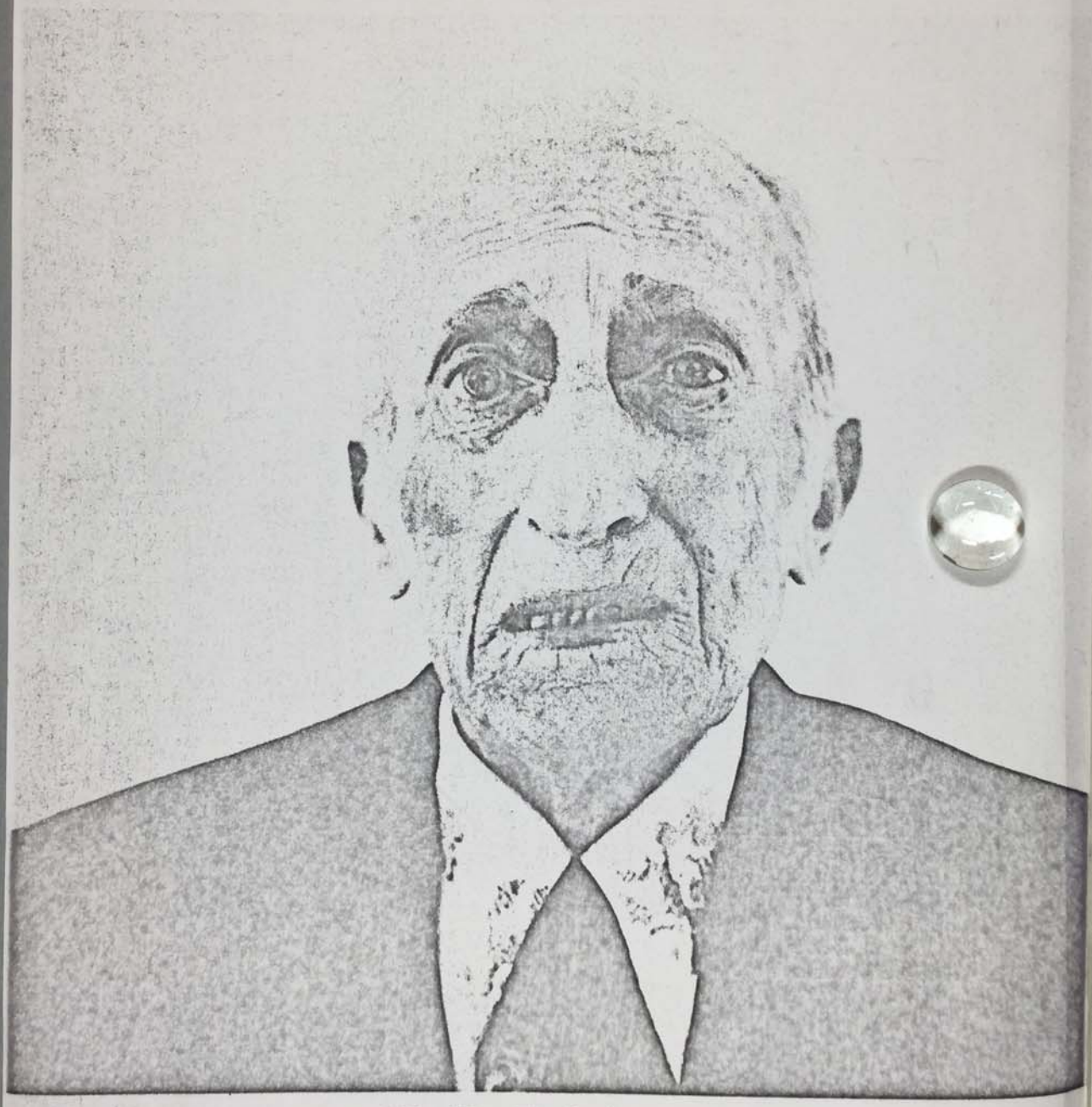
ARTNEWS SUMMER 74

tions of their art only during the 15th and 16th centuries when they began to treat book illustrations as discreet, naturalistic pictures. An early example of the new naturalism is the Egmont Breviary; later examples include such remarkable books as the Hours of Queen Eleanor of Portugal and the Hours of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese by Giulio Clovio.

The Morgan exhibition closes on July 31. Until then, it offers visitors an opportunity to survey the art of the Middle Ages that is equalled only in the exhibition rooms of the greatest European libraries. ● HERBERT L. KESSLER

Richard Avedon (Museum of Modern Art): Jacob Israel Avedon, the father of Richard Avedon, was not close or sympathetic to his son. Abandoned as a child by his father, Jacob dedicated his life to the textile business. Towards the end of his life, he retired to Florida, divorced his wife and became, for six years, his son's most powerful model. Unlike the *Vogue* mannequins who stare coyly into the distance, Jacob Avedon looks directly into the camera. The backgrounds are stark white. The edge of the film forms a bleak and black frame for the image. When Jacob Avedon fell ill with terminal cancer, the photographic sessions continued. His brow contracts. His skin turns white and transparent. His mouth twists in pain and paralysis. His face becomes a wide-eyed anguished skull. Richard could no longer bear to develop the film and simply stored the rolls after each session. Now, after Jacob's death, they are a remarkable elegy, an assertion not of life after death but of life in the face of death. ● MICHAEL ANDRÉ



AVEDON

"Jacob Israel Avedon," the last portrait taken by the celebrated American photographer Richard Avedon of his father, the culmination of a series of hundreds of such portraits of his father that Avedon made over the past six years, a selection of which are shown this month and until June 16 at The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Father and so breakin the barrier isolatio

BY BARBARA R

This month two shows ink famous sons to fath ne through acceptance nent, the other throug esistance—instrumenta heir sons' strong, creati At The Museum of Mo rd Avedon's photograp —the subject that has a ecent years—are shock erity and candor, expo he photographer unkno ic. Accompanying The Guggenheim Museum's pective show of over aintings, sculptures, graphics by sculptor Alb tti are paintings by his anni, as well as his co nd his godfather, Cur eading Swiss Post-Impr

Capturing the mood essimism that dominat hinking in the postwar e 's angular figures and dified heads with their v yes have become familia he *Angst* and uneasiness ur anxious age. A fam Montparnasse cafés until 966, Giacometti linked rt and literary worlds riendship with poets an amuel Beckett. Essentiall shared Beckett's view of s isolated and alienated, y his inability to commun ellowmen, confronting hich values and meanings ast into doubt. In their ompression, Giacometti's arely mobile (Continued

GIA

Fathers and sons: breaking the barriers of isolation

BY BARBARA ROSE

This month two shows in New York link famous sons to fathers who were—one through acceptance and encouragement, the other through rejection and resistance—instrumental in forming their sons' strong, creative personalities. At The Museum of Modern Art, Richard Avedon's photographs of his father—the subject that has absorbed him in recent years—are shocking in their severity and candor, exposing a side of the photographer unknown to the public. Accompanying The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's major retrospective show of over two hundred paintings, sculptures, drawings, and graphics by sculptor Alberto Giacometti are paintings by his father, Giovanni, as well as his cousin Augusto and his godfather, Cuno Amiet, all leading Swiss Post-Impressionists.

Capturing the mood of existential pessimism that dominated European thinking in the postwar era, Giacometti's angular figures and distorted, simplified heads with their vacant, staring eyes have become familiar symbols of the *Angst* and uneasiness provoked by our anxious age. A familiar figure in Montparnasse cafés until his death in 1966, Giacometti linked the Parisian art and literary worlds through his friendship with poets and the writer Samuel Beckett. Essentially, Giacometti shared Beckett's view of modern man as isolated and alienated, immobilized by his inability to communicate with his fellowmen, confronting a world in which values and meanings had all been cast into doubt. In their fragility and compression, Giacometti's attenuated, barely mobile (Continued on page 198)

GIACOMETTI

"Elie Lotar," the last portrait bust in bronze by Swiss-born Parisian Alberto Giacometti—an original and visionary artist—whose work for the first time is combined with paintings by his father, Giovanni Giacometti, in a retrospective show until June 23 at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The photograph above, by Herbert Matter, is part of Matter's photographic essay on Giacometti, to be published in the fall of 1975.

FATHERS AND SONS

(Continued from page 147)

striding or standing figures—typical of his late style—express this sense of personal withdrawal, of the conditional relationship of modern man to his unstable world. In his surrealist works of the 'thirties and 'forties—which many critics consider his greatest sculptures—Giacometti frequently placed figures or objects that were often sexual metaphors in cages symbolizing the spiritual imprisonment and isolation of modern man.

Comparing the bleak world of Giacometti with the sunny scenes of happy family life painted by his father, Giovanni, one realizes how much family ties once meant and how much we have lost in human contact through the fragmentation of the family. Despite his obsession with isolated figures, Alberto Giacometti remained close to his family, who supported him both spiritually and financially. His brother Diego was his assistant and modeled for the sculptor's most celebrated colossal heads with narrow proportions and enlarged features reminiscent of the mysterious heads found on Easter Island. For although Giacometti did not represent men as "heroes" in the classical sense, his standing figures are defiantly upright, his portraits deliberately frontal, demanding confrontation, indicating that he identified dignity and courage as modern forms of heroism.

Modern painting and sculpture frequently deal with the human condition in terms so general and universal they border on the abstract. Often Giacometti's generalized faces and bodies seem to lack individuality; it is difficult to identify the subject of his portraits, because his emphasis is on the universality of the human condition as opposed to the specificity of the features of any single individual. Because it records the fact of a specific person, portrait photography is by definition more concrete. To make a universal statement, the photographer must convince us that the subject represents Everyman—that we may, in some way, empathize with that person's experience.

Richard Avedon's portraits of his father are summations of the complex life of one man. In contrast with Giacometti's closeness to his father, which permitted him to follow his father's footsteps as an artist without conflict, Avedon's ruptured relationship with his father is typical of the American family.

Born in Russia, Jacob Israel Avedon was two when the family arrived in America in 1891. His childhood was spent in an orphanage, because his father deserted the family. Eventually, Jacob Israel changed his name to Allan Jack Avedon, made a considerable fortune in the dress business, suffered castastrophic reversals during the Depression, rebuilt the business, and retired to Florida in his seventies. The elder Avedon completely rejected his son's interest in art. "When I brought home a poem," Richard Avedon recalls, "my father said nothing, except to show me where I had left out a comma."

"At forty I realized that I didn't know my father; in fact, that I felt I didn't have a father. For the next ten years I worked to know him and finally he worked with me. At first we talked in his language, the language of business; but six years ago it seemed necessary that he should understand me as I had come to understand him. He began to cooperate actively in this, to learn the techniques of my kind of photography as well as my intention in photographing him. Do you see the expression in his eyes? He is looking at you, confronting you. He was not looking at me. He was looking directly into the lens of the camera."

When photographer Avedon learned his father had a terminal illness, he stopped printing the photographs; the negatives were sealed and only opened recently after his father's death last fall. "My father taught me how to die. During the last year of his life, he put his affairs in perfect order; he arranged his own funeral, which was no funeral, and chose the box that would hold his ashes. He left the hospital to come swimming with me at a big Miami hotel. He was an ordinary man, but he was determined to die like a hero. I wanted these photographs to show him as he was: all the hunger, the anger, the courage, and, above all, the dignity."

Modern artists seem to be saying that to face man's fate with dignity and courage is the heroic act of our time. In this sense, Avedon chose to see his own father as Everyman. ▽

BISEXUALITY

(Continued from page 197)

Oh, there is one other thing I want to tell you. It's what my analyst gave as an explanation as to why I am bisexual. He said there was no such thing as bisexual, that I was really homosexual.

This was his problem.

My mother was an epileptic. A grand mal epileptic. And he said seeing her seizures aroused me sexually. All right?

Do you accept this?

I think it's as good an explanation as any. I have tried very hard to revisualize, but never, never with any sexual results . . . sexual feelings of any kind.

Did your psychiatrist explain what his reasoning about the origin of your bisexuality was?

Well, a seizure looked very much like a person involved in an orgasm, so that's the connection.

It's an interesting point, but a rather tenuous one.

That's what I thought. But it's acceptable to me as a life experience of my own, and if this is one of the results, okay.

Well, it's intriguing, whether it's valid or not.

But there are so many other things that happen, we can never really isolate anything. I don't know that my mother was an especially seductive mother. I don't think so, but I thought that you would find the idea interesting. ▽

EAT YOUNG

(Continued from page 191)

said Dr. Blackburn, and to this end he has become involved in a gigantic study called MR. FIT—an acronym for Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial. Under the U.S. Public Health Service's National Heart and Lung Institute (NHLI), this survey will cost ten million dollars each year and is scheduled to take six years.

In an initial study group, several thousand people will receive proper, regular medical care to reduce their risk of at some time developing heart disease. An equal number will be given care, too, in a different style. They will undergo really strong intervention measures—nutrition counseling, stop-smoking clinics, drugs, and diet control. The goal with this group, says Dr. Blackburn, is to reduce their smoking by at least 25 percent to 40 percent, to cut down blood-cholesterol levels by 10 percent, and to lower high blood pressure by 10 percent. And then to find by careful analysis whether these methods work. If they do, America's life-style must be changed if the heart-disease epidemic is to be conquered.

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

The New York Times

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 1974

By HILTON KRAMER

Richard Avedon (Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53d Street): The eight oversize photographs of the artist's faher, Jacob Israel Avedon, that make up this exhibition constitute a pretty harrowing experience. We are invited to observe, at very close quarters and with an almost radical intimacy, as age and disease (cancer of the liver) overtake the subject, and very little—neither the terror nor the resignation—is spared us. It is not something the more tenderhearted among us will relish.

Yet there is a dignity in this unabashed enterprise that is finally more affecting than the undeniable sense of shock that we feel on our initial encounter. We see the elder Avedon, in all his anguish and resentment, with such clarity and precision that the very absence of evasion softens our horror and transforms our response into something more than morbid curiosity. We feel ourselves, oddly enough, intensely in touch with life—and with a side of life that rarely, if ever, is captured in the art of any medium.

We cannot help being aware, too, of the filial drama that is being enacted in these pictures, and this necessarily adds a further, difficult emotion to the entire experience. The eight pictures were taken between 1967 and 1973, when the elder Avedon succumbed just before his 84th birthday.

There has often been an element of voyeuristic thrill in Richard Avedon's portrait photographs, and for this reason it would be easy—but mistaken, I think—to dismiss this work as yet another exercise in facile sensation. His closest affinity, in these portraits of his father, is actually with the work of the late Diane Arbus, who taught us to look with fresh eyes at many sides of life from which the camera had traditionally remained aloof. Mr. Avedon has brought a similar courage and affection to his "forbidden" subject, and the result will forever alter the way we think about such subjects in the future.

Richard Avedon al Museo d'arte moderna di New York

V 33

Richard Avedon, forse il più noto fotografo di moda di tutti i tempi, sapeva che suo padre era condannato. Per sei anni ha documentato, si può dire giorno dopo giorno, i progressi della malattia, in una serie di immagini: affettuosa pietà e crudo realismo ne fanno un documento eccezionale e agghiacciante. Un centinaio di queste fotografie (ne riproduciamo due fra le ultimissime) sono ora esposte al Museo d'Arte Moderna di New York.

ART NEWS
SUMMER 74

Portrait of the portraitist

"I think of myself as an underground artist—no one knows or has seen the kind of work, the portraiture that I've been doing for the past ten years." So says Richard Avedon, the fashion photographer, who adds that he has never been successful by his own standards, and is almost apologetic for his commercial success. For all his acclaim, the fact that Avedon has never up till now had a museum show in New York does rankle and his work is often judged, he feels, by preconceived notions of "the perfumed halls" of women's fashion magazines.

His current show, at the Museum of Modern Art, consists of eight portraits of his father, Jacob Israel Avedon, taken when he was 81 to 87 years old. Jacob Avedon was born in the province of Grodna, Russia, in 1889. After immigrating to this country, he operated a blouse shop and, among other things, worked as a buyer for the Tailored Woman and as a substitute schoolteacher in Hell's Kitchen. He died last year.

"That is not my father on the wall," Avedon says. "They are photos of my father. They are the way in which I express my feelings about him, how he expresses his towards me, the way he reacts to being photographed—in the end it's something that has been made. It is not reality."

Avedon, an intense, attractive man of 51, was once high-school poet laureate of New York City and co-editor with James Baldwin of the DeWitt Clinton High School literary magazine. He has been a fashion photographer for such magazines as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* for almost 30 years.

"When I do an advertisement or a page for a fashion magazine," he said, "my function is to sell either the issue or the product. That's what I have to do, and I am good at it. But it's far from the most meaningful part of my creative life."

He sees the great advantage in being a fashion photographer as enabling him to be "my own Ford Foundation, my own Guggenheim granter," providing him with the only way he can afford to do the work that is most important to him. He notes that Edward Steichen, whom he admires greatly, started as a commercial photographer.

Richard Avedon, *Jacob Israel Avedon*, photograph, 1973.

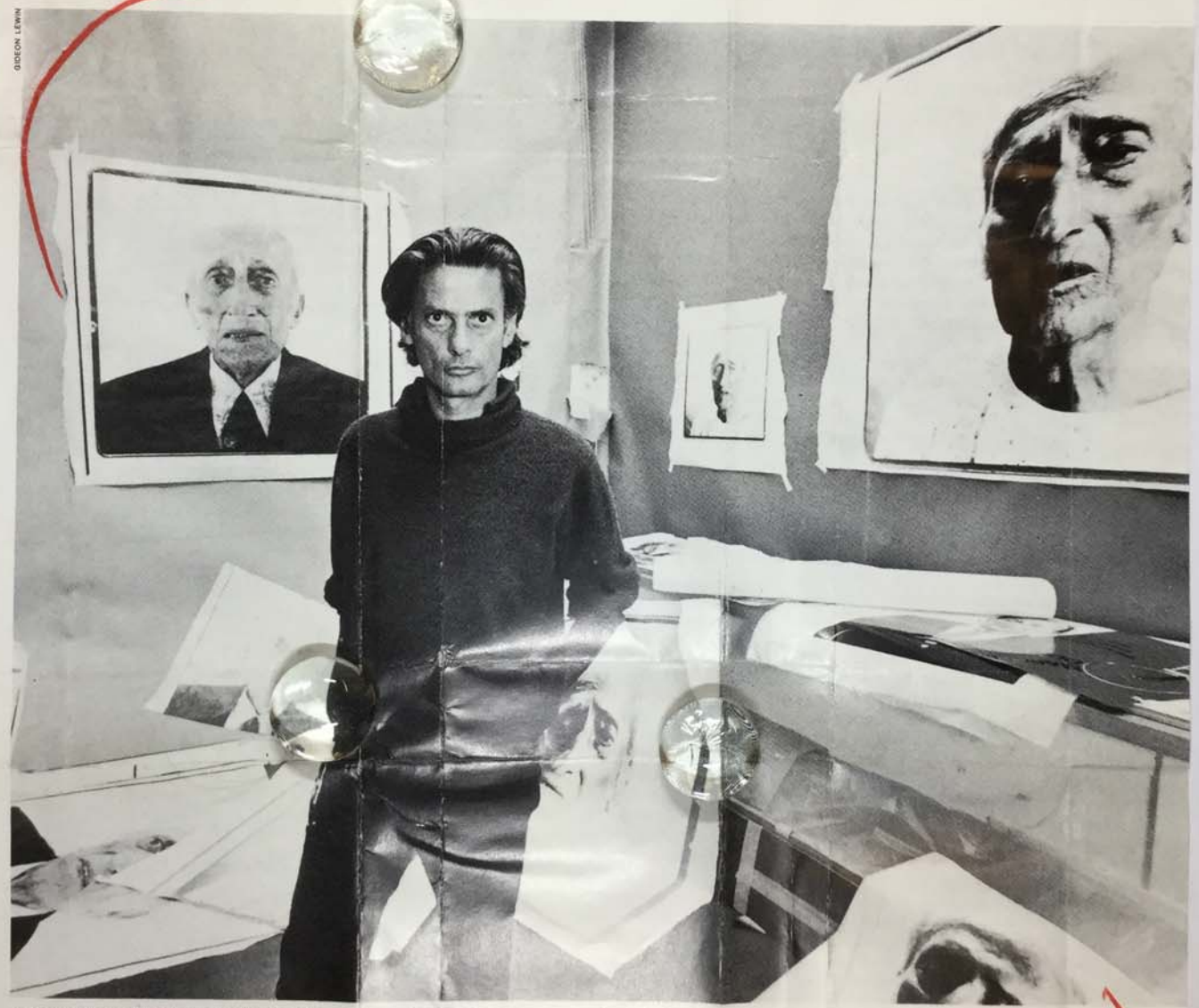
"My fashion work is completely commercial photography—it always has been, and I separate that from the photographs that I am not paid to do. That's the work I'm most interested in."

He considers important his 9-by-35-foot photo tableau of the Mission Council in Saigon, the power structure that directed the United States involvement in Vietnam. (Why so large? "I see the group itself as being of mythical proportions"); portraits of Isak Dinesen, Oscar Levant, Andy Warhol, Stravinsky and Eisenhower.

"I work every day. I constantly photograph, the way some people speak. It is the language that I am most comfortable with. You should be reading the photos or listening to them. There's much more there to learn about me that way than by listening to me." ■

Review of Richard Avedon exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art on page 126.

GIDEON LEWIN



AVEDON sr. VISTO DA AVEDON jr.: UNA ECCEZIONALE MOSTRA AL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART DI NEW YORK

Otto ritratti di Jacob Israel Avedon, fotografato da Richard Avedon: questo il materiale della singolare mostra che durerà dal 1° maggio al 16 giugno al Museum di New York. Solo otto ritratti del padre dell'artista, presi fra il 1967 e il 1973 (anno della morte di Jacob Israel) sono sufficienti a rappresentare la statura di un fotografo contemporaneo e ancora attivo ma già collocabile fra i più grandi di tutti i tempi, eccezionale ritrattista e fotografo di moda, che Vogue ha valorizzato e che con il suo genio ha, di rimando, valorizzato Vogue. L'allestimento della mostra, che si intitola semplicemente *Jacob Israel Avedon*, è stato curato da Marvin Israel, una artista che recentemente ha esposto i suoi dipinti alla Cordier Ekstrom Gallery e che sta curando la grafica del libro *The Avedon Woman*, di prossima pubblicazione.

Nella foto sopra: Richard Avedon nel suo studio mentre sceglie i ritratti del padre per la mostra al Museum of Modern Art di New York. La foto è stata scattata da Gideon Lewin.

MARZONI

VILLAGE VOICE
NEW YORK, N. Y.
W. 147,111

MAY 9 1974

Richard Avedon: An unusual and touching expression of filial-piety—portrait-documentation with 8 emulsion treated canvases of this famous photographer's father who died at 84. In explaining the pictures Avedon writes "Whatever happened between us was important to us but it is not important to the pictures." The biography of Jacob Israel Avedon *is* essential to these works. As a first N.Y. show this is a puzzling selection. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, 956-6100, through June 16) (FMcD)

VV

POST

art

Michael Todd

Michael Todd: Caligraphic sculptures of welded steel throughout which unfold emotional content in a narrative manner all too uncommon to the conventional "drawing in space" stance taken by much current non-objective sculpture. It is work full of surprises and rewards. (Zabriskie Gallery, 29 West 57th Street, through May 25) (AA) VVV

El Dorado, The Gold of Ancient Columbia: Most Precolumbian Gold objects were made and used for personal adornment. The breathtaking intricacy, wit and originality of forms in this quiet installation of an extraordinary treasure become even more impressive with the realization of how much else was lost in the plundering of the Spanish conquest. Hairpins, clasps, noserings of exquisite formal simplification are on view and should not be missed. An excellent film accompanies the exhibition. (Center for Inter-American Relations, 680 Park Avenue, through July 28) (AA) VVV

Richard Avedon: An unusual and touching expression of filial-piety—portrait-documentation with 8 emulsion treated canvases of this famous photographer's father who died at 84. In explaining the pictures Avedon writes "Whatever happened between us was important to us but it is not important to the pictures." The biography of Jacob Israel Avedon *is* essential to these works. As a first N.Y. show this is a puzzling selection. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, 956-6100, through June 16) (FMcD) VV

Village Voice 5/9/74

Changes JUNE 1974

Richard Avedon: the decision was agonizing...

(Photograph by Sy Johnson)

Jacob Israel Avedon; March, 1969, photographed by Richard Avedon.

By SY JOHNSON

Richard Avedon has had a priority on luck. In 1945, at the tender age of 22, he came to *Harper's Bazaar* as the protege of its fabled art director, Alexey Brodovitch. Within a year he was firmly established as the *enfant terrible* of fashion photography, and 29 years later he is still firmly at the top of his profession. When the Charles Revson-Lauren Hutton deal was making headlines last year, the third party in that *Ultima II* million dollar contract went virtually unnoticed — photographer Richard Avedon. It was generally assumed that if Revson was spending that much money on his fashion campaign, who else would he get but Avedon?

This same Richard Avedon is one of the great portraitists of our time. Most makers of photographic portraits earn their living from their sitters, and the best of the breed specialize in making their subjects larger than life: the heroes become more heroic, the women more beautiful. Avedon moved from that romantic early vision to a harsh penetrating glimpse into private hells. His early pictures of Chaplin and Picasso were universally admired. The new work gazes with unblinking intensity at the ravages of time and pain. It is not universally admired.

"I'm drawn to photographs in which the light is raw and the defenses are down. Whenever I become absorbed in the beauty of a face, in the excellence of a single feature, I feel I've lost what's really there — seduced by someone else's standard of beauty or by the sitter's own idea of the best in him. So each sitting becomes a contest.

"I prefer to work in the studio. People become symbolic of themselves when they are taken out of their environment. It's a stylistic necessity for me — the sense of people isolated from the comfort of furniture and rooms and things that give them security.

"I have to engage the subject. Otherwise, there's nothing to photograph. The concentration comes from me and involves them. Sometimes the force of it grows so strong that sounds in the studio go unheard. Time stops. We share a brief intense intimacy. But it's unearned. It has no past — no future.

"When the sitting is over, when the picture is over, all that's left is the photograph and a kind of embarrassment. They leave, and I don't know them. If I meet them a week later I expect they won't recognize me, because I don't feel I was there. At least the part of me that was, is now in the photograph. The photographs have a reality that the people don't. It's through the photographs that I know them.

"Why a sitting is crucial to me is the deepest kind of question. When it stopped being crucial, I stopped working. That was 1964. When I say working I mean my portraits which I've always felt to be my deepest work. I photograph almost every day of my life, except certain weekends when the weather is good and I make a living as a photographer. I'm never paid for what you're looking at in this room. In a sense, portraits or variations on that theme are the totally uncorruptible aspect of my life. Nobody pays for them. Nobody wants them.

"When I began making portraits without that particular kind of intensity, when my heart stopped pounding — which it does when I care about a sitting — I felt that I had no right to photograph anymore. I didn't work for four years. In life you understand that friendship and love can't go on forever at the pitch they start. But if an artist drops from that pitch, the work shows it. If I couldn't have started it going in myself — the freshness, the urgency, the necessity — I would never have photographed again."

When the appetite to make pictures became precious and crucial again, Avedon took steps to force himself to come back alive. He abandoned the Rolleiflex camera, which he felt was too easy, and embraced the most cumbersome and demanding camera system in the world, the 8 x 10 view camera. He took days of test pictures until he knew how he wanted to fill the frame.

"That portrait of Renata Adler was the first I did after years of not working, and it was done with my 8 x 10 camera. If she had moved an eighth of an inch to the right or to the left, she wouldn't have been where I wanted her to be. That meant I had to control it. I had to work, and it had to be — again — unsure. I can now return to the Rolleiflex, because I can work again. I had to use the 8 x 10 camera for a long while in order to make it not a reflex — aren't Rolleiflexes called "reflex" cameras?"

In 1963, Avedon felt a need to become close to his father, Jacob Israel Avedon, who had retired to Florida, after a career in the dress business. "He rejected everything that was important to me. When I brought home a poem, he said nothing except to show me where I had left out a comma."

When Avedon failed to get his high school diploma, his father predicted he would wind up driving a cab. Instead, he joined the Merchant Marines. "My job was to identify photographs. I must have taken pictures of maybe one hundred thousand faces before it occurred to me I was becoming a photographer." When he got out he enrolled in the New School to study with Alexey Brodovitch and found himself a surrogate father.

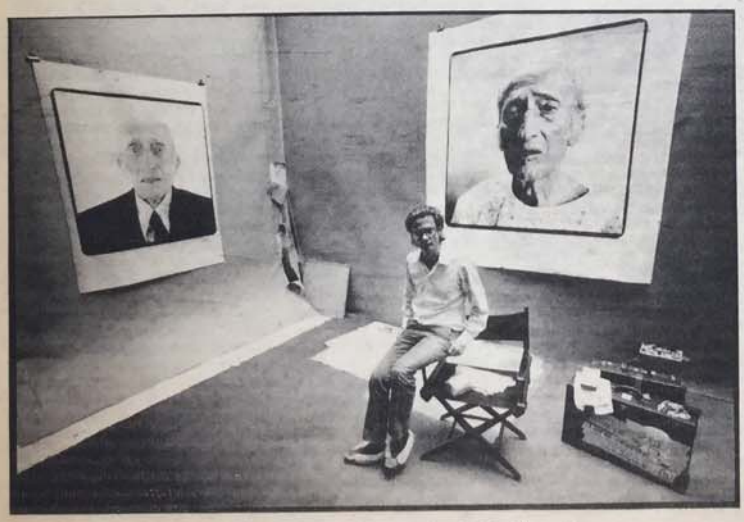
"When my father rejected me, it destroyed me. Brodovitch taught by rejection. He just threw away everything he didn't like. And I worked my ass off to please him. He was a fantastic teacher. But one time when I was 24 or 25, I had one of those problems that seemed overwhelming, and I felt close enough to want to talk to him about it. After all, we worked together every day. But he didn't want to know about it. He just sat there."

At first Avedon went into the Real Estate business with his father in Florida. "He was most at ease in the world of work and the language of business. My own work had always been removed from him. But in learning his business, a dialogue began that was different from anything else in our lifetime. It became necessary that he enjoy me. He had never understood what my work was about. He appreciated it, admired it, but one man doesn't know what another man goes through to accomplish his work. Work was the deepest part of his life, as it was the deepest part of mine."

Seven years ago Avedon began to photograph his father. The communication didn't be-

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jacob Israel Avedon; August 25, 1973, photographed by Richard Avedon.



Richard Avedon in his studio (photographed by Sy Johnson).

gin immediately. Avedon said in 1970: "Whenever he poses for me, he smiles and becomes benign, gentle – and somehow wise. My photographs show his impatience. I love that quality in him. He isn't interested in the fact that he looks his age, eighty-three, and is still fantastically vibrant and angry and hungry and alive. He's more interested in looking sage. So my sense of what's beautiful is very different from his."

"Through the photographic sessions, a great deal opened up between us. I don't mean to imply that what happened was directly connected to photography. It was all very oblique. I think it was the first time he saw me completely as myself. The interesting thing is that what happened between us is of absolutely no importance anymore. What's left are the photographs, and the information in them is self-contained. In some way, they are free of both of us.

"These portraits of my father go deeper than any portraits I've done. For one thing, I've never returned to a sitter over and over again. That in itself begins to build a reciprocal, collaborative series of occurances. I had exhausted the possibilities of strangers. I had much more knowledge of this man than people whom I visit for a short period of time and leave with some small idea of who they are. That isn't to say that photographs record anything, because I don't think that they do. *All* photography is fictional. That isn't my father on the wall. That's a photograph of my father. One tends to think that, in a photograph, there is a record of something seen in an objective way. That's impossible, nor is it even interesting to try to achieve. If that's what I wanted, I wouldn't be a photographer."

The decision to exhibit the photographs was an agonizing one. One senses that Avedon is not at all certain he hasn't used his father in some monstrous fashion.

"In the summers, I work in Europe for a few weeks. Last August when I returned, I flew down to see him. We had a terrific weekend. Talked, ate, photographed, and I left Sunday night. Monday morning, he stopped eating. Six days later he was dead. There's no question

Jacob Israel Avedon, photographed by Richard Avedon, December 19, 1972.

in my mind that he wanted to see me once more, possibly to be photographed once more. It was no secret to him. He knew what the photographs were like, what they were about, and he wanted to be part of it. He also knew he wanted his life to be over. I think the last sitting was important to him, and I think that's why the photographs look the way they look. I know they were taken with my father's full knowledge of what I was doing."

A viewer at the Museum of Modern Art might well be disappointed. A small room contains eight photographs, all enormous, all quite similar in expression. The difference is that the earliest show a vigorous man with dark hair and firm countenance, the last show an old sick man staring at death. "Somebody can walk in and say: 'There's only eight photographs. What's the big deal?' But it's a very precise expression to me. They are in there because they are the most expressive of my work."

Avedon feels that if people could forget about labels and just respond to the photography, they wouldn't get caught up in the present implications of his portraits. "Before, it was 'look what he did to Eisenhower.' Now it's 'Look what he's done to his father.' Well, in five years, those pictures of my father will become part of the larger body of my work, and the consistent line of it will come through; these will just be eight of five hundred portraits.

"There's a book by Sander, in which he says 'musician'. I don't think he says it's Schoenberg. He just gives his subjects work titles. Some of them are very eminent people. It doesn't matter. The work holds. And I would hope that happens to my work."

Sy Johnson is a jazz pianist, arranger and composer.

Lucas Samaris: Transfigured, mutilated, fragmented and abstracted...

By LOIS GREENFIELD

According to the myth, a young Greek thespian named Narcissus fell in love with his own image. This self-absorption doomed him to destruction: transfixed by his reflection, he was transformed into a flower. It's a legend that might well describe the inner passion of Greek born artist Lucas Samaras. Fascinated by his own image, Samaras is obsessed with manipulating it – even to the point of obliteration.

In his new series, entitled "Photo-transformations," recently on exhibit at the Pace Gallery, Samaras exposes his body and psyche to the mirror of the camera. He enters its mysterious space and emerges on the other side of the looking glass – transfigured, mutilated, fragmented and abstracted.

With himself as sole protagonist, Samaras creates sado-masochistic dramas in his kitchen/workroom. He plays many roles: demon and saint, male and female, monster and clown and – most importantly – terrorist and terrorized. In this theater of the mind, he is pierced by thorns, riddled with bullet holes and trapped in a profusion of amoeboid particles. Sometimes converted into a prickly monster or a demon of phallic protrusions, he reigns over his own hell.

A picture of a porcupine monster standing at the entrance to his darkened kitchen is an apt paradigm of his multiple being. Echoed by his human shadow on the wall and armed with a beam of light radiating from his absent genitals, he penetrates his own mindspace like a burglar in the night.

How does he do it? These hallucinations are effected by manually spreading and etching the photographic emulsion of the Polaroid SX-70 during its development. Isolated from the resulting extravagant color swirls and textured patterns which dominate many of his pictures are his sensory organs. Highlighted in red and green, they become a dramatic focus for his grotesque and exquisite abstractions. His screaming mouth turns into a seething furnace, eager to consume his fingers. His bulging eyes radiate a fierce glow, and his hands form a defensive barrier or – cupped together into a pseudo-orifice – invite penetration.

The thematic and stylistic preoccupations inherent in these photo-transformations recall Samaras's works of the 1960s. In the "chair transformations," he initiated a critique of an object's unique physical manifestation; the conceptual variety of alternate chair structures questioned the immutability of a preconceived form. The spikes, furs and strings which differentiated his "boxes" later became the dotted and linear patterns in his assisted "auto-polaroids."

In these auto-polaroids he finally

PHOTOGRAPHY

focused his artistic energies inward. Besides portraying himself in different personae and in surrealistic composites, Samaras put together sequences juxtaposing phallic and ingestive imagery. Vestiges of this oral/genital confusion, epitomized by a shot of a knife and fork pointing at a candle on his crotch, are still present in his recent work.

Besides incorporating old themes, Samaras' new photo-transformations explore his egotism's hidden dynamic and ensuing contradiction — the tension of being simultaneously actor and director. His identity oscillates between omnipotent artist/perpetrator and helpless subject/victim. Among his astonishing self-manipulations he intersperses reminders that he is his own brutalizer: unaltered polaroids show Samaras clutching the camera's cable release while posing for himself. Even when his image is entirely annihilated, it is Samaras who constructs its replacement. By presiding over and controlling his own demise, he reaffirms his own existence.

In the self-containment of his mirrored universe, Samaras generates an inexhaustible repertory of reflections. And by the conscious act of creation, this modern day Narcissus escapes his mythic fate.

Lois Greenfield is a freelance writer and photographer.

Photo-transformation by Lucas Samaris (photographed by Al Mozell)

Photo-transformation by Lucas Samaris.

Photo-transformation by Lucas Samaris (photographed by Al Mozell).

He penetrates his own mind-space like a burglar in the night.

le arti della comunicazione visiva, la grafica, la pittura, la fotografia, son venute proponendo negli anni. Pur nella eterogeneità delle sue ricerche e quindi nella varietà dei suoi risultati, alle volte persino in forte contrasto tra di loro, Palazzi si salva dal generico per avere sentito e portato fino in fondo le sue esperienze.

Per il resto, anche se non mancano delle buone immagini (Vistali, Sorlini, Saccaro...), questa rassegna non risponde, se non talvolta sul piano del mero contenuto, a quanto il prof. Boni, Sindaco della città, ha scritto in apertura del volume: « Dopo la grande catastrofe la gente apriva gli occhi piena di voglia di vedere con pupille diverse ».

(A. A.)

A LONG THE RIVERUN - immagini e introduzione di John Brook - ed. The Scrimshaw Press - lire 6.500

Uno strano, affascinante album tra il sogno e la realtà di una vita in riva ad un fiume. Potrebbe essere un album di famiglia intimo, o la fantasia di un amore, o una poesia in immagini, o anche tutto vero. La prima lettura lascia solo un'impressione estetica, per la dolcezza e la proprietà delle fotografie, ma poi l'impressione si fa più profonda e calda, perde il colore di un'apparente facilità a favore di un durevole, incisivo eppure quasi inesprimibile senso di pace. Immagini sagge, queste di Brook, e felici come una vacanze ricordata. Forse non capolavori in senso assoluto, sebbene alcune siano davvero notevoli, ma di quelle che non si dimenticano facilmente. ●

MOSTRE

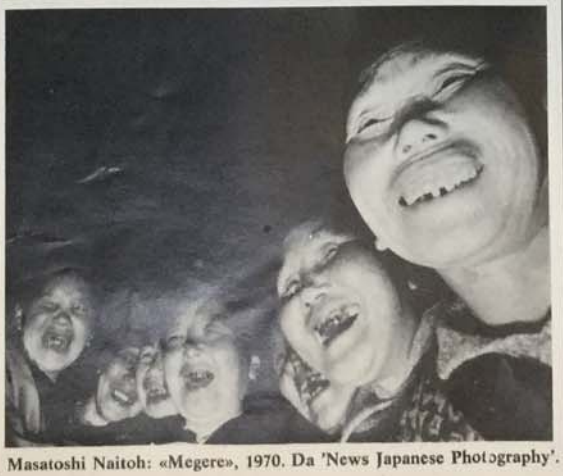
Due al M.O.M.A.

Veramente interessante, anche se per diversi motivi, il fine stagione delle mostre del Museo d'Arte Moderna di New York. Ne abbiamo scelte due significative, perchè insieme ci pare diano il polso del momento, in altalena tra classico e neo-impressionismo.

La prima e più prestigiosa è senz'altro quella firmata da **Richard Avedon**, nome quasi leggendario della fotografia moderna. Ebbene, il grande Richard ha voluto dedicare un omaggio al padre Jacob Israel: lo aveva ripreso più volte nel corso degli ultimi sei anni di vita, in diverse occasioni, portando avanti un progetto di singolare interesse, fotografico ed umano insieme. Se infatti, come dice John Szarkowski, « il fotoritratto è un'arte di enorme difficoltà, ed ancor più quando fotografo e soggetto si conoscono molto bene », perciò l'opera di Avedon assume valore di saggio e di esempio, d'altro canto il rapporto instauratosi tra padre-soggetto e figlio-fotografo è di quelli che merita indagare al di là della mera immagine-risultato. Avedon stesso afferma che: « Era una strada per riconoscerci e riconoscere ciò che eravamo, ma ciò che è accaduto tra noi è stato importante per noi soli, non per le immagini. Esse vivono autonomamente. Ciò che è in esse è auto-contenuto e, in qualche strano modo, libero da entrambi noi ». Sono osservazioni su cui riflettere con attenzione.

Richard Avedon: « Jacob Israel Avedon, 1889-1973 ». Mostra MOMA.

Daidoh Moriyama: « Attrice ».



Masatoshi Naitoh: «Megere», 1970. Da 'News Japanese Photography'.

La seconda mostra, denominata « Nuova fotografia giapponese », diretta in tandem da John Szarkowski e Shoji Yamagishi, ha presentato una grossa scelta (187 fotografie) raccolte come quindici personali di altrettanti autori

S. Tomatsu: « Dopo un tifone ».

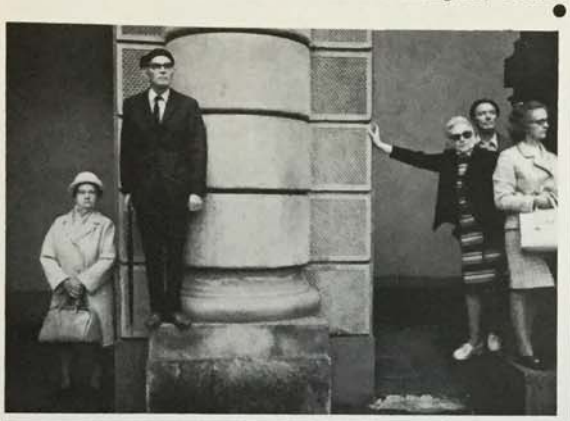
nipponici contemporanei. Il punto focale è l'evidente momento di passaggio, con abbandono del pittorialismo tradizionale, il nuovo fascino post-bellico della tecnica e l'insorgere di una sensibilità per l'immediato, per la descrizione di esperienze del momento vissuto, sino al limite di un sospetto di « surrogato di esperienze ». Dalla mostra è stato tratto un buon volume, edito dal Museo stesso. ●

GALLERIA DELL'IMMAGINE

IL DIAFRAMMA - FOTOGRAFIA ITALIANA SEPT. '74

Stoccolma

Presso il Museo Fotografico del Moderna Museet, simpatica ed interessante mostra di **Otmar Thormann** (vedi F.I., aprile '74). Questa volta l'amico ha preso di mira uno degli avvenimenti turistici più classici della capitale svedese, il cambio della guardia a Palazzo Reale, e per un mese lo ha regolarmente fotografato; però voltandogli le spalle. Il documento è dunque sugli spettatori, sui diversi comportamenti, sulla composizione casuale di gruppi e accostamenti.
Interessante anche l'iniziativa di unire all'invito per l'inaugurazione della mostra tre delle immagini stampate a cartolina postale. Un'idea intelligente, e furba. ●



Non è arte

Qualsiasi cosa possa essere, la fotografia giornalistica non è arte. Lo afferma **Gene Thornton,** critico del « New York Times », recensendo la mostra annuale della New York Press Photographers Association, e giustifica non irragionevolmente l'assunto in questo modo: come riconosciamo un fotografo-artista, un creatore tipo Caponigro, Uelsmann, Strand eccetera? Dal suo stile, che diventa « firma », cioè un modo tutto proprio di accostare i soggetti scelti. Ebbene, questo non può avvenire in chi lavora per la stampa, per i limiti tecnico-psicologici del mestiere in sè, tant'è vero che esiste uno stile universale della fotografia per i giornali, caratterizzata da un'accurata messa a fuoco, un contrasto deciso, grigi ben definiti per una facile riproduzione, inquadratura o taglio studiati per concentrare l'attenzione del lettore. E nessuno, infatti, riesce a distinguere la mano di un fotografo di cronaca da quella di un altro. Ma c'è un altro motivo non meno importante: l'autore della fotografia di stampa non può avere « firma » perché non esprime se stesso, ma ciò che il suo direttore pensa possa essere interessante, il ché taglia le gambe a qualsiasi possibile originalità. Infine, non dimentichiamo la dispersione; ad esempio, di Eddie Adams, fotografo versatile e bravo, noto per la famosissima foto di un'esecuzione per strada a Saigon, sono esposte: un soldato svenuto per la stanchezza e la tensione vicino a Suez, un controluce con bambino e cane, una sequenza sul rilascio dei prigionieri vietcong, una bella ragazza nuda con una mela, un ritratto di un pianista famoso, una curiosa pietra tombale dedicata ad un'automobile. Come volete che possa risultarne uno stile, una « firma » riconoscibile? Nulla di artistico, ma un mestiere. Forse il più disgraziato, misconosciuto mestiere del mondo. ●

Ron Frehm: « Respiro vitale ».

Claude aneddotico

Il linguaggio poetico moderno si è evoluto verso la sintesi, spesso anche scabra o violenta, tesa ad una concentrazione massima di sensazioni. E' la via seguita anche da **Claude Nori,** giovane ma già ben affermato fotografo francese, attraverso i suoi « Aneddoti »: sono immagini-poesie dai

colori calibrati, intensi, stampate per altro con quel procedimento al carbone che forse rimane insuperato nella resa materica. Aneddoti, momenti aggressivi, cesellati da una creatività di buona scuola e non certo effettistica.
Presentata con successo alla « FNAC Etoile » di Parigi, l'opera di Nori avrà la sua prima mostra italiana presso « Il Diaframma », dal 7 al 21 ottobre prossimi: sarà una mostra da visitare senza fretta e sulla quale discutere a fondo, specie da parte di chi ancora ha i sonni turbati dall'eterno dilemma della cerativìtà in fotografia. ●

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SE NE PARLA A NEW YORK

MIO PADRE
Otto ritratti «dipinti» con l'obiettivo dal grande Richard Avedon con soggetto suo padre, Jacob Israel e lo scorrere del tempo che si legge sulle immagini fissate tra il '67 e il '73, prima che morisse: questo il tema della «personale» che il Museo d'Arte Moderna di New York ha voluto dedicare a quello che è considerato uno dei più grandi, se non il più grande, dei fotografi viventi, da anni collaboratore di «Vogue». La mostra, che ha già creato molta attesa, si aprirà a maggio e chiuderà a metà giugno. Nella foto le due generazioni a confronto, Richard davanti a una gigantografia del padre Jacob, durante l'allestimento dell'esposizione.

GIDEON LEWIN

ST MARK IN THE BOWERIE, chiesa sconsacrata tra pile di trash e emigrati portoricani, situata nel quartiere più povero della città. Vi si organizzano a sere alterne « Letture di poesia », capeggiate dall'ex profeta dell'hippismo Allen Ginsberg, protagonisti tutti i giovani virgulti del verso psichedelico, pubblico eterogeneo ma sostanzialmente nel mood esistenzialista degli anni '50.

ST JOHN THE DIVINE, altra chiesa, stavolta protestante e attivissima, per meglio incoraggiare i fedeli ad assistere alle funzioni religiose, con vantaggi per le anime e le tonache, invita personaggi del mondo dello spettacolo ad esibirsi durante la messa: da Martha Graham al re del musical Mr. Rogers, da Joan Sutherland a Ray Connif, sono passati sull'altare del Divino Giovanni, ma il clou è stata la notte di Natale, con Yoko Ono e Elton John.

ROLLER DERBY è il nuovo sport, un'intricata specie di baseball con pattini a rotelle, violenta come il rugby, più veloce dello hockey e praticata con notevole successo dalle donne. Le partite hanno luogo al Madison Square Garden e costituiscono un'esperienza fragorosamente indimenticabile.

POLAR BEAR CLUB, è un'accolta di ottuagenari superlubrificati che trascorre le gelide domeniche invernali nuotando nell'oceano al largo di Coney Island. Gli «Orsi Polari» sono soliti concludere i loro incontri con una colossale mangiata di ostriche che, essendo notori afrodisiaci, lasciano supporre ulteriori attività agonistiche notturne.

MATTACHINE SOCIETY è il nome di una società che figura nelle pagine gialle come «Istituto di studi sociali» e in pratica funziona da centro di smistamento, consultorio, bibbia e confessionale degli omosessuali, sistemando i timidi spaiati, componendo diverbi, organizzando movimenti di protesta e gite collettive nei luoghi del piacere.

BAM è la sigla della Brooklyn Academy of Music, un grande complesso ottocentesco in stile rococò sorto nel bel mezzo del diseredato quartiere e risuscitato quest'anno da una serie di sorprendenti iniziative: il teatro dell'Opera adibito a palcoscenico per gruppi rock femministi, il teatrino sede di bizzarre vocalizzazioni del Dorian Woodwin Quartet, il Salone destinato a ospitare mimi, danzatori e travestiti, come una specie di comune delle arti in cui tutto accade contemporaneamente, caoticamente, entusiasticamente e – fondamentale – economicamente.

CONTINENTAL BATHS è un cabaret con piscina centrale riscaldata dove si assiste allo show nudi o al massimo con un asciugamanino sui fianchi, dove è consentito danzare adamitici sul bordo dell'acqua mentre inservienti impudichi forniscono cocktail afrodisiaci.

THE PHONETIQUE GALLERY è un negozio che vende solo telefoni, a forma di Venere di Milo, di sommergibile, di Topolino, di barile di birra, incastonati di gemme, tappezzati di astrakan viola, incorporati in trofei di porcellana e in caschi di astronauti.

THE BYRD HOFFMAN SCHOOL OF BYRDS, una comune teatrale diretta dal trentenne Robert Wilson, artefice di pièces che durano dalle dodici ore ai sei giorni e coinvolgono dai cinquanta ai cento attori in colossali tableaux-vivants surreal-psicanalitici.

IL TORNEO DI SCACCHI organizzato dal Museo d'Arte Moderna, tra tappezzerie di Lichtenstein e arazzi di Warhol, in una serata dedicata a Marcel Duchamp padre dell'arte contemporanea nonché accanito giocatore di scacchi. La serata, organizzata dalla first-lady della cultura Barbara Jakobson, comprendeva inoltre uno spettacolo mimico dei Mabou Mines, un happening di John Cage e una serie di film degli anni dieci.

Fathers and sons: breaking the barriers of isolation

BY BARBARA ROSE

This month two shows in New York link famous sons to fathers who were—one through acceptance and encouragement, the other through rejection and resistance—instrumental in forming their sons' strong, creative personalities. At The Museum of Modern Art, Richard Avedon's photographs of his father —the subject *that has absorbed him in* recent years—are shocking in their severity and candor, exposing a side of the photographer unknown to the public. Accompanying The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's major retrospective show of over two hundred paintings, sculptures, drawings, and graphics by sculptor Alberto Giacometti are paintings by his father, Giovanni, as well as his cousin Augusto and his godfather, Cuno Amiet, all leading Swiss Post-Impressionists.

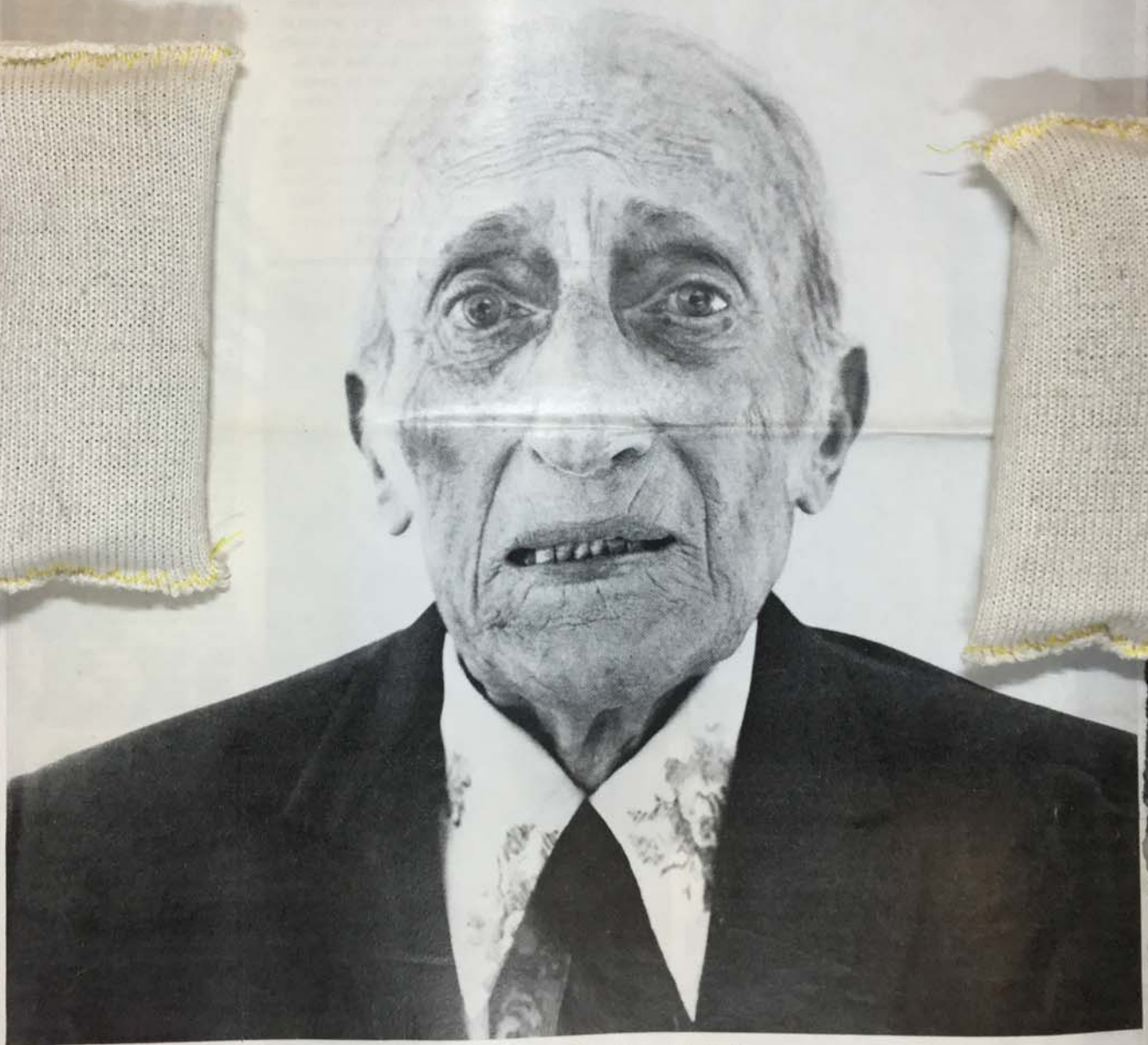
Capturing the mood of existential pessimism that dominated European thinking in the postwar era, Giacometti's angular figures and distorted, simplified heads with their vacant, staring eyes have become familiar symbols of the *Angst* and uneasiness provoked by our anxious age. A familiar figure in Montparnasse cafés until his death in 1966, Giacometti linked the Parisian art and literary worlds through his friendship with poets and the writer Samuel Beckett. Essentially, Giacometti shared Beckett's view of modern man as isolated and alienated, immobilized by his inability to communicate with his fellowmen, confronting a world in which values and meanings had all been cast into doubt. In their fragility and compression, Giacometti's attenuated, barely mobile (Continued on page 198)

GIACOMETTI

"Elie Lotar," the last portrait bust in bronze by Swiss-born Parisian Alberto Giacometti—an original and visionary artist—whose work for the first time is combined with paintings by his father, Giovanni Giacometti, in a retrospective show until June 23 at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The photograph above, by Herbert Matter, is part of Matter's photographic essay on Giacometti, a book to be published in the fall of 1975.

VOGUE-MAY 74

PLE ARE TALKING ABOUT...



AVEDON

"Jacob Israel Avedon," the last portrait taken by the celebrated American photographer Richard Avedon of his father, the culmination of a series of hundreds of such portraits of his father that Avedon made over the past six years, a selection of which are shown this month and until June 16 at The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

FATHERS AND SONS

(Continued from page 147)

striding or standing figures—typical of his late style—express this sense of personal withdrawal, of the conditional relationship of modern man to his unstable world. In his surrealist works of the 'thirties and 'forties—which many critics consider his greatest sculptures—Giacometti frequently placed figures or objects that were often sexual metaphors in cages symbolizing the spiritual imprisonment and isolation of modern man.

Comparing the bleak world of Giacometti with the sunny scenes of happy family life painted by his father, Giovanni, one realizes how much family ties once meant and how much we have lost in human contact through the fragmentation of the family. Despite his obsession with isolated figures, Alberto Giacometti remained close to his family, who supported him both spiritually and financially. His brother Diego was his assistant and modeled for the sculptor's most celebrated colossal heads with narrow proportions and enlarged features reminiscent of the mysterious heads found on Easter Island. For although Giacometti did not represent men as "heroes" in the classical sense, his standing figures are defiantly upright, his portraits deliberately frontal, demanding confrontation, indicating that he identified dignity and courage as modern forms of heroism.

Modern painting and sculpture frequently deal with the human condition in terms so general and universal they border on the abstract. Often Giacometti's generalized faces and bodies seem to lack individuality; it is difficult to identify the subject of his portraits, because his emphasis is on the universality of the human condition as opposed to the specificity of the features of any single individual. Because it records the fact of a specific person, portrait photography is by definition more concrete. To make a universal statement, the photographer must convince us that the subject represents Everyman—that we may, in some way, empathize with that person's experience.

Richard Avedon's portraits of his father are summations of the complex life of one man. In contrast with Giacometti's closeness to his father, which permitted him to follow his father's footsteps as an artist without conflict, Avedon's ruptured relationship with his father is typical of the American family.

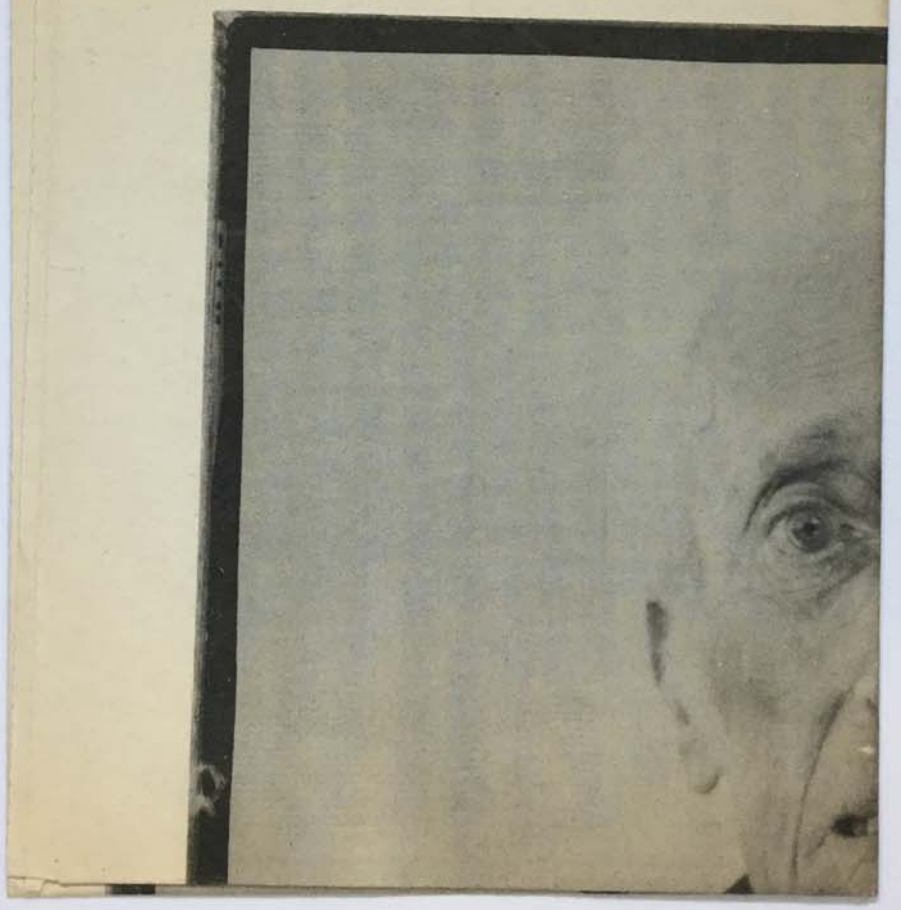
Born in Russia, Jacob Israel Avedon was two when the family arrived in America in 1891. His childhood was spent in an orphanage, because his father deserted the family. Eventually, Jacob Israel changed his name to Allan Jack Avedon, made a considerable fortune in the dress business, suffered castastrophic reversals during the Depression, rebuilt the business, and retired to Florida in his seventies. The elder Avedon completely rejected his son's interest in art. "When I brought home a poem," Richard Avedon recalls, "my father said nothing, except to show me where I had left out a comma."

"At forty I realized that I didn't know my father; in fact, that I felt I didn't have a father. For the next ten years I worked to know him and finally he worked with me. At first we talked in his language, the language of business; but six years ago it seemed necessary that he should understand me as I had come to understand him. He began to cooperate actively in this, to learn the techniques of my kind of photography as well as my intention in photographing him. Do you see the expression in his eyes? He is looking at you, confronting you. He was not looking at me. He was looking directly into the lens of the camera."

When photographer Avedon learned his father had a terminal illness, he stopped printing the photographs; the negatives were sealed and only opened recently after his father's death last fall. "My father taught me how to die. During the last year of his life, he put his affairs in perfect order; he arranged his own funeral, which was no funeral, and chose the box that would hold his ashes. He left the hospital to come swimming with me at a big Miami hotel. He was an ordinary man, but he was determined to die like a hero. I wanted these photographs to show him as he was: all the hunger, the anger, the courage, and, above all, the dignity."

Modern artists seem to be saying that to face man's fate with dignity and courage is the heroic act of our time. In this sense, Avedon chose to see his own father as Everyman. ▽

Yale ~~Review~~
Revue



Avedon, Artist and Son

When the Editor of this magazine asked me to review a new show of Richard Avedon's photographs , soon to open at New York's Museum of Modern Art, I thought he was kidding. Like most people, I had come to know the Avedon name through his fashion work for Harper's Bazaar and Vogue, and of course the psychedelic Beatles posters. I had no notion of the Avedon who has been intensive – ly pursuing his own work – almost exclusively portraitur – all along. I had not seen the 1959 book "Observations" that he did with Truman Capote, the distillation of some ten years' work, nor had I seen "Nothing Personal", which he did with James Baldwin in 1964. But now I have; I've seen the books, talked with Mr. Avedon, and have seen the nearly final mock – up of his upcoming show: eight portraits of his father, in a 20 X 20 room. Something happens to you in that room which is very complicated and powerful, which marks an evolution in Avedon's approach to the portrait, and which may mark the beginning of the reinstatement of the studio portrait as Art.

Almost in the same breath with "hello" Richard Avedon asked me if I wanted to see the work first – yes. He immediately led me through his studio to a working facsimile of the show as it will appear on the groung floor of the Modern. The eight portraits hardly add up to the average foto – show lineup. Although the prints will be available for anyone at the Museum to see, just how they'll be seen is as important as how the individual prints have been manipulated, and selected. In both cases Avedon has strived for control.

Jacob Israel Avedon is in sharp focus in the show's external, introductory "snapshot" of father and son. He even looks a bit like Mar – cel Duchamp; but in addition to the intelligence in that face, there is also a distinctly unsympathetic, hawklike gaze toward that figure to his right, in the foreground, three – quarters back to the camera, out of focus, hand to his mouth in an almost childlike posture: his son, Dick. In a recent article in Vogue entitled "Fathers and Sons: Breaking the Barriers of Isolation," Barbara Rose noted: "The Elder Avedon completely rejected his son's interest in art. 'When I brought home a poem,' Richard Avedon recalls, "my father said nothing, except to show me where I had left out a comma...at forty I realized that I didn't know my father; in fact, that I felt I didn't have a father. For the next ten years I worked to know him and finally he worked with me."

Avedon applied the word "sequential" to his arrangement of the work, but he clearly wasn't thinking in terms of simple, undisrupted progressions which the mind finds accessible, and too often takes for rational and logical, and therefore good. There are no obvious pat – terms. The walls of the show are not set up like pages in a layout, the way most photography exhibits – you'll notice that "show" is a term reserved for more entrenched forms of art – are. Avedon's walls know what the other walls are doing – the effect is very dense as one stands in the midst of these photographs staring at one another, almost condescending to the admission of one who isn't framed.

The point of focus is different in nearly every print, as are the lighting, the clothes, and of course the man. They each represent different fictions about the same man. The fictions are up for contradiction, but we know that Jacob Israel Avedon lived and died and somehow that comes through

Richard Avedon has said that his interest is only in the surface, and that photography is easy. But one feels that something different is happening here for him. He went from shooting lots of film on a Rolleiflex to big (8 X 10) camera work because he wanted to make it harder. Somehow the big camera makes the decision of when to shoot more difficult, the slice of time less predictable. But this is not to imply that he has reneged on his past work – the figure is still isolated in the studio, away from its proper place. He's not turning into an "artist photographer" after a commercial career, – he's always done both. He is not a Diane Arbus, a Bruce Davidson , a Les Krims, or for that matter any other photographer we think of as doing "photography" today. He sees himself within the studio tradition of Julia Margret Cameron, Irving Penn, and others, and he wants very much to be judged in light of that tradition.

The show is unique, and terribly personal . It is also breathtaking.

David Hirsch

The show will be at the Museum of Modern Art from May 1 to June 16.

Yale ~~Review~~
Revue

Jacob Israel Avedon photographed by Richard Avedon

ows we've seen

Jacob Israel Avedon, by Richard Avedon

Jacob Israel Avedon: Photographed by Richard Avedon, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (May 1-June 16). My father was a man to whom I didn't speak for 20 years. We were reconciled before the end, but though I loved him (and I know he loved *me*) I didn't like him. Yet the day I learned that it was all over, it seemed fitting and proper that something be done to mark his passing. At *The New York Times*, I requested—no, *demanded*—to see a reporter, to whom I told the facts of my father's life. On reading his obituary the next day, I was proud to be his son.

I mention all this only because it may, in some way, help to explain my interpretation—photographic and otherwise—of Richard Avedon's photographs of his father. (Certain points in the latter's biography happen to parallel those in my father's life, including the divorce and remarriage.) What motivation impelled Avedon—world-renowned photographer of a thousand famous faces—to exhibit, as his first New York show, eight portraits of his father at the end of his life?

One ponders on this while reading the chronology posted outside the exhibit room. It serves, along with the dates on the photos, as background material and captions for a picture story that shows the wasting away of a vigorous man.

The chronology capsulizes the life of Jacob Israel Avedon. We learn the names of his father, mother, and siblings . . . that he was born in Lomzha, Province of Grodna, Russia, Oct. 21, 1889, and that his father emigrated to America the following year. That the mother and family joined the father at 413 Grand St., New York City. Then, after a spell of living on the Lower East Side: "1893—Father deserts family." Jacob was sent to an orphanage, later returned to the family on Grand St., attended P.S. 192, then Townsend Harris High School and the College of the City of New York, worked as a teacher in the Bronx, established Avedon's Blouse Shop (1913) and Avedon's Fifth Avenue (1917), married (1922). Then: "1923—Son, Richard, born May 15th." The family moves to Cedarhurst, Avedon's Fifth Ave. shop goes bankrupt, the family moves to East 98th St., then East 86th St. Mr. Avedon separates from his wife (1952), moves to Florida, divorces his wife (1957), meets Eleanor Sorenson (1959), marries her a decade later, establishes real-estate partnership with son, Richard, in 1970, is operated on for cancer of the liver in 1972, and dies eight months later.

The first, heroic-size photograph, dated March 27, 1969, is a frontal portrait of an alert 79-year-old bridegroom (Mr. Avedon was married two days later). Sporting a striped tie with Windsor knot, he is obviously a natty dresser. His furrowed face is blotched with pigmented spots. Adjacent to this print are two smaller images, apparently made at the same sitting. In one of these pictures the subject looks down; in the other, aside.

In the next photograph, dated May 15, 1971, the subject's hair is white and the face blotches have faded. He's still partial to jaunty ties (this one has polka-dots), but one wonders whether senility has set in, whether his vague expression is an attempt to appear alert.

On December 19, 1972—three days after an unsuccessful operation—the subject is wearing pajamas. The suit is gone, along with the Windsor knot and square-set pocket handkerchief that are talismen, in certain circles, of snappy style. Part of the face is in shadow . . . a harbinger of things to come.

Two photographs are dated August 25, 1973—a week before the subject died. In them, he wears a suit again (strange apparel for one so ill). His tie is just slightly askew, and he appears to be apprehensive in the portraits—one frontal and the other with eyes averted. The face is noticeably lighter than in the previous pictures, adding to the impression of fragility. There is anxiety and pain around the mouth. The question it seems to ask is, "How long?"

Avedon the photographer knows all the tricks of his trade—in fact, he invented some of them. For reasons we can only imagine, he adopted the passport esthetic for these portraits—frontal head and shoulders, every detail sharp, light background. Except in one photograph, the lighting is flat. The huge enlargements include the negatives' black edges—encouraging the viewer to believe that the photographer's statement is frank and total . . . that nothing has been concealed.

Photographic portraiture, according to John Szarkowski, director of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, is most difficult when photographer and subject know each other well. Each "recognizes and nullifies the other's little tricks of style . . . In these circumstances, only trust and acceptance

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shows we've seen

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can succeed." He believes that Avedon's portraits of his father are "the deeply moving record of such a success." This statement, however, is inapplicable to these portraits, except for the first in the series. Anyone who has ever photographed a dying person—especially a loved one—knows that both photographer and subject realize that it's too late for what Szarkowski calls "tricks of style."

What the viewer takes from this exhibit must necessarily reflect what he brings to it in terms of life experience. The photographs may leave you unmoved, they may appall you, or they may haunt you. They may make you think of someone else, or of your own ultimate destiny. Or remind you of what Edward Weston called "the camera's innate honesty" when he wrote: ". . . it enables the photographer to reveal the essence of what lies before his lens with such clear insight that the beholder may find the re-created image more real than the actual object." If the beholder was also the photographer, the photographs may reveal something about the subject that he did not previously perceive—especially in a loved one, in a case where ". . . I didn't really look at the pictures until after he died" (Avedon). This from a man who has also stated: "At first my father agreed to let me photograph him but I think after a while he began to want me to. He started to rely on it, as I did, because it was a way we had of forcing each other to recognize what we were."

More than a decade ago, Richard Avedon was described in The Encyclopedia of Photography as "the most successful and versatile photographer of his generation." He was named by POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY as one of the world's 10 greatest photographers. But it remains for each viewer to decide whether Avedon's first New York show is a memento mori or an attempt to make private moments into a public monument.

Photographs by Ansel Adams, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City (April 24-June 30). If photography is a mansion with many chambers, there's a room at the top for Ansel Adams—for he is truly photography's Man of This Century. As photographer, writer, and teacher, he has won many laurels. Crowning and confirming them is this, his first one-man show in a New York City museum.

Now 72, Adams became a full-time photographer at the age of 28 in 1930, when he and five others, including Imogen Cunningham, Willard Van Dyke, and Edward Weston, founded Group f/64, dedicated to exploring the potential of "straight" photography. Though he gained fame for his photographs of the West's unspoiled beauty, not all of his career has been devoted to nature. "My life in photography," he has written, "has been extremely varied; I have worked as a professional-commercial photographer, doing medicals, 'nuts and bolts,'

Brassai, by Ansel Adams

catalogs, advertisements, journalistic projects, and pictures of people. My dominating interest, however, has been what is loosely called 'creative work'—with emphasis on the natural scene."

Adams' first book, *Making a Photograph* (1935), with a foreword by Edward Weston, made his reputation as a writer. With Beaumont Newhall and David Hunter McAlpin, he helped to found the first department of photography as a fine art, at The Museum of Modern Art in 1940. Six years later he established the photography department at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. A three-time Guggenheim Fellowship winner, he has produced a remarkable body of work.

Adams' genius lies in perceiving a scene, interpreting it by means of what he calls "previsualization," and re-creating the subject through his vision in the final print. He uses the straight approach—nature as he finds it, or selects it. An admirer of daguerreotypes, he desires "to achieve that exquisite tonality and miraculous definition of light and substance in my own prints." In doing so he originally used an 8x10 view camera, later a Hasselblad, 35-mm, and Polaroid Land cameras. Until the advent of Polaroid positive/negative film, each of Adams' Polaroid prints was as unique as a daguerreotype.

His photographs are virtuoso performances that orchestrate the interplay of light, shadow, and form. He masterfully conveys the mood of soft morning light, intense sunlight, dusk. A primary objective of his precise seeing is the celebration of nature's grandeur.

But Adams' photographic genius is not limited to unsullied nature. There is intricate sky tracery in "Rails and Jet Trails"; social comment in "Political Circus," which shows posters of politics and the circus in San Francisco, 1935; and "Pipes and Gauges," made in a West Virginia factory, 1939. The excellence of Adams' still-lifes is exemplified by a 1932 composition of a

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hard-boiled egg in its slicer.

Too little known are Adams' portraits. These include "Gottardo Piazzoni in His Studio" (1932) and "Alfred Stieglitz, An American Place" (1936)—both of which integrate the subject with his surroundings; "Woman Behind Screen Door" (1944), with screen texture inherently superimposed; "Graduation Dress" (1948), in which a white-gowned girl and a massive tree lean slightly toward each other; and powerful close-ups of Brassai (1973) and Julian Camacho (1974).

The 10 40x60-in. prints displayed are superlative examples of some of Adams' best-known work: "Moonrise" (Hernandez, New Mexico, 1944), a technical and esthetic tour-de-force; the outstandingly beautiful "Leaves" (Mount Rainier, Washington, 1942), and "Stream, Sea, Clouds" (Rodeo Lagoon, California, 1962). Equally well rendered are less imposing subjects: "Boards & Thistles" (1932) and "Tar Paper and Nails" (1958).

The show reaffirms the importance of viewing original prints if photographs are to be properly appreciated. The medium's unique capability of rendering infinite detail and chiaroscuro has never been better demonstrated. When this capability is utilized by a master such as Ansel Adams, the photographs are likely to endure as long as the rivers flow.

Fritz Henle—Photographs, New York Cultural Center (May 16-July 7). With the publication in 1937 of his first book, *Japan*, Fritz Henle became the world's leading exponent of the Rolleiflex. Since then, his photographs have been published in 11 of his books and in innumerable periodicals. He has been to the $2\frac{1}{4}$x$2\frac{1}{4}$ twin-lens reflex what Dr. Paul Wolff was to the Leica in the 1930s—a master who helped to popularize a small-camera format.

Henle's exhibition covers a lot of territory—from Munich and Venice, 1931, to portraits of Pablo Casals (Puerto Rico, 1972). In the years between, he photographed in Japan, China, India, Mexico, France, Hawaii, and the Caribbean. His craftsmanship and composition are superb.

Fritz Henle

There are no telephoto shots or extreme close-ups (these are not among the Rollei's most appropriate applications) and comparatively few available-light photographs, especially from the early years. But for outdoor shooting with a normal focal-length lens, the Rollei was and is a great camera—especially in Henle's hands. The Paris series, made in 1938, indicates how well the camera can be used for candid work. A shot of a bearded man standing in front of a shop reminds one of Atget's pictures in the same milieu.

At 65, Henle continues to make pictures. He lives in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, and is still a Rollei fan, though now he uses the SL66, a single-lens reflex.

John Gutmann—Photographs, Light Gallery, New York (April 30-May 25). Judging from the 21 photographs we have seen (made from his more than 10,000 negatives), John Gutmann may well have one of the significant archives documenting

John Gutmann

America from 1933 to the mid-1950s. During that period, he was a peripatetic photojournalist, covering assignments throughout the United States and in Asia. His work was widely published in books and magazines, and was shown in three one-man exhibitions (1938, 1941, 1947) at the De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco. The show at Light Gallery is his first in New York—and it is an impressive body of work.

Born in Germany in 1905, Gutmann was a painter and art teacher in Berlin until 1933. That year he came to the United States, bought his first camera (a Rolleiflex) and embarked on his new career. The strongly composed pictures he made show a keen awareness of social problems during the Depression era. They deserve to rank high in the image-annals of the period.

Gutmann, who was a professor of art at San Francisco State University from 1938 until his retirement in 1973, is now making prints from his negative file of the 1930s. If

the work in this exhibition is a fair sample, his prints will merit widespread attention.

—Harvey V. Fondiller

Jay Dusard—Photographs, University of Oregon Art Museum, Eugene, Or. (April 5-May 6). The beautiful prints of the Arizona landscape by Jay Dusard raise the often confusing question of "photographic style." As the subject of landscape is perhaps the most compliant of all those available to the photographer, it offers the perfect example in which one can study the different approaches that can be taken toward it. Because the landscape means different things to different people, the same region can be seen either as a majestic view of the grandeur of nature by Ansel Adams or as a subtle examination of details by Jay Dusard. In this sense, Dusard offers us a view from the other end of the canyon—a new method of seeing an area that he so thoroughly knows, through a style he so effectively handles.

In trying to interpret his prints, the viewer is confronted with the questions: what are the distinguishing characteristics of his work that separates him from other photographers working in the same genre? And if he is consistent to this manner of seeing, does it produce his own personal style?

Jay Dusard's style is that of a conscientious photographer, sensitive to the nuances of detail found in the tectonic frame of his large camera through which he views the landscape. His images are very seldom of objects that statically rest in the picture, creating something specific to look at. Instead, he photographs areas of space filled with minutiae that function individually within the whole context of the picture.

His views of the sides of canyons and the walls of a dam are flat surfaces that contain a wealth of independent areas in which the nuances exist. Unlike the bolder graphic designs of wall patterns by Aaron Siskind, Dusard does not concentrate on a dominating form or structure but lets each of the small regions invite a participation by the viewer. In this sense, they might be compared by intention to those action painters of New York City in the 1950s, such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. These artists did not examine a specific form or object in their painting but recorded their involvement with the piece, resulting more in an interpretation of person than of object.

The images which have made an impression on Dusard reflect his experience as an architect, geologist, cowboy, and mostly, a neighbor of Frederick Sommer. Sommer's amorphous photographs of the landscape anticipate, by some 25 years, the various views that Dusard presents. However, there seems to be much more influence than imitation. Sommer's desert landscape containing randomly placed vertical cacti are similar to Dusard's views of the canyon walls in their scattered areas of submissive detail. Yet Dusard refines his ideas further

Jay Dusard

in the ability to apply this same type of vision to most all of his photographs of objectless scenes.

His current exhibition, therefore, is a collection of various sights seen in a generally coherent vision that would identify the style of Jay Dusard. A photographer's sources of images are always changing, thereby causing a constant flux of stylistic qualities. Yet Dusard seems very comfortable in the manner he is now working, and further development of his style can only give his portfolio more unity.

—David Turner

Women's Show: Photography '74, Cheltenham Township Art Center, Cheltenham, Pa. (April 28-May 19). In April, FOCUS, a Philadelphia organization of women artists, began a monumental festival that ran for two months. By the time the festival ended in late May, there had been 70 exhibits devoted to the visual arts and some 100 panel discussions, demonstrations, and films in and around the Philadelphia area. The goings-on focused on national as well as local women artists.

Shows for print makers, painters, and sculptors were everywhere, but *Women's Show: Photography '74*, a juried exhibition overseen by Elke Solomon, curator at the Whitney Museum, was the only show devoted entirely to photography. From the entries submitted, the works of 24 local women were selected.

The works, covering a spectrum of techniques and images, ranged from "pure" or traditional photographs to photo etching, photo silk-screens and superimposed, underexposed images that left a surrealistic residue. Carolyn Fetterolf's serene photographs of nonhuman, living objects were striking in their textures and the strength of nature that they captured. "Canyon Tree" pictures just that with leaves, massive trunk, peeling bark, and broken limbs. Nancy Hellebrand's two portraits, one of a man and the other of a woman, both taken

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we haven't seen on the streets of New York since 1960.

Walker Evans' people were 30 years behind us. Frank Herrera's people are 15 years behind. Progress?

1,000 Photographers Doing Their Own Thing 1984—Photographs by Social Security Number 214-52-5767 and 999 other Social Security Numbers, Creative Photography Gallery, M.I.T., Cambridge (May). Minor White made this show his parting shot before retiring from teaching at M.I.T. The content was the simplest: one picture of a child under a tree, reproduced about one thousand times (I took their word for it) on a ribbon of paper that ran all around the gallery with breaks only for the doors. This was no simple parting shot; it was a machine-gun burst. It may have been a tongue-in-cheek suggestion that no

WHAT'S WHAT WHAT'S WHAT

Ric Is 47 Feet, Nude, Hangs At MOMA And Is Made By 3M

A man of the cloth would be one way to describe 47-ft. tall Ric, who stretches, nude, on polyester, around three walls of New York's Museum of Modern Art. Ric is also available in plastic, mylar, paper, zinc and "bridal satin."

The people in Minnesota who mine and manufacture would be surprised to see what their 3M color copier has wrought. Photographers Keith Smith and Sonia Lanoy Sheridan have worked together to produce nine Rics by using 3M's System I and System II machines. They moved their subject across the machine's image plate—getting 8½ x 11 exact-size prints of whatever was pressed against the copier. Thirty pieces of paper later Ric was completely "man-scanned." The two artists then cut up the prints, made transparencies of the now 600 pieces, then enlarged them using the System II's enlarging capacity. Finally, the results were heat transferred onto quilt-like rectangles of cloth, onto etching plates, onto plastic and yes, as the wall label makes a point of stating, onto bridal satin. MOMA then hung the resulting huge assemblages as part of its "Projects" series.

The use of the 3M technology in photography is a recent development. California museums have featured shows created solely by this office machine method, and multi-media exhibits have included hints that the copier is a coming photographic device. The work it produces is recognizable by its flat, grainy quality, by its lack of fine details and by its warp of perspective, as things pressed against the machine become 2D. It's a process that allows for one-step multiple printing, for unusual size relationships and for whimsy.

Sheridan and Smith recognize this playful quality and exploit it in their environmental works. They hang, for example, another 47-ft. long Ric but this time with only the back of his head and raised hands showing. The remainder of him rests in pleats on the floor.

Avedon Focuses On His Father

Objectivity is all right if you're studying the mating ritual of the vanishing American prairie dog, but if you can watch your parent's approaching death with scientific detachment and a 2¼ camera you have to realize you're opening yourself up to some criticism. Here it is.

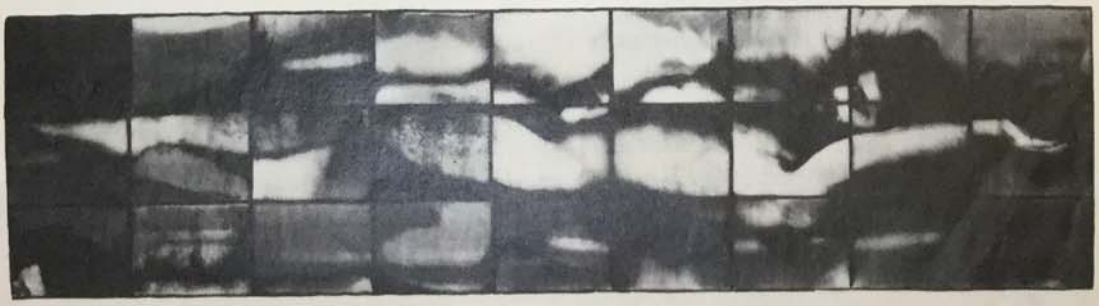
Perhaps the answer to Richard Avedon's detached style lies in the titles of his two previously published books of portraits. They are *Observations* and *Nothing Personal*. In the MOMA show, there is nothing personal, at least to a viewer, about the photographer's relationship to his subject, Jacob Israel Avedon.

Ultracrisp Richard Avedon document exposes pain of approaching death, seen in the eyes of his father.

Eight close-up portraits taken over a six-year period document the changes in Avedon's 83-year-old father, up to his death in September of last year. No props are included, no hint of environment, of other family members, of changing ideas or relationships are allowed to intrude to add information or warmth. Rather, Avedon's mercilessly sharp camera work combines with his trick of photographing posed subjects just as they lose their pose or poise. The resulting enormous blowups, ragged black borders included *à la* Diane Arbus (it is worth mentioning that Marvin Israel, a close friend of the late Diane Arbus, designed this show) are haunting—not for the information that is in them but for the information you get when you realize all that is missing.

Kodak Must Show Future Formats —For $10,000

Got $10,000 to spare every once in a while? If so, you can qualify as a recipient of any new Kodak film format plan at least 18



Made-by-machine Ric, hung at MOMA, is 47-feet long, polyester and bent around three walls.

art

Michael Todd

Michael Todd: Caligraphic sculptures of welded steel throughout which unfold emotional content in a narrative manner all too uncommon to the conventional "drawing in space" stance taken by much current non-objective sculpture. It is work full of surprises and rewards. (Zabriskie Gallery, 29 West 57th Street, through May 25) (AA) **VVV**

El Dorado, The Gold of Ancient Columbia: Most Precolumbian Gold objects were made and used for personal adornment. The breathtaking intricacy, wit and originality of forms in this quiet installation of an extraordinary treasure become even more impressive with the realization of how much else was lost in the plundering of the Spanish conquest. Hairpins, clasps, noserings of exquisite formal simplification are on view and should not be missed. An excellent film accompanies the exhibition. (Center for Inter-American Relations, 680 Park Avenue, through July 28) (AA) **VVV**

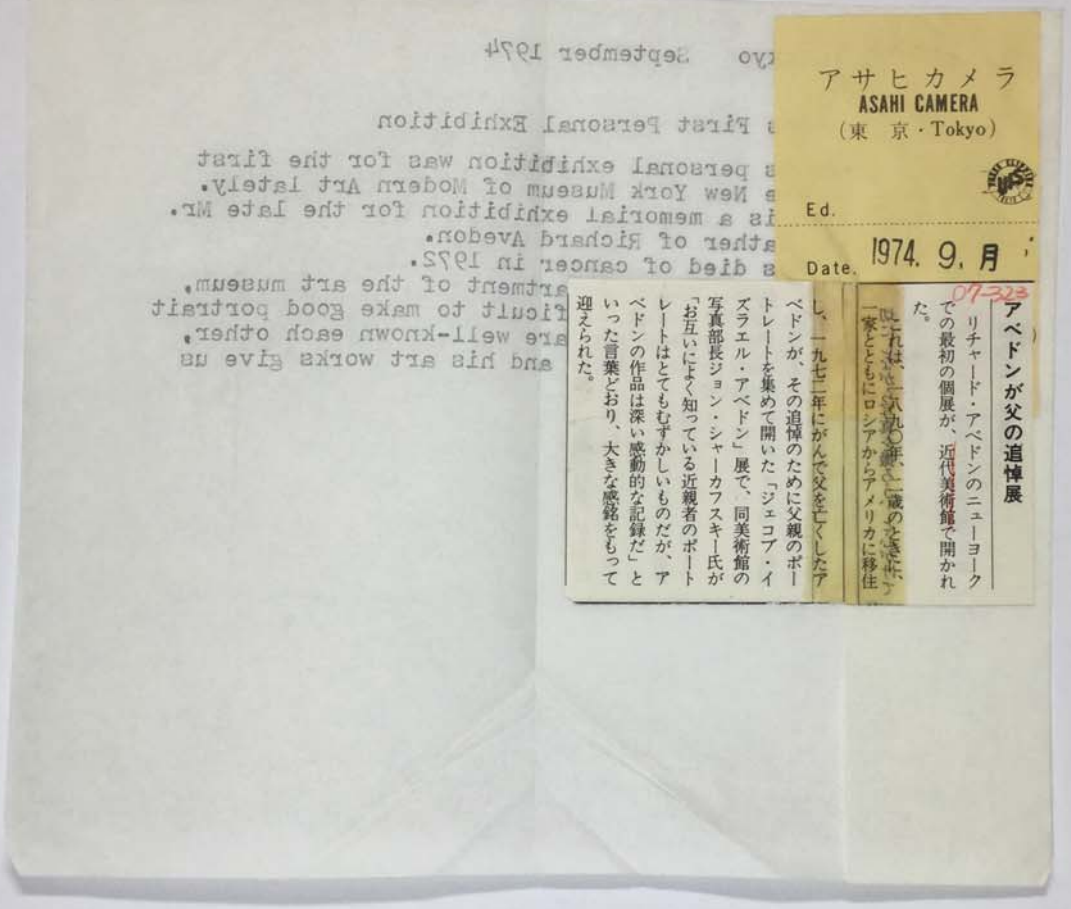
Richard Avedon: An unusual and touching expression of filial-piety—portrait-documentation with 8 emulsion treated canvases of this famous photographer's father who died at 84. In explaining the pictures Avedon writes "Whatever happened between us was important to us but it is not important to the pictures." The biography of Jacob Israel Avedon *is* essential to these works. As a first N.Y. show this is a puzzling selection. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, 956-6100, through June 16) (FMcD) **VV**

Village Voice 5/9/74

ASAHI CAMERA, Tokyo September 1974

Richard Avedon's First Personal Exhibition

Richard Avedon's personal exhibition was for the first time held at the New York Museum of Modern Art lately. The exhibition is a memorial exhibition for the late Mr. Jacob Israel, father of Richard Avedon.
Jacob Israel was died of cancer in 1972.
Mr. John Shakavsky, photo department of the art museum, told that it is generally difficult to make good portrait of ones closed relations who are well-known each other, but Avedon's is an exception, and his art works give us profound impressions.



アサヒカメラ
ASAHI CAMERA
（東　京・Tokyo）

Ed.

Date. 1974. 9. 月

07-322

アベドンが父の追悼展

リチャード・アベドンのニューヨークでの最初の個展が、近代美術館で開かれた。

「これは、ぼくが二十九歳のときに、一家とともにロシアからアメリカに移住し、一九七二年にがんで父を亡くしたアベドンが、その追悼のために父親のポートレートを集めて開いた「ジェコブ・イズラエル・アベドン」展で、同美術館の写真部長ジョン・シャーカフスキー氏が「お互いによく知っている近親者のポートレートはとてもむずかしいものだが、アベドンの作品は深い感動的な記録だ」といった言葉どおり、大きな感銘をもって迎えられた。

The New York Times

ARTS AND LEISURE

Sunday Sept. 7, 1975

Richard Avedon—An Artist Despite His Success?

By CAROL LAWSON

"June is one of the most beautiful women I've ever photographed — maybe, in part, because she's not a professional beauty. She makes me feel I'm just learning to photograph women."

Richard Avedon, the famous fashion photographer who has photographed the world's most glamorous women for the pages of Vogue and Harper's Bazaar for 30 years, is talking in his East Side studio about his recent portrait of June Leaf, a 45-year-old artist who wears no makeup and has never gone to the beauty parlor. June Leaf's picture is one of more than 100 Avedon portraits that will go on exhibit Wednesday at the Marlborough Gallery in the photographer's first large-scale show in New York.

Avedon's admirers use the words "imaginative," "innovative" and "ingenious" to describe his talent. He is best known for having created a dramatic style of fashion photography that, according to one fashion editor, is so alive with movement and energy that his models seem about to jump off the page. Instead of using his mannequins as mere coat hangers, Avedon turned them into actors and directed them in performance situations as idealized images of flirtatious, laughing, running, dancing, real-life women.

But while his notoriety in the fashion world stamped him with a public image as a one-note photographer, Avedon was constantly pursuing and experimenting with portraiture — the private, non-commercial side of his art. In this area of photography, too, he created a distinctive style—a startling and sometimes bizarre look devoid of the surface glamour of his fashion work. No pancake portraitist ("I'm not a cosmetician."), Avedon stands his subjects squarely in front of his camera, against a stark white background, and aims for inner qualities of character instead of outward qualities of appearance. He sums up the difference between his fashion and portrait photography as "a matter of photographing a performance versus photographing the true nature of things."

Avedon's portraits have been exhibited in several group shows at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in the last 20 years. His first one-man show in New York took place last year at The Modern, where he exhibited eight photographs of his father, taken before and during the elder Avedon's losing battle with cancer. In an admiring review of the works in The Times, Hilton Kramer noted a frequent "element of voyeuristic thrill" in Avedon's previous portraits, but observed that in the photographs of his father, "we feel ourselves, oddly enough, intensely in touch with life—and with a side of life that rarely, if ever, is captured in the art of any medium."

News of Avedon's affiliation with Marlborough—a meeting of two shrewd business minds to launch the gallery's photography department — aroused speculation that he was about to give up commercial photography. "I would never not want to be a fashion photographer," he insists. "My commercial work [a conglomerate of television commercials, record album covers, print ads and Vogue spreads] has made it possible for me to be my own Ford Foundation, my own Guggenheim." (Avedon calls himself "probably the highest-paid photographer in the world." According to a New Yorker profile, he was making $125,000 a year as long ago as 1958.)

Sitting in a director's chair in his skylit studio, the youthful looking 52-year-old photographer starts to talk about some of his recent portraits and his

Continued on Page 38

Jack Mitchell

To design his first major New York show, Avedon built a maze-like model of the gallery.

Carol Lawson is an editor of the Arts and Leisure section.

Richard Avedon—An Artist Despite His Success?

Art

"Each of my portraits is more a portrait of myself than of someone else." (Richard Avedon)

Continued from Page 1

working methods. "It was a surprise—really, a gift," he explains, getting back to June Leaf's portrait, one of 18 he did for his exhibit in a burst of activity this summer. "I went to Nova Scotia in July to photograph Robert Frank, the photographer. We've known each other a long time. I had never met June, the woman he lives with. We all spent a day together collecting stones by the sea, and I kept watching her. When she took me into her studio and showed me her work, all of a sudden, from a rather silent woman, this knockout of a person came out.

"She seemed surprised when I asked to photograph her. What I found extraordinary in the sitting was her complete lack of narcissism. What came forward was not the fact that she has a beautiful face—which she has—but her quality as a woman. An intricate woman who was totally unaware of her physical beauty in front of the camera. It was very different from photographing a professional beauty who feels the success of the moment depends on her physical self."

Another portrait in the exhibit is the photograph Avedon took last winter of his friend, writer Truman Capote. "It's very unflattering," Capote complains. He was sick the day the picture was taken—and the camera didn't lie. The blank stare of Capote's half-crossed, half-closed eyes suggests a sort of stupor.

"Whether or not people like my portraits of them isn't the point," Avedon says. "Each of my portraits is more a portrait of myself than of someone else—a portrait of what I know, what I feel, what I'm afraid of."

Preparing for his debut on 57th Street was a full-time job for Avedon all summer. As soon as plans for the Marlborough show were set, he began working day and night in his studio. "I always live here when I'm working intensely," says the high-keyed photographer, whose head and arms and legs are always in motion.

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Half of Avedon's white-walled studio has been occupied for the past three months by a huge, perfectly scaled model of the Marlborough interior, which he had redesigned for the show. As the opening of the exhibit drew nearer, Avedon spent days pinning and repinning scaled-down copies of all 100 photographs in the show to the heavy cardboard walls of the maze-like model. The smallest prints, which are actually six-inch squares, were reduced to about one square inch.

Kicking his brown loafers off his bare feet, Avedon crawls into the maze to inspect his latest arrangement. Threading his wiry, 5-foot, 7½-inch frame around the fragile partitions, he announces that, unbeknown to the Marlborough management, he plans to hang the portraits in the gallery without names to identify the faces.

"My portraits don't illustrate a specific person," he insists. "They either stand or fall as photographs. That's how I hope people will see them."

Richard Avedon

"I'm not a cosmetician." Above, portraits of June Leaf and Truman Capote

Holding up a portrait of Ike and Mamie Eisenhower, who will be identified only as "couple"—as will the Duke and Duchess of Windsor—Avedon says, "Forget who they are. Just look at the faces. Look at them as people."

If Avedon is genuinely serious about portraits irrespective of the reputations of his subjects, why does he focus his camera on so many instantly recognizable faces—Marilyn Monroe, Groucho Marx, John Lindsay, the Chicago Seven? If he wants to avoid what he calls "the People Magazine mentality," why doesn't he photograph unknowns?

"I can't explain why I choose to photograph certain people," says Avedon, choosing his words carefully. "This is not entirely out of stubbornness on my part. I really believe in the mysterious part of it. Diane Arbus used to say, 'A photograph is a secret about a secret.' If I say why I make these choices, I forever interfere with the way people look at them and demean a lifetime of work."

He adds that photographing former Presidential secretary Rose Mary Woods this summer "got me interested in photographing a kind of woman I've never been interested in photographing before. I've been drawn mostly to creative people—artists, writers, actors. It never occurred to me that I could find in other kinds of people the same state of emergency. Now I'm beginning to see people on the streets I'd like to photograph."

The week before he went to Nova Scotia, Avedon flew to Buenos Aires to photograph the writer, Jorge Luis Borges. During the all-night flight, he reread a lapful of Borges's paperbacks. When he arrived in South America, Avedon learned that Borges's mother, with whom the writer had lived all his life, died just before he landed. Borges agreed to go ahead with the sitting anyway.

"While my assistant was setting up the lights and equipment—it took about an hour—Borges and I talked about death—his mother's death, deaths of other people in his family, ways of dying, the death of my own father. A very strange thing happened. Instead of this conversation bringing us closer together, it created a greater and greater distance. This sitting was so full of intensity and had in it every element for a powerful portrait. But instead, the portrait is icy cold and empty of what I'd hoped would be there.

"I almost didn't hang the Borges portrait in the show, but I think it is valid. I placed it next to Stravinsky. The two are similar—contained, held back."

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The largest photograph in the exhibit is Avedon's 1971 portrait of the Mission Council, a straight-faced lineup of the 11 top military and civilian officials in the United States embassy in Saigon. The picture, a technical tour de force which stands eight feet tall and 35 feet wide, is actually five separate photographs, joined by a purposefully fractured overlapping of the figures.

"I'm knocked out by the fact that I did this in 15 minutes," says Avedon, whose activities in the peace movement are well known. "I photographed every day for seven weeks in Vietnam, and this is the only photograph I'm willing to show. I knew I would have literally a matter of minutes for the sitting one Tuesday, after the Mission Council's weekly meeting in the embassy's War Room. There are no accidents in this photograph. Everything was planned. Beforehand, I had made a drawing. I got the height of each man, and since I don't crop my photographs, I had to map out the picture with the height of the tallest man as my starting point. They are arranged in order of their rank and authority. This was meant to be as correct a photograph as it could possibly be."

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Stylistically, Avedon works within a rigid set of restrictions: no backgrounds (Indoor portraits are taken against a blank white wall; outdoor photos, usually taken on his roof, are done against a backdrop of white paper. When he travels—even to the front lines in Vietnam—he always takes long rolls of white paper.); no sitting ("My sitters have to stand."); and, these days, no artificial light ("I started with daylight in my early portraits, and this summer I returned to it. Artificial light never could have revealed what the daylight brought out in William Burroughs's face. The daylight glows out of his face."). In addition, Avedon gives his sitters no instructions for dress or behavior in front of the camera.

Since the mid 1960's, Avedon has taken most of his portraits with an 8 X 10 Deardorff, a boxy, imposing camera that sits on a tripod. The only time he works behind the camera is at the beginning of the sitting, when he focuses it. For the rest of the sitting—which can be as short as William F. Buckley Jr.'s four-and-a-half-minute session or as long as an hour—Avedon holds the button in his hand and stands next to the camera, face-to-face with the sitter. An assistant stands behind him, changing the film.

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"I used to work with a Rolleiflex, but I began to feel that the camera came between me and the sitter. I had to hold the camera in my hands and look into it, and the sitter was forced to relate to the lens. Using the 8 X 10 camera allows for a *real* connection between me and the person I'm photographing."

Friends and colleagues who have followed Avedon's work closely over the years say his recent portraits have a quieter, less studied, less theatrical quality. Writer Harold Brodkey (who says his own portrait "is not the way I *look*, but the way I *am*") observes, "Years ago, when Dick fought with other photographers for space, he purposely made his work startling. Now, instead of jumping out at you, the work pulls you into it. Dick told me that a lot of what he does now is to let the sitter photograph himself. He sees what the sitter is willing to give and works within that framework. He's there to catch you, if you're willing to be caught."

Is there a key to Avedon's unique way with a camera? "His speed," says Brodkey. "No one has his quickness and immediate insight. His eye sees something, and then he moves faster than almost humanly possible to push the goddamn button." ■