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00:00:03:01 NARRATOR: As another feature of the first annual American Art Festival, your city station now presents, from the auditorium of the Museum of Modern Art, a panel discussion on the topic What is modern Photography? Moderator for the symposium will be Edward Steichen, director of the department of photography for the Museum of Modern Art. Participating in the discussion will be the following top-ranking American photographers: Margaret Bourke-White, Walker Evans, John Mealy, Lisette Model, Wright Morris, Homer Page, Irving Penn, Ben Shahn, Charles Sheeler, and Aaron Siskind. And now to begin our discussion, here is our moderator, Edward Steichen.

00:00:50:03 EDWARD STEICHEN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and fellow photographers. I would first like to pass on a salute to WNYC. In case there are any out-of-townners in this audience, I want to tell them that WNYC is the municipal broadcasting station owned by the City of New York, and we're very proud of it. Proud of the fine music they give us every day, and I want to give a particular salute to its magnificent engineering staff, for the quality of the music they give us over the FM.

00:01:34:02 Now, the next plug will be for the museum. The Museum of Modern Art, as you know or should know, is the only museum in the world that has an honest to goodness department of photography, a department that is in exactly the same footing as the other departments in the museum. A great many museums render something like lip service to photography, but here, we are encouraged to go all out and we have the backing of all the directors of the departments and the trustees.

00:02:16:00 When we first opened the department, under my own direction, I set out a preface which went something like this. Photography is a potent factor in in creasing our knowledge and shaping our concept and understanding of contemporary life. I believe its influence cannot be overstressed. And then in particular, I stressed the importance of photography as an art, as a vital modern means of giving form to ideas. It is the artist in photography, who beyond his own creative achievement, establishes standards, produces new influences and new uses of the medium.

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00:03:12:04 STEICHEN (Cont.): Our first large[?] exhibition was called In and Out of Focus, with the following paragraph as a preamble. "Any rational opinion or evaluation of the scope and significance of today's photography must be based on an informed approach[?], exploring the various tendencies, directions, and phases in contemporary photography." All of the exhibitions that we have had to date have been more or less along those lines.

00:03:42:05 And this symposium tonight is, in a sense, carrying on that same idea. Ordinarily, photographers are like little children, to be seen, not heard. Tonight, we're going to hear from them. They're going to have to explain their misdemeanors. We don't pretend that this is the complete picture of photography. For instance, take the field of magazine photography. If we were to give that really adequate coverage, we'd have to mobilize the entire society of magazine photographers and bring them out here, which would be a special problem all of its own.

00:04:29:27 Those seeking pat answers that they can put in their little hands and take home, as to what photography is all about, are going to be disappointed. But I think those of us who are attracted to the medium because it's sturdy and young and has elbow room, lots of elbow room, are going to be satisfied with what's coming. We're going to present the speakers alphabetically. And I want to start off with a bang.

00:05:16:10 In the first issue of *Life* magazine, Margaret Bourke-White opened up a new chapter in photojournalism. In that issue, she set a swift, hard pace for herself and began establishing a series of precedents that have made her an outstanding ace among aces. Somehow or another, she managed to turn up with her camera in any corner of the globe that is in the midst of some cataclysm or dramatic[?] shakeup. She went gallivanting over enemy territory and Air Corps bombers, and was torpedoed at sea. Mud, cold, rain, dirt, and stench are things she has taken in her stride, to record men, places, and events for her magazine.

00:05:56:22 Whether she points her camera at misery or magnificence, it is always done with a passionate interest and deep conviction. Margaret Bourke-White.

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00:06:07:16 BOURKE-WHITE: Hi there[?]. [applause]

00:06:13:17 Thank you, Mr. Steichen. You said we were to confess our misdemeanors; but you also said we only had five minutes. I don't know whether five minutes will be enough for all of mine. There are so many aspects to modern photography; but there's one that interests me above all others, and I've given quite a lot of thought to it. It sounds quite simple. It's to tell the truth. Now, of course, we all know the old saying that the photograph never lies. And all over[?] this department, there were good reasons for doing this.

00:06:39:23 But I'm not talking about intentional [inaudible] in his photograph, although I'm sure they've taken lots of pictures which have told good lies. And often there are very—

00:06:49:02 He has to know what the truth is. It's not always so easy to decide. Sometimes it takes a lot of soul searching, and it always takes a lot of research. Now, that's a very important part of photography. With the world in the confused state that it's in now, I think anyone who is in a position to throw light—

00:07:11:19 —sit in a small cornerette[?] is in a position of great importance and very great responsibility. I think I never felt that responsibility more keenly than on my most recent assignment, which was to South Africa. I knew it was a great opportunity, because there [was] a very important story to be told. As we all have heard, this is a country where the situation of discrimination between black and white is most acute. It's a country with about 10- or 11-million population, in which the two million who happen to have white skins manage to keep 8-million people who are unlucky enough to have black skins in a state where they have no vote, where they have little choice of job, where they're not given much chance to get an education, where they're barred from skilled trades, and where life is very difficult for them, if it could be called life at all.

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00:08:05:05 BOURKE-WHITE (Cont.): Well, how to show all that? How to make up my mind about it? Of course, it was natural to begin in the gold mines, because all life there is centered on getting gold out of the ground. And that meant really beginning at the bottom, because under Johannesburg, the mines go down to the awesome depth of two miles. The pictures of this miner that we showed tonight were taken at a depth of 6300 feet, which meant not only more than a mile underground, but it meant 1,000 feet below sea level.

00:08:36:22 But even then, I found that gold mines in Johannesburg didn't look so very different from coalmines in Pennsylvania, except that the miners wore fewer clothes, and my miners looked hotter; but I think the photographer was pretty hot, too, at 1,000 feet below sea level. But I decided that it took something more. It seemed to me that it wasn't only the work these people did that was important, but the lives that they lived when they weren't working.

00:09:05:06 And that wasn't quite so easy to find out about it. But it wasn't impossible to find out about it. I found out that the men lived behind barbed wire and were locked in at night, and had to sleep on hard cement floors, forty to 100 in a single windowless room, and had to live without their women, because it would've cost the company a little more for housing if their families had been brought there.

00:09:30:24 And I found out a great many other things, too, and of course, tried to take pictures to show this. And it wasn't always so easy to get them. But I decided that it wasn't just the single picture that counted. It seems to me that if a photographer knows the truth, he thinks of it terms, perhaps, of a mosaic. And when you're getting permission to do something, you don't show that whole mosaic that's in the photographer's mind. He shows one single piece of the mosaic. And usually it isn't too hard to proceed step by step.

00:10:02:21 And the finished mosaic should know[?] the truth, if the photographer has decided what the truth is. I decided, too, that it isn't necessarily to go to far corners of the earth to find the truth, like South Africa or India, for example. In fact, it was in India that someone made a remark to me that pointed that up quite strongly. I was taking pictures in a Mohammedan college, and I

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BOURKE-WHITE (Cont.): was rather shocked to find that in spite of India and Pakistan's new freedom, there was still segregation of women.

00:10:38:17 The co-eds were coming to class in some of these colleges in veils. And I found that pretty shocking. Of course, that's something that is dying away now. And I spoke of it to a group of students after class. And one of them turned to me and he said, "You talk about your equality and democracy. But how can you say that you have democracy in America, when you do not give equal rights to Negroes?" Since then—that was in 1947—great strides have been taken—of course, the trend started much earlier—to give equal citizenship to Negroes.

00:11:12:06 And I've been glad to take pictures in Southern colleges which are now beginning to admit Negroes. I think that we can find the truth in our country, our own back door. We can find it in the good things, as well as the bad things. Both must be shown. The important thing is that in photography, our tools grow. And our whole conception of what we can show keeps growing. And as we grow, our pictures improve and we grow to be bigger people and can show more in photography, because photography is as big as life itself. [applause]

00:11:57:09 STEICHEN: Thank you, Margaret Bourke-White. The next figure that I've brought into this picture is not present. It's Harry Callahan, from Chicago. I'm bringing him into the picture because he presents a face of photography that is not represented here at the table. Harry Callahan is one of the important younger photographers who takes the anastigmat lens into his confidence, as he probes and searches into the realm of pattern, texture, and design.

00:12:30:08 He is continually exploring both himself and in the realms of places, people, and things, or contrasts and relationships. Callahan is no respecter of standard technical formula or code. His unerring sense of pattern is an integral part of his photography, and not a thing by itself. What may look like an abstraction actually stands for an intensification of reality.

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00:12:57:05 STEICHEN (Cont.): Our next speaker is Walker Evans. After living with the museum's collection of photographs for three years, I find the intrinsic merit and the aliveness of a photograph is put to a severe test. And the frequent handling and consideration I have had to give to the photographs in our collection of Walker Evans' photographs always remains a particularly stimulating experience.

00:13:26:06 His photographs are a visual demonstration of the Goethe reference to *das Ding an sich*, the thing in itself. He pins down incisive images of people and places, salts them down with a sprinkling of the Humpty-Dumpty of things. Personal opinions are in evidence; but facts, unrelieved and unretouched, are the order of the day. He's one of the group of this panel who was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Walker Evans. [applause]

00:14:08:17 WALKER EVANS: Please forgive me for reading. An artist can't be expected to play without the music before him. I felt sure that someone tonight would call his paper "Is Painting an Art?". What is Modern Photography is really too much of a subject for me. I'd like to be allowed to abuse my privileges to a certain extent. I don't see how anyone can be interested in a photograph that isn't either original or daring or beautiful, or somehow of unalloyed coinage. And I choke on the word modern used in connection with these qualities.

00:14:45:10 All photography is the product of a modern invention. And we all know that some of it is festering with attitudes and states of minds that were valueless from the time of Al-Sabieties[sp?]. There are photographic styles that are recent and very interesting, but I'd hesitate to call any of them modern. We have to remember that in the 1920s and somewhat before, modern meant atonality and cacophony in music, and abstraction and various distortions in painting, incommunicable subjective imagery in poetry, and automatic writing in prose.

00:15:21:16 Yet we were stimulated by Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Braque, Modigliani, Crane and Stein because they were artists, not because they were freaks trying to traffic in something called modern. In photography, I do feel that a good picture usually shows a relation

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EVANS (Cont.): to its period. Atget, for example, gives you a feeling that he belonged very much to the Paris of his days; and Brady seems rooted in the American atmosphere of his.

00:15:48:12 Probably, there is only a remote connection between my points here; but think how much each of these men has contributed to current photography. Brady is doubly interesting as a forerunner. His studio portrait lighting has turned up in recent fashion photography, and his beautiful straight field reporting style is still imitated. As for Atget, I suppose Shahn could produce a comparable photographic poetry of the streets, if he set out to do it.

00:16:12:27 But Atget's sustained performance can still serve as a model. I think his use of dawn lighting was partly a matter of convenience, but is nonetheless influential. I seem to be approaching the ultimate twist of our subject title, into what is *not* modern photography; but I think I can hold myself to one obvious point here, which is that the camerawork that strained after modernism just after the First World War is distinctly not now modern photography. It's as excruciatingly dated as Francis X. Bushman's profile. [laughter]

00:16:48:08 We're allowed by the prospectus tonight to bring analysis to the subject. Under cover of this, I'd like to close with a theoretical note about the motivations of the photographer. It seems that sights or images or objects become a very active challenge to a man who works with cameras. He feels impelled to attack them, and in a sense, to bag them. Sometimes he's a collector; sometimes he's Hamlet looking for a cure to paralysis of the will.

00:17:13:01 Sometimes he's the little boy who's never gotten over the stories of Teddy Roosevelt in Africa after big game. In any event, in his more indiscriminate moments, he is the slave of his craft to such an extent that he may think, can't I ever go out on the street without seeing things? [laughter]

00:17:31:11 He goes on, though, and incurably. The last thing I should want to do is to speak a sentimental apology for him. But it's quite another thing to feel the impact of those working in this medium who are born artists. [applause]

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00:18:02:15 STEICHEN: Thank you, Walker Evans. As I said, these papers are all placed alphabetically. I was afraid that you might think that we were deliberately forcing contrasts. This one concerns Louie Farr, Louis Farr[sp?]. In the last few years, a lyricist with a camera has been wondering the highways and byways of New York.

00:18:37:27 Soul-searing sadness and tender love whisperings, crackling gaiety continually appear in the front of his camera, as if by magic. In the world of today, it is a heartening experience to know and to know of young Louis Farr. I quote his statement. Quote, "Photography determines the entire pattern of my existence, the path of my existence. Half of that existence is concerned with a salable commodity. The remaining half constitutes the uncompromising passion that manifests itself in a search to grasp and hold that fraction of a second that often holds the answer to the complexities of life.

00:19:24:18 "Nothing is to unimportant for me to observe. The wild desire to see and record all things and the unlikeness of my achieving them have resulted in my persistent use of the camera. I carry it almost constantly. From its prints, I extract the examples that life itself teaches. To me, this symposium is the combined focusing of ideas. Tonight, one cannot help but feel again the pure spirit of An American Place."

00:19:59:27 John Mealy. John Mealy is a fervid, restless, and exuberant experimenter and innovator of methods and techniques, at a time when scientists and sportsmen were all agog with the information and measurements revealed by Edgerton and Germeshausen's stroboscopic sequence pictures. The young[?] Mealy was pumped to realize, ooh-ooh, that's for me. In a short time, he had developed the stroboscopic technique in a new and creative medium.

00:20:32:07 The crisp, flickering interruptions of a Martha Graham dance gesture could evoke the unfolding of the petals of a flower. His photographs of the musical festival at Pradas[sp?] would indicate that Mealy is again opening new doors. Mr. Mealy. [applause]

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00:20:53:13 JOHN MEALY: There is no such thing as modern photography. [laughter] There is photography and there is the lack of it. I can only tell you what I consider photograph yeah to be, based, as it were, on my own experience. I am concerned, in my own pictures, with movement because life is movement. Only death is stiff. A person sleeping is still breathing. A person singing, though seemingly immobile, projects a sense of organic agitation which can be even more strenuous than physical exercise.

00:21:31:20 When a photograph does not express movement, it ceases to represent life. It becomes, to me at least, meaningless. In motion pictures, we express movement by actually recording it. In still photography, we express movement by arresting it. By arresting movement, I mean creating an image which retains all detail very sharply, regardless of the nature or speed of the movement.

00:21:59:17 I do not see any virtue in blurring. Blurring in a photograph is a virtue only by accident. Every week, along with some sixty-odd-million Americans, I look through a certain picture magazine. [laughter] Page after page will roll by before I actually make a stop. Being a photographer, the first thing I do is to look for the credit line. [laughter]

00:22:26:02 Sometimes I might even whistle. [he whistles] Invariably, I ask myself the same question. What is it that makes this one photograph more compelling than the score I have so casually passed by? What does this picture have which makes me wish I had taken it? The answer is always the same. Timing.

00:22:52:23 To compel interest, to create impact, a photograph must reveal an instant which has more meaning to us than if we had actually ourselves witnessed the whole event. I repeat, for this to me, is the heart of photography. To create impact, a photograph must reveal an instant which has more meaning to us than if we had actually ourselves witnessed the whole event.

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00:23:24:02 MEALY (Cont.): I will give you an example from my own experience. I was assigned to cover the first Louis-Walcott fight, which took place in Madison Square Garden during the winter of 1947. I think it was the 5th of December, if you want to be exact. In handing me the assignment, the editors were very explicit. "Bring back a picture of the knockout," they said, [laughter] everybody expecting Walcott to go down.

00:23:58:19 As it turned out, everybody had guessed wrong. Actually, it was Joe Louis and not Walcott that went down. And very luckily for me, he went down twice. [laughter] I could hardly believe my own eyes when I saw Louis fall for the first time, and was so utterly unprepared that I missed it completely.

00:24:24:28 Fortunately, as I said, Joe obliged, [laughter] and when the second knock down occurred, I was ready for it and caught it dead on. You will possibly have seen this photograph, which covers the ring and a fairly large section of the audience behind it. The action shows the split second when Joe Louis is hitting the canvas. Now, the eye could not quickly perceive, and the spectators could hardly realize, the impact of this sudden happening, which was reflected not so much in Louis' awkward falling form, but in the variety of feelings on the spectators' own faces.

00:25:07:26 The majority of the spectators were certainly not conscious of what they were doing, feeling, or thinking at that particular moment. But looking at the photograph in retrospect, we are able to discern, for instance, who among those present are wholly unconcerned or too slow to react, and who were shouting; the ones who are twisted with anxiety, and those who are shocked rigid by what is happening.

00:25:37:29 Each face tells its own peculiar story. And by a thousand accurately recorded details, we are now able to reconstruct, almost at a glance, this overpowering mass emotion which is released by the spectacle of a public fight. This, then, arresting movement, capturing the precise instant which can create, by means of a snapshot, an enhanced meaning for a whole event

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MEALY (Cont.): or human action, constitutes, in my opinion, the true timeless province of photography. [applause]

00:26:34:23 STEICHEN: Thank you, John Mealy. Our next subject, with the lovely shock of white hair down on my left, claimed to be too frightened to read her own words, and I had to promise that I would read them for her. And that is Lisette Model.

00:27:05:07 Most of the earlier photographs that came under the heading of candid photography, candid photographs, were little more than silly or ludicrous snapshots. When that terms is applied to the photographs by Lisette Model, it takes on new meaning. [The] camera eye in itself is impersonal. But to that camera's eye is added her own very personal, keen, and searching eye, continually probing and poking beneath surface appearances. Her satire is sometimes subtle and acid. Again, it is lusty and boisterous.

00:27:40:29 On occasion, she pictures human grace and dignity with an epic grandeur. And this is Lisette Model's statement, with instructions to be read with emphasis. [laughter]

00:27:57:27 "Two tendencies dominate the field of photography today, one full of artificial subterfuges, glamor fantasies and hysterical drive for what is called shock appeal; the other striving for sincerity, realism, and truth. I have often been asked what I wanted to prove by my photography. The answer is, I don't want to prove anything. The photograph proves to me. I am the one who learns.

00:28:29:19 "Why do you photograph these ugly people? To me, these people are not ugly. They are vital personalities. That is why life has marked them so sharply. Why do these people look so serious? And why not? These photographs cannot be published; they say too much. I am concerned when they don't say enough. These are everyday conflicts.

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00:28:58:20 STEICHEN (Cont.): "The camera is a means of detection. It shows not only what we already know, but can explore new aspects of a constantly changing world. New images surround us everywhere. They are invisible only because of sterile, routine convention and fear. To find these images is to dare to see, to be aware of what there is, and how it is. The photographer not only gets information, he gives information about life.

00:29:29:20 "What is more, the information is given on a mass scale. The camera works fast; so does the photographer. Within the second, he has to see and feel, to understand and to select, to react and to act. Movement and expression, unseen before, is stuff. A moment is captured that never was and never will be again. Speed, the fundamental condition of our days' activities, is the power of photography. [audio file stops, restarts]

00:30:01:13 "The modern art of today, the art of the split second." [applause]

00:30:21:00 Wright Morris. Will you come up here, Morris? I think you'll probably do— Wright Morris is the literary man in this group. Poet and novelist, he has produced two notable books, *The Inhabitants* and *The Home Place*, published by Scribner and Son. In these, his text and his photographs work together as a unit. The pictures do not illustrate the text, and the text does not illustrate the pictures; they are one.

00:31:01:14 Let me read to you what Lewis Mumford had to say about Wright Morris' *Home Place*. Quote, "I began *The Home Place* on my own home place in Dutchess County, and I finished the book in Iowa, not far from the scene of Wright Morris' double-barreled work of art. The stuff of which he has composed his book is so genuine it almost hurts. Wright Morris' writing has the density of an experience that has been lived and relived in the mind, until the depth of a lifetime can come forth in a single casual episode.

00:31:36:19 "As for his photographs, they are as poignant in feeling as they are skillful in technique. Morris makes the rubbish left by the past lives or the grass a human foot has walked on more poignant with human experience than most photographers are capable of making of the

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STEICHEN (Cont.): human face. In Wright Morris' *Home Place*, we have one of the most original works of art our generation is likely to see." Wright Morris. [applause]

00:32:13:27 WRIGHT MORRIS: Somewhere in *Walden*, Thoreau says, "If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, like a scimitar, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and the marrow. And so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are dying, let us hear the rattle in our throat and feel the cold in the extremities. If we are alive, let us go about our business."

00:32:47:13 This passage illuminates for me the business of photography. It is not a definition, but it is as close to a definition as I care to get. What the photographer feels when confronted with a fact is what the beholder should feel when confronted with the photograph—a shock of recognition. There is no definition that will substitute for this. Men have always wanted some litmus test or some species of art-sensitive Geiger counter that would settle for them once [and] for all, the perplexing problems of art.

00:33:24:24 Happily, there is none. We have to [con]front this fact ourselves, face to face. Photography begins, I think, with this shock of recognition. A man, with or without a camera, face to face to a fact. The camera can come along later, or the fact may be lost. On the ground glass, it may look like something else. We seem to be born a race of interpreters. The man who buys a camera sees the world through the eyes of the camera, as others see it through art, literature, or some, photography.

00:34:02:28 The last eyes we use, if ever, are our own. The word genius, by and large, is the term we reserve for those men who, with eyes of their own, look about them and report on what they see. As I believe that a man's self may divide him from his subject, self-expression is not a fruitful use of photography. The personality of the photographer, if that is his subject, belongs in front of the lens, not behind it.

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00:34:33:20 MEALY (Cont.): A camera itself, then, the apparatus, is just one more thing, in my opinion, that can separate us from reality. Not long ago, I received a photograph on which I found the following information. 4 x 5 Speed Graphic, 2A flashbulb, fast pan film, 1/100 second at f/11. Did this machine take the picture? I'm inclined to think it did.

00:34:59:19 It not merely did, it was expected to. I have not as yet been asked what typewriter it is that writes my books, but I am always what camera took my photographs. It has led me to the opinion that when a man picks up a camera, he loses sight of both the subject and the photograph. The glimmer that he sees is the play of light on the chrome surface of some gadget, and sweet edge that he feels is the one that cuts through his pocketbook.

00:35:30:20 I doubt if any subject is less academic than the one we have under discussion. What is photography? Whatever it is and wherever it is, I think it is becoming a public menace. The word shoot, as photographers use it, is both accurate and prophetic. [laughter] And the word candid, like the button passed out to initiates at some political convention, seems to permit the bearer to shoot anything in sight. He invariably does.

00:35:59:29 His favorite hunting grounds are those usually marked Private, Keep Out. And his favorite game is somebody's private life. If the camera has widened our horizons, it has narrowed to the point of strangulation, the still point on which we all stand, our privacy. The conception has grown, largely through practice, that what is private is meant to be exposed. And there is at the root, something suspicious about privacy. Like certain tests[?], rewards are now posted for men who shoot it down. And the pelt, if rare, can be sold on the market for a pretty good price.

00:36:38:20 If this is art, it is also politics. It has a good deal to do, in my opinion, with that latest vanishing American, the uncommon man. Photography is still magic. Perhaps that is the gist of it. There is about this, too, like the alchemist's stone, something that bewitches the minds of men and makes its user a force for evil or a force for good. The man with a camera, like the

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MEALY (Cont.): man with the plague, is carefully kept out of certain places. But where he should be absolutely forbidden, he is let in.

00:37:16:26 There is no closed season, apparently, on our privacy. The photographer, more than other craftsmen, is engaged in an endless wrasse with the devil. With every snap of the shutter, he tells a big lie or a small truth. That terrible myth, that the camera does not lie, in our time has come home to haunt us. It not merely lies, it lies inexhaustibly. It were better to say that it seldom tells the truth and that it is, in our public life, the number one liar.

00:37:52:27 Ten years ago, when I was off hunting myself, a man at my back, standing at the edge of a cornfield, fired a hail of singing buckshot over my head. He missed me, but he hit what he was aiming at. He was aiming at the fellow who would invade his privacy. Thanks to this man, I was brought face to face with a fact that I would rather have avoided, the one that lies, I think, at the heart of photography. Because I believe a great photograph, by definition, is the invasion of some kind of privacy, whether it is a chair, a child, or the war dead scattered on some beach.

00:38:35:06 How can this invasion be justified? I have no answer. I am not sure that an answer exists. The presumption under which I labor is that I am something of an artist, and that these are the materials with which I work. But I notice that I work less and less, that there are more and more photographs that I do not take. I believe that privacy is so rare in our time that it has about it something holy, and I ponder[?] the right of any man to look in upon it; to reduce, that is, our dwindling supply of this commodity.

00:39:16:12 If a man feels that he must, let him first know what he is about. He can acquire this knowledge, in my opinion, by turning to the photographs of Walker Evans, where there is revelation, boldness, and always great delicacy. If he can meet and sustain such standards, let him work. If he cannot, let him hold his peace.

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00:39:40:28 MEALY (Cont.): The things that interest me photographically are those that speak for themselves. Sometimes I feel that everything visible does. I confine myself, however, to the language that I think I understand, that which is spoken by houses and the things that are handled by men—manhandled, as a rule, and worn out. These things are a species of photographs in themselves. The tool that bears the imprint of many hands, the bed that holds the impression of many bodies, and the house that wears, like an album, the look of the inhabitants.

00:40:19:02 Upon these things, as on a photographic plate, man has left the impressions that I find both revealing and eloquent. They may need a witness, but they do not need an interpreter. As I am a writer, I use these photographs in relation to words. I have, that is, a form problem. I want the photograph to exist by itself; I want the words to stand by themselves. I do not want illustration, that is, from either medium.

00:40:49:07 The solution I have found has been dictated by these terms. It seems to me that the problem of photography text, a frontier that invites many crossings, is at root a simple problem of integrity. One medium should not slyly corrupt the related one. It should be a marriage of independent minds, and not an arrangement by which one mind enters a permanent slavery. On my way here tonight, I read that anybody—anybody—can take a good picture.

00:41:22:24 Better, than is, than those you have in your pocket right now. It has been the purpose of the industry to make it easy to take pictures. But this makes it hard, it seems to me, to take photographs. As a matter of fact, however, I look forward to the automatic camera, the one that dispenses, that is, with that deadly cameraman. The human element is always unreliable. Why not let some foolproof gadget aim the camera, then shoot if off?

00:41:50:04 If anybody can do it, certainly some gadget can do it better. And until that occurs, I'm afraid we will lack photographers. We will go on asking, what is photography? It will not be clear until then, I think, that though good pictures can be taken by cameras, photographs are what you get from photographers. [applause]

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00:42:28:12 STEICHEN: Thank you, Wright Morris. Definitions of documentary photography vary. Like so many words, this one has taken on meanings beyond those given in the dictionary. In spite of an uninformed insistence that the image documentation deals with exclusively is slums and filth, documentary photography does usually center around the general theme of human relations and of how people live.

00:43:05:09 In the work of photographer Homer Page, this documentation of what we are like and how we live also begins to reveal and express some of the whys in these human relations, in these human questions and equations. Homer Page, like the previous speaker Wright Morris, both received and worked on Guggenheim Fellowships. Homer Page. [applause]

00:43:41:21 HOME PAGE: I have felt some responsibility to talk a little bit tonight about the new directions that young so-called documentary photographers are taking. I think these directions are important. They will become more important as time goes on. In general, I think there has been a trend away from the old documentary standby of objective reportage, toward a more intimate, personal, and subjective way of photographing. I think specifically, there are two trends that seem to me to be very important.

00:44:47:02 One trend has a positive note to it. It records life as healthy, vigorous, and even sometimes humorous. It does this without being insipid. I think it's something new and welcome in this field, which has been criticized so often for photographing despair and deprecation.

[audio is silent until the end]

00:48:12:29 [END]