

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

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## "DIOGENES WITH A CAMERA," PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION, TO SHOW WORK OF 6 AMERICANS

The first of several exhibitions to show the work of contemporary American photographers will be on view in the Auditorium Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from May 21 through August 17. The exhibitions will be organized and installed by Edward Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, who has chosen the title "Diogenes with a Camera" to indicate photography's contribution to the search for truth. The photographers represented in this first exhibition are Edward Weston, Frederick Sommer, Harry Callahan, Esther Bubley, Eliot Porter and W. Eugene Smith.

This series aims to demonstrate how the art of photography has added to our knowledge of the truth. Although it is readily seen that scientific photography has made such contributions, they are less recognized in the art of photography. For the recording of quantitative truth, the millions of little facts, the hundred thousand leaves on a tree, no other visual medium can compare. And in addition it is capable of expressing qualitative truth, of penetrating to significant meanings.

The exhibition will be comprised of 6 one-man shows of especially selected work usually on a basic theme or project illustrating the purpose of the series. The series to be shown, in contrast to the recent exhibition of five French journalistic photographers, plans to cover the different phases of American photography, particularly work that has made an outstanding or original contribution to the documentary, the journalistic, the naturalistic, the pictorial and the abstract.

The opening group in the gallery's installation is the work of W. Eugene Smith. His complete series about a Negro nurse mid-wife is included, supplemented with a selection from his Spanish Village series, both originally for Life magazine. It is apparent that Eugene Smith is strongly possessed of the painter's intuition. He injects himself, his feelings and his experiences into the picture he produces.

Next is a group of prints by Harry Callahan, dominated by a frieze-like scroll making a procession of close-ups of women's faces, taken with a telephoto lens from across the street. Here is found a more impersonal, objective point of view towards reality. In all of this photographer's work, the artist's sense of pattern and design is conspicuous.

Eliot Porter, trained as a scientist, is a photographer whose color photographs of birds have won a unique place in ornithology. His work to be shown here is in color. Included in the exhibition are recent works, meticulous renderings of naturalistic scenery, with particular emphasis on the texture and design of selected fragments of nature, composed with a poetic and intimate feeling.

An entirely different phase is represented in the next galleries in the work of Esther Bubley, a prize-winner in the recent Life competition for photographers under 30 years of age. This is direct photographic reporting without a trace of the painter's pictorial concept. The outstanding quality of her reporting is the expression of her love and understanding of people. The group to be shown includes a few of her priz-winning pictures from the Life contest and an extensive coverage of the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital, a series commissioned by the Mellon Fund for Health and Welfare.

The Arizona painter-photographer Frederick Sommer moves into the realm of the abstract in his landscapes by subtracting or eliminating the elements of aerial perspective. Using the same biting precision, he begins composing his subjects imaginatively. They are whimsical, humorous or ardent; they have composition and design. The exhibition will include a number of the actual objects Sommer has used to create these compositions: the streaked lid of an old paint can, the broken parts of a tiny doll, fragments of old woodcuts.

Edward Weston, a long recognized master photographer and leader of the famed Pacific Coast F-64 school of photography, is included in this exhibition for his unique explorations into the realm of truth during his 50 years of photography. He will be represented by 6 photographs made since his comprehensive one-man show at the Museum in 1946, as well as by the recently issued Portfolio of original prints celebrating his 50th year of photography.