

photo list
local-general

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

530522-45

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POSTWAR EUROPEAN PHOTOGRAPHY TO BE SHOWN AT MUSEUM

The first large exhibition of postwar European photography at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, will be on view from May 27 through August 2 in the Auditorium Gallery. More than 300 photographs, including portraits, documentary work, abstract and surrealist compositions, by 78 photographers from 11 countries and working all over the world were selected for the exhibition by Edward Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, on a recent European tour.

Postwar European Photography is being presented in recognition of the achievement of these photographers who were severely hampered by lack of materials and equipment and by the fact that during the war years creative photography was practically suppressed in most countries. It is a sampling of important work rather than an all-inclusive survey. After the showing at the Museum of Modern Art the exhibition will be circulated to other museums, schools, colleges and art associations throughout the U.S.A.

The exhibition includes a group of the famous series on returning prisoners of war taken by the Austrian Ernst Haas in his native Vienna and a series taken in Greece showing crowds of people waiting in anticipation of a much-heralded miracle. Some of Mr. Haas' work done in America will also be shown including a series on "sand hog" construction workers and photographs taken in New Mexico.

Dramatic photographs of a famine in India by Werner Bischof of Zurich will be shown along with some of his early work. Robert Frank, also from Zurich, who works in New York as well as Europe and was one of the prize-winners in Life Magazine's Young Photographers Contest, is represented by a series of photographs of miners in Wales and bankers in London.

Recent portraits, taken in Italy, of 81-year-old Gordon Craig, famous modern theatrical designer and theoretician, will be shown as a credit to the photographer David Lees of Florence and a tribute to Mr. Craig's memorable contribution to the art of the theatre.

Unusually intimate portrayals of student life in the cafes of Boulevard St. Michel in Paris taken by Ed van der Elsken of Holland will be shown. Ernst Scheidigger of Switzerland has photographed a series showing Joan Miro, the famous modern artist, at work in his studio and in his garden.

Tender, gentle dancing movements are contrasted with frenzied frantic dancing in a series of photographs of couples in South America by Leonti Planskoy who now lives in England and is being shown in this country for the first time. Cockney London and the war in Korea are shown in photographs by Bert Hardy, English photographer whose work reveals a sympathetic human understanding. Jakob Tuggener of Switzerland photographed the contrasts between industry and nightclub life on the Riviera. Luigi Veronesi of Italy is represented by a series of abstract photographs, as is Hans Hammarskiöld, an outstanding young photographer from Stockholm. Sten Didrik Bellander, also from Stockholm, is represented by surrealist photographs tinged with Scandinavian wit.

A haunting series by Vilem Kriz, a Czech now living in the U.S., is called "Vision of the Times through Documents of the Past." Mr. Kriz, like several other photographers in the exhibition, also uses broken dolls as a recurring subject. Anker-Spang Larsen of Denmark, for example, shows dolls caught high in the air in barbed wire and lying dismembered in open fields. Six of the photographers included in the exhibition have only a token representation of one picture each as they have been shown in extensive exhibitions at the Museum since the war. They are Brassai, Cartier-Bresson, Doisneau, Roni and Iziz, whose work was shown in "Five French Photographers" in 1952, and Bill Brandt, the English photographer, whose work was shown at the Museum in 1949.

Mr. Steichen comments on the exhibition as follows:

I believe this exhibition shows that postwar Europe is making a significant contribution to the art of photography. New names are added to the list of top-flight contemporary photographers. The work of these 78 men and women is a persuasive demonstration that photography of today overrides frontiers and language differences, has become a universal medium of expression. European camera workers had to overcome economic problems bordering on the impossible. Yet in this exhibition we find the same wide range of fruitful probings and experiments in various directions characteristic of American work today. Their weaknesses and strength, their foibles and borrowings from other mediums also parallel our own. On occasion they show a resentment of the inevitable discipline of the medium as flagrantly as some of our younger photographers. The clear cut demonstrations by those of fuller experience show how well photography is uniquely qualified to record the image of the world we live in.