

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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WALKER EVANS: AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHS with essay by Lincoln Kirstein. 196 pages; 87 plates. Cloth, \$7.50. Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed by Doubleday & Co., Inc. June 8, 1962.

Walker Evans: American Photographs, a pictorial record of the thirties by one of this country's greatest living photographers, will be issued by the Museum of Modern Art June 8. Evans' view of America during a decade of economic depression and political change is presented in 87 full-page black and white photographs of its people, houses, streets and signs. An essay by Lincoln Kirstein describes Evans' work and his place in the history of photography. The 196-page book is available at the Museum or by mail for \$7.50 (plus 25 cents postage). It will be distributed nationally by Doubleday and Co., Inc.

Originally published in 1938 and out of print for the past twenty years, American Photographs has become a collector's item. The book, now considered a classic volume of contemporary photography, revealed a new master of the camera who expressed the tragic sense and troubled conscience of the thirties. As Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications, says in the foreword, Evans' work seems even more important today when the period it documents can be seen in historical perspective.

The pictures are divided into two sections, one devoted to people, the other to buildings which Evans believes typify native American expression. Taken between 1928 and 1937 in the eastern and southern states, subjects include a tenant farmer's family singing hymns, a coal dock worker, Coney Island couples, a girl in Fulton Street, park bench sitters, bowery bums, an auto graveyard, torn movie poster and minstrel showbill, car-lined main streets, boarding houses, farm houses, wood gothic houses, shanties, churches, country stores and roadside stands.

In his 9-page essay Lincoln Kirstein writes:

The most characteristic single feature of Evans' work is its purity, or even its puritanism. It is "straight" photography, not only in technique but in the rigorous directness of its way of looking.... The power of Evans' work lies in the fact that he so details the effect of circumstances on familiar specimens that the single face, the single house, the single street, strikes with the strength of overwhelming numbers, the terrible cumulative force of thousands of faces, houses and streets.

The original edition of American Photographs was published in conjunction with an exhibition of Evans' work, the first one-man photography show ever presented at the Museum. A selection of his photographs in the Museum collection will go on view June 8 to mark the publication of the new edition.

Evans was born in St. Louis in 1903. One of the few photographers who is also a writer, he covered art and film for Time during the 40's. In 1941 he collaborated with James Agee on "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men." For the past 16 years he has been associated with Fortune and has been responsible for photographs and text for many portfolios on the American scene. He is currently on leave to work on a grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

Photographs and review copies are available from Nancy Reed, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. Circle 5-8900.