

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

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PRESS PREVIEW:

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SISKIND RECENTLY, an exhibition of forty photographs taken by Aaron Siskind since 1960 in Rome, Chicago and Mexico, will be on view in The Museum of Modern Art's Edward Steichen Photography Center from May 5 through June 27. This will be the first in a series of small one-man exhibitions emphasizing a significant period or aspect of the work of outstanding photographers to be shown in the third floor photography galleries. The Siskind exhibition was selected by John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography.

Aaron Siskind's photographic career began in the early thirties and during that first decade his work was documentary in form and social in intent. Mr. Szarkowski writes, in his introduction to the exhibition, "In the early '40s Siskind felt a growing discontent with what he sensed to be the limited meaning of the work he had been doing, and a growing concern for formal values, for the meanings which belong not to the subject but to the photograph itself. To release his seeing from conventional meanings Siskind turned to subjects which, in conventional terms, had no meaning -- to the stains and scars of old walls, and the detritus of used-up places.

"The development of Siskind's style since that time has been coherent and organic, and might even seem, in retrospect, to have been predictable. The insistence on the primacy of the picture plane, and the love of magic, and the sense of ritual and delight in exploration of the unknown -- these qualities in Siskind's work have remained, while the work itself has grown stronger and richer."

Born in New York City in 1903, Siskind studied at the City College of New York and taught English in New York public schools from 1926-49. Since 1951 he has taught at the Institute of Design in Chicago, where he is now head of the Photography Department.

When the Edward Steichen Photography Center opened in May 1964, works from the Museum's unique Photography Collection of about 7,000 prints, dating from 1839 to

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the present, were shown in its own galleries for the first time. About 200 photographs from the Collection are continuously on view in the Steichen Center, in addition to the special series of temporary one-man shows.

The Museum initially exhibited photographs in 1932, three years after the institution was founded, and began to acquire them for the Collection in 1933. In 1940, it became the first art museum to establish a curatorial department devoted exclusively to this medium. But, it was only with the addition of the Photography Center in 1964 that the Department was provided with permanent exhibition space and accessible study-storage.

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Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Lynn Traiger, Assistant Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.