

The Museum of Modern Art

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ADVANCE TO MAGAZINES

The first major retrospective of the works of DOROTHEA LANGE, the American photographer who died on October 11, 1965, after a long illness, will be shown at The Museum of Modern Art from January 25 through March 22, 1966.

Although she has been acknowledged as one of the seminal influences of modern photography, only a small portion of Lange's work has been widely seen -- the best known is that of the 1930s which showed the ordeal of rural America during the dust bowl years. In addition to this work, the exhibition, directed by John Szarkowski, who heads the Museum's Department of Photography, will include an essay on the emergence of The New California during the past generation; sections on Ireland, Egypt and Asia which show Miss Lange's perceptive and personal response to other countries and cultures; and a highly evocative essay on the artist's own home and family which reveals a lyrical sensibility rare in photography. This later more subjective work shows the same clarity with which she photographed the dignity and worth of ordinary people during the '30s. The basic theme of Lange's work remained constant throughout her career: the value and the toughness and the indestructibility of human beings.

The exhibition will consist of about 200 pictures, mounted under plexiglass -- sometimes as individual 8 x 10" pictures, sometimes as clusters of images designed to make a single statement. A monograph* on Dorothea Lange, with an essay by the novelist and critic George P. Elliott, a friend of the photographer for many years, will accompany the exhibition.

Dorothea Lange was born in Hoboken, N.J. in 1895. At the age of 17 she decided to become a photographer. She found a job in the New York studio of Arnold Genthe, who gave her her first camera, and studied under Clarence White at Columbia University. In 1915 she moved to San Francisco, where she began her photographic career
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*DOROTHEA LANGE by George Elliott; 112 pages 90 illustrations; tentatively priced, hardbound, \$6.95; paperbound, \$3.50. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.

as a photo-finisher, and the next year opened a portrait studio, which was very successful. Having tried to photograph nature she finally realized she had to stick to people - "people, only people, all kinds of people, people who paid me and people who didn't." More and more her work was outside the studio, as she found her subjects on the streets and along the wharfs. In 1932, her view of the dilemma of a whole country was realized in the famous photograph called "White Angel Breadline."

Paul Taylor, an economics professor at the University of California, visited her San Francisco studio and was moved by her pictures; in 1934, when the State of California hired him to make a report on the migrant worker situation, he made the unprecedented request that his research assistant be a photographer -- and that the photographer be Dorothea Lange. Their report was so revealing and their presentation so effective that the state set up camps for the refugees. When, in turn, the federal government set up the Resettlement Administration (later the Farm Security Administration), it included a photographic unit under the direction of Roy Stryker and Dorothea Lange was one of its most prominent photographers.

In the years between 1935 and 1940, Miss Lange traveled throughout the country and her work resulted in the publication in 1939 of An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion, in collaboration with Paul Taylor, her husband.

Miss Lange continued to work for the FSA until 1943 when it disbanded, and during the war she worked for the Office of War Information and for the War Relocation Authority photographing the Japanese-Americans being taken to relocation camps. In 1945 while photographing the United Nations Conference, she collapsed. After that time she could no longer accept demanding rigorous assignments. Her work became more personal; she collaborated with Ansel Adams and her son Daniel Dixon on the essay, "Mormon Villages" in 1954; her Irish essay was published in Life in 1955. Also in the show will be an essay on her home and family composed of photographs made over the years.

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Among her major essays is Death of a Valley, the documentation of the devastation of the Beryessa Valley, done with Pirkle Jones in 1960. Another essay, Remembrance of Asia, was photographed in 1958 when Miss Lange accompanied her husband to Pakistan while he was acting as a consultant on community development for ICA (later AID). Her essay photographs of Egypt were made in 1963 while Dr. Taylor, as a Ford Foundation consultant, was serving as a visiting professor at the Institute of Land Reclamation at the University of Alexandria, UAR.

One of the largest essays, The American Farm Woman, is compiled of about 30 pictures taken over the years of American women paired with pictures of their environment. The essay was completed earlier this year.

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.