

# The Museum of Modern Art

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

BRUCE DAVIDSON

July 7 - October 2, 1966

## WALL LABEL

At its simplest and purest, photography is observation. Good photography has demonstrated that observation can be a creative act.

Few contemporary photographers give us their observation so unembellished -- so free of apparent craft or artifice -- as Bruce Davidson does. In his work formal and technical concerns remain below the surface, all but invisible. The presence that fills these pictures seems the presence of the life that is described, scarcely changed by its transmutation into art.

Working fundamentally in the reportage tradition, Davidson has been one of those who have redirected that tradition away from a concern for dramatic narrative, and toward a heightened awareness of photography's ability to evoke the indefinable sense of place, character, and relationship. His earlier work, as seen here in the English essay (1960) is spontaneous and intuitive, it delights in the fugitive and the evanescent. In comparison the recent work is reflective and deliberate; the pictures are both more static and more insistent. In this more contemplative way of working the picture becomes in a sense a collaborative venture between the photographer and the subject. A similarly unhurried reciprocity is necessary between the print and the viewer -- these are pictures to be considered with attention.

John Szarkowski

Bruce Davidson was born in 1933 in Oak Park, Illinois, and became committed to photography during childhood. After undergraduate study at the Rochester Institute of Technology (notably with Ralph Hattersley) he studied art and philosophy at Yale University. Since 1959 he has been a member of Magnum Photos, Inc. In 1962 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in photography. His work has been widely exhibited, and was the subject of a one-man exhibition at The Art Institute of Chicago in 1965.

The photographs of Wales and of England (1965) are exhibited with the permission of Holiday magazine.

All prints in the exhibition were made by Joseph Portogallo.

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