

The Museum of Modern Art

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

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WALKER EVANS' SUBWAY, an exhibition of 41 portraits made in the New York subways from 1938 to 1941, will be on view in the Edward Steichen Photography Center at The Museum of Modern Art from October 5 through December 11. John Szarkowski, Director of the Photography Department, has selected and installed the show.

For more than two decades this particular group of photographs was deliberately withheld by the artist from public exhibition and publication. They are released now for the Museum exhibition because, Evans says, the "rude and impudent invasion involved has been carefully softened and partially mitigated by a planned passage of time."

With an unobtrusive camera the photographer caught his captive riders unaware. This was a technical feat at that time, as the photographs were taken in available light and with the relatively slow film then on the market.

What has been recorded are the moments when the individual human being is revealed - "as matchless as a thumbprint or a snowflake," according to James Agee's foreword to the forthcoming book of these subway pictures, Many Are Called (Houghton Mifflin, November 1966). Agee continues: "Each carries in the posture of his body, in his hands, in his face, in the eyes, the signatures of a time and a place in the world upon a creature for whom the name immortal soul is one mild and vulgar metaphor."

Walker Evans was born in St. Louis in 1903, and has been a photographer for 40 years. From 1935-37 he was an influential member of the remarkable group of men and women who photographed America during the Depression for the Farm Security Administration. "His work has helped to define not only the whole documentary tradition of photography, but every American's sense of his past and his present," John Szarkowski says.

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In 1936, while on leave from the FSA, Evans made the photographs that formed his contribution to Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1941, revised 1960), done in collaboration with James Agee.

The Museum of Modern Art's first one-man show of photography in 1938 devoted to Walker Evans: American Photographs, was later published in book form with an essay by Lincoln Kirstein (Museum of Modern Art, 1938). This now classic book was re-issued in 1962 by the Museum. His work has been exhibited many times at the Museum and was among the first to be acquired for the photography collection in 1932.

Evans was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1940-41 and again in 1959 to document the American scene. He has been an Associate Editor of "Fortune" magazine and is a Professor of Graphic Design at Yale University, teaching photography. Another recent Evans' book, Message From The Interior (The Eakins Press, N.Y., 1966), is on sale now in the Museum bookshop.

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