JACOB ISRAEL AVEDON: PHOTOGRAPHED BY RICHARD AVEDON
TO BE PRESENTED AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

An exhibition of Richard Avedon's photographic portraits of his father, Jacob Israel Avedon, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from May 1 through June 16.

Avedon photographed his father on many different occasions during the last six years up until the week of his father's death on September 1, 1973, just before his 84th birthday. This exhibition, designed by Marvin Israel, consists of eight pictures chosen from those sittings.

John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography, says, "Photographic portraiture, pursued with the high ambition that tradition suggests, is an enormously difficult art. It is most difficult when the photographer and the subject know each other well; in such cases each recognizes and nullifies the other's little tricks of style -- the stuff of our personae. In these circumstances only acceptance and trust can succeed. Richard Avedon's portraits of his father are the deeply moving record of such a success."

Avedon, in speaking of this exhibition, said recently, "At first my father agreed to let me photograph him but I think after a while he began to want me to. He started to rely on it, as I did, because it was a way we had of forcing each other to recognize what we were. I photographed him many times during the last year of his life but I didn't really look at the pictures until after he died. They seem now, out of the context of those moments, completely independent of the experience of taking them. They exist on their own. Whatever happened between us was important to us but it is not important to the pictures. What is in them is self-contained and, in some strange way, free of us both."

Richard Avedon was born in New York City in 1923. He served as a photographer

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in the Merchant Marine during World War II and later studied and worked with Alexey Brodovitch. He became a staff photographer for Harper's Bazaar in 1945 until 1965 when he joined Vogue. He has published two books of his photographic portraits: "Observations" with text by Truman Capote and "Nothing Personal" with text by James Baldwin. He edited Jacques Henri Lartigue's "Diary of a Century" and last year published a book of his photographs of The Manhattan Project's production of "Alice in Wonderland," with text by Doon Arbus.

In 1970, there was a retrospective exhibition of his portraits at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. This is his first exhibition in New York.
Biography of Richard Avedon's Father

Jacob Israel Avedon

Father: Israel Avedon  Mother: Mathilda Sater
Siblings: Dora, William, Ida, Samuel

1889  Born in Lomzha, Province of Grodna, Russia, October 21st
1890  Father emigrates to America
1891  Mother and family leave for America on Nord Deutscher Lloyd Line boarding at Hamburg, Germany to join father at 413 Grand Street, New York City
1893  Father deserts family
1894  Sent to Jewish Child Care Association Orphanage, with older brothers, William and Samuel
1898  Returns to family on Grand Street
     Attends P.S. 192 on Ridge and Broome Streets
1902  Graduates as one of three students accepted at Townsend Harris High School
1905  Enters College of the City of New York
1909  Passes State Pedagogy Examination and qualifies as teacher
1910  Works as substitute teacher at P.S. 17 in Hell's Kitchen
     Assigned as permanent teacher at P.S. 43 in the Bronx
1913  Establishes Avedon's Blouse Shop at 110th Street and Broadway, with brother Sam
1917  Establishes Avedon's Fifth Avenue, a women's speciality shop, at 39th Street and Fifth Avenue with brother Sam
1922  Marries Anna Polansky, January 28th
     Moves to 142 West 87th Street

(more)
1923  Son, Richard, born May 15th
1925  Daughter, Louise, born April 2nd
1926  Moves to Villa Place, Cedarhurst, Long Island with family
1930  Closes Avedon's Fifth Avenue due to bankruptcy
      Sells insurance for Connecticut Mutual
1931  Returns with family to New York City to live at 16 East
      98th Street
1932  Becomes buyer for the Tailored Woman, 57th Street and
      Fifth Avenue
1934  Moves to 55 East 86th Street with family
1937  Establishes Avedon's Woonsocket, a woman's dress shop
      Commutes weekly from home to Woonsocket, Rhode Island
1951  Suffers heart attack
1952  Separates from wife, Anna
      Moves to Tamiami Circle, Sarasota, Florida
      Sells mutual funds for Waddell & Reed
1956  Takes Florida Stock Broker Test and passes first in state
      Becomes broker for Jules Bache & Company
1957  Divorces wife, Anna, June 7th
1959  Meets Eleanor Sorenson
1968  Daughter, Louise, dies at Rockland State Hospital, New York,
      January 18th
      Suffers second heart attack, November 30th
1969  Marries Eleanor Sorenson, March 29th
      Moves to 280 Golden Gate Point, Sarasota, Florida
1970  Establishes real estate partnership with son, Richard, to
      purchase Havana Heights property
1972  Enters Sarasota Memorial Hospital for operation on primary
      cancer of the liver, December 16th
      Operation unsuccessful
      Returns home
1973  Dies, Sarasota Memorial Hospital, September 1st