

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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THE FAMILY OF MAN, an exhibition of creative photography dedicated to the dignity of man, conceived and directed by Edward Steichen, and composed of more than 500 photographs from 69 countries will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from January 26 through May 8. Mr. Steichen, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, assisted by Wayne Miller, spent more than two years selecting the pictures after seeing more than two million photographs. Carl Sandburg, noted poet and author, has written an introduction to the exhibition and Paul Rudolph, architect, has designed the installation which emphasizes as well as symbolizes the theme of the exhibition. The exhibition includes the Museum's entire second floor galleries.

Mr. Sandburg says in his introduction, distributed as a leaflet to all visitors to the exhibition, "The wonder of human mind, heart, wit and instinct is here. You might find yourself saying 'I am not a stranger here.'" The theme photograph, symbolizing these qualities and which recurs throughout the show, is of a young piper.

Commenting on the show, Mr. Steichen says: "Photographers all over the world have made this exhibition possible. They have photographed the everyday story of man - his aspirations, his hopes, his loves, his foibles, his greatness, his cruelty his compassion, his relations to his fellow man as it is seen in him wherever he happens to live, whatever language he happens to speak, whatever clothes he happens to wear.

"Photographs of lovers embracing and parting; of a happy, laughing bride on a child's swing in France, of a girl in India being seen in a mirror for the first time by her bridegroom during an age-old marriage ceremony, are here. Photographs of a woman heavy with child walking rapidly in a street in Japan, a Dutch mother nursing her child, first steps of children in Germany, in India and in South Africa. A small boy playing marbles in Java, a little girl splashing in a New England pond are akin, and so is the lonely and unwanted, unloved child in one part of the world like another such child thousands of miles away. Photographs of a father with his son in primitive Africa and another in Levittown, U.S.A., show the same kind of closeness. The essential oneness and goodness of man is mirrored in the simple direct terms of photography."

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Photographs in the exhibition show men working on the land as they found it in Iran, in Ireland, in Indonesia, in the seas, on the African Gold Coast, show women washing clothes in the Bronx and in India, or making bread in Sicily or carrying huge loaves in Yugoslavia as, different as the circumstances may be, the families of the world engage in the same basic tasks. Men and women making music and dancing and going to parties in Berlin, in Paris, in Borneo, at Coney Island and in New Mexico reveal another kind of kinship, while studying and learning are revealed as much the same in Israel, Czechoslovakia and Princeton, New Jersey.

Photographs of children playing Ring Around the Rosie show that this universal pastime of the young is equally enjoyed in 12 countries. Arranged around a large ring in the center of a gallery, are photographs of children in German streets, on a Swiss hillside, in an oil field in Peru, in a schoolyard in Israel, who

"...clasp the hands

And know the thoughts of men in other lands..." (John Masefield)

There are photographs of relationships between men and women, showing women gossiping, men gossiping, a small girl and an old man playing checkers on a park bench, a bored couple, a happy couple on a ferry ride, simple pleasures and expensive distractions.

The next section of the exhibition poignantly points out the way in which death is a great leveler - as seen in photographs of a baby, in a Brady photograph of a dead soldier from a war fought long ago, of a chieftain and of a King. Other pictures show the compassion that is given by soldiers to their comrades on a Korean battlefield and by friends in a sickroom in the West Indies. Attitudes of prayer in Kashmir are similar to those caught by a photographer on a street in Shanghai and loneliness and hunger in an enemy occupied country is akin to the reactions of men in a depression-ridden country. The photographs reveal the sometime cruelty of a majority to a minority, and man's eternal hope as reflected in a street car in Indonesia bearing the stirring words taken from the Declaration of Independence, "All People are created equal," and the beginnings of adulthood in teenagers in Africa, France and Moscow. A French count, an American policeman, photographed from above as if he were literally the pillar he is figuratively, and women voting in France, Japan, Greece and Korea continue the story of THE FAMILY OF MAN.

This great parade of human emotions and feelings, seen in people, characterized by dignity and hope wherever they were found by photographers all over the world, is climaxed at the end of the exhibition by a series of photographs which dramatically raise one of the greatest challenges of our time - the hydrogen bomb and what it may mean for the future of the family of man. Nine photographs of questioning faces,

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trptychs of three children, three women and three men are shown with a quotation from Bertrand Russell, "...the best authorities are unanimous in saying that a war with hydrogen bombs is quite likely to put an end to the human race there will be universal death - sudden only for a fortunate minority, but for the majority a slow torture of disease and disintegration."

At the entrance to the next gallery the visitor sees a photograph of a dead soldier with the words from the 5th century (B.C.) "Who is the slayer, who the victim? speak." (Sophocles) This gallery is painted black, and the only light comes from a six by eight foot (Eastman) color transparency of the explosion of a hydrogen bomb.

In the last gallery are classic photographs of couples under a line from Ovid, "We two form a multitude": a man and wife sitting on a bench in Wales; in a Mexican house; standing in their German garden; beside a Canadian barn; in their parlor in Sicily; in workclothes in the United States; in a field in China. Mr. Sandburg writes of these faces, "... beyond forgetting, written over with faiths in men and dreams of man surpassing himself."

These couples are placed at right angles to a 16-foot mural of a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. Over this are words from the charter of the United Nations:

We, the peoples of the United Nations [are]
Determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which
twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth
of the human person, in the equal right of men and women and of nations
large and small ...

The exhibition closes on the theme of the eternal hope that lies again and again in the magic of childhood with a series of gay, lilting, tender photographs - a small Chinese girl discovering the beauty of a soap bubble, a Japanese child holding her head back and waiting open mouthed for the falling snow, children jumping excitedly in the fallen autumn leaves, playing games in the ruins of a Spanish town and climbing in tree tops.

The 257 photographers in the exhibition include all the well-known men and women in journalistic and documentary photography as well as many photographers whose work is being exhibited for the first time.

Although the story of THE FAMILY OF MAN is told entirely by the photographs, with captions giving only the photographer's name and proper credit and the country in which the picture was taken, each section of the exhibition is headed by a quotation from world literature, many from the distant past. Research for these captions was done by Dorothy Norman.

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As a prologue to The Family of Man, one of the major 25th Anniversary Year exhibitions, a special section has been installed in the stairway and hall leading to the exhibition galleries. The first picture is an enlarged photographic view of Orion photographed through telescope lens and symbolizing the epic and universal qualities caught by the camera's eye and the photographer's hand in the exhibition which follows.

At the head of the stairs is a photograph of a young child lying in an ancient redwood forest linking the past and the future. A photograph of a mask from the Stone Age and of a woman in a primitive tribe today are reminders of timeless qualities while on the large wall opposite the entrance to the galleries on the second floor landing is a photo mural of a stream flowing into the ocean. Projecting from this are three photographs of fertility and evil, recurring themes in the exhibition.

Entering the exhibition galleries the visitor passes through a large doorway lined with photo-murals of crowds and masses of people - man on a grand scale. The first photograph in the exhibition is a picture of lovers. On a separate panel Carl Sandburg has written in his own hand, his poem:

"There is only one man in the world
and his name is All Men.
There is only one woman in the world
and her name is All Women.
There is only one child in the world
and the child's name is All Children.

A camera testament, a drama of the grand canyon of humanity, an epic woven of fun, mystery and holiness - here is the Family of Man."

Publicity photographs and additional information available from

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