

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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Photographs by Walker Evans will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art from June 8 through August in a special exhibition marking the reissue by the Museum of Evans' famous book, American Photographs* Evans' pictorial record of the thirties, now considered a classic volume of contemporary photography, was originally published in 1938. It revealed the tragic sense and troubled conscience of a decade of economic depression and political change. As Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications, says in the foreward to the new edition, Evans' work seems even more important today when the period it documents can be seen in historical perspective.

For the exhibition Grace Mayer, Associate Curator of Photography, has selected fifteen photographs from the book. Taken between 1928 and 1937 in the eastern and southern states, subjects include a tenant farmer's family singing hymns, a coal dock worker, Coney Island couples, a girl in Fulton Street, park bench sitters, bowery bums, an auto graveyard, torn movie poster and minstrel showbill, car-lined main streets, boarding houses, farm houses, wood gothic houses, shanties, churches, country stores and roadside stands.

In a 9-page essay in the book Lincoln Kirstein writes:

The most characteristic single feature of Evans' work is its purity, or even its puritanism. It is "straight" photography, not only in technique but in the rigorous directness of its way of looking....The power of Evans' work lies in the fact that he so details the effect of circumstances on familiar specimens that the single face, the single house, the single street, strikes with the strength of overwhelming numbers, the terrible cumulative force of thousands of faces, houses and streets.

The original edition of American Photographs was published in conjunction with an exhibition of Evans' work, the first one-man photography show ever presented at the Museum.

Evans was born in St. Louis in 1903. One of the few photographers who is also a writer, he covered art and film for Time during the 40's. In 1941 he collaborated with James Agee on "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men." For the past 16 years he has been associated with Fortune and has been responsible for photographs and text for many portfolios on the American scene. He is currently on leave to work on a grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

*WALKER EVANS: AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHS with essay by Lincoln Kirstein. 196 pages; 87 plates. Cloth, \$7.50. Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed by Doubleday & Co., Inc. June 8, 1962.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. Circle 5-8900.