

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

No. 40

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April 15, 1970
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PHOTOGRAPHY: NEW ACQUISITIONS, an exhibition of 37 photographs recently acquired by The Museum of Modern Art, will be on view from April 15 to July 5, 1970, in the Steichen Galleries. Of the 29 artists represented, only two had works in the Museum's collection before 1969, and none has been extensively shown here before. John Szarkowski, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, who selected the exhibition, says it can be viewed as an indication of some of the general concerns and attitudes of a new generation of American photographers.

Throughout the year, the Department of Photography views several hundred portfolios of work by younger artists, in addition to studying publications and exhibitions in other galleries and museums. "On the basis of judgments formed from this intensive exposure to current work," Mr. Szarkowski continues, "the Department selects for acquisition a number of works that seem to represent in microcosm the character of the best work of the day." This program has enabled the Department of Photography, since its inception in 1933, to build a unique collection of historical and current works of exceptional quality and vigor.

Mr. Szarkowski further notes in the exhibition wall label that there are two distinct esthetic directions among photographers today. The first is a re-shaping of the documentary tradition based on the artists' own fascination with the snapshot, "the most personal, reticent, and ambiguous of documents." "These photographers," he continues, "have attempted to preserve the persuasiveness and mystery of these humble and intuitive camera records,

(more)

while adding a sense of intention and visual logic." Untitled (Cloud) by H. Wessel, included in the exhibition, represents such an attitude.

In apparent contrast is the work of Keith Smith, for example, whose style emphasizes "the kinship of photography to the older arts, often making frank and visible use of applied color, montage, and various darkroom manipulations in an effort to extend the range and richness of photography's vocabulary." PHOTOGRAPHY: NEW ACQUISITIONS illustrates that between two ostensibly divergent styles, there is a shared awareness. Though the forms are quite different, the source of the perception remains essentially the same.

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Additional information available from Jonathan Wright, Assistant, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. (212) 956 - 7297, 7501.

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WALL LABEL

Since its photography collection was begun in 1933, the Museum has attempted to remain informed of significant developments in the creative use of the medium, and to collect works of exceptional quality and vigor that reflect this evolution. On the basis of judgements formed from an intensive study of current work, the Department of Photography recommends for acquisition a limited number of works that seem to represent in microcosm the character of the best work of the day.

The present exhibition is limited to recent acquisitions of work by American photographers who have not been extensively exhibited by the Museum. Most of these photographers are young -- over half are still in their twenties -- and only two were represented in the Museum Collection before 1969. Thus the exhibition can be viewed as an indication of some of the central concerns and attitudes of a new generation of American photographers.

Two distinct positions -- seemingly antipodal if not antipathetic -- are visible here. The heirs of the documentary tradition have redirected that idea in the light of their own fascination with the snapshot: the most personal, reticent, and ambiguous of documents. These photographers have attempted to preserve the persuasiveness and mystery of these humble, intuitive camera records, while adding a sense of intention and visual logic. In apparent opposition to this work are those pictures which emphasize the kinship of photography to the older arts, often making frank and visible use of applied color, montage, and various darkroom manipulations in an effort to extend the range and richness of photography's vocabulary.

These polar positions however share the same axis; each represents part of a broad exploration of the ways in which photography can respond to the needs of contemporary sensibility. On the level of a shared awareness rather than a shared style, these pictures may have more in common than a first look would suggest.

John Szarkowski

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PHOTOGRAPHY: NEW ACQUISITIONS

April 15 to July 5, 1970

Checklist

ADAMS, Robert. (b. 1937)

1. New Housing, Colorado Springs #3. 1968
Purchase (58.70)
2. Outdoor Theater, Colorado Springs #39. 1968
Purchase (7.70)

BENNETT, Gordon. (b. 1933)

3. Days of Protest. 1966
Anonymous Purchase Fund (371.68)

BENSON, John. (b. 1927)

4. Untitled. 1969
Purchase (SC)

BENTLEY, David. (b. 1938)

5. Untitled. n.d.
Gift of the Artist (169.69)

BLUMBERG, Donald. (b. 1935)

6. The Family. 1967
Anonymous Purchase Fund (956.69)

BURKE, William. (b. 1943)

7. Untitled. 1968
Benjamin Zeller Memorial Purchase Fund (SC)

COHEN, Mark. (b. 1943)

8. Untitled. 1967
Purchase (121.69)

COHEN, Mark. (b. 1943)

9. Untitled. 1969
Gift of the Artist (SC)

DANKOWSKI, Joseph. (b. 1932)

10. Alexis Humphries. 1968
Purchase (SC)

DEAHL, David. (b. 1950)

11. Hands and Face. 1968
Purchase (1.70)

EGGLESTON, William. (b. 1939)

12. Untitled. 1967
Gift of the Artist (122.69)

13. Untitled. 1968
Gift of the Artist (SC)

ERWIN, James. (b. 1943)

14. Untitled. 1968
Purchase (SC)

FINK, Laurence. (b. 1941)

15. Before the Confirmation. 1962
Purchase (SC)

FRIEDMAN, Benno. (b. 1945)

16. Ordinary Santa Fe Portrait No. 9a. 1969
Gift of the Artist (SC)

HAHN, Betty (b. 1940)

17. Girl By Four Highways. 1968
Purchase (73.70)

HARE, Chauncey. (b. 1934)

18. Escalon Hotel Before Demolishment, San Joaquin Valley. 1968
Purchase (123.69)

HARE, Chauncey. (b. 1934)

19. Kitchen, Kensington, California. 1968
Purchase (124.69)

JONES, Harold. (b. 1940)

20. Untitled, from "Poems to the Sky." 1968
Purchase

MARCIANTE, Tony. (b. 1945)

21. Untitled. n.d.
Purchase (74.70)

MARTONE, Michael. (b. 1941)

22. Portrait of Lannie Martone. 1969
Purchase (968.69)

MAYES, Elaine. (b. 1938)

23. Haight Ashbury Portraits. 1968
Purchase (9.70)
24. Haight Ashbury Portraits. 1968
Purchase (4.70)

MERTIN, Roger. (b. 1942)

25. Untitled. 1968
Purchase (957.69)
26. Casual Heart #1. 1969
Purchase (958.69)

QUICK, Herb. (b. 1925)

27. Parking Lot. 1968
Gift of the Artist (379.69)

RISS, Murray. (b. 1939)

28. Wife and Child. 1968
Gift of the Artist (1486.68)

SILVERTHORNE, Jeffery. (b. 1946)

29. Girl With Mask. 1969
Purchase (75.70)

SMITH, Keith. (b. 1938)

30. Figure in Landscape. 1966
Purchase (961.69)

31. Somewhere Between the Old Margaret and the New. 1969
Purchase (962.69)

SONNEMAN, Eve. (b. 1946)

32. Family Portrait, Chicago. 1968
Purchase (SC)

STARK, Larry. (b. 1940)

33. Official Government Photography Area. 1969
Purchase (77.70)

WALCH, Robert. (b. 1942)

34. Cornfield at Dawn. 1968
Gift of the Artist (381.69)

WALKER, Todd. (b. 1917)

35. Untitled. 1966-68
Purchase (965.69)

WESSEL, Henry, Jr. (b. 1942)

36. Untitled. 1968
Purchase (SC)

37. Untitled. 1968
Purchase (SC)