

THE FAMILY OF MAN

La mostra "La famiglia umana", presentata a New York nel 1955, è stata di grande rilievo nel paesaggio fotografico internazionale, in quanto ha permesso di individuare e riflettere sopra una serie molto grande di modi in cui la fotografia avvicina l'emozione, e come questa viene visualmente trasmessa all'osservatore; quindi una grande occasione per prendere coscienza delle potenzialità della fotografia in un momento in cui la tecnologia aveva fornito un grande contributo di ricerca alle capacità del mezzo e la fotografia poteva mettere alla prova la propria soggettività ed autonomia.

Essa comprende — anche se non in vere sottosezioni — sia le azioni che le emozioni che coinvolgono la nascita, la morte, la fame, il lavoro, la fatica, la sofferenza, il gioco, la gioia, la spiritualità, ...

I believe the family of man exhibition, produced and shown first at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and now to be circulated throughout the world, is the most ambitious and challenging project photography has never attempted.

The exhibition demonstrates that the art of photography is dynamic process of giving form to ideas and of explaining man to man.

It was conceived as a mirror of the universal elements and emotions in the everydayness of life — as a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind throughout the world.

We sought and selected photographs, made in all parts of the world, on the gamut of life from birth to death with emphasis on the daily relationships of man to himself, to his family, to the community and to the world we live in — subject matter ranging from babies to philosophers, from the kindergarten to the university, from the primitive peoples to the Councils of the United Nations.

Photographs of lovers and marriage and child-bearing, of the family unit with his joys, trials and tribulations, its deep-rooted devotions and its antagonisms. Photographs of the home in all its warmth and magnificence, its heartaches and exaltations. Photographs of the individual and the family unit in its reactions to the beginnings of life and continuing on through death and burial.

Photographs concerned with man in relation to his environment, to the beauty and richness of the earth he has inherited and what he has done with this inheritance, the good and the great things, the stupid and the destructive things.

Photographs concerned with the religious rather than religions.

With basic human consciousness rather than social consciousness.

Photographs concerned with man's dreams and aspirations and photographs of the flaming creative forces of love and truth and the corrosive evil inherent in the lie.

For almost three years we have been searching for these images. Over two millions photographs from every corner of the earth have come to us — from individuals, collections and files.

We screened them until we had ten thousand. Then came the almost unbearable task of reducing these to 503 photographs from 68 countries. The photographers who took them — 273 men and women — are amateurs and professional, famed and unknown.

All of this could not have been accomplished without the dedicated efforts of my assistant, Wayne Miller, and the tireless devotion of our staff.

The Family of Man has been created in a passionate spirit of devoted love and faith in man.

*Edward Steichen — Introduction to The Family of Man
from THE COMPLETE BOOK by The Museum of Modern Art — New York, 1955*