

April 1963.

DENNIS STOCK

Dennis Stock was born in New York City in 1928. He joined MAGNUM, as one of its youngest members, in 1951, after winning LIFE's young photographer contest with a story on the arrival of displaced persons in New York harbor. Most of his assignments are related to the performing arts (Stravinski, Bruno Walter, Stokowski), film personalities and politics. Dennis Stock has also produced two television shows and ~~worked~~<sup>worked</sup> as film dialogue coach and second unit director on feature films. His notable book, Portraits of a Young Man: James Dean, was published in Japan in 1956 and his other book, Jazz Street (1960), was described by The New York Times as "one of the hundred best books of the year."

Following are a few remarks Dennis Stock has made recently concerning his work:

"When I started out to photograph, the war was just over. The world was in pieces and yet whole; everybody was disturbed and yet elated; everything was still numb, yet promise and adventure were palpitating in the air. Having reached a state of mind, tastes and senses, I was taken by surprise about the limitless possibilities opening up, and threw myself into the middle of the effervescence of Hollywood, New York, Tokyo, Paris, in rapid succession. Dissatisfied, even frightened, I would have exclaimed with Keats - had I known his poem then - "A theme! a theme! great nature give me a theme; let me begin my dream." But first the themes. Dreams may come later, when order is once re-invented through vision, imagination and form.

"Not just subject matter, be it people, moods, emotions; not just moments to document, events to record, persons to portray, happenings to catch, developments to trace. I did not want to snatch a piece of history. I did not want to indulge myself in the relief of petty criticism, when hurt sensitivity relishes the social gesture... Most important to me then and - so it seemed - to everybody else, was the sense of dislocation, of lack of orientation mixed with fear of getting lost. So here we have James Dean's despair and resignation, à la You Can't Go Home Again, intensified by the courage of a little Chinese girl who, an orphan in Hong Kong, holds up under the

the weight of houses threatening her from above, and the young soldier with his forlorn look, riding in a bus through the peaceful countryside.

"Out of this broad and sometimes ill-defined concern grew a new and more specific one for the artist and his work. I was on my way to learning that there are effective ways of coming to grips with loneliness and solitude and I got the first glimpse of such a solution by working with and for men doing creative work. I do not believe in the genie cult, nor in false hero worship. Yet it would be plain ingratitude not to acknowledge the tremendous and positive influence Henri Cartier-Bresson, Ernst Haas, Gjon Mili, Alexander Calder and Igor Stravinski had on me. In trying to capture the intense relation the artist has to his work, I learned the advantages of being extremely economical. Thus I acquired a discipline which I find both necessary and gratifying. And I could avoid the trap of formalism, not so much in spite, but because of the apparent security it offers, a security which is anything but compatible with my temperament. Drama? Yes. Poetry? Yes. Insurance policies? No."

\*Impatient vi

This is the first one-man, comprehensive showing of Dennis Stock's work and we are grateful for his cooperation and generosity in making it possible.

"Impatient with being dependent on something to discover worth photographing, I wanted somehow to surmount this barrier. This time I wished to be free and was quite unwilling to accept photography's conventional limitations. Sticks and stones, and heads and bones. I had enough of that. And still being greatly impressed with creativity at work in art, I went to the source of all creation, to nature, and started not only to discover but to invent. New relations in nature as theme, that is as ambitious and adventurous as one can get. There form is simply the only adequate expression of a content, while technique is entirely subservient to creating the image itself... The rest is yet to come."

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