

News Release FROM THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

MICHIGAN AVENUE AT ADAMS STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 60603, U. S. A.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eighty-one photographs by Bruce Davidson will be on display in the Art Institute's newest gallery of photography through March 14, 1965.

At age 31, Davidson is considered one of the most famous of the young generation of active photographers. He has been praised for his "poetic realism" by Alexander Lieberman, Art Director of VOGUE magazine, and for "intuitiveness and great sensitivity" by Cartier-Bresson.

"A highly disciplined photographer, giving as much attention to the craftsmanship of his art as to the freedom of his feelings," his works often take the form of pictorial essays. A circus, the lower East Side of New York, the Statue of Liberty, Central Park become settings for human beings who are chosen, not as archetypes, but as particular people living a particular moment of their lives. Davidson explores the universal themes of love, friendship, the feeling of isolation in teen age gangs and the elderly, the explosive joys of childhood.

Keynote of the current exhibition is 68 photographs from a series commissioned by the London magazine, THE QUEEN. A few appeared in HORIZON but most of them have never been published or exhibited. Also included are a group of pictures from a survey of American Negro life made while working on a Guggenheim fellowship.

A final group is from a series based on the recently opened Verrazanno Narrows Bridge over the entrance to New York harbor. These were not commissioned pictures but sprang from Davidson's interest in the strength and vitality of men who build some of America's most essential and fascinating structures. Gay Talese's recent book, "The Bridge," uses pictures from this series.

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Bruce Davidson, born in Chicago, Illinois, owned his first camera at age ten, a 127 Falcon. When his mother generously cleared a jellycloset for his dark room, he proudly painted "Bruce's Photo Shop" above the door. During high school years, he worked as an assistant to a commercial photographer where he developed a tolerance for the "black cloth."

Enrolled in the Rochester Institute of Technology, Bruce remembers that he first encountered "the idea." A teacher, Ralph Hattersley, said "the idea comes first," and Bruce found himself turning from slide rules and single shots to the meaning of moments in individual lives.

During his first months in Yale's School of Architecture and Design, watching football players, Davidson's "idea" developed into a series of photographs which he titled "Tension In the Dressing Room," and submitted to LIFE magazine just as he was drafted into Uncle Sam's fighting machine.

Sent to Arizona for "on-the-job training in photography," Davidson says that he once worked his way into a dark room with a mop. But, when LIFE published his football essay, the Army gladly gave him a camera. Later, Davidson used a four day leave in Paris to capture his now famous story "Madame Fauchet, Widow of Montmartre."

Davidson dislikes talking about his work. "If you want to find out anything, look at the pictures," he says with a shrug. "Verbalizing" is not his natural means of expression and therefore seems alien and untruthful.

In 1958, Davidson joined MAGNUM, the international photographic agency founded by Henry Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa. In 1961, he leased a studio in Manhattan while fulfilling a contract with VOGUE magazine. In 1962, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Today, he broods over his world, facing it with the lightest of equipment, a 35 mm Leica, his "ideas" and himself.

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