

JONAS DOVYDENAS is at present photographer for the Department of Urban Renewal, City of Chicago. This is the latest stage in a long and exceptional journey.

He was born in 1939 in Lithuania where his father was a writer. The years 1944 to 1949 he passed as a refugee and displaced person in various parts of Germany. On February 22, 1949, he arrived in Boston harbor, then settled with his family in northwestern Pennsylvania, graduating from Scranton High School in 1958. The next two years and a half were spent in the U.S. Air Force after which he went to Providence, Rhode Island, and entered Brown University, majoring in English literature. During the years in the Air Force he had begun printing photographs at the base hobby center and later, while attending Brown University, he met Harry Callahan and took a course with him at the Rhode Island School of Design. This, doubtless, had influence in orienting his exceptional gifts for photography, and when he graduated from Brown University in 1965, he came to Chicago where his photographic insight enlarged still further. After a semester at the Institute of Design of The Illinois Institute of Technology and trips to many parts of the United States, he began work for the Department of Urban Renewal in Chicago in 1966. With all this has been produced a large and diverse number of photographs, a selection from which is shown in this exhibition, his first one-man show.

His wide range of subject matter and his success with it are no mere displays of accomplishment: they are evidence of the assimilation of individual knowledge and experience which is perhaps more necessary in mastering the inflexibilities of photography than in any other picture making process. Technique is used so well and is so adequate that it never dominates the effect of the whole, but becomes a natural aid to the object in mind, like some system of manners or consideration which can cope with any situation. A rare consistency continues through the variety of landscapes, city crowds, deserted places, and the revelations of people when they are alone. The most fleeting moments and spontaneous views are treated with equal care and regard. These are some of the welcome attributes of his work, but most welcome of all is his aptitude for showing humanity in its most ordinary moments which, after all, reveal more of character and mystery than exceptional times of stress or disaster.