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milton

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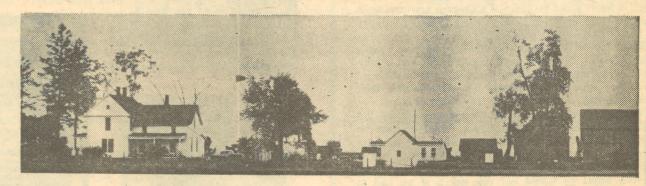
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CAMERA CRAFT AT THE ART INSTITUTE



Long, Low Look at the Landscape

BY HUGH EDWARDS

Art Institute Curator of Photography

ART SINSABAUGH began photographing the Midwestern landscape in 1952 while teaching at the Institute of Design, but all his attempts with a camera of standard size did not satisfy him. Later, at the University of Illinois on a summer fellowship, he found a large camera which demanded working with sheet film 12 by 20 inches. This was ideal for his particular intentions and it was by way of this medium the photographs in his current exhibition at the Art Institute were realized. They were taken in Illinois and Indiana during a period of work which began in 1961 and extended into the recent months of this year.

Although Sinsabaugh is now identified with the Midwestern environment, he did not come to Illinois until the 1940s. He was born in Irvington, New Jersey, in 1924, and like so many others, began taking pictures with the inevitable Brownie. During high school he worked first in a photography studio and later as a junior photographer for the War Department, commuting to New York City to attend a photography trade school. In 1943 he

was drafted and served for three years in the Army Air Force in the United States and Asia. After his return he came to Chicago to the Institute of Design and was graduated in 1949. He conducted the school's Evening Division of Photography from 1951 until 1959 when he went to the University of Illinois, in Urbana, as professor of Art and where he is now organizing a photography program. His work has been published in England and America and exhibited by the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the American Federation of Arts.

MOST OF the photographs in the present exhibition have not been publicly shown before. They offer not only another illustration of the camera's barely touched potentialities, but also the revelation of much the human eye cannot encompass. This is given us in an atmosphere of unusual personal expression. One wonders how our horizontal landscape could ever have been represented before, except in these low, wide rectangles suggesting an infinity on either side of our vision, as well as one before us in depth. It is the format of Titian's "Sacred and Profane"

Love" and Rembrandt's etching, "The Goldweigher's Field." It has surprising and increasing modern use in new windshields and picture windows, and Panavision 70 is its largest example.

How high Sinsabaugh can make the sky in such a low dimension and how broad the land, by never exceeding 20 inches, is repeatedly astonishing. As one passes from photograph to photograph on the walls of the gallery, the visual experience, always on the same plane and varied only by the quiet verticals of farm dwellings, trees, telephone poles, ferris wheels, boxcars, housing projects, railroad crossing signals, water towers, seems impelled by constant and tranquil movement which carries one on beyond the final view.

Illinois and Indiana lose their old reputation for being the most ordinary and homely of landscapes and are now changed into a display of a wealth of details of human manifestations and expression, although man always stays modestly out of the picture.