


ROBERT FRANK

Robert Frank was born in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1924. In 1954 the Swiss photographer, Werner Bischof, while working on the ~~photographs~~ ^{illustrations} for a book on the Incas, was killed in an automobile accident in the Andes. Robert Frank was then commissioned by Les Editions Delpire to finish the project begun by Werner Bischof and went to South America. In 1955 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and travelled about the United States photographing people who represent the great majority of our population and who ~~seem to~~ ^{most of} pass unnoticed by our artists and intellectuals. His ~~unparalleled~~ ^{He!} unparalleled discoveries of the ordinary were published in France in a book, The Americans, which was [←] issued later in this country by the Grove Press with a moving and understanding essay by Jack Kerouac.

This book aroused more controversy than any collection of photographs published in recent years. The reasons for this may be ~~attributed to~~ the unusual merging of uncompromising reality and sincere poetry, the ability of the interpreter to appear as an actual participant and inhabitant of the environment he depicts, the natural and seemingly simple employment of technique and the surprising and undeniable presentation of people and sights which meet our eyes every time we go out of our houses and our vision is compelled to look beyond ourselves. It is a ^{strange} ~~great~~ contribution to an American interpretation of life through the photographic medium and is another step forward in a great American photographic tradition, the earlier poets of which were Lewis Hine and Walker Evans. Perhaps it is even a larger accomplishment than anything that has gone before it because the average modern human being, in our age of distraction and acceleration, seems so difficult to approach, grasp and immobilize in interpretation. The camera is the most successful instrument for this task 

and yet there are few photographers who ~~are able to~~ employ it successfully for this admirable purpose. Robert Frank has ~~the admirable ability~~ ^{exceptionally} ability, ^{for this} and the great "eye-opening" pictures of this exhibition illustrate it.

Although he has been represented in many shows, this is his first one-man exhibition. The photographs on ~~this~~ wall represent him before he began work on The Americans, while those on the opposite (east) wall were made for that book. To the visitor it is hoped they will ~~give one of those experiences~~ ^{he can} ~~the reward of~~ which will be that, after viewing them and returning to the usual sights of the streets and public places, he will have a somewhat increased vision and sympathy for everyday ordinary life and what he may have regarded as commonplace and insignificant.

During the last two years Robert Frank has been much concerned with the motion picture and has produced two films, made in New York where he lives, one of which includes Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Larry Rivers, Alfred Leslie, and has had nationwide success.

And now that the surprise of The Americans has accumulated acceptance with time and more sensible consideration and its influence may be seen both in films made here and abroad as well as in the work of still photographers, Robert Frank has become recognized as one of the most valuable of our photographic interpreters. Within the last month Edward Steichen named him - with Eugene ~~Steichen~~ Smith and Harry Callahan - as one of America's "three best" photographers.

A few copies of The Americans, which is at present out of print, are still available and original prints from ~~the~~ negatives of these photographs may be obtained. Inquiries should be made in the Glore Print Study Room on ⁷ ~~the~~ ^{just} ~~ground~~ floor.