

Race Mura: Photographs in Color  
by Robert Riger  
May 9 - July 25, 1964.

## Wall label

Robert Riger was born in New York City and studied at Pratt Institute where he was graduated and in later years has taught. He served in the Merchant Service and the United States Navy and from 1947 to 1949 did layout design for The Saturday Evening Post <sup>in</sup> ~~and~~ Esquire (to which he is still a frequent contributor), then worked for six years as an advertising art director. For seven years, from its first issue, his work was seen <sup>regularly</sup> ~~almost constantly~~ in Sports Illustrated ~~where his drawings enjoyed great acclaim~~. In 1960, his book, The Pros: A Documentary of Professional Football in America, focussed attention on his photographs and revealed new possibilities of accomplishment with action photography. He has since written and illustrated Best Plays (1963 and 1964), the annual publication of the National Football League, and provided the many illustrations for Vince Lombardi's best seller, Run to Daylight (1963). In 1962, his photographs of professional football were shown in The Art Institute's gallery of photography and the popularity of that exhibition has requested the present selection from his work in color. These facts <sup>offer</sup> ~~are~~ only a suggestion of his many activities and the vast amount of work he has accomplished.

Although he is an avowed documentarian, perhaps his greatest achievement is bringing the action photograph to life and projecting it with an expression that far transcends documentation. Action, when photographed, seldom produces an object of art. The comparison of a photograph by Muybridge with a drawing of a similar subject by Toulouse-Lautrec is a fair demonstration of this, for the photograph has a petrified super-reality which the ~~medium~~ <sup>artist</sup> absorbs in large, living significance. The photograph is the precious record of facts which the eye could not comprehend, but captures only a fraction of motion, whereas the drawing makes permanent its mysterious continuity. It is Robert Riger's special accomplishment that with the complicated photographic medium he does produce pictures of action which suggest continuous motion as we feel and wish to express it.

P His long experience as an active artist and his admiration of the work of Uccello, Pollaiuolo, Géricault, Delacroix, Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, ~~must~~ have contributed much. His own personal gifts and his appreciation of the camera as something ~~more~~ <sup>other</sup> than an intractable instrument for the representation of realities caught unawares of for images of ~~the world~~ <sup>intellectual statement</sup>, have done more.

On the occasion of a large exhibition of Robert Riger's photographs, shown last fall in New York, John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography of The Museum of Modern Art, wrote: "...his first commitment is not to photography as such, but to the recording of those aspects of life that most fascinate him. Like hundreds of thousands of his contemporaries, Riger is drawn to the dramas in the great stadiums. Among all those thousands, perhaps none has seen the spectacle more clearly". The picture story shown here of horse racing, a subject which has attracted ~~so~~ many great artists, is another example of Robert Riger's gifts for documenting ~~subject~~ <sup>his material</sup> in esthetic terms and relating it to the large complex life <sup>in</sup> of which we are involved and of which it is such a colorful part.

RACE HORSE: Photographs in Color by ROBERT RIGER

- ✓ 1. THE FARM: Three-month old filly sired by Swaps
- ✓ 2. THE FARM: Calumet mare with young Nashua colt
- ✓ 3. THE FARM: Yearlings grazing
- ✓ 4. THE BARN: Hot walkers cooling out a string of horses after morning work
5. BIG HORSE: The best horse in the barn is called the "Big Horse". This is Nashua
- ✓ 6. MORNING WORK: 6:30 A.M.
- ✓ 7. MORNING WORK: Preparing a horse in the morning
- ✓ 8. MORNING WORK: Breezing out a three-year old
- ✓ 9. MORNING WORK: Back to the barn after work
10. WALKING RING: The walking ring before the race
- ✓ 11. THE JOCKEYS: Bill Hartack
- ~~HE~~ 12. THE JOCKEYS: John Sellers
- ✓ 13. THE JOCKEYS: Eddie Arcaro
- ✓ 14. PARADE TO THE POST: Outriders leading field of horses and stable ponies to the post at Hialeah
- ✓ 15. PARADE TO THE POST: The feature race at Saratoga
16. THE RACE: The first turn
17. THE RACE
18. THE RACE: The duel in the stretch
19. THE RACE: The duel in the stretch
20. THE RACE: The last sixth of a mile
- ~~HE~~ 21. COMING BACK: The finish
- ✓ 22. COMING BACK: Pulling up past the finish

- ✓ 23. COMING BACK: Back to the stands
- ✓ 24. WEIGHING OUT
- 25. UNSADDLING
- ✓ 26. UNSADDLING
- ✓ 27. TURF RACE
- ✓ 28. RACING IN FRANCE: A report to the trainer on trouble in the stretch
- ✓ 29. RACING IN FRANCE: The Château at Chantilly
- 30. RACING IN FRANCE: Members of the Jockey Club
- 31. RACING IN FRANCE: Members of the Jockey Club
- 32. RACING IN FRANCE: Members of the Jockey Club