

May 23, 1960.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City, New York.

Dear Mr. Frank: It seems so long since I was in New York and talked with you on the telephone that I am afraid you have forgotten the conversations we had in regard to an exhibition. Since I came back to Chicago, I have been very busy and I knew you had little time to be bothered with correspondence. However, I have not forgotten that you said you might be interested in a show and my experiences with The Americans have been so many since my return that I am writing you at last, still with the hope that we may have an exhibition here.

In the last week I have completed an exhibition schedule so that I am able to give you, if you are still interested, some idea of when the show could take place. How would the period from April 28 through June 11 of next year suit you? I remember you said you would like to have some delay and although these dates - almost a year in the future - may seem distant, the time will pass much faster than we think.

I have had the museum store stock the American edition of your book. They have sold a number of copies and there is a steady demand for it. We have both the French and American editions in the print study room and they have been enthusiastically received by the many young photographers who come here to look at the prints in our collection. This pleases me a great deal because no other book, except Walker Evans' American Photographs, has given me so much stimulation and reassurance as to what I feel the camera was created for. I hope this does not have too pompous a sound for I feel your work is the most sincere and truthful attention paid the American people for a long time. Although so different and not stemming from them, it may be kept in the company of Frank Norris, Sherwood Anderson, Hart Crane, John Dos Passos and Walker Evans and these are the best in American expression in the time I can remember. It is a real privilege to have known your pictures in their first freshness and newness. Someday they will spread to everyone and even the most sterile and analytical of intellectuals will accept them at last.

I should greatly appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible in regard to what you think about the exhibition so that I may put it definitely in the schedule of exhibitions.

I hope to be in New York again, at least in the early fall, and talk with you again. As typewriters and telephones are instruments of inhibition for me, I regret I could not arrange a meeting during those days I was there this spring.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

July 25, 1960.

Dear Robert Frank: As they say in America, "at home in the hotel this evening", I want to write you a few lines. Kenneth Josephson came to the museum a few days ago and said he had talked with you in some gallery in New York. It was good to have news of you again for I think often of you and the pictures in your book are always with me and take on more meaning all the time. I hope there will be more and more of such pictures - that you will never stop making them. What else is the camera for, anyway? As for the things I read about them (by all the people who take their liberalism the safest way - is there anything worse than a liberal in anything, all the bad things can be laid to them - they are unbelievable. All those written stupidities by the stupid (bêtes is the word for them) make me almost afraid to go out in the streets. If there are that many of that kind of "good" people around, it's really dangerous. But when I do go out, the people of your world are there and it is in their environment (not the Rocky Mountain scenery or walls of crumbling, scaling paint or the baby-kittan-hot-lipped-girl-and-boy paradise) in which I live and I am glad. I want to see you sometime and tell you how I ran away from "culture" and accelerated education to spend all my evenings in a large skating rink on the outskirts of Chicago for five whole years. There were many wonders there and I used to wish someone would catch them so they could be kept. Then I found your book and saw you had done it. Well, I am going back to that place just as soon as I can get enough strength to overcome laziness and old age. So go on with your presentation of this world which is the only real world - what's wrong with it anyhow? - it just takes courage to live in. And, after all, what these commercial and esthetic hucksters say about your work is ~~the~~ what they used to say about Walker Evans - and how I used to fight that.

I plan to come to New York in October and hope you will let me see you. I am kept alive here by the Encyclopédie de la Pléiade and having your pictures and finding the real things everywhere I go. Of course you must have seen Truffaut's Les quatre cent coups. I went to it many times last winter (it recalled, somehow, ^{the} happy memory of reading the first books of Genet, especially Le Miracle de la rose, although it is "externally" quite different) and last week it was in a theatre in my neighborhood, so I went every night. I wish I owned a copy of it. Sometime soon I want to telephone you and ask the name of the distributor of your film. I'll try to get the Hyde Park Theatre here to show it, if it is to be had.

Best regards now and I hope to see you before very long.

Sincerely,

4900 Blackstone Avenue, Chicago, 15, Illinois.

Have you seen the work of Yasuhiro Ishimoto, the Japanese photographer, who is living in Chicago at present? He has done some Chicago pictures this last winter I wish you could see. I'll try to send you his book, Someday Somewhere.

April 6, 1961.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City,
New York.

Dear Robert:

Many thanks for your note. I am waiting impatiently for the prints to arrive, although you have certainly been prompt enough about sending them. It will make things a little less solitary here to have them. With all my liking for them, I have never seen an original print of yours. As I said, in my letter yesterday, I'll telephone you as soon as they are received.

I am sending you a bibliography I made, believing you might enjoy some of the illustrations.

Good wishes and more soon,

Sincerely,

- 5 -

I know. I

I'll call you tomorrow morning and get your reply by telephone.

April 8, 1961.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City,
New York.

Sincerely,

Dear Robert:

When I telephoned yesterday you were not in and I had a talk with Mrs. Frank about all kinds of subjects from Robert Frank to Jean Genet and enjoyed it very much. As she must have told you, the prints arrived and thanks for sending them so promptly. I was very unhappy about the movie ticket seller with the Joan Crawford poster which was creased down the middle. This must have happened when the prints were put in the envelope and it - somehow - curled under. It smoothes out nicely but I believe it would be best to drymount it and I hope you will agree.

You wrote it would be all right to trim the prints to the edges of the pictures. This we will do and not crop anything. Now another question comes up which I must ask you. I feel it would be a great help if each print were mounted on mat board of average thickness (trimmed to the edges of the compositions) of good rag quality so there would be no future deterioration of the original photographic paper. Of course this will make the prints thicker but also safer for handling and any future use. My concern is that you might object for some good reason, such as sending them out for publication, to engravers, etc. For the exhibition these "thickened" prints would be hinged to mats, put under glass and hung. Each photograph, slightly project from the matboard backing, appears to much better advantage, as we have discovered in our shows.

I am very pleased with the selection and know you are pressed for prints, so I dread asking for more. There are some subjects from The Americans which are absent and which I wish we could include as I feel they would both heighten and balance the overall effect of the exhibition. In fact, most of them will be asked for as they are already popular with people who know the book. If you have prints of any - or all - of these I will surely be grateful for having them here. You will find them listed on the attached sheet. The page references are to the Delpire edition of the book - someone has borrowed my American copy and has not returned it.

One more question. Although we have not had any notable success with making sales, we have sold some photographs and there are always inquiries about prices. Therefore I should like to know if any of yours are available and what the cost would be. I - for one - would like to buy the picture of the boy standing before the juke box. Places where people go for entertainment at night after work, seen with the light of day intruding have - like the skating rink in Harvey - a sad kind of magic attraction for me and I am glad you have expressed it in this picture. Also the one of sunlight on the chairs and table of a restaurant corner with television which Jack Kerouac so beautifully mentioned in his essay. This juke box

scene and about twenty others in The Americans are as great as anything I know.

Well, this must be a tiresome letter for you. Don't worry about answering it. I'll call on Tuesday morning and get your reply by telephone.

Best wishes to all of you,

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City,
New York.

Dear Robert:

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Dear Hugh Edwards

Thank you for your book Surrealism
and It is interesting especially
compared to to-day. It is also well
done I guess that is your merit.

The News release is very good - I like
your sentence he has the power to see
in a flash the total individual in a
total Symbolic Scene. That is a ~~very~~ good
description of a good photographer and
it is very much (I think) what I
want my photographs to be. Misty.
in the Americans. I am sure you
will do the best with my photographs.
After all I am glad that you have
that exhibition - you understand what
I have been doing -

~~I will try~~ I will try to send you some more photos of the Americans before the 28th.

My reservations are because I would like to concentrate on Films - And I find it a very difficult problem.

If you can see L'Aventura by Antonioni in Chicago - go see it.

It is by far the most advanced film of our time. (It is a complete flop in N.Y.) Visually in Films people are used to the level of a childrens book with subtitles.

I would like to come to Chicago but nothing is sure. as it never will be - and what would be the difference? I would like to meet you. Salut Robert

Dear Hugh Edwards -

Just before I leave I am very busy and I
wished this would not be a lousy letter
but if you are under pressure you become
weak. ~~I~~ I received your list ^{of photographs} (and after
my return ~~I'll~~ in Sept. I'll send them
to you. ANTONIONI is the only real film maker
of our time. go and see L'AVVENTURA and
LA NOTTE. They are as moving as facts
~~po~~ language when it's most moving and poetic.
I cannot stop thinking about these two films.

Here is the list of Photographs which I
need as soon as it is possible. They are
to be sent to: AIR MAIL

DU Magazine
" MORGARTENSTRASSE 29 ATT: Mr. D. BACHMANN
ZURICH (Switzerland.)

please let me know if you can not
identify the photographs.

I will be in N.Y. until June 6th

Also advise me before that date
when you can send off the requested
photographs.

The rest of them please hold in
Chicago until my return in Sept.

Thank you for all your
help and of course

Moral support.

I wished you could replace
that old granddaddy at the Museum
in N. York.

Salut Robert.

May 13, 1961.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City,
New York.

Dear Robert:

I have had some difficulty in making a selection of your prints we should like to acquire for the collection here. Ten is not enough. When I made the first choice the number came ~~to~~ forty and now - after much consideration - I have come down to thirty and even this sacrifices some I should like very much to have.

I have tried to reach you by telephone several times and failed. I wanted to ask if you would consider making thirty prints for \$ 500.00? I know this is less - for each print - than we offered you for a group of ten, but I thought you might consider it and let me know. Send a card or telephone me here collect. I am enclosing a list of the thirty subjects with page references from the Deipire edition of Les Américains. If you do not have negatives for all of them, there are still ten others it is very hard to omit. Could you let me know about this as soon as you can?

I am sorry to send merely a business letter - I have so much to do today. The show continues to be greatly liked and has an average of 275 visitors each day.

All good wishes,

Sincerely,

Telephone call from Robert Frank, 6-20-61,
saying he will make prints for us when
he returns from Europe in the fall.

May 26, 1961.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City,
New York.

Dear Robert:

Just a note. I have always wanted to write you a decent letter and have never done it.

Your exhibition will come down on the morning of June 12th (a Monday) and we should have it leaving here by Air Mail the next morning. We will remove the thirty prints from their temporary mats and I assure you they will be packed well and handled with the greatest care. I will be sorry to see them go. There has been a very warm response to the show and there have been many people who have come to the print study room to express their appreciation for having seen it here. I do hope to see you and talk with you about all this. Your pictures and those by Walker Evans are among the things I have come across in this life which have meant most to me and made my rocky existence a little easier. And I am always amused at how both of you were ignored and ignored, then suddenly taken up overnight by the big shots and talked about by them as if they had felt that way all the time.

You will think I am desperate when I tell you I am in the middle of Simone de Beauvoir's Part Two of her autobiography (La Force de l'âge). I have just read this in it and thought you might like it: "Voilà quelques années, une dame qui entretenait une dizaine de chats demanda à Jean Genet avec reproche: 'Vous n'aimez pas les animaux? - Je n'aime pas les gens qui aiment les animaux', dit-il."

I'll write again soon or telephone before you leave. Norman Geske was here from Nebraska and he admires your wife's sculpture. All the best to all of you. Thanks a lot for the letter - it cheered me up today and this was ^{of} the days I needed it.

Yours,

June 14, 1961.

Mr. Robert Frank,
c/o Mr. D. Bachmann,
DU Magazine,
Morgartenstrasse 29,
Zurich,
Switzerland.

Dear Robert:

Your cable came Monday morning while we were taking the show down and the thirty prints went out that afternoon by Air Mail, insured for \$ 1500.00. I hope they reach you safely and soon. We will hold the other prints until we hear from you. They will be stored in solander boxes (like the etchings of Rembrandt et al), so don't worry that anything bad will happen to them.

Much has happened to me in the last two weeks and I cannot tell all of it today. Your two books arrived and I am more grateful for this gift than anything I can remember - and this is no lie. The inscription in The Americans made me very happy and I am having a case made for that book. I'll write you more about the books later. The day after they came I had to go to NYC unexpectedly, in regard to a museum matter which I shall also tell you about later. I arrived in NYC two days before you were to leave and tried to call you many times, but I expected you to have the phone off the hook and believe you did. It was no time for talking, so I'll see you later. The best things that happened while I was away were seeing your portfolio at The Museum of Modern Art and the evening I spent at The American Dream. Do you have another set of the portfolio left and could we ever think of obtaining one - Steichen told me you made about twenty-five copies. The two plays by Edward Albee have me jumping yet. I read The Zoo Story in the Evergreen Review last winter and have thought a lot about it. Too bad it closed the day I left Chicago. I have become much involved with the company which came to Chicago to do The Fantasticks and they are performing in the ball-room of a hotel where Gershwin used to stay, around the corner from where I live. All of them are people anybody would fall in love with. They have a friend who was playing Jerry in The Zoo Story and wanted me to go and find him. By the way, all of them like you very much and knew all the pictures in the book before I started to talk about it. Well, The American Dream makes much of an idea I have thought about for a long time (you surely hit it well in your book) and I wish they would print that play of that I could see it many more times.

I'll write again soon and am sorry this has to be done in such a hurry today. Would you relieve my worries by dropping an air mail postcard to let me know if the photographs reached you? Best wishes to all of you.

Yours,

December 29, 1961.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City, 3,
New York.

Dear Robert:

The check in payment for your thirty prints has just come from the business office and we are closing at 3:00 o'clock, so I am hurrying this off to you. I hope it reaches you soon and I want to tell you again how happy I am we have the prints. They are really handsome and are going to fit well on 18 x 22" Strathmore mats. I am putting up five of them in the print study room for everyone who comes in to see.

I hope we are able to get some of the Show pictures but may wait until I see you as you may have made many others that were not published. And we should have some of your earlier work. There is one of a car in that ~~xxxxxxx~~ portfolio at the Museum of Modern Art which is the greatest picture ever made of a modern automobile.

It was good to talk with you today. I almost sent Pablo a Civil War cannon to assemble for Christmas but maybe you don't like such things in your house (I assure you it won't shoot). Grace Mayer gave me a dressing down because I like to read books about the Civil War so I feel rather self-conscious. However, I heard from her at Christmas and I hope I am forgiven for a while.

Bye Bye Birdie is here and that is my new vice. The people in it here (Joan Blondell is the mother) are much better than they were in New York. I go every time I can get \$ 6.00 for a ticket. Every time I see the kids' telephone chorus I wish for you. The kids are all wonderful and there is a rock and roll singer (Jesse Pearson as Conrad Birdie) who is like someone you might have created. Lincoln Kirstein was through here week before last and he went (he asked me where I wanted to go). He can't sit still even at his own ballets, but I made him stay until the end. This show is the best thing I know for popular consumption which uses contemporary people and situations without sinking under messages for reform or running aground on symbolism. Which is one of the good things about your pictures: all your people made their environments and they are living in them like fish in water.

Let me know about the gun. More soon and I hope all of you have a happy New Year.

Sincerely,

A.I. check for \$500.00 enclosed.

Jan. 4th 1962

Dear Hugh Edwards -

Your letter (and ^{of course} ~~the~~ was the last one to arrive last year - And I am writing my first letter this year so I appear and I am grateful for all what you write, and I want to thank you for it. It makes one feel good to be appreciated so eloquently? I hope you will continue to feel so alive about what's white and what seems to be black. Good luck and I hope soon I can shake hands

Salut Robert.

P.S. ^{Swiss Magazine} "The January Issue has lots of my photos. I'll send you a copy. Please list all prints which are damaged and I'll make new ones.

He probably would not be able to attempt the Canon
Pablo can have Robert's
libes.
I would not have the patience to do it.

April 12, 1962.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City, 3,
New York.

Dear Robert:

Here is the list about which I talked with you on the telephone. Don't hurry with making the prints. As the funds are available, my only obstacle is getting the approval of the committee. However, I can show them reproductions if the prints are not here and later - when the photographs arrive - make settlement with you. As you will notice, there are 18 subjects on the list instead of 16 (I added two more right after talking with you) and I wonder if it would be possible to have these for \$ 450.00. If you feel any reluctance about this, please let me know, for I feel this is a lot of work for the amount offered.

I called Walker Evans and talked with him today. I am much concerned about having a selection of his work here and I have thought a lot about it since I came back. One prospect evaporated, but others are in sight. It is absurd there should be any halt about this. Well, I am busy with it and am sure something will come of it.

It was good to talk with you yesterday and I'll write a long letter soon. I need another bus ride for inspiration and wish it could be to New York. I'll never forget that great space of Ohio in the snow in the late afternoon where there was a stop for something to eat and then going on through the night to breakfast at your house the next morning. I'm in too great a hurry right now to make sense (I want to be sure to get this mailed this afternoon) and on top of that I am tired. Lately I have been reading French books all night long and it does not leave much of me to move around in the morning.

Good wishes to all of you and I miss seeing you,

Sincerely,

P. S. If you send any prints or tear sheets of miner series (I'm ashamed of my ignorance of this) I'll make the selection and mail them back to you right a ay.

December 27, 1962.

Mr. Robert Frank,
34 Third Avenue,
New York City, 3,
New York.

Dear Robert:

I have just received your letter. I'm always happy when one comes - they even look good - and this was a long time coming, so it has been enjoyed more than if I had had it sooner. I have not known how to begin writing you to tell about how I was in New York at the end of November and tried many times to reach you but no one answered the telephone. I planned to go over to your place but the few days passed by and I was never able to do it. The last day (a Saturday) Walker Evans took me to lunch at the Century Club, a place I'll never forget, and he alone could make me feel things are all right even if there is only one right person left. I am not going to get unhealthy and become an optimist, it is only that Walker Evans can make you feel like resisting all this damned nonsense for a while longer. He is the proof it can be done. The night of that same day I saw the play by Edward Albee for which I had been lucky enough to get a seat. I hope it is still there when I go back and that I'll be able to get in. I like to read his plays - he is almost the only living writer in the U. S. I care anything about now - and it is even better to hear them. That whole last day obliterated all the photographers and photography I was loaded with. The bus ride back was great: everybody on the trip had arrived in airplanes from Europe that morning (that is all except four Americans) and they were going to visit relatives in remote places. There was a Turkish automobile mechanic and a machinist from Greece. And a Scotch carpenter from Glasgow who knew all of Robert Burns and talked to me all night. He gave me some Three Nuns tobacco and Senior Service cigarettes and now writes from Minneapolis. But I came back to Chicago very sorry I hadn't seen you.

I wish you didn't have to leave the place I like so much and that I could see you there again. It is quite likely I shall return sometime in February and before I start that time, I'll let you know. It is good you are working on a film and it is not hard to understand how and why you feel the way you do about the other kind of picture taking. Antonioni's new picture opened here yesterday and I am going tonight. I'm surprised it is here so soon.

I'll try to find some copies of The Americans. Brentano's told me last month they located a copy and somebody paid them \$ 20.00 for it. About three weeks ago there were some copies of the French edition at Wittenborn's for \$ 6.50 and I wonder if they have any left now. People are always asking for it here.

I'll call you sometime before long and hope you will see me when I come to New York. All good wishes to all of you for New Year's. I have a four day holiday beginning tomorrow and am going to get away from everybody with my six Castello pipes, a lot of French books and English tobacco.