

May 12, 1962.

Mr. Lawrence N. Shustak,
28 West 31st Street,
New York City, 1,
New York.

Dear Mr. Shustak:

I have waited to write you until the meeting of the Committee on Prints and Drawings at which it was necessary to present your portfolio of photographs. The committee has met and now we have their approval for the acquisition of this album of twelve prints. Within a few days a check will be sent you by The Art Institute of Chicago.

Thank you very much for having mailed the portfolio to us. I like the photographs very much and wish to congratulate you on the realization of your project. The respect for your work which the finished portfolio demonstrates is admirable indeed and I wish that more photographers would compile these small collections - and have the good sense to make them available. When I come to New York in the fall I hope to have time to get in touch with you and see other work you have done. And, if you are ever in Chicago, please visit us here as I should like to show you the collection and talk with you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

JOHN SIMON GUGGENHEIM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

551 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK 17 • N. Y.

November 26, 1962

Mr. Hugh Edwards
The Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago 3, Illinois

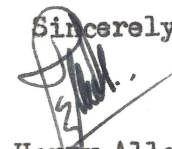
Dear Mr. Edwards:

Will you please write us your judgment of the abilities of Mr. Lawrence N. Shustak who has applied for a Fellowship and has referred us to you. A statement of his projected study is attached.

As always, anything you say will be held in the strictest confidence.

With many thanks for your assistance to the Foundation, I am

Sincerely yours,



Henry Allen Moe
President

Guggenheim

December 28, 1962.

Mr. Henry Allen Moe, President,
John Simon Guggenheim Foundation,
551 Fifth Avenue,
New York City, 17, New York.

Dear Mr. Moe:

Within a few days I shall send you my statement concerning Lawrence N. Shustak. I regret and apologize that it has not reached you sooner, but your request for it arrived while I was out of the city.

It will be a pleasure to recommend Mr. Shustak. Although I am not familiar with a large amount of his work, I believe much interesting and original material could come out of his project.

May I ask you to forgive not having sent the opinion before and grant me a further amount of time. I shall write you again immediately after the New Year's holiday.

With every good wish to you for 1963,

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

My acquaintance with the work of Lawrence N. Shustak is limited to his portfolio of original prints, Black Jews, and a small number of subjects published in photographic magazines.

Last year Mr. Shustak sent one of the portfolios (unannounced) to The Art Institute. It was almost two months before a meeting of the Committee on Prints and Drawings at which it could be presented for a confirmation of purchase and I looked at it many times. I became fond enough of it to want to own a copy myself. The esthetic virtues of these pictures were entirely photographic: Mr. Shustak seemed to have discovered art and the camera instrument at the same time. Unlike many other young photographers he did not begin looking at painting through a lens and was not misled into making photographs which look like reproductions of contemporary painting. His gifts of selection, point of vision, feeling for exactly the right instant for transforming the exposure into permanence, bring satisfying results. And these are harmonized by technical means which indicate great respect for his medium and no hollow virtuosity. The old adventure of moving from blacks which are never flat or dense through a gamut of grays into the final illumination of white is made into a new experience once more. None of this compromises the reality of the subjects but helps to produce the unpretentious atmosphere which gives these pictures high distinction. And the social message never overpowers the life of the photographs as photographs. One can believe they will be good to look at when the human problems and situations they suggest are all changed or forgotten. A welcome characteristic of these pictures is the absence of that embarrassing, educated and hypocritical contemporary desire to "help others." Mr. Shustak's photographs present and arouse an individual viewpoint more than they dictate or impose one.

It is a pleasure to recommend any assistance that may be available to encourage him to go on working. After he is done with the interesting incongruities of religion in a materialistic civilization, one feels he will reach other vantage points and discover many other unphotographed expanses of life. Seriousness, a sense of responsibility for work to be done, and unostentatious accomplishment such as his, should be welcome anywhere.