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Art Scene

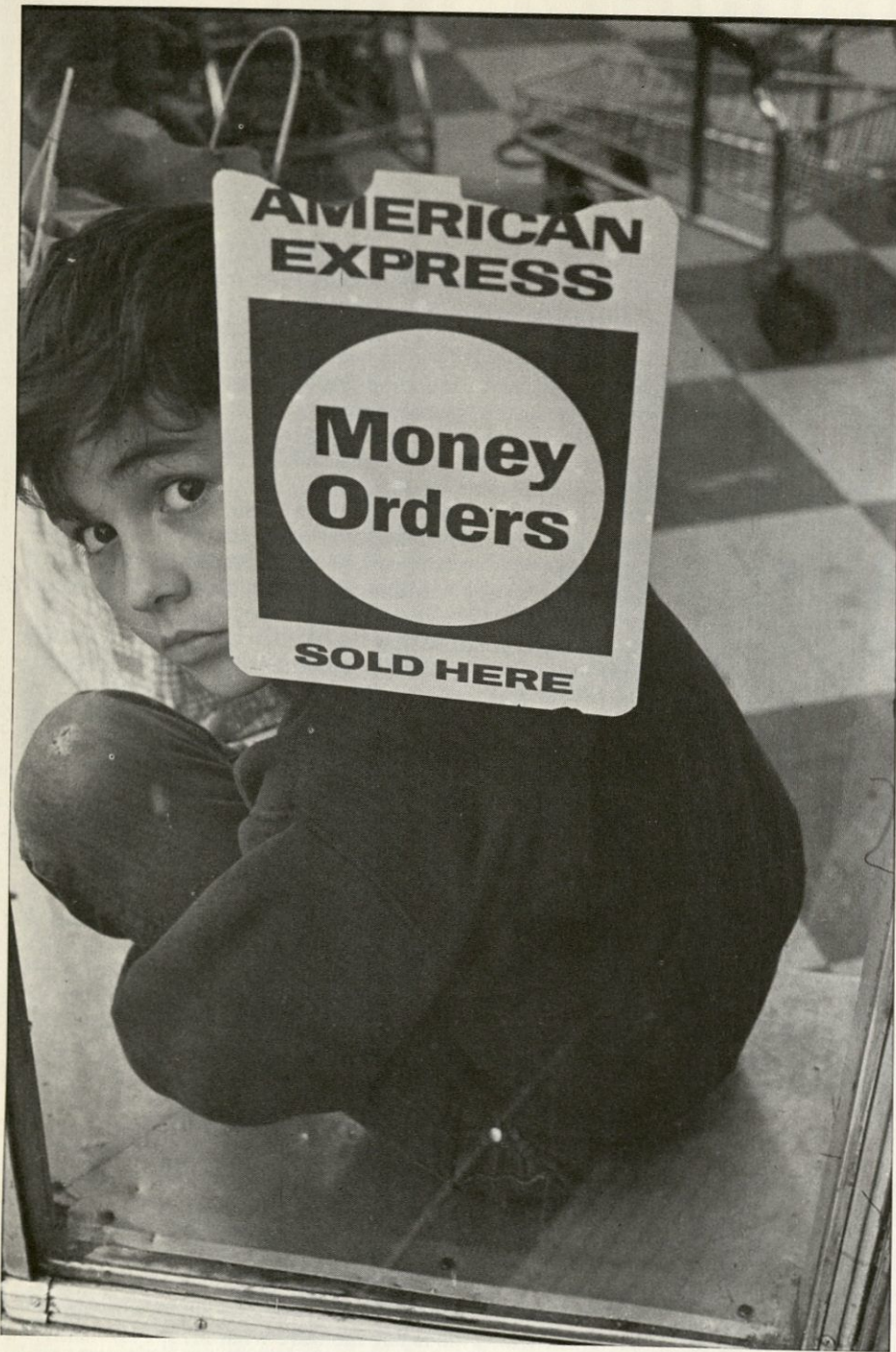
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Jonas Dovydenas

A Photography Portfolio

By Hugh Edwards

The increasing interest in photography as an independent medium and the demand in art history and general educational courses for consideration of the past and present work of the camera have prompted the Illinois Arts Council to organize a group of four exhibitions to be made available to museums, colleges, and other institutions in this state. Circulation throughout other areas of the United States and an itinerary in Europe are also contemplated. The principal object in selecting and arranging these photographs has been to present

Frederick Beckman



Illinois photographers, with emphasis on new talent, in works of subject matter drawn from the Illinois environment.

Photographs by Arthur Siegel and Aaron Siskind had its initial showing late last spring at the Hyde Park Art Center. It is a survey of the work of these famous artist photographers who came from the east to Chicago and, by their work and teaching at the Institute of Design of The Illinois Institute of Technology, have had great influence on contemporary photography.

The Illinois Landscape is made up of the work of Art Sinsabaugh, who has been largely responsible for

the realization that the Illinois countryside and the great Chicago area have distinctive character and attractions which have long been ignored. The publication of a book of these photographs and several exhibitions of them have done much to make them famous and to increase perception of the Illinois environment.

Buildings in Illinois is a selection from the large and extensive work of Harold Allen whose experiences as art historian, photographer-documentarian of Americana, and teacher of photography at the school of The Art Institute, contribute much to the content value of these handsome prints. The aim here has not been to concentrate on famous buildings (although some are

represented) but to call attention to those which might be passed unnoticed and which have significance as evocations of American life of the past and the development of domestic architecture.

People in Illinois includes the work of ten young Illinois photographers: Billy Abernathy, Barbara Crane, Jonas Dovydenas, Jay King, James Marchael, Thomas Palazzolo, Arthur Sawyers, Joseph Sterling, Edward Sturr, Roger Vail. Illinois is one of the richest fields for photographers concerned with the representation of people. This exhibition, showing the work of a group of gifted individuals, has been chosen to illustrate rare and interesting aspects of living which may be discovered by observing human beings engaged in their most ordinary activities. It reveals many of the tendencies attractive to young photographers today who employ their medium to exploit its special qualities, not to be found in other ways of expression, and establish the camera on its own merits, apart from the fashions and fads of other arts.

The exhibitions do not propose to give a comprehensive view of the vast field of photography in Illinois. Their intention is to display examples of quality revealing new viewpoints and unusual observation. It is hoped they will serve as an introduction, stimulating plans to produce more shows of their kind in a continuing project which will end in a survey of Illinois photography and photographers.

Since 1959, when photography exhibitions were resumed at The Art Institute of Chicago, a number of shows have been devoted to introducing the work of photographers whose work was new and unknown to the general public. At the time of each of these shows, the photographer was living in Chicago, but since then, some have gone on to other places, others have remained here, but all have continued to fulfill the promises of their earlier endeavors and several have become famous in their field. To give an idea of the scope of these exhibitions at The Art Institute and to demonstrate how museums may stimulate what is today's most lively picture medium, Carroll T. Hartwell, Curator of Photography at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, has organized an exhibition which will be shown at The Minneapolis Institute until the middle of January. About 70 prints are exhibited which have been lent from the permanent collection of photography at The Art Institute of Chicago. They include photographs by Billy Abernathy, Harold Allen, Fred Beckman, Jonas Dovydenas, Joseph Jachna, Rudolph Janu, Ken Josephson, Danny Lyon, James Marchael, Ray K. Metzker, Enrico Sarsini, Arthur Sawyers, Art Sinsabaugh, Joseph Sterling, Roger Vail, Robert Earl Wilson.

As a whole they offer a pictorial panorama which is wide and varied. Advances made by latter-day photog-





James Marchael

raphy in discrimination and choice of subjects are strikingly evident. What was once regarded as the "instantaneous" image is now produced by practitioners for whom technical excellence has become a matter of conscience. All these photographers seem to have attempted the presentation of object lessons which will stimulate the elevation of even the ordinary published photograph to a higher level and to suggest to each viewer the esthetic possibilities of the life around him. Each print is not only a notable display of its content but is also an individual work standing alone. The reminder is always constant that the camera is not an instrument of painting, drawing, or conventional print-making, but the auxiliary of a medium which has virtues, handicaps, and difficulties peculiarly its own. So the show results in being what it should be: representative of a heightened realistic vision and—above all—photographic.

