



CELEBRATIONS

An exhibition of original photographs

Hayden Gallery
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
March 1 - March 30, 1974

Public preview: Friday, March 1, 8-10 pm
Refreshments

Sponsored by the MIT Committee on the Visual Arts

Gallery hours: 10-4, Monday - Saturday

Photograph by Jack Stuler

CELEBRATIONS

WHITE

CELEBRATIONS

ADVENTURE





Terry Reed



John MacDonald Snyder

Minor White Gathers Final M.I.T. Show

By HILTON KRAMER

Special to The New York Times

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Feb. 28—Minor White, the American photographer, was once described by an admiring colleague as "teacher, critic, publisher, theoretician, proselytizer and house mother for a large portion of the community of serious photographers." All that, of course, in addition to being a photographer of classic eminence in his own right.

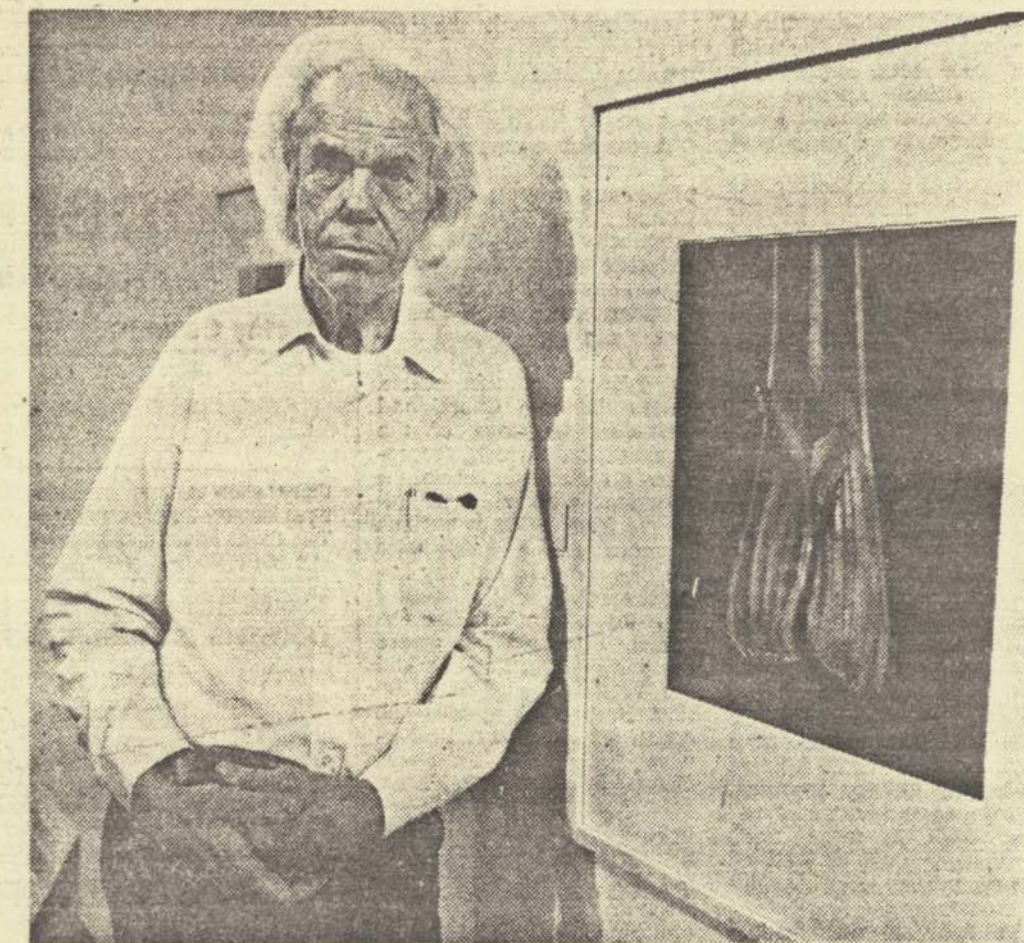
For the last nine years Mr. White has dispensed his wisdom about photography and life and their philosophical interrelations from his position as professor of photography at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—an odd perch, you might think, for an artist and thinker of a distinctly mystical turn of mind. But it is one in which he has clearly felt at home. At 65, he is about to retire from M.I.T., and with a characteristic gesture of solidarity with photographers known and unknown, he has organized an exhibition of other people's work called "Celebrations."

It opens at M.I.T.'s Hayden Gallery tomorrow evening and will remain on view through March 30.

Abstract and Concrete

Like other exhibitions Mr. White has organized during his tenure at M.I.T., "Celebrations" takes a highly abstract theme—"the celebrations of life, its rites and mysteries"—and implements it with a dazzling anthology of concrete images. The most commonplace comedies of life are joined with the most lyrical evocations of nature in a pictorial survey that brings together different generations and different points of view in a splendid affirmation of the photographic medium in all of its variety and strengths.

Mr. White organized the "Celebrations" exhibition as a kind of open competition without prizes. He simply announced his general theme and invited submissions from anyone who wished to be considered. The result, selected from thousands of prints by Mr. White and Jonathan Green, his colleague in the photography program at M.I.T., is a show of 77 works by 69 photographers, profes-



The New York Times/Arthur Grace

Minor White at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where an exhibition of photographs he and a colleague, Jonathan Green, have arranged, is to open tonight.

sionals and amateurs, some famous and some unknown.

Landscape, cityscape and the candid portrait are "celebrated" here as joyously as the more abstract mystical images of light and nature we associate with Mr. White's own work. The exhibition is clearly intended to illuminate the expressive and philosophical dimensions of the medium as a whole, and not simply to rehearse or ratify the more specialized style of the man in charge.

Otherworldly Quality

Inevitably, though, Mr. White's philosophical bias makes itself felt. Even the earthiest of images—pictures of parties and families and animals and street scenes—acquire a certain otherworldly quality in the context of the exhibition Mr. White has created. There is no suggestion of violence or disruption or disintegration of any sort here. The atmosphere is one of contemplation and rever-

ence. The subjects are secular, but the outlook is religious.

The visitor of "Celebrations" naturally enjoys it first of all for its many pictures of outstanding distinction. Among these, I would especially cite the brilliant landscape photographs of Terry Reed, John MacDonald Snyder and Carl Leavitt. There are also memorable pictures by Emmet Gowin, Mark Riboud, Imogen Cunningham and Leonard Freed.

Long Artistic Career

But there is another dimension to the exhibition—the point of view that governs it. To understand this is to understand what Mr. White has been doing at M.I.T.—and indeed, what he has been up to throughout his long career as an artist and teacher.

"Except for photography, the roots of all the arts go back to the sacred," Mr. White writes in the catalogue of the "Celebrations" exhibi-

tion. "The roots of the photographic media are in secular science and in a technology which is separate from art and the esoteric."

Mr. White's mission has clearly been to repair this historical breach between the sacred sources of art and the secular origins of the medium he has made his life's work. Like Alfred Stieglitz, his great mentor, he has worked to confer a spiritual (even, perhaps, an esoteric) destiny on an art that was born, so to speak, spiritually orphaned. This is not, to be sure, everybody's notion of what the destiny of photography is or should be, but Mr. White has succeeded in making his "sacred" view of the medium one of the central critical issues for many contemporary photographers, and in "Celebrations" he has given his mission a most solicitous and persuasive statement.