5 PHOTOGRAPHY AND HOUSING FOR ONE WORLD

> "Race and class relations seem to me infinitely more important than improved housing techniques at this point in history. But, even so, I know that one can't solve everything all at once and would not drag it in here except for one disturbing thing that becomes more and more apparent. Namely, that large-scale housing and planning techniques, however enlightened in a physical sense, not only do not automatically improve the social structure: they can (and do, in the absence of a determined conscious effort to prevent it) actually promote and crystallize segregation in a much more blatant, official and efficient form that we've ever known it in the past outside the deep South."
>
> Catherine Bauer Wurster to Reginald Johnson, July 20, 1944.[1]

During the Second World War, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles both abolished racial segregation in its unfilled housing projects and discontinued the use of racial quotas in tenant selection. At a time when many housing authorities across the United States still enforced segregation in public housing, this change of policy in Los Angeles was controversial, but timely. As many Americans around the time of the Second World War increasingly associated racism with fascism, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and other public housing proponents found a new way of winning the support of a broader taxpaying public by positioning public housing's policies against racial or religious discrimination in tenant selection as American and democratic.[2]

Photography figured prominently and problematically in the positioning of non-discrimination in public housing as "the New Deal in a microcosm," as historian Sophie Spalding has observed of Leonard Nadel's never-published photobook, *Aliso Village U.S.A.*[3] But as this chapter further aims to show, this

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notion of public housing projects as ideal, democratic microcosms had currency in relation to the politics of the late wartime and immediate postwar years, as well. So too did photographers see in public housing's postwar image a possible means of furthering their photographic practices before audiences that included other photographers, government officials, museums, and the Guggenheim Foundation. For them, to photograph this ideal "microcosm" was to undertake pressing and prestigious cultural work. Looking closer at the place of public housing in the practices of the Los Angeles-based photographers, this chapter explains how public housing and specifically images of its residents functioned within the portfolios of photographers both during the 1940s and early 1950s and later in their respective creative careers.

Although race forms only one of the themes of this chapter, it is worth noting that several approaches to this theme follow the current photohistorical concern with narratives outlined in the introduction to this study. Kate Sampsell-Willmann identifies this tendency as a "retreat from racial essentialism" and a turning to "the photographer's intentions as an additional text."[4] One of the books Sampsell-Willmann reviews, Erina Duganne's *The Self in Black and White: Race and Subjectivity in Postwar American Photography*, shows how this approach might help scholarship "move beyond evaluating representations of race, both in isolation from their broader historical and cultural significance within the United States and as the product of a unified and cohesive group of individuals," and more immediately offer a useful lens for viewing the work of photographers "who share an interest in depicting black subjects."[5] Art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau likewise offers a framework for approaching such inequities between artist and subject as that between college-educated photographers and low-income public housing residents by understanding the role of the subject in artists' navigation of their contemporary markets.[6] In addition to recognizing the disjunct between these idealizing photographs and the social and political problems of public housing, these approaches urge the historian to more closely study the ways in which figures such as the housing resident functioned as part of a history of photography.[7]

In adopting this approach, it is important to recognize that the identities of many of the photographers who worked for the Housing Authority remain unknown. Those who received some acclaim are either of European heritage, or their identity goes unmentioned. If the Housing Authority showed photographs in their newsletters, reports, or exhibitions made by photographers who identified as Black, Indigenous, or of Asian heritage, urgent work remains to be done to understand and celebrate these photographers' contributions to the public housing movement and the greater social history of Los Angeles.

The urgency of this task becomes clear when one considers this period as the prologue to the Civil Rights era. As Blake Stimson shows in *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation*, at the center of photography's postwar work was the question of political "belonging"—specifically, the idea of a "new global subject."[8] Looking at such photographic projects from the 1950s as the Museum of Modern Art's landmark 1955 exhibition, *The Family of Man*, Stimson identifies "a peculiar and distinctive form of late modernism"—one which held "the possibility of a new political identification, the possibility of a civic-minded collective self-understanding that would generate a new postwar, postmodern citizen of the world."[9] The global popularity of such exhibitions as the Museum of Modern Art's depended on a widely-held notion of photography as capable of "doing the same sort of ideological work that spirituals, sarongs, homespun, and the like performed" during the Civil Rights era, Stimson explains. But as he also acknowledges, this work was "symbolic"—the hold of this notion, brief.[10] Looking to the formats of the photoessay and the photographic exhibition, Stimson examines closely the "embodied" and "affective" experience of looking at photography during this period.[11] "How," he asks, "did the exhibition [*The Family of Man*, N.K.O.] translate political motivations into emotional experience?"[12]

Not least for the fact that the work of one of the Housing Authority's photographers was later included in this landmark postwar show is Stimson's question worth modifying and testing against earlier commercial photographic practices surrounding the Housing Authority's program. In the absence of adequate records, this chapter does not try to grapple with the complex emotional experiences created by housing photographs. Rather, it looks to the writings of housing officials and photographers on the political and social motivations of public housing and its photographs in this period of political and social change. The ideas surrounding housing in Los Angeles especially, as Don Parson explains, changed from the "community modernism" of the New Deal practices of "social democratic reform" to a postwar "corporate modernism," or "the monumental glorification of the commercial urban economy."[13] In postwar Los Angeles, the pro-private-building *Los Angeles Times*, as Parson shows, played a large part in this shift through their sharp criticism of the public housing program.[14] International initiatives such as the one to make housing a topic at the United Nations also suffered scathing review, as mentioned in chapter 3 of this study. These events form a backdrop for postwar photographic practices from 1945 to 1948. In which ways might photography have proffered its promise of belonging during this tumultuous period? How did this promise resonate with the postwar housing program's positioning of itself and especially its racially diverse

communities as a democratic ideal? Moving away from Stimson's focus on the blockbuster, *The Family of Man*, this chapter brings together anti-racist messages from popular culture with under-researched records including the correspondence of the Housing Authority's Frank Wilkinson in his collection at the Southern California Library, the recently released FBI file of the photographer, art historian, and designer Esther Lewittes Mipaas, and the never-published Guggenheim Fellowship application of photographer and filmmaker Louis Clyde Stoumen. These records explain how photographers interpreted and responded to these two promises with projects that offered profound reflections on their medium and roles in the postwar world.

PICTURING CIVIC UNITY

In January 1942, with defense housing projects well underway and one eye trained on the end of the war, the California Housing and Planning Association gathered with representatives from the United States Housing Authority in the conference rooms of the Clift Hotel in San Francisco. There, they called several tenets of existing housing legislation into question. International housing leader Catherine Bauer most clearly articulated the current problems in her upbeat but cautionary speech, titled "Post-War Housing Can Save the West." She asked a series of provocative questions: "Is the public housing atmosphere too paternalistic for wide popular enthusiasm? Should we find a way to enlist responsible participation from the people we are trying to serve, right from the start? Are the projects too dull and 'regimented' in appearance to strike a popular spark?"[15] These questions went to the heart of some of the greatest public criticisms of public housing. But one of the most pressing issues for Bauer was the matter of tenant qualification, especially in Los Angeles. The problem, she explained, was that the people who the housing authorities were uprooting in slum-clearance efforts were not always eligible to move into the new public housing projects under the current rules. In framing the successful resolution of this problem as a benefit for all the Western states, Bauer called for legislative changes that would allow groups currently barred from the existing housing program, such as single persons, people without US citizenship, and people who owned their "slum" homes, to qualify for the new government-sponsored units.[16]

As several historians have ably shown, prejudice prevailed in the newly built units among selected residents, as well. A closer look at the Housing Authority collections reveals a familiar story, but in as-yet unpublished words worth considering here. Ten months after Catherine Bauer gave her speech,

Catherine Henck of the Housing Authority of the City of Vallejo wrote to Frank Wilkinson in Los Angeles regarding a conversation she had with him at a conference the previous weekend on what she termed "the racial problem in projects." "We have quite a large minority group—Negroes and Filipinos—in our project," she wrote; "I would like to find out the actual experiences of other managers in drawing them into the community life, best methods of doing this, best ways to overcome prejudice etc."[17]

Henck wrote this letter at a time when the Great Migration of hundreds of thousands of African Americans from the rural South to urban centers was gathering momentum.[18] Over the course of the 1940s, upwards of two hundred thousand African Americans came to Los Angeles, many in search of work.[19] These workers encountered prejudice in many places, and public housing, as implied in Henck's request to Wilkinson to share his experience in this area, was one of them. Most provocative about Henck's letter is the responsibility she assigned to herself and the housing managers in addressing this problem. Their job was to find and use the "best ways to overcome prejudice," but they were also culpable of a lack of "training or realization of the scope of the job."[20] Evocative of the paternalism which Catherine Bauer just a few months earlier had warned against, Henck's letter also touches on an unsettling view of Black people and Filipino Americans as public housing "others" in 1942 Vallejo who must be somehow made to be a part of a contemporary notion of "community life."

In response to Henck's inquiry, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's Frank Wilkinson suggested that the Vallejo Housing Authority offer ideas for community activities which the residents could organize and implement themselves.[21] Just a year later, he would take his own advice to a new level: in 1943, Los Angeles ceased admitting public housing residents to new public housing projects according to racial quotas that maintained the ratios in the surrounding area (and hence maintained segregation), opting instead to give the units to those who were the first to submit qualifying applications.[22] However, the Housing Authority's ultimate failure along with that of the rest of the national program to operate without racial prejudice is well-documented.[23] One place where segregation persisted was not far from Vallejo in Richmond, where both the Richmond Housing Authority and the Farm Security Administration built units in 1942 (six thousand and eight thousand, respectively) to accommodate many of the African American workers arriving from the South to work in the Kaiser shipyards.[24]

Studies of housing in Los Angeles further underscore the social engineering inherent in the City's housing policies. Dana Cuff describes how housers saw Los Angeles's public housing communities as places where "better citizens"

were "produced."[25] The idea was that families with low incomes would move into public housing, stay for only a short time as they worked their ways to higher salaries, and then would leave to rent in privately-owned buildings or buy homes.[26] But as historian of architecture Dianne Harris explains, buying a home was where many families faced serious challenges. In Los Angeles, homeownership in the postwar era meant buying a single-family detached house in the suburbs. Harris demonstrates the ways in which these houses and the suburban neighborhoods they comprised constituted sites where certain identities and lifestyles found reinforcement, while others were shaped or shunned. The dwellings as well as their representations in home and garden magazines and later in television shows, she writes, exhibited "a pervasive iconography of white, middle-class domesticity" and acted as "poignant ciphers for whiteness, affluence, belonging, and sense of permanent stability."[27]

Considering further what these "ciphers" meant especially for house-hunting families, African American and African Studies scholar Andrew W. Kahrl poses a challenge to Harris's thesis by positing a difference between "aspiring towards whiteness" in postwar suburbia and "seeking to become unmarked."[28] In postwar Los Angeles and prior, being "marked" or categorized according to racist concepts meant facing racist housing covenants. These covenants barred many Black people from buying or renting homes in certain neighborhoods well into the postwar years.[29] Moreover, the Federal Housing Administration encouraged such restrictions by underwriting loans almost exclusively for segregated housing.[30] Many neighborhoods complied out of financial interest, but others balked at the restrictions as essentially un-American. Groups such as Community Homes, Inc., a cooperative formed with the aim of buying and building on land in the San Fernando Valley in 1947, struggled to get a mortgage for their project without FHA insurance. The financial advisor to the group fumed in a letter to Catherine Bauer in 1947: "The fact of the matter is that the local FHA had shut the door in our faces completely, and solely on the basis of the interracial character of our development […]."[31] To this representative, the problem with the FHA's refusal to underwrite loans for his cooperative's planned neighborhood was that it threatened the very "American way of democratic life" which such neighborhoods upheld.[32] As historian Josh Sides aptly summarizes the situation, the racially-restrictive housing covenants in Los Angeles made public housing for many low-income families, and especially Black families already strained by unequal work opportunities, an "only alternative" well into the postwar years.[33]

"NON-DISCRIMINATION IS DEMOCRACY AT WORK"

As the Community Homes representative's correspondence with Catherine Bauer shows, by 1947 the stakes for successful non-discrimination in housing were formulated in terms not of a triumph over racism, but a triumph of democracy. Housing groups in Los Angeles as well as groups from Washington State to Washington, DC, sought to solidify the connection between public housing's non-discrimination policies and democratic ideals. As demonstrated in images circulated by several local housing authorities, photographs paired with captions or short articles emerged in these early postwar years as a popular form of evidence of a non-discriminatory public housing policy's far-reaching advantages.

In the November 1946 issue of the *Journal of Housing*, for instance, the Seattle Housing Authority published a photograph of a group of five small children standing behind the fence of one of the local housing projects' preschools (fig. 82). Lined up, the children hold on to the fence in a group gesture of laying claim to the structure and the basic "American right" to housing that it symbolized. Although all the children are protected by the same fence, they still look over it in the directions that interest each of them most. Public housing is for everyone, the image seems to suggest, but living in it need not eradicate individuality. The caption, however, calls on terms with different connotations: "Non-Discrimination is Democracy at Work."

Hints to the Housing Manager

IN-SERVICE BUDGET TRAINING

Thirty-two employees of the Detroit Housing Commission are now enrolled in an in-service training course on local and FPHA budgeting procedures. Given by Robert J. Temple, Superintendent of Housing Operations, the course meets two hours a week and is compulsory for housing managers, assistants, and central maintenance division heads. Other interested employees may also attend. The course was opened this fall—the first in-service training offered by the Commission.

POSTERS IMPROVE MAINTENANCE

Monthly lobby displays on timely maintenance topics carry great weight among residents of Rancho San Pedro, "671" development of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles. For example, reports Manager Dorothea Nelson, a recent exhibit on the virtues of good housekeeping resulted in an unprecedented number of resident requests to the management office to disconnect stoves (to prepare them for cleaning), lend equipment, etc., in order that residents could do a thorough housecleaning job. The informal, colorful displays vary with the season, inviting tenant cooperation on such matters as watering of lawns, spring cleaning, etc.

The housekeeping display that had such stimulating effects consisted of a large poster with the words "Are You Guilty?" and the picture of a guilty-looking woman on it. Connected to the poster was a streamer running down to a pile of dirty household equipment—greasy stoves, soiled windows, dusty furniture.

This hint appeared in the first issue of "Here's Housing"—monthly newsletter of the Pacific Southwest Regional Council (see page 257).

DATING WINDOW SHADES

Also from "Here's Housing" is a suggestion from Manager Virginia Hedges of Ramona Gardens, another Los Angeles development, on a way to reduce record keeping on window shade repairs. The repairman stamps the date on the roller whenever repairs are made or the shade replaced. In this way there can never be any doubt about the date of the last service to the shade, and appropriate charges can be made to the resident whenever any additional service is required.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS—SEEN IN PRINT, NOT IN OPERATION

Currently on the market are four items useful for floor maintenance and for waterproofing of exterior building surfaces, available from the Flexrock Company, 3626 Filbert Street, Philadelphia 4.

Less slip wax. Said to be a "safe," protective coating on hard surfaces such as concrete, terrazzo, marble, ceramic tile; also on soft surfaces such as wood, rubber or asphalt tile, linoleum, cork. Can be applied with either a cloth or mop, needs no polishing, and is supposed to dry in 20 minutes.

Ruggedwear floor resurfacer. A tough overlay for worn wood or concrete floors. One-half inch thick, it can be applied right over the old floor, according to the manufacturer's statement. It takes 50 hours to dry.

Roofiex waterproofer. Said to be a "quick, sure, roof-leak stopper for permanently patching an area or an entire roof." It can be applied directly from the container right over the old roof and forms a seamless, one-piece roof. The material is claimed to be unaffected by weather and, also, to be elastic—i.e, it should contract or expand with the roof without cracking.

Flexseal building waterproofer. A colorless transparent waterproofer that may be either brushed or sprayed on the exterior walls of a building. Said to be equally effective on mortar, concrete, brick, stone, or composition.

Containers for Oily Waste Rags—

Because oily rags are known to be serious fire hazards, maintenance men may be interested in this container, which has been approved by the National Board of Fire Underwriters and the Associated Factory Mutual Fire Insurance Companies. It is put out by the George W. Dieter Manufacturing Company, 405 North Monticello Avenue, Chicago 24.

Precision Tool Corrects Faucet Leaks—

A precision tool that re-forms and smoothes out rough, raised faucet seats —a common cause of leaking faucets—is available from the J. A. Sexauer Manufacturing Company, 2903 Third Avenue, New York City 51. The device is said to form a smooth, corrosion-resisting surface on the seat and fits all faucets and many small valves.

NON-DISCRIMINATION IS DEMOCRACY AT WORK

"We think the above picture succinctly tells one of the basic stories of public housing in Seattle," writes Ruth Howells, Public Relations Director for the Seattle Authority. "It was taken over the back fence of Yesler Terrace's Day Care Center, toward the end of the day when the kids were pretty restless."

The Authority's sixth annual report, just published under the title "Housing the People," carries this picture on its cover and points out that "since its inception, the Seattle Housing Authority has scrupulously adhered to a policy of non-discrimination in the housing of families in all of its projects." The report goes on to say that "never at any time during the war period did the Authority have any serious racial difficulty in its family projects. . . . It was therefore possible to locate racial minority groups on all projects without setting off any part or neighborhood on the development for any one group or class. This proved not only feasible but administratively most practical."

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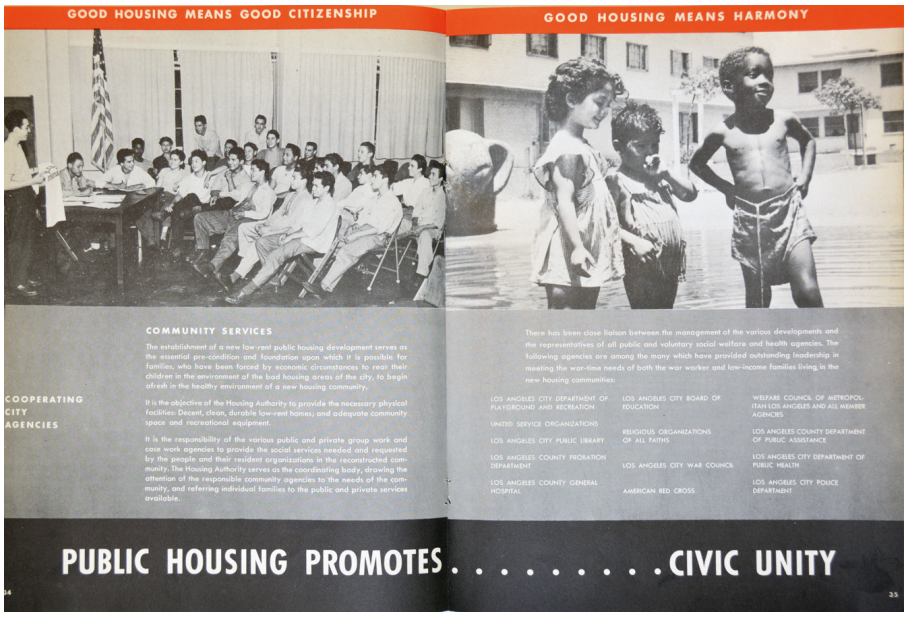
82] "Hints to the Housing Manager," *The Journal of Housing* 3, no. 11 (November 1946): 263, Oakland Public Library.

According to the *Journal of Housing*, the Seattle Housing Authority understood the connection between the reproduced photograph and the caption as to-the-point: "'We think the above picture succinctly tells one of the basic stories of public housing in Seattle,'" the caption quoted the Seattle Authority's public relations director, Ruth Howells. But the rest of the caption hardly clarified this connection between non-discrimination and democracy. Rather, it touted non-discrimination's promotion of efficiency in public housing management. Quoting the Authority's annual report, the caption claimed that

> "'never at any time during the war period did the Authority have any serious racial difficulty in its family projects....It was therefore possible to locate racial minority groups on all projects without setting off any part or neighborhood on the development for any one group or class. This proved not only feasible but administratively most practical.'"[34]

Speaking to an audience of housing employees, the *Journal of Housing* offered an ideal and ideologically-charged image and subtitle while simultaneously underscoring the administrative pragmatism of having one fewer tenant placement criterium. Eradicating race as a criterium allowed for more flexible placement of families based on other criteria, like housing need. In this way, non-discrimination was not just (perhaps also not yet) democracy at work—it was better management.

While social workers may have appreciated arguments for non-discrimination as a policy that was easy to implement and maintain, it was the caption's first association of non-discrimination with a democratic ideal that spoke to the broadest audience. Groups of children and young families formed a motif through the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's photography from this period.[35] The Authority often paired these photographs with captions alluding to non-discrimination policies or related civic ideals of unity. For example, in Los Angeles's 1945 annual report, *A Decent Home, an American Right*, Simon Eisner and Frank Wilkinson included Esther Lewittes Mipaas's photograph showing three children playing in a splash pool at one of the Housing Authority's developments (fig. 83). The youngest child holds a hand to his mouth in apprehension, but the older boy and girl smile. Although a black and white photograph, the tones of the image reveal that the children look different—that they have different skin colors. Still, the layout invites the reader to see in this image of diversity also one of community and oneness. Reprinted to fill the top half of a page of the annual report above the words "Civic Unity," the editors posit the playing children as citizens—as residents of the same housing project and



83] Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, *A Decent Home, an American Right: 5th, 6th and 7th Consolidated Report,* ed. Frank Wilkinson ([Los Angeles]: s.n., 1945), 34–35, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

members of one community in which living and playing together is "democracy at work."[36]

This figure of children playing in their neighborhood as a symbol of a democratic ideal carried special weight at a time in which the threat of fascism was still a fresh memory. Nowhere was this symbol more intoned than in the 1945 Oscar-winning short film, *The House I Live In*.[37] The film was a parade of Hollywood talent. The title of the film came from the lyrics of its main song, written by Abel Meeropol (credited under his pseudonym, Lewis Allan) and set to music composed by Earl Robinson.[38] The young singer, actor, and teen heartthrob Frank Sinatra sang the song as he played himself in the starring role, according to historian Art Simon, for free.[39] Screenwriter Albert Maltz, soon to be blacklisted as one of the infamous Hollywood Ten, wrote the script—also for no compensation.[40] Just over ten minutes long, the film tells the story of Sinatra encountering a group of boys chasing another boy in the alley behind his recording studio. Sinatra intervenes and questions the boys to find out why they are chasing the other one. "We don't like his religion," one small boy declares. "Now hold on," Sinatra replies, "I see what you mean. You must be a bunch of those Nazi werewolves I've been reading about." This comment confuses the boys: "Mister, are you screwy?" one asks. "Not me, I'm an American," Sinatra answers.

Sinatra then beckons the boys to gather around him while he tells them a story of how two World War II soldiers, one Jewish and one Presbyterian, worked together to bomb a Japanese battleship. With Sinatra's voice narrating, the film cuts to a sequence of aerial action before returning to the singer's youthful face.

Asking the boys whether their parents participated in wartime blood drives, he then launches into an argument that the same blood runs through all people's veins. If the blood argument does not link the moralizing story of cooperation between the Jewish and Presbyterian soldiers with a broader argument for a democratic America free of prejudice for Sinatra's audience, then the lyrics of the song that he sings next do. Abel Meeropol's lyrics for *The House I Live In* describe America as a neighborhood complete with a playground filled with children. When Sinatra comes to the words "All races and religions," the film cuts to a shot of the Jewish boy as he steps closer to the group to listen. The camera then pans the faces of the other children as Sinatra finishes the song. The transformative lesson is complete: one boy picks the Jewish boy's bag up from the ground and hands it back to him. The small boy who questioned Sinatra lingers in the alley as the rest of the group disappears around the corner. He looks toward the camera and the direction in which Sinatra departs and smiles as the final bars of *America the Beautiful* play and the film fades to black.

Just as the children in public housing's swimming pools and daycares provided public housing with a figure of a better future world, so also the youthful cast of *The House I Live In* offered the hope that future generations would not repeat past errors. The closing to the short film suggests that the children begin to change their prejudiced ways. The outspoken boy's glance in the direction of the recording studio door places the source of this inspiration in Sinatra, a young man who spoke with the boys like he was "one of them." The shared youthfulness between the anonymous boys and the celebrity comes to the fore when the outspoken gang member innocently asks what Sinatra does for a living. "I sing," Sinatra replies. "Aww, you're a kid," the boy responds, hinting at his doubt but also underscoring Sinatra's youth.

Cultural historian Art Simon observes how contemporary audiences took the film's equation of anti-Semitism with "anti-Americanism" to symbolize the anti-Americanness of all forms of prejudice.[41] But further research shows that the effectiveness of the film as a tool of social reform remained debated. At issue for contemporary critics was Sinatra's "public persona;" as a young, endearing, musically talented, and commercially successful son of Italian immigrants, Sinatra helped popularize the film's message.[42] Still, one contemporary viewer was wary of whether popularity could lead to lasting change. "When big names are cited (such as Frank Sinatra) there is again the danger of sloppy thinking—'I am against prejudice because Frank Sinatra says it is wrong,' etc.," the critic wrote in 1946.[43] Other commentators, however, saw in the film a means of raising public awareness upon which "more effective local organization" might take action.[44]

The imperative of a civic body free of prejudice resonated with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles. The Authority had taken care to not discriminate in the selection of tenants for its housing projects starting in 1943. Still, it recognized that these efforts would not achieve sweeping reforms if national policy allowed discrimination to exist in other local authorities. Under the editorship of Frank Wilkinson, the Housing Authority's annual report for the war years included a direct call for the amendment of the 1937 Federal Housing Act "to the end that all persons, regardless of race, color, creed, citizenship or national origin be eligible to occupy low-rent public housing developments assisted by said Act."[45] It was a move on behalf of a local authority to change national policy. The national celebrity figure of Frank Sinatra and Earl Robinson's song about America as a democratic neighborhood soon aided the effort.

Starting in 1946, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles called on photographs not of small children, but of young people and none other than the young celebrity Frank Sinatra to position its policy of non-discrimination at local public housing projects as a solution to the far-reaching problems of racism. In March, Aliso Village resident Harry Johns made headlines with other members of a group of high school-aged dancers in the *California Eagle*, a newspaper written, edited, and read by Black Angelenos.[46] The dancers, who called themselves the Pan-American Dance Group, had recently received the Brotherhood Award from the Los Angeles Youth Council "'for their outstanding leadership and initiative in dedicating the program of their youth group to the fundamental principles of Brotherhood, and for setting the best example of inter-faith, inter-racial cooperation among the youth of Los Angeles.'"[47] Included with the article was a photograph of the members of the group, a copy of which was also printed in the Housing Authority's *Los Angeles Housing News* (fig. 84). Harry Johns stands tall on the left, looking on as the president of the dance group, Fred Martinez, receives the award from Frank Sinatra. Sinatra, centered in the composition with the stripes and fringe of an American flag barely visible behind him, flashes a smile as he shakes Martinez's hand.

A comparison of this presentation with that of the same photograph in the April issue of *Housing News* shows a slightly different interpretation of the image. This time, the article begins by naming Frank Sinatra, then Fred Martinez, resident of the Housing Authority's housing project, Pico Gardens, then Harry Johns of Aliso Village. Under the title "As One Good Guy to Another," the photograph of Sinatra handing the award to Martinez positions the young public housing resident as Sinatra's equal in his effort to further the message of cooperation in *The House I Live In*. This award, the article also makes clear, is an

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CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 3)

Wyatt's speech was tuned to the theme that Emergency measures and Basic Measures are equally vital in the solution of the housing problem that confronts the country.

"I want to speak very plainly on this point," Wyatt stated. "There is no conflict between the emergency measures we need during the veterans housing emergency and the basic, long-range measures of the Wagner- Ellender- Taft Bill. On the contrary, both are integral elements of the Veterans' Emergency Housing program and both are needed quickly. BOTH MUST HAVE THE VIGOROUS AND UNDIVIDED SUPPORT OF ALL THOSE FIGHTING FOR VETERANS' HOUSING AND FOR DECENT HOMES FOR ALL AMERICAN FAMILIES"

Wyatt went on to say that, while solid support of the emergency recommendations embodied in the Patman Bill was imperative at this time, "this country cannot stand on a veterans' housing program which will serve only those veterans who can pay economic rents. We cannot progress toward our goal of good houses for all without public housing for those families who cannot secure decent shelter from private enterprise."

Wyatt also pointed out that the same "small but powerful groups" that oppose the Patman Bill also oppose the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Bill.

AS ONE GOOD GUY TO ANOTHER

IT IS SCARCELY NECESSARY to identify the gentleman in the bow tie - one Frank Sinatra - who is handing to Fred Martinez, resident of Pico Gardens Housing Development, a scroll emblematic of the annual award of the Los Angeles Youth Council for providing the most outstanding leadership in interracial group understanding among the youth of Los Angeles.

Martinez is accepting it in his capacity as President of the Pan-American Dance Group of Los Angeles. The others, comprising the Executive Board of the group are (l to r) Harry Johns, Esperanza Luna, Mary Lou Diaz, and Moses Garay. Johns is also a housing development resident; he lives in Aliso Village. The ceremony was the climax of the recent observance of Brotherhood Week.

Thus is concrete proof adduced to back up the claim of the City Housing Authority that "PUBLIC HOUSING PROMOTES CIVIC UNITY."

EASTER CELEBRATION

The Tenants' Organization of the Corregidor Park War Housing Development is planning an Easter celebration so big that it will be divided into two sections: One on Easter morning and the other on the Friday night preceding Easter.

The program will include an Easter Pageant, a play, a children's chorus, and - of course - an egg-hunt. If you'd like to see the fun, you're invited.

84] "As One Good Guy to Another," *Los Angeles Housing News* 3, no. 4 (April 1946): 5, in box 58, folder 15, Reuben W. Borough Papers (Collection 927). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

award for public housing as a place where good citizens and young leaders live and promote "interracial group understanding." The article offers the resounding conclusion: "Thus is concrete proof adduced to back up the claim of the City Housing Authority that 'public housing promotes civic unity.'"[48]

The management assistant at Aliso Village, Sidney Green, wasted little time in sending the photograph along with an article to the National Association of Housing Officials' monthly publication, the *Journal of Housing*.[49] In July of 1946, the *Journal of Housing* published Green's story, titled "Public Housing Promotes Civic Unity," along with the same photograph. The focus of the article, however, was less on the dancers than it was on the Housing Authority's experience with non-discrimination in its projects. In echoes of Frank Wilkinson's letter to Catherine Henck, Green presented professional readers with a "how-to" for making non-discrimination in public housing a step towards ending racial and religious prejudice by stressing such measures as cooperating with other community agencies, forming active residents councils, and "sharing in integrated

activities" with the surrounding community.[50] These measures, Green advised, would not immediately eliminate conflicts in housing projects, but rather allow for swifter resolutions. He illustrated this point by recounting a dispute "between some youthful members of a racial group living in a development and others of another group living outside the development." Green wrote, "Because of the experience in inter-racial cooperation that the resident youths had had on the development," the Housing Authority was "able to convince" the group from the housing project to "take the lead in settling the dispute before it grew worse."[51] While the teenage dance group surrounding Sinatra gave faces to Green's message about successful "sharing in integrated activities," the hero of the story was clearly public housing and, more specifically, its management in their commitment to fostering "inter-racial cooperation" in the broadest sense. Green took care to cite the open-mindedness of public housing's young residents in the handling of the cited dispute, but this advantage, so the story goes, was a result of living in the Housing Authority's projects.

Following the different publications of this photograph of the Pan-American Dance Group, one sees the multiple meanings the photograph carried for its interpreters. For the *California Eagle*, the photograph highlighted the achievements of Harry Johns, a member of its community of Black readers. For *Los Angeles Housing News*, the photograph celebrated the public housing residents in the group while offering "concrete proof" of housing achievement. In the *Journal of Housing*, the photograph portrayed housing's postwar poster youth while positioning the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles among national colleagues as experienced in enacting a policy of no discrimination. The photograph, these republications seemed to suggest, was cogent and versatile. It was just one of many more images against discrimination that the Housing Authority would circulate in the postwar years.

LOS ANGELES HOUSING NEWS

One of the most important means of circulating photographs of housing as a place of interracial understanding was the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's monthly newsletter, *Los Angeles Housing News*. Inaugurated in 1943, the news reported on a variety of events in Los Angeles's public housing communities, from Halloween parties to Cinco de Mayo festivals, basketball games, and flower shows. Other articles reported from Washington, DC, and local low-income neighborhoods of privately owned housing, offering readers a look into the public housing machinery and keeping them current on housing achievements that might otherwise not be visible in the cityscape for months or years

to come. Photographs reproduced as grainy black and white halftones regularly accompanied these articles and seldom counted fewer than five to an issue.

Los Angeles Housing News and its photographs were certainly instruments of propaganda and control; editors selected stories and presented them as achievements so that these actions might be emulated among housing residents and reflect positively on the Housing Authority as a public agency.[52] But outside the photograph of the Brotherhood Award ceremony, seldom is the racial diversity of residents or workers verbally underscored in a direct way.[53] A set of photographs published in 1948, for example, consists of three portraits of families gathered in front of their Quonset huts at the temporary veteran housing project, Rodger Young Village.[54] These portraits, all the same height and width, span the page in a row under the title, "Honorable Discharge and Actual Housing Need Are the only Qualifications" (fig. 85).[55] The suggestion, as a reader in 1948 might interpret it, is that just like in the pages of *Housing News*, there is a place in public housing for every veteran, and the Housing Authority will work for the inclusion of each.

This work of the Housing Authority is underscored in other photographs in the same layout.[56] On the page facing the veterans' family portraits, a photograph shows Commissioner Nicola Giulii holding the second smallest of a veteran's five children while he hands the veteran a "referral" to the Housing Authority for help with relocation. "How they have been living shows in the picture," the caption reads, drawing the viewer's attention to the barn-like door of the family's home. In another picture, veterans sit around a table at a meeting with the Housing Authority's officials and other resident leaders. Executive Director Howard Holtzendorff cuts a commanding figure at the table's head, his shirtsleeves rolled-up as he speaks to the gathering of representatives.

Returning to the photographs of the veterans with their families, one might see what artist and writer Coco Fusco in 2003 called "a taxonomic display of recognizably distinct and attractive ethnic faces" and cited as "the convention that now dominates corporate advertising."[57] But did the 1948 readers of *Los Angeles Housing News* recognize (or want to recognize) the distinctions in the faces and in the black and white photographic reproductions' registry of the skin tones as ones of race or ethnicity?[58] And was such recognition the Housing Authority's intention? Celebrated by peers in the *Journal of Housing* for its efficiency, a policy prohibiting discrimination, illustrated using the corporate conventions outlined by Fusco, might indeed have signaled the Housing Authority's successful operation in this early postwar period of "corporate modernism."[59]

The important question of whether these photographs attracted applications from potential public housing residents remains difficult to trace. In 1945,

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Vet Housing

Due to the temporary war-caused disruption of its original program, the City Housing Authority is today actually conducting three separate housing programs. One is the basic purpose of the Authority, the reason for which it was created: 3,168 permanently-built, Authority-owned, low-rent, slum-clearance housing units. Another is the residue of temporary and permanent war building: 6,551 units of war-worker housing, of which 5,167 are scheduled to be torn down or removed by next July, and 1,384 are to be sold for private ownership. These are owned by the Federal Government and operated by the Authority. The third is the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program, consisting of 3,570 units of temporary, re-use housing, owned by the City and operated by the Authority for the period of the housing emergency. However, the entire grand total of 13,589 units is now, and has been since the end of the war, reserved exclusively to the occupancy of honorably discharged veterans of War II.

Due to the rising tide of veterans' housing problems and also to the fact that since V-J Day the Housing Authority has accepted only honorably discharged veterans' applications, it was deemed advisable to form a Housing Authority Veterans' Advisory Committee. Since its formation, the Veterans' Committee has functioned over nine states, County Council Commanders, or their representatives, of every recognized veteran organization in the City constitute the body. To date, the Committee has been of inestimable help to the Authority during many trying days, to rank understatement. In this picture, the group looks over plans for Basilone Homes. Executive Director Howard Bellendorff (seated center) is flanked by two former Chairmen of the body, Meri Horn of the American Legion (finger on map) and Mel Young, American Veterans' Committee. Other Chairmen have been: A. B. Lattimore, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Arthur B. Tryon, Director of the Veterans' Service Center. Leaning over Horn's shoulder is Al Weinberg, Judge Advocate of the Jewish War Veterans and Project Coordinator of the Mayor's Emergency Housing Committee.

CHAIRMAN

Present Chairman of the Authority's Veterans' Committee is Joel H. Fallis, County Counselor of the Disabled Veterans of America. Fallis is a rehabilitated veteran of World War I. A member of the Armed Services from January 15, 1915, to July 7, 1919, Fallis served first on the Mexican Border and later as an artilleryman in France. He has worked with Federal and State Employment Services for 22 years.

Dan Kingman, Adjutant of the 30th District of the American Legion and Veteran Consultant to the Authority, hands a happy family a referral to Authority low-rent housing. How they had been living shows in the picture. Thus does the Vets' Advisory Committee get tangible results.

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Honorable Discharge And Actual Housing Need Are The ONLY Qualifications

These are typical veteran families at Rodger Young Village, huge quonset-hut community in Griffith Park. Taking only veteran applications, the Authority had at one time a backlog of 16,000 veteran applicants. A cross-section of those, consisting of 1000 applications taken at random by Al Weinberg, Co-ordinator of the Mayor's Emergency Housing Committee, showed that 58.4 percent of all veteran applicants had incomes of LESS THAN $38 PER WEEK and were therefore unable to pay generally prevailing rents. Average income of all veterans actually placed in Authority-owned low-rent developments so far this year is LESS THAN $51 PER WEEK.

Landlord And Tenants Talk It Over

Harmonious resident-management relations are maintained through a system of Resident Councils, democratically elected by the people who live on the development rom among themselves. These Councils deal with the Manager and, in turn, elect from their own body one representative to the Inter-Development Council, which represents all developments and deals with the Executive Director and the General Housing Manager. Scene above shows Director Baltzendorff addressing a meeting of the IDC. Charles Kosloff, Council President, faces camera at center of picture. System has worked well.

One of the 7 Well-Baby Clinics which the Health Department operates on Authority developments. The Board of Education operates Nursery Schools on ten developments and provides Home Counselling services on six. The Department of Recreation provides Playground Directors for almost all locations. Adult Education groups flourish at 22 developments and religious services are held in cooperation with major church organizations. All community facilities are available to the immediate neighborhood as well as project residents.

85] "Vet Housing," *Los Angeles Housing News* 5, no. 8 (August 1948): 6–7, in box 146, John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation. Library. (Collection 1604). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

the circulation of *Los Angeles Housing News* was under five thousand.[60] Extant copies suggest that the readership of the newsletter extended to some of the most active and celebrated agents of housing reform of the 1940s and early 1950s. The socially progressive Haynes Foundation kept a run of *Los Angeles Housing News* from the years 1947 until 1951.[61] Copies also remain accessible in archives around the world, from architect Lloyd Wright's and political figure Reuben W. Borough's in Los Angeles, to Swiss architect Werner Moser's in Zurich.[62] Although utterly forgotten in the history of housing outside studies specific to the Housing Authority's work, in its day *Los Angeles Housing News* brought the Authority's self-portrait and message to a broad and sympathetic readership. Like the annual report, it was just the kind of publication progressively-minded photographers might seek out in a search for meaningful, gainful work.

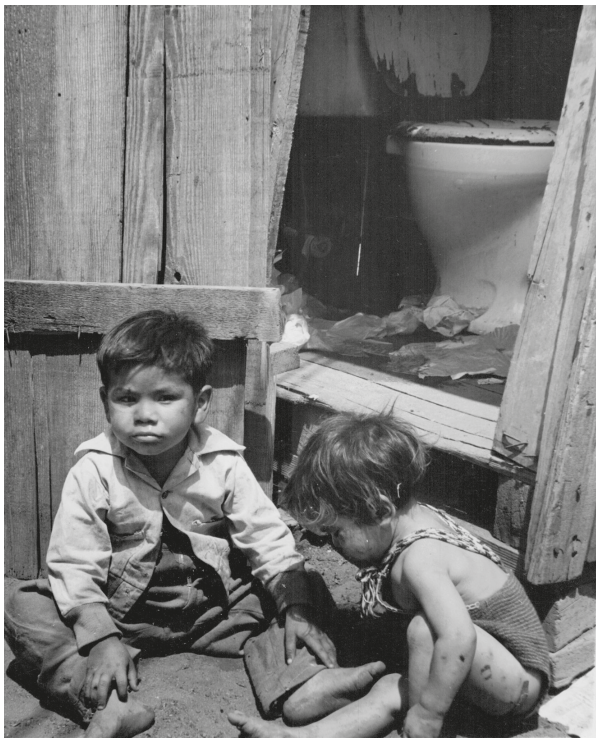
HOUSING AND BELONGING IN THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF ESTHER LEWITTES MIPAAS

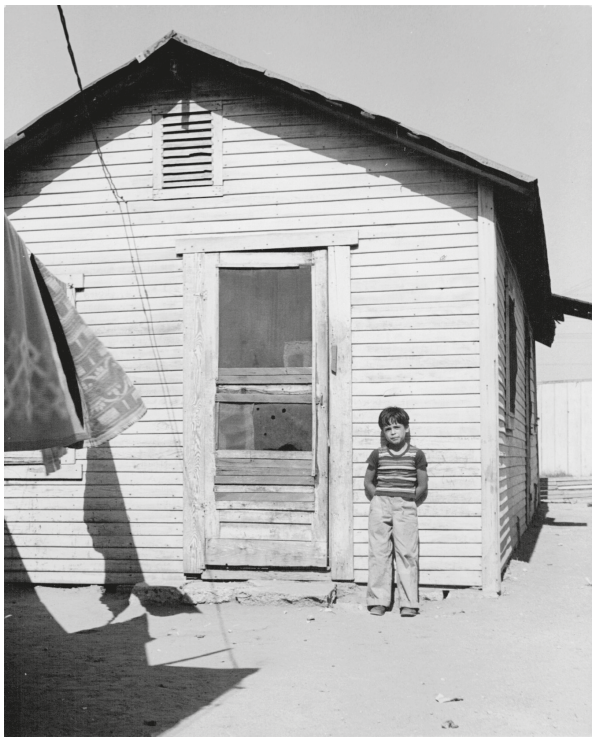
Following the new approaches to women in history as outlined in the introduction to this study, the biography and archive of the photographer Esther Lewittes Mipaas are here worth considering for their grounding of the Housing Authority's photographic practice in the "'micro' realities of everyday lives," to cite again the incisive words of Clare Midgley, Alison Twells, and Julie Carlier.[63] As these authors further note, this return to photographic history's smaller narrative

86] Esther Lewittes Mipaas, untitled, ca. 1945, gelatin silver print, 8 in. × 10 in. (20.32 cm × 25.4 cm), Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

units also offers a much-needed nod to "the role of human agency in affecting change."[64] A closer look at Esther Lewittes Mipaas's photography from right before "the last moment for a long while in which art presumed to have a say in the future," to quote again Blake Stimson, promises significant insight into the photography of the Housing Authority from this integrated, "everyday" level.[65]

Esther Lewittes Mipaas is not the most prominently represented photographer in the collections of the Housing Authority in terms of the quantity of photographs attributed to her.[66] But in her contributions to the widely circulating and exhibited *A Decent Home, an American Right*, her photographs counted among the most seen by a broader public. The photograph of the children in the splash pool was just one of several images in the report with a corresponding print in her personal collection (fig. 1). In another of her photographs published in the report, a group of war workers line up to pay for their lunches (figs. 86, 51). Others of Esther Lewittes Mipaas's photographs portray the problems of the slums. In one photograph visible in the report panels as displayed at the National Orange Show (fig. 56), two small children, their clothes and faces soiled, sit in the dirt. Behind them, the door to an outhouse stands open, the soiled porcelain of a toilet bowl clearly visible as a symbol of the insanitary conditions of the children's playground (fig. 87). "Pacoima in beautiful San Fernando Valley—the





87] Esther Lewittes Mipaas, Pacoima in beautiful San Fernando Valley – the outside toilet, ca. 1945, gelatin silver print, 10 in. × 8 in. (25.4 cm × 20.32 cm), Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

88] Esther Mipaas, Home near Watts, 1945, gelatin silver print, 10 in. × 8 in. (25.4 cm × 20.32 cm), Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

outside toilet," the photographer wrote on the back of the print. "Bad housing breeds disease," read the title of the page of the Housing Authority's annual report (fig. 46).[67]

No scholarship to date details Esther Lewittes Mipaas's (hereafter Esther's) lifelong practice stretching from the New Deal in New York to wartime Los Angeles to postmodern Berkeley and Oakland.[68] Yet, a comparison of her published photographs with others in her personal collection offers a new understanding of the "micro reality" of photography in the service of public housing in 1940s Los Angeles. Many of Esther's photographs of what appear to be the same neighborhoods pictured in *A Decent Home, an American Right* were never published. Among these photographs was one of a neatly dressed boy standing in front of a modest, weather-worn house (fig. 88).[69] He clasps his hands behind his back and cocks his head as he squints at the photographer and smiles faintly. Leaning against the house, he appears at ease and at home. A patterned blanket hanging from a nearby line billows outward toward him, its shadow on the house's facade mimicking his posture. Not the dirty child on the ground near the toilet, the boy appears to be posing for the camera with a confidence and coolness beyond his years. Esther made the following note on the back of the print:

"Home near Watts
print submitted 6/30/45
[not purchased as yet]."

One can hypothesize as to why the Housing Authority did not promptly purchase the photograph. Perhaps the boy and his living conditions simply did not look bad enough. His hair is well kept. His light trousers are spotless. The patterned blankets hanging in the yard show that someone nearby cares about good housekeeping. The yard, free of mud and neatly swept save for two small pieces of paper visible in the photograph's foreground, appears perhaps too safe and clean. Indeed, as Dana Cuff suggests in reference to other photographs in the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's scattered collection, the photograph might offer evidence to challenge the Housing Authority's justifications for the removal of the "slums."[70] Here was not a house near Watts, but a home.[71]

Other photographs in Esther's collection further this challenge. In one photograph, again evidently unpublished, four small boys stand in a row, facing the camera situated not far from the end of a large, shiny automobile (fig. 89). Looking out over the fender of the car, the boys' expressions show mixtures of curiosity, surprise, and coolness. One boy with a particularly stoic expression hangs his arm around the shoulders of the smaller boy next to him in a gesture of camaraderie. Their attention on the camera and its operator, the boys pay little mind to the group of men assembled behind them. Two of these men stand with their backs turned to the camera and heads bent, looking at something in their hands. Another man faces them, the shadow of his fedora partially obscuring his face. At his left hand, a large instrument stands on a heavy tripod, partially hiding another man from view. These two gatherings have caught a neighbor's attention: apart from the scene stands a fifth man, his bare head visible over a wood fence. He looks out over his shoulder in the direction of the same camera that has captured the attention of the group of young boys—Esther's camera.

Esther likely took this photograph in the same summer or fall of 1945 when she made "Home near Watts." Whether she intended this photograph for the Housing Authority's use, however, is doubtful. The scene it captures appears too spontaneous with the stark contrast between the smiling boys and the grim, official-looking man in the fedora—too unflattering for the Housing Authority, if indeed it captured a confrontation between a housing surveyor and residents whose home he scrutinized. Uneasy meetings between public housing employees and residents of older housing in low-income neighborhoods, as Dana Cuff explains, were part of the Housing Authority's appraisal work of

89] Esther Lewittes Mipaas, untitled, ca. 1945, gelatin silver print, 8 in. × 10 in. (20.32 cm × 25.4 cm), Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

1940.[72] But the photograph of the scene at this house leaves the reason for the gathering unexplained. The unpainted yet solid fence, the neatly swept yard, the clean and well-fitting clothes and neat haircuts of the alert and evidently healthy children at play, although not signs of affluence, all add up in the iconography of the day to the kind of home celebrated by housing reformers and residents alike. Indeed, the photograph seems to beg, why would the Housing Authority need to send photographers here? In eschewing a portrayal of the house to focus on the gathering in the yard, Esther takes the camera—an instrument that figured prominently in the Housing Authority's project of measuring and judging—and recasts it as a device for capturing housing's often invisible pals, neighbors, and gatherings. The house, like the house in Watts, forms a backdrop to a performance of belonging—of leaning against a house as though laying claim to it, of palling around in the yard.

This photograph is just one among many that suggest the possibilities that Esther saw for her practice during the Second World War. Born and raised in New York City, Esther took up a career in the arts during the years of the New Deal. Much of her work, like Catherine Bauer's, was marked by an interest in regional styles in the arts and design and the outcomes of transnational exchange. In 1938, Esther received her Master of Arts from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University with a thesis that proposed a stylistic connection

between the frescoes of a Catalonian chapter house with initials in the twelfth-century Winchester Bible.[73] Because Franco's troops destroyed large portions of the convent and chapter house just a few years earlier in the Spanish Civil War, Esther researched the frescoes with the help of a group of black and white photographs at the Frick Art Reference Library in New York.[74]

The rise of fascism in Germany also made Esther witness to an influx of European scholarship to the United States. Esther's thesis supervisor and chairman of the Graduate Fine Arts Group at New York University, Walter W.S. Cook, for instance, played a crucial role in helping refugee art historians find new teaching positions.[75] One of these scholars was Erwin Panofsky, a man "generally regarded as the most brilliant art historian of his generation in Germany," as Cook wrote in 1934.[76] Esther was a student in Panofsky's course on "German Painting and Graphic Arts of the Fifteenth Century" in the fall semester of 1935, where one of the topics he addressed was "the interrelationship of German art with that of the Netherlands."[77]

Esther pursued her career in the arts into the late 1930s, when she found work as a textile renderer on the Index of American Design project sponsored by the Works Progress Administration.[78] The Index's attention to the crafts of different American regions in turn resonated with Esther's subsequent research.[79] In 1955, for instance, she published an article in *Antiques* magazine on "A Mexican eighteenth-century wool rug" in which she offered a compelling comparison: while the rug's motifs included plants and animals "native to Mexico" and an embroidery on wool technique found in other Spanish colonial rugs, the "design," including the "flowering tree growing from knolls of earth" and flower baskets, more closely resembled New England adaptations of English and Continental themes.[80]

Like many Americans who moved to Los Angeles around 1942, Esther found a job at Lockheed. There, she applied her knowledge of art as a draftswoman.[81] Her arts background followed her through this period finally to the summer of 1945, when she made her photographs for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles's first postwar consolidated annual report. The photographs in Esther's collection from the 1940s reflect her knowledge of design. One eight-by-ten-inch print, for example, shows another scene from one of Los Angeles's low-income neighborhoods (fig. 90). The yards and streets are of dirt. The houses are exceedingly small and appear to be made from any materials at hand, but lovingly. A vine grows on one structure in the foreground, protected by a fence made of wood from a packing crate. The words "this side up" on one of the fence boards are turned on their side, offering a symbol for the city's carelessness in providing housing for the people who possibly packed up their lives to come to

90] Esther Mipaas, Near Culver City – Shacks, shades, ca. 1945, gelatin silver print, 8 in. × 10 in. (20.32 cm × 25.4 cm), Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

this house court, which, as Sophie Spaulding and Dana Cuff explain, was one of the few places migrant workers could afford to live.[82] Beyond this fence is a view of the court. Neighbors gather on the stoop of another modest home. A woman leans against the wood siding of the building, one hand on her hip, the other held up to her chin as though listening to the others sitting on the ground in the sliver of shadow next to the house. "Near Culver City—Shacks, shades," Esther alliteratively labelled the back of the print.

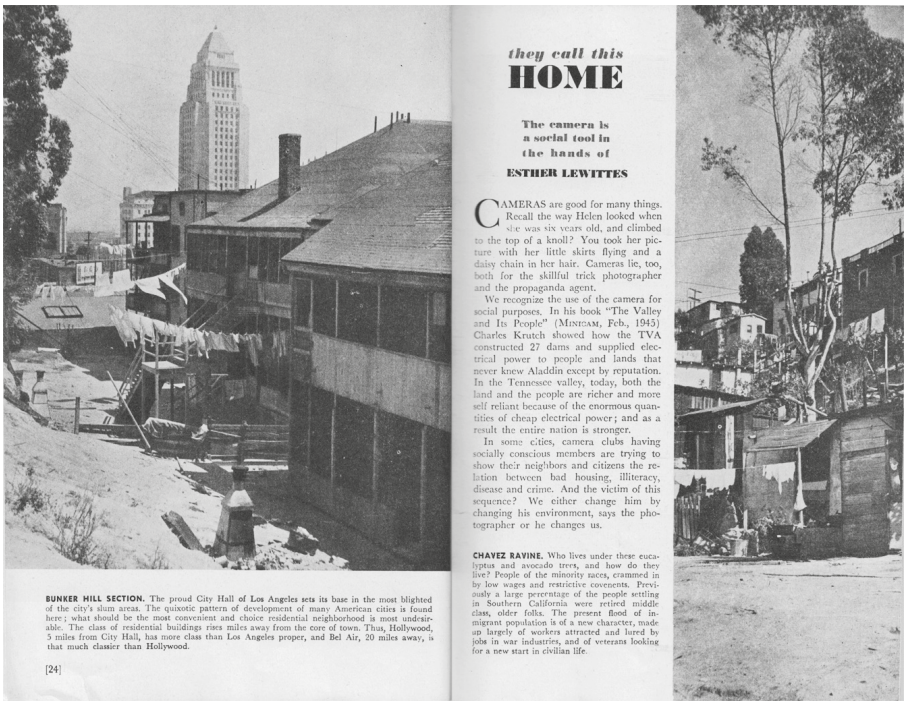
Much as Esther appears to have looked for compelling forms in Los Angeles's low-income neighborhoods, never far from these aesthetic considerations or her notes on the Housing Authority's payments was a sense of political urgency. A year after the Housing Authority published *A Decent Home, an American Right*, Esther published her own small selection of housing photographs for an audience of photographers, urging them to consider how their art might "have a say in the future."

"THEY CALL THIS HOME"

In August 1946, Esther Lewittes Mipaas published six of her Los Angeles photographs in *Minicam* magazine. She titled the article "They Call This Home" (fig. 91).[83] The "they" to which this titled referred were the residents of the city's low-income neighborhoods. One of the photographs shows a group of four girls sitting in the grass of Belvedere Gardens, the hillside homes visible in the background (fig. 92). The girls smile into the camera, their bright dresses and hairbows reflecting in the sunlight as they appear to enjoy each other's company. In another photograph published with the article, a young woman sits in the shade with a baby on her knee while two other women do laundry. Like the girls in the grass, the young woman smiles into the camera. These portraits, like many others by Esther, picture Los Angeles's low-income neighborhoods in ambiguous terms—as places where older, perhaps "substandard" forms of housing are home.

Still, Esther's article clearly adopted the anti-slum arguments of the day in noting "the relation between bad housing, illiteracy, disease and crime" and the problems of unplanned development.[84] Not once mentioning the Housing Authority, the article focused on photography as a forceful solution to this problem: "Photography can help awaken Chambers of Commerce, and 'leading citizens' when they see, big as life, housing conditions in their city which perhaps they have never seen before in their whole lives, despite the years they may have lived in their home town."[85] The subtitle to the article offered another interpretation of this position: "The camera is a social tool in the hands of Esther Lewittes."[86]

The social functions of photography were important to Esther Lewittes Mipaas on a personal level. The medium's greater postwar "promise of a world citizen" as recognized by Blake Stimson was a promise to both the residents Esther photographed and herself.[87] Esther's biography again offers a micro-historical perspective on this promise—a way of understanding this new subjectivity Stimson describes in the "everyday" terms and from the level of a personal "reality" as advocated by scholars of feminist history.[88] In 1943, shortly after joining Lockheed, Esther joined the Communist Party. Her affiliation prompted the creation of a file on her at the Federal Bureau of Investigation that would grow to over four hundred pages over the next twenty-nine years. The file, released in 2017 in redacted form, contains no notes from the 1940s on her freelance work that connected her to the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, though her name appears along with that of Sidney Green, the *Journal of Housing* contributor and former manager of the Housing Authority's Basilone



BUNKER HILL SECTION. The proud City Hall of Los Angeles sets its base in the most blighted of the city's slum areas. The quixotic pattern of development of many American cities is found here; what should be the most convenient and choice residential neighborhood is most undesirable. The class of residential buildings rises miles away from the core of town. Thus, Hollywood, 5 miles from City Hall, has more class than Los Angeles proper, and Bel Air, 20 miles away, is that much classier than Hollywood.

[24]

they call this
HOME

The camera is a social tool in the hands of
ESTHER LEWITTES

CAMERAS are good for many things. Recall the way Helen looked when she was six years old, and climbed to the top of a knoll? You took her picture with her little skirts flying and a daisy chain in her hair. Cameras lie, too, both for the skillful trick photographer and the propaganda agent.

We recognize the use of the camera for social purposes. In his book "The Valley and Its People" (MINICAM, Feb., 1945) Charles Krutch showed how the TVA constructed 27 dams and supplied electrical power to people and lands that never knew Aladdin except by reputation. In the Tennessee valley, today, both the land and the people are richer and more self reliant because of the enormous quantities of cheap electrical power; and as a result the entire nation is stronger.

In some cities, camera clubs having socially conscious members are trying to show their neighbors and citizens the relation between bad housing, illiteracy, disease and crime. And the victim of this sequence? We either change him by changing his environment, says the photographer or he changes us.

CHAVEZ RAVINE. Who lives under these eucalyptus and avocado trees, and how do they live? People of the minority races, crammed in by low wages and restrictive covenents. Previously a large percentage of the people settling in Southern California were retired middle class, older folks. The present flood of immigrant population is of a new character, made up largely of workers attracted and lured by jobs in war industries, and of veterans looking for a new start in civilian life.

EAST SIDE, just east of the railroad tracks. Though the percentage of multiple dwellings is small, too many of the tenements are of flimsy wood. Garbage is collected only twice weekly.

NOT ALL SLUMS are in the center of town. This is in an area of Culver City that the movies do not talk about. The life is al fresco and washday is every day of the week.

Space and sunshine—Los Angeles has more geography and less harsh winds than any other major city in these United States. More foliage, more outdoor living, more industry in rural areas, more agriculture in urban areas. So, even before the War, the geography and the vagaries of city development gave Los Angeles more miles of blighted slum area than possibly any other American city.

WHO NAMED THESE STREETS? This is Floral Drive in Belvedere Gardens, the County of Los Angeles, said to be the richest agricultural county in the United States.

At present, with half a million additional population, in combination with the standstill in housing construction, an emergency exists that is disastrous. Patent with danger is the pushing of erstwhile war-workers and now low-income industrial workers' families into one-room motels, trailers, shacks. Minority groups, predominantly Mexican, Negro, Japanese, are crammed in upon one another in the most run-down, the least improved areas. The housing shortage is an emergency, and Esther Lewittes shows this with her pictures.

Photography can help awaken Chambers of Commerce, and "leading citizens" when they see, big as life, housing conditions in their city which perhaps they have never seen before in their whole lives; despite the years they may have lived in their home town.

Neglect of slums is not due to meanness of spirit or niggardliness on the part of Los Angeles, Esther Lewittes says. Where natural resources for good living have been found most generously, haphazard development has imprisoned a huge portion of the population into the same overcrowding and lack of sanitation that makes a slum in every part of the land.

[26]

THE WAR is over and this child's father has come home; they'll take down the service flag from the window. But can this soldier's family find—or afford—a decent home?

[27]

91] Esther Lewittes, "They Call This Home," *Minicam,* August 1946, 24–25, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

92] Esther Lewittes, "They Call This Home," *Minicam*, August 1946, 26–27, Esther Lewittes Mipaas Collection.

Homes, in a 1950 memo regarding an investigation into communist activity in Pacoima.[89] Instead, Esther's interest in better communities as expressed in "They Call This Home" most clearly appears in an FBI memo from 1951 in which an informant links Esther with an effort to share the communist newspaper, *People's World*, with residents of Los Angeles's Maravilla neighborhood. Of Maravilla, in the words of the FBI's Special Agent Timothy L. Donovan, Esther reportedly shared at her group meeting

> "that the rents are being raised to 450.00 a month which is beyond the reach of most of the Negro families there, and consequently they are moving out. There are 17 Negro families remaining, and the quarter vacated by those who have moved are not being replaced by Negroes which the party feels is discriminatory and [redacted under the Freedom of Information Act] has reported the matter to [redacted, FOIA]."[90]

Many of the concerns of the Housing Authority for safe and non-discriminatory neighborhoods thus found voice in Esther and prompted her actions in other social and political circles several years after the Housing Authority printed Esther's photographs in its annual report.

Esther's affiliations with these circles and attendance at meetings during which the topics of housing discrimination were discussed followed her long after she left Los Angeles. After moving back to New York in 1955, she applied for a passport to travel with her mother to the grave of her brother who died in the Second World War in France and to visit another brother in Israel. Her history with the Communist Party ultimately delayed the issue of her passport and forced Esther in 1956 to recount her wartime and early postwar years in Los Angeles.[91] The words in her signed affidavit expressed a multi-layered desire for belonging in the midst of a tumultuous decade: "I was in the party because it was active on domestic issues and active in furthering the War effort. [...] When I reassociated I did so for personal reasons, that is, just to reassociate with people, just people, on a social basis."[92]

In January 1957, the passport office called Esther to a hearing. Statements recorded in the meeting transcript outline the intricacies of this belonging Esther sought:

> "Mrs. Mipaas: [...] I was never interested in the Communist Party as a Russian Party. I am not interested in Russia. Russia is a country on the other side of the world that is definitely opposed to our policies; in fact, is opposed to our life. Not only our way of life but our life.

Mr. Franzmathes: Did you feel that way when you were a member of the Communist Party?

Mrs. Mipaas: I began to feel that way and dropped out. When I first joined I didn't feel that way. I felt the Communist Party was an American party that was interested in winning the war and seeing certain social legislation enacted. I was never in sympathy with Russia. It was always with American aims."[93]

Esther again argued for her loyalty to the United States as she had in her affidavit, this time more strongly situating her actions in a political moment long part of the wartime past. Her concise statements bring to the fore the preoccupation of Cold War America with distinguishing what was "American" from what was not. Well aware of the dangers of affiliation with the Communist Party, Esther urged her interrogator to recall not the history of political parties in the previous decade, but a longer history of association and belonging as practiced by heroes from America's past.

These heroes were not the social reformers or political leaders one might expect to be mentioned in testimonies from the Cold War. Instead, Esther referred to more personally meaningful heroes—to American artists. Her words recorded in the transcript reveal her caution in presenting an argument that would have been esoteric at best, or utterly incomprehensible, at worst, to anyone who was less than mildly interested in the longer history of the United States or its art:

"I don't know whether you are convinced of this but I have been studying old history. My secondary interest is history. I have read a great deal on American history. I just finished doing a lot of work on American art. I read the prerevolutionary sources—the original sources of Paul Revere and Peter Hurd and various other early American painters. There was Charles Willson Peale who was a great American painter—ornithological painter, etc. If we can go back to that I think you can understand my enthusiasm for joining an organization which is out of character with me but I felt that the early Americans had joined organizations to see certain domestic policies carried through and it was an American inspiration that brought me to it."[94]

In this string of references to American artists from vastly different eras, Esther asked her interrogators to "understand" her "American inspiration." American artists, some of whom might be deemed the first patriots, organized to help make change happen at home. Narrowing her argument to American examples

doubtlessly aimed to appeal to a Bureau looking for anything un-American. Still, that Esther counted herself as part of this history—as someone for whom art, and here one might add artists, "had a say in the future"—offered a resounding statement about the artist's role at this turning point in the housing movement and the complex political situation of the postwar world. The photographs Esther made for the Housing Authority never entered this conversation. But it is tempting to think that in making them, the art historian and designer counted each print as important political, social, and historical work. When Esther Lewittes Mipaas at long last received her passport in 1957, the FBI followed her to the European art capitals of Rome and Florence.[95] They did not close her file until 1972.[96]

LOUIS CLYDE STOUMEN'S GRIFFINS

While Esther Lewittes Mipaas sought social contacts in political organizations, like other Housing Authority photographers, she practiced photography mainly alone. The photographer Louis Clyde Stoumen also worked in this capacity and had similar notions about photography, political agency, and art. As revealed in his writings and especially in his application for funding from the Guggenheim Foundation in 1948, Stoumen's professional goals ran parallel to those of the photographers working in the postwar moment described by historian of photography Blake Stimson: Stoumen sought new photographic "forms" for a new global "subjectivity."[97] In this vein, Stoumen's work for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles is pertinent to this study not least because it counted among his activities in the years directly preceding curator Edward Steichen's inclusion of one of his photographs in *The Family of Man* in 1955.[98] But the form and scope of the project that Stoumen proposed to the Guggenheim Foundation in 1948 differed significantly from the later exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art. This final section of this study presents Stoumen's practice from the years 1946 to 1948 as a facet of a prologue to the Museum of Modern Art's blockbuster exhibition and one in which Los Angeles's public housing program, as both Stoumen's client and subject, played no small role.

The promotion of non-discrimination in housing policies became an attractive source of work in the postwar years. In a letter to Frank Wilkinson dated 1947, one job-seeking houser, Hal Dunleavy, offered to produce "an annual report or a special report on your racial minority housing policy and practices," adding that "the latter could get excellent publicity in the progressive and negro press especially."[99] Although nothing in the archive suggests that the Housing

Authority produced a special report on this theme, it was not for a shortage of social scientists, writers, or designers who could make one. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, located in a defense center, near Hollywood, and in a city filled with colleges and technical schools, was in a particularly auspicious situation in this regard.[100] After the war, many veterans returned home through the Port of Los Angeles and decided to stay in the city. Under the provisions of the G.I. Bill, veterans enjoyed paid college tuition. The Art Center College, then located on Third Street in Los Angeles, attracted veterans seeking to study photography.[101]

The G.I. Bill fostered a generation of artists—mostly men—by providing them with access to education that several otherwise might not have had.[102] Future photographer for the Housing Authority Leonard Nadel, for instance, received training in photography and served overseas as part of the Army Signal Corps.[103] After returning to civilian life, Nadel moved to Los Angeles and continued this training at the Art Center College, graduating in 1949 as a member of the first class to complete the school's newly accredited program in photography.[104] Louis Clyde Stoumen followed a similar path. Before the war, Stoumen obtained a degree from Lehigh University in his home state of Pennsylvania, then moved to New York where he took classes from members of the Photo League.[105] During the Second World War, he worked as a filmmaker and photographer for the National Youth Administration and the United States Army. Following the war, Stoumen settled in Los Angeles and, starting in 1948, enrolled in the film courses of Slavko Vorkapich at the University of Southern California.[106] From the East Coast to the West, from Army camps to the art schools of Los Angeles, the paths of both Stoumen and Nadel find an appropriate summary in the words of curator and historian of photography Anne Wilkes Tucker: "Lou Stoumen's evolution follows an archetypal pattern, familiar to many of the men in his generation. They sought broader, more sophisticated spheres and art provided an access route out of their childhood situations."[107] Offered on the occasion of a solo exhibition of Stoumen's work in 1995, four years after his death from cancer, these words celebrated the trajectory of Stoumen's life from that of the small-town boy to world-renown photographer and filmmaker. But they also point to a generational pattern—perhaps even a strategy—of striving not for sophistication, but world citizenship through the practice of photography as art.

The small body of research on Stoumen's work offers similar biographical readings of his photographs. Some of Stoumen's earliest projects involved the photographing of Times Square in 1940, a stint as the editor of the Photo League's *Photo Notes* newsletter, and following his wartime work for the Army and

National Youth Administration, projects for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles along with the inclusion of his work in *The Family of Man*.[108] Stoumen then rose in the public eye with numerous successful endeavors in film. His 1956 production, *The Naked Eye*, included a reverent portrayal of the work of West Coast-based photographer Edward Weston.[109] *The True Story of the Civil War* won Stoumen his first Academy Award in 1957 and first prize at the Venice Film Festival.[110] *Black Fox*, a story about Adolf Hitler narrated by Marlene Dietrich, won him a second Oscar in 1962.[111] Much of the research on his work in still photography focuses on his exhibitions and book projects from the years following these successes in film. As Anne Wilkes Tucker further observes, Stoumen did not sell a photograph in a gallery until he was nearly sixty years old, but experienced greater success with selling his photographs in books.[112] Stoumen's books, or "paper movies" as both he and his commentators called them, included five titles published from 1975 to 1992, all combining Stoumen's photographs with his own prose, and some with additional essays by photographers and art historians.[113]

Commenting on the format of the photobook in comparison with the gallery exhibition, art historian James R. Hugunin offers a practical explanation for Stoumen's turn to this format in his claim that "The bookworks signify a historical moment of dissatisfaction with art's traditional audience as well as an attempt to bypass the art market system."[114] This historical and biographical approach to understanding Stoumen's turn to the photobook format holds in readings of the books' contents, as well. Several commentators view the books as autobiographical—as composed in large part of photographs Stoumen created throughout his life.[115] "Stoumen heightened the implications of the scenes by voicing his own memories and insights," adds photographer Arthur Ollman.[116] The result is a grand story of the self: "Stoumen was drawn to life, to people of power, as well as to strong social situations."[117] These "people of power" included some of the most celebrated artists of Stoumen's day: "West Coast legends Edward Weston and Ansel Adams," Aldous Huxley, Slavko Vorkapich, and Alfred Stieglitz.[118] But this list also included Stoumen's "characters" of "the 'everyman,'" as Ollman furthers, acknowledging Stoumen's sympathy for the Left and his affiliations with the blacklisted Photo League.[119]

James Hugunin likewise remarks on Stoumen's work's attempt "at regaining a social 'embeddedness' of earlier eras" as perhaps a point of view that was in many circles no longer current when Hugunin wrote his essay in 1992.[120] The art historian cites one *New York Times* critic's comment on Stoumen's 1983 exhibition at the International Center of Photography as containing photographs that were "'ill-fitting'" in the contemporary art world.[121] This review, titled "The

Power to Convince Has Faded," placed Stoumen's exhibition (which included his 1940 photographs of Times Square together with his photographs of New York shot in the 1980s) alongside two other contemporary exhibitions of what the critic called "social documentary" or "humanistic" photography. The problem with these photographs, according to the critic, was their want of "urgency."[122] Comparing Stoumen's photographs of Times Square shot in the early 1940s with those shot in the 1980s, he commented on the later photographs' lack of "immediacy." The problem with Stoumen's later work extended to the social documentary on display in the other two exhibitions, as well: "Their [the photographs', N.K.O.] power to convince us, to outrage us, to move us to act, has faded," the critic proclaimed.[123] But for Hugunin writing about Stoumen's work in 1992, the urgency of this criticism was beginning to fade, as well.[124] This study now returns to the moment following Stoumen's Times Square project of 1940, when he returned from the war and in 1945 began photographing Los Angeles.

THE PAN-AMERICAN DANCE GROUP

When Louis Clyde Stoumen arrived in Los Angeles in 1945, he had not only the Times Square project and his work for the Army in his portfolio, but also, as historian of photography William Ewing notes, the beginnings of a photobook. James Hugunin traces the start of Stoumen's production of "paper movies" to the first to which Stoumen applied this term: *Can't Argue with Sunrise: A Paper Movie*, from 1975.[125] Ewing, however, extends the term to include two of Stoumen's earlier photobooks, as well: a student project, *Speech for the Young* (1939), and a United States Army publication, *Yank's Magic Carpet* (1945), to which Stoumen contributed twenty photographs and editorial work.[126] Stoumen's archive, moreover, suggests that during this time he also worked privately on a third book he called *The Magic Carpet*.[127] Most likely a further development of *Yank's Magic Carpet*, Stoumen referred to the project in 1948 as a "photographic book of international content and a 'one-world' theme" and "my serious work," admitting that freelance jobs and obligations to his family had kept him from finishing it.[128]

Stoumen indeed juggled his "serious work" with freelance jobs during these years. The "international content" and "'one-world' theme" extended to both. One of these projects was none other than an article with photographs of the Pan-American Dance Group, published in the August 1946 issue of John Entenza's *Arts and Architecture* magazine with the title, "Harmony in 'A' Flat."[129] Stoumen's photographs consist of individual headshots of twelve dancers taken from dramatic angles (fig. 93). Arranged into a three-by-four grid, these images form an array of youthful faces. All the dancers smile. Some squint into the bright

by Louis Clyde Stoumen

photographs by the author

"HARMONY IN 'A' FLAT"

93] Louis Clyde Stoumen, "'Harmony in 'A' Flat,'" *Arts and Architecture*, August 1946, 26–27.

sunlight. On the opposite page, two smaller photographs show the dancers in action. They raise their arms and bend their knees. A girl's skirt billows as the photographer captures her mid-twirl. This is the "more effective local organization" social commentators of the period wanted to result from *The House I Live In*: young people dancing to not only send a message about a more tolerant world, but realize it in their work as a creative team comprised of individuals of "all races and religions."[130] To redeploy Blake Stimson's description of the later exhibition, *The Family of Man*, the dance of the Pan-American troupe was at once real and presented "an ideal against which lived reality could be critiqued."[131]

In his article, Stoumen recounted the history of the group, setting its formation in 1943 at the Housing Authority project, Aliso Village. As Stoumen noted, this was a time shortly after the Zoot Suit Riots, in the midst of the Second World War, and in the midst of numerous altercations between Los Angeles's Eastside gangs.[132] He charted the group's growth from a small coterie that performed before a tiny audience at Aliso Village's Community Hall through performances at City Hall and the University of California, Los Angeles, to their hit "interracial musical review" featuring Earl Robinson's song, *The House I Live In*, and their receipt of the Brotherhood Award.[133] Their newest performance, Stoumen explained, "involves much music and dancing, a mythical fairy god-father, and a story revolving around the building of a house for a boy and girl who can't get married till they get a house."[134] But the story was not exclusively one of postwar housing shortage, Stoumen advised readers of *Arts and Architecture*: "This architectural motif is both literal and figurative in that also being built is

a harmony house for young people of all races and cultures."[135] Stoumen thus presented not only public housing policy, but also the arts in the form of architecture, dance, and music, as vital tools in the fight against racial injustice.

Stoumen's article was not the first to address readers of *Arts and Architecture* on this subject. In the December 1943 issue, editorial associate Peter Yates published a cautionary essay under the title "Bigotry and the Color of the Skin." In this essay, he recounted the numerous strands of prejudice running through United States history up to the present wartime internment of Japanese Americans under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which Yates deemed "a blot upon our democratic history and pretensions."[136] He concluded this history with hope for the recent "presidential directive against discrimination" in war production and a call to "Enlightened Americans" to heed "its liberating promise."[137] Inherent in this appeal to the reason of the magazine's readership, a large portion of which worked in architecture or the arts and design industries, was indeed a hope that artists might take up the banner against this pressing postwar problem.

Louis Clyde Stoumen aligned his commercial work for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles with a pursuit of the ideal of one world. Nowhere is this effort more evident than in Stoumen's application to the Guggenheim Foundation's Fellowship award, drafted in 1948. By 1948, the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship had become a highly coveted award for photographers. Edward Weston was the first photographer to receive the award in 1937, followed by several other photographers in the early and mid-1940s including Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Wright Morris, and Ansel Adams.[138] The year prior to Stoumen's drafting of his application, Beaumont Newhall received the award to write a history of photography.[139] The diversity of these winning practices found resonance in Stoumen's own 1948 application in the section "An Account of My Work," where he positioned his commercial photography for the Housing Authority prominently among his activities since the Second World War. Among the tasks fulfilled for the Authority, Stoumen listed the production of "1000 negatives of city slums, public housing projects, health and recreation problems, etc.," a "redesign of fittings, paint scheme and photographic display in [the, N.K.O.] Housing Authority's commission room," the "design and execution of an 18-foot long photographic mural on veterans' housing problems," as well as the "preparation of Authority photographic exhibits."[140] He also mentioned the production of "architectural and other photographs," for the Housing Authority's *Los Angeles Housing News*, the *L.A. Daily News*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.[141]

Of all this work completed for the Housing Authority, the "one-world theme" is most evident in Stoumen's portraits of veteran families for the *Los Angeles*

Housing News article, "Honorable Discharge and Actual Housing Need Are the only Qualifications" (fig. 85).[142] In these portraits, Stoumen framed each of the diverse families within the arching front porches of their temporary Quonset hut housing units at the Housing Authority's Rodger Young Village. In the first two portraits, parents share adoring glances while holding their children in their arms. In the third portrait, the parents gaze off to the right of the camera. The father wears a gentle expression of determination as he holds a healthy infant in his lap, while a little girl smiles directly into the camera from the arms of her mother. Aside from the unusual shape of the Quonset huts' roofs, the photographs appear to be conventional family portraits—indeed, portraits the families might hang on the sloping interior walls of their Rodger Young Village homes. Placed side by side in *Los Angeles Housing News*, together they offer a portrait of a veterans' community open to all. Perhaps hopeful that the readers of his application for the Guggenheim Fellowship were attuned to the public housing movement's position on contemporary race relations, Stoumen almost certainly detailed this work to further align his practice with the current cosmopolitanism in the arts.

THE LOS ANGELES PROJECT

The project that Louis Clyde Stoumen proposed to the Guggenheim Foundation in 1948 was an extensive study of Los Angeles that would culminate in a book with text and photographs both by him. He referred to these fourteen months of work as simply "the Los Angeles project."[143] The words with which Stoumen described the project present a litany of Los Angeles' people and places. "I should like to explore and to study this adopted city of mine in its present midpassage," he wrote,

> "to learn the look, the texture and the smell of the sprawling city, in sunshine, in smog, in rain, at night, in all seasons; to get to know the hearts of the fishermen of San Pedro, the righteous orators of Pershing Square, the airplane builders of Burbank, the proprietors of ten thousand real estate developments and used car lots, the maimed and mindless veterans in the white beds at Sawtelle, the artists, artisans and businessmen of the film studios, the bartenders, publicity men, housewives, call girls, juicers, grips, physicists, oil drillers, psychiatrists, all the native-born and all the uprooted transplanted Iowans, Pennsylvanians, Mexicans, Negroes, Europeans and Orientals;"[144]

Knowledge of the hearts of these diverse inhabitants of the city, Stoumen proposed, would form the raw material for his book, a "rich brew" from which he would aim

> "to distil [...] the significant forms and meanings of the city, its origins and directions, and to determine their inter-relationship with the social and cultural ferment of our nation and our world; to fix these insights and root images in as few simple words and straightforward photographs as possible; and in the end to assemble this writing and camerawork in the form of an integrated book which will be readable by a wide audience and will have historical, social and esthetic values beyond those of regional reportage—a book of words and pictures which will freshly reveal Los Angeles to its own inhabitants, which will in some small way reveal modern man to his own surprised inspection."[145]

Outlining with conviction the Los Angeles project's potential to form connections between city and nation and world as well as between "modern man" and himself, Stoumen's poetic description resonates profoundly with Stimson's and later also Robin Kelsey's descriptions of photography's formation of a new subjectivity and a "nation" or "republic."[146] For Stoumen, however, this nation-building and belonging took place not in the bodily "pivot" from one image to the next in the exhibition, as Stimson argues in his study of *The Family of Man*, but in the "inspection" of the photographic book.[147]

The photographic book was by no means a new form for art that took Los Angeles as its subject. The photographer Leonard Nadel, for instance, produced mock-ups of two photobooks around this time. One presented the public housing development of Pueblo del Rio, while the other exhibited photographs of Aliso Village. Scholars remark on Nadel's message of interracial "harmony" especially in the second publication, titled *Aliso Village U.S.A.*[148] The international aspirations for this message, however, are largely overlooked. On the final page of the main part of the book, Nadel's concern for the world context of his work is clear in his citation of none other than the United Nations Charter: "...that people...without distinction as to race, can live together in peace with one another as good neighbors."[149] The form of the photobook, Nadel further hoped, would stir its readers in much the same way as photographer, curator, and veteran Edward Steichen's later exhibition, *The Family of Man*. The photobook provided an alternative to "graphs and charts and reports" which, Nadel claimed, "have a way of becoming ponderous and dull and clinical."[150] In a 1950 letter, one of the contemporary readers of Nadel's mockups commented on the "easy-

to-grasp-quick book form" while suggesting that an exhibition of the photographs be considered, as well.[151]

For Stoumen, on the other hand, a Los Angeles "book of words and pictures" was more than "interesting"—it was particularly suited to taking Los Angeles as subject. "It is in the light of such considerations of media and form that I should like to make a photographic book about an area of America which even in the days of its Spanish colonists was found to be 'infested with many griffins,'" Stoumen wrote in his prospectus.[152] Stoumen left the reference to griffins unexplained, but almost certainly intended it to allude to the Spanish myth about the "Black Amazon Queen" Calafia and her army riding into battle to defend their island of California on man-eating creatures that were part eagle, part lion.[153] A part textual, part photographic art form, in Stoumen's view, was Los Angeles's modern griffin—the medium most appropriate "to distil[ling, N.K.O.] the significant forms and meanings of the city, its origins and directions." Following Stoumen's associative logic, the figure of the griffin might also have symbolized for him the city's heterogenous civic body ("all the native-born and all the uprooted transplanted Iowans, Pennsylvanians, Mexicans, Negroes, Europeans and Orientals [...]"). Thus tying historical legend to the present and the forms of art to identity (and perhaps even comparing humans to animals like birds and lions), Stoumen proposed a combining of media for representing a city that was witnessing only the latest in a long history of migrations to the region.

By 1948, the notion of combining media as an appropriate means of representing America's heterogenous population was far from new. As art historian Lauren Kroiz shows, early twentieth-century modernists, especially those with ties to the photographer Alfred Stieglitz's New York galleries, developed "composite" art forms that they theorized using "racial metaphors" at the same time that the United States was experiencing a significant influx of immigrants.[154] Decades later, Stoumen saw the photobook as a remarkably current form. He cited two trends as "symptomatic of the readiness and hunger of vast audiences for new visual-verbal forms."[155] The first was the popularity of *Life* magazine.[156] The second was the success of the film industry.[157] Still, the photobook would need to be further developed to achieve similar levels of popular appeal. As Stoumen explained, the popularity of the photographic book was contingent upon "how sensitively the makers of such books exploit the powers of the new medium" and "how rapidly they and workers in other graphic media teach the audiences the laguage [*sic*] of the camera eye."[158] Previous attempts, such as *Land of the Free*, by Archibald MacLeish, *Naked City*, by Weegee, and *The Inhabitants*, by Wright Morris, came near to what Stoumen aimed to achieve in the late 1940s, with *The Inhabitants* in Stoumen's view coming "closest to the true nature

of the medium."[159] The problem for Stoumen was that *The Inhabitants* was "marred [...] by its seemingly purposeful obscurity."[160]

Aiming to avoid this pitfall, Stoumen had already researched his proposed area of investigation. He enrolled as a part-time graduate student at the University of Southern California's Department of Cinema.[161] His plans for his Master's thesis, titled *The Camera, the Brush and the Photographic Book*, included the study of similarities between what he called the "photographic book" and film as well as their common forerunner, the illuminated manuscript.[162] "My interest in scholarship is slight;" he wrote, "mostly I want through an examination of the mutual influences of the camera and the brush to isolate and understand the art element in photography, as well as to establish standards and functions for the photographic book."[163] This historical research came to the fore in Stoumen's proposal for the Los Angeles project. The photographic book, Stoumen argued, had the potential to surpass both *Life* magazine and Hollywood films with "exact, emotional, and sensuous statements" and its ability to "tell great truths with compelling force and beauty, and make reality manifest."[164] Stoumen was undeterred by what he deemed was an abysmal performance of related media in telling these truths: "The fact that the gargantuan output of our press, the canned dreams of ten thousand films, and the snapshots of 20 million American amateurs seldom reveal these potentialities," he wrote, "does not negate them."[165]

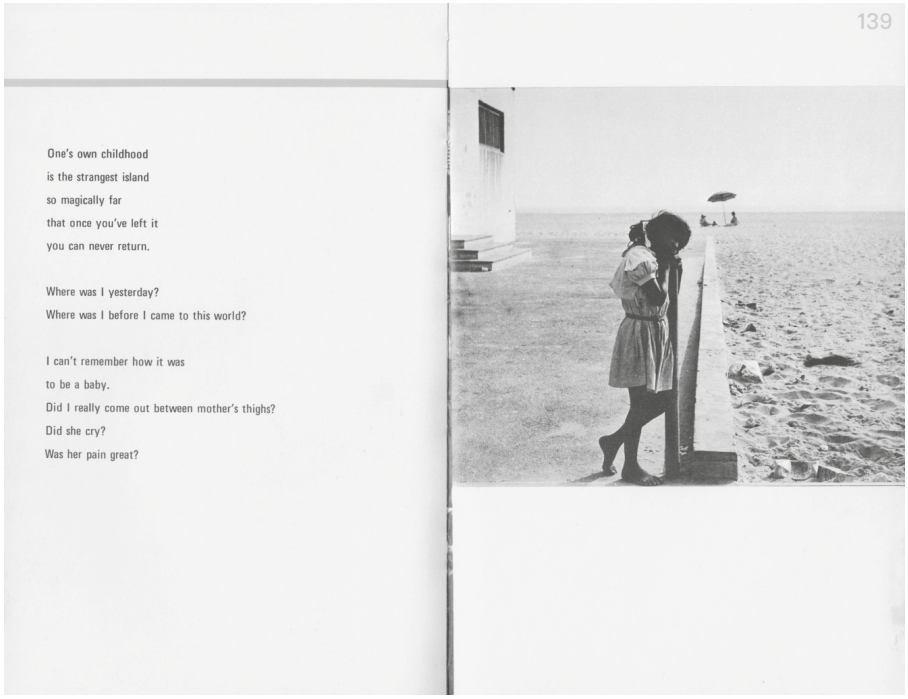
The key for Stoumen to achieving the potential of the photographic book lay in the maker's process. The fourteen-month project timeline he proposed would begin with a month-long period of research of available textual and "graphic work" on Southern California "with special reference to old Spanish documents and to modern sociological, anthropological (the Indian), political and cultural studies."[166] Following this initial library and archival work, Stoumen then intended to tour the city via multiple means of transportation, including air travel, to prepare an outline and "shooting script."[167] This period would extend into the second part of the project, which Stoumen titled "Writing and Camerawork."[168] Citing his experience of shooting Times Square in the early 1940s, Stoumen recalled one "technical problem" he encountered in his attempt to try to shoot a hefty camera in a "'candid' manner."[169] He expounded on this challenge, claiming that for the Los Angeles project he "would try to combine in the same negative those qualities of sharpness and texture associated with the larger camera, *and* the unposed, naturally-lighted, revealing qualities common to the so-called 'candid' miniature."[170] His adaptation of this method for the Los Angeles project, he further noted, would involve modifying his car through "the construction of [...] camera vents."[171]

Still, much as camera work formed a critical component of the Los Angeles project, the innovation Stoumen hoped would win him the Guggenheim Fellowship was the technique of combining these photographs with words. Stoumen saw the combination of text and image in the photographic book as a way to "raise the component paragraphs and pictures in a creative new whole qualitatively greater than the sum of its parts."[172] This combination should exhibit what Stoumen called a "contrapuntal relation" and "something like sound-image montage."[173] His choice of term to describe this technique is striking: long before Edward Said applied the musical term "counterpoint" to shift readers' attention to the "other histories" of colonialism's "cultural archive," Stoumen applied it to his griffin medium with the aim of exposing "modern man" to "modern man."[174] Taking the analogy of sound further, Stoumen described the photographic book as "an integrated whole in which words and pictures speak eloquently in one chorused voice."[175] Visually, this chorus amounted to a highly complex layout:

> "Generally, text and pictures would be on facing pages. There might be two or more continuities of both verbal and visual images on the same pages; thus, aside from the main sequence of the photographs, a strip of smaller photographs of news clippings or advertising signs might run through the book at top and bottom of the pages; and aside from the main text, a running series of overheard folk quotations might be used."[176]

The montage here, much like the modernist montage of the prewar decades, was made with pieces of the everyday. As in the Housing Authority's annual reports, the reader would be led from page to page by these "continuities of both verbal and visual images" running along the length of the layouts. The regional and vernacular language would appear along with Stoumen's own to make one multivocal work of art.

The Guggenheim Foundation never granted Stoumen the fellowship. Decades passed before Stoumen realized many of the plans he set out in the application. In the meantime, *The Family of Man* opened at the Museum of Modern Art in 1955. In the exhibition section titled "Aloneness and Compassion," curator Edward Steichen included a photograph by Stoumen of a barefoot girl, leaning forlornly on a pole against the background of Venice's sandy beach.[177] In light of Stimson's reading of the show as one vested in a promise of world citizenship and belonging, Steichen's inclusion of Stoumen's work under this banner is particularly poignant. The artist who photographed the veteran families of Rodger Young Village and the smiling faces of the Housing Authority's famed Pan-American Dance Group, so Steichen's title seemed to suggest, knew something



94] Lou Stoumen, *Can't Argue with Sunrise: A Paper Movie* (Millbrae, CA: Celestial Arts, 1975), 138–139, collection of the author.

about the other side of Brotherhood and One World. Following Stimson's argument, one can picture the hopeful world citizens crowded around Stoumen's photograph of the lonely girl. Had Stoumen finally realized his hope to "in some small way reveal modern man to his own surprised inspection"?[178]

By the time Louis Clyde Stoumen realized his plans for the Los Angeles project, it had grown in scope to extend to all places where Stoumen had lived in his life thus far. He called the book *Can't Argue with Sunrise: A Paper Movie* and published it in 1975.[179] Credited in the colophon for the book's design is Michael Glen. Along with several other photographs of Los Angeles from the late 1940s and early 1950s published in the book, Stoumen included the 1953 photograph of the girl at Venice Beach (fig. 94). But instead of framing her in terms of "Aloneness and Compassion" as Steichen had, he titled the work *Pensive Child*.[180] On the opposite page, the first stanza of Stoumen's text reflected not on aloneness, but on loss:

> "One's own childhood
> is the strangest island
> so magically far
> that once you've left it
> you can never return."[181]

Was Stoumen's island—his nation, his One World—gone?

The *New York Times* review of Stoumen's show at the International Center for Photography offers a reminder that in 1983, for at least one viewer, Stoumen's photography along with a host of other "humanistic" photographs seemed less "immediate": "their power to convince us, to outrage us, to move us to act, has faded."[182] But as recent studies in the history of photography encourage, looking at the long life of photographic endeavors like the Los Angeles project shows that this is what photography does. As photohistorians turn to archives for new narratives from photography's past, the projects that some critics considered failures—projects like public housing or photography for "One World"—promise currency once more. The "fading" of a "power to convince us" seems no longer a loss, but a history, and photographs long forgotten all the more immediate for it.[183]