

WHITNEY

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PRESS RELEASE



Imogen Cunningham, 1883-1976 Martha Graham 2, 1931 Gelatin silver print, Sheet: 7 5/8 x 5 7/8in. (19 3/8 x 14 15/16 cm). Image: 7 5/8 x 5 7/8in. (19 3/8 x 14 15/16 cm). Promised gift of Sondra Gilman Gonzalez-Falla and Celso Gonzalez-Falla to Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and The Gilman and Gonzalez-Falla Arts Foundation T.2014.246 © 1931, 2014 The Imogen Cunningham Trust

The Whitney's Photography Collection Transformed by Promised Gift from Sondra Gilman Gonzalez-Falla and Celso Gonzalez-Falla

NEW YORK, September 23, 2014—Adam D. Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, announced today that a promised gift of seventy-five iconic photographs has been made by Sondra Gilman Gonzalez-Falla and Celso Gonzalez-Falla that will dramatically impact the Museum's photography collection.

"This promised gift from the greatest benefactors of the Whitney Museum's photography program has a transformative effect on the Museum's collection," said Mr. Weinberg. "The works are classics of twentieth-century photography that enable us to tell the story of twentieth-century American art. We are

profoundly grateful to Sondra and Celso, who have amassed one of the outstanding collections of photography in the world, for their extraordinary support and longtime allegiance to the Whitney. They have raised our collection to a new level.”

Among the works are twelve photographs by Walker Evans, including *Kitchen Wall, Alabama Farmstead* (1936), which was published in Evans’s and James Agee’s important book on tenant farm families, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, as well as *Torn Movie Poster* (1931). Also part of the gift are two of the most iconic works of Alfred Stieglitz, *Equivalent* (1922), an example from his seminal series of cloud photographs, and *Spring Showers* (1901), an important early photograph, as well as key works by Robert Frank from his classic series *The Americans*. There are also excellent examples of work by Diane Arbus, William Eggleston, and Imogen Cunningham, including *Martha Graham 2* (1931). The works, which are being given as a shared promised gift that will be jointly held by the Whitney with The Gilman and Gonzalez-Falla Arts Foundation, include iconic photographs by Berenice Abbott, Ansel Adams, Margaret Bourke-White, Harry Callahan, Roy DeCarava, Lewis Hine, William Klein, Dorothea Lange, Helen Levitt, Danny Lyon, Lisette Model, Man Ray, W. Eugene Smith, Paul Strand, Edward Weston, and Minor White, among others.

Elisabeth Sussman, the Whitney’s Sondra Gilman Curator of Photography, commented: “Sondra is responsible for originating the Whitney’s photography department, and she and Celso have been the greatest champions of photography in the Museum’s history. These seventy-five works are absolutely elemental to our collection, masterworks and master prints by many of the major figures in twentieth-century American photography. The impact on our collection is immense.”

At the Whitney, a determined effort to collect photographic art began in 1991, when Sondra Gilman Gonzalez-Falla founded an acquisitions committee devoted to the purchase of twentieth-century photography. Since then, the photography collection has grown from fewer than fifty works to several thousand. An area of particular concentration is photography’s interaction with contemporary artistic practice in all disciplines. Rather than treating photography as an autonomous art with its own pictorial language, the Whitney has engaged with photography as a medium used by artists who approach it as one of several means of creative expression.

In 1998 the Whitney furthered its commitment to photography with the formation of a curatorial department of photography and the inauguration of the Sondra Gilman Gallery, a space exclusively devoted to the exhibition of photography. The Whitney has continued to concentrate its efforts to collect, preserve, and exhibit photographs by twentieth- and twenty-first-century American photographers. The museum’s mission in photography is to build a collection that reflects the complexity and diversity of American art, as well as to encourage acquisitions that enhance the Whitney’s holdings of works in other media.

The Whitney plans to include some of the photographs in the presentation of the permanent collection that will inaugurate the Museum’s new building downtown, on the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets, when it opens in the spring of 2015.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world's leading museum of twentieth-century and contemporary art of the United States. Focusing particularly on works by living artists, the Whitney is celebrated for presenting important exhibitions and for its renowned collection, which comprises over 21,000 works by more than 3,000 artists. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum's signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a center for research, scholarship, and conservation.

Founded by sculptor and arts patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1930, the Whitney was first housed on West 8th Street in Greenwich Village. The Museum relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and, in 1966, inaugurated its present home, designed by Marcel Breuer, at 945 Madison Avenue on the Upper East Side. While its vibrant program of exhibitions and events continues uptown, the Whitney is constructing a new home, designed by Renzo Piano, in downtown Manhattan. Located at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the Meatpacking District, at the southern entrance to the High Line, the new building, which has generated immense momentum and support, will enable the Whitney to vastly increase the size and scope of its exhibition and programming space. Ground was broken in May 2011, and the new building is projected to open to the public in spring 2015.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

<i>Jeff Koons: A Retrospective</i>	Through-October 19, 2014
<i>Shaping a Collection: Five Decades of Gifts</i>	Through-October 19, 2014
<i>Edward Hopper and Photography</i>	Through-October 19, 2014
<i>Collecting Calder</i>	Through-October 19, 2014

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. General admission: \$20. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$16. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 p.m. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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