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**SFMOMA ANNOUNCES PROMISED GIFT OF 800 PHOTOGRAPHS FROM
COLLECTORS PRENTICE AND PAUL SACK**

Works Join Some 1,000 Photographs Already in Trust

**SFMOMA Will Share Access to Collection with
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco**

San Francisco, March 15, 2005—Neal Benezra, director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), today announced the promised gift of nearly 800 photographs to the Prentice and Paul Sack Photographic Trust at SFMOMA from the Sacks' private collection. This group of important photographs joins their 1998 gift of nearly 1,000 works spanning the history of the medium.

Since the establishment of the Prentice and Paul Sack Photographic Trust in 1998, the Sacks have continued to collect in a very serious and prolific manner, building a second collection that is as remarkable in size and quality as the collection that originally comprised the Trust. In an effort to make the entire collection available to a wider Bay Area audience, the Sacks and SFMOMA are making available this new gift, together with the works already in the Trust, to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF), which will have, upon the reopening of the de Young Museum in October 2005, a new gallery specifically devoted to photography. SFMOMA and the Trust have agreed to enter into a collections access arrangement that will allow FAMSF to borrow up to 150 photographs at a time from the Trust for use in permanent collection displays, special exhibitions, and publications.

Sack states, "I am absolutely delighted to be able to give my entire collection of photographs to the Sack Trust and SFMOMA and to provide access to these works to the Fine Arts Museums in an ongoing manner. Although the collection will reside with SFMOMA, both institutions will display selected works for the entire Bay Area community to enjoy. I am especially thrilled that visitors to the de Young Museum will have the opportunity to appreciate photography as an artistic medium for the first time when the new building opens in October."

Benezra comments, "We believe that this agreement represents an unprecedented milestone in American museum practice. Traditionally, museums have jealously guarded their collectors and collections; with this arrangement, however, we are doing a great service to all who visit San Francisco museums and are interested in photography."

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Harry Parker, director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, adds, “The history of photography is of such great importance to museum visitors today; we are truly appreciative of the opportunity to access this important collection and to include the medium of photography at the new de Young.”

The initial gift established the Prentice and Paul Sack Photographic Trust at SFMOMA as a supporting organization to the Museum. This unique arrangement (the first supporting organization for art museums ever allowed by the IRS) allows SFMOMA to use the photographs as it would works from its permanent collection in exhibitions and catalogues, as well as for loan and study.

A retired real estate investor, Paul Sack has assembled a photographic collection of exceptional quality and enormous diversity that is loosely united around the theme of architecture. Sack’s primary criterion for adding works to the collection is that each photograph must contain a building that potentially could be bought or leased. His first photographic purchase was Walker Evans’ *New York, South Street*, 1933; from there he went on to build an important group of modernist pictures by such pivotal figures as Dora Maar, Alexander Rodchenko, Paul Strand, and Edward Weston. The collection also includes an impressive selection of 19th-century photographs, including masterpieces by David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, William Henry Fox Talbot, Edouard Baldus, and Francis Frith, as well as significant works by lesser known and anonymous photographers.

Highlights of the new gift include important 19th-century photographs by Eugène Atget, Julia Margaret Cameron, Lewis Carroll, and Eadweard Muybridge; key photographs by influential members of the European avant-garde such as Gustav Klutssis, El Lissitzky, and Albert Renger-Patzsch; and major works by contemporary artists Diane Arbus and Francesca Woodman.

In addition to maintaining a longstanding relationship with SFMOMA, Sack has supported the larger photographic community through his connections with the San Francisco Art Institute (where he studied painting) and with the Friends of Photography, the now-defunct nonprofit founded in 1967 by Ansel Adams, Brett Weston, and Nancy and Beaumont Newhall, as well as through a variety of other patronage activities.

San Francisco has long been noteworthy for its strength and influence in photography circles. In recent years this has largely been due to the enthusiasm and generosity of the Sacks, who have succeeded in fostering a fertile environment for practitioners, curators, critics, and collectors. Paul Sack’s fascination with pictures of the built environment may be very different from the concerns of figures such as Bender and Adams, but his passion has helped to sustain the importance of photography in the community at large. One of his primary motivations in forming the Trust was to make it possible for the pictures to be seen by as many people as possible. The Trust ensures that a rotating selection of the photographs remain on public view at all times as part of *Picturing Modernity*, SFMOMA’s permanent collection exhibition, and key works from his holdings have been loaned to important photography exhibitions worldwide.

On June 2, in celebration of this historic arrangement, SFMOMA will open the exhibition *Taking Place: Photographs from the Prentice and Paul Sack Collection*, featuring nearly 300 of the most significant pictures, ranging from 19th-century daguerreotypes and tintypes to more contemporary gelatin silver prints. The exhibition, which is accompanied by a 242-page catalogue, will be among the largest photography exhibitions in SFMOMA’s history and will offer an unmatched perspective on the evolution of the medium.

Since its founding in 1935, SFMOMA has been committed to building a photography collection of international stature, a fact that distinguishes the institution as one of the first American museums to recognize photography as a legitimate art form. With the advice and support of one of the Bay Area's most renowned photographers, Ansel Adams, and a host of local practitioners and patrons, the Museum's commitment to the medium strengthened steadily over the decades, gaining momentum with the appointment of the first dedicated curator of photography in 1958 and the establishment of a distinct Department of Photography in 1980. Since then, SFMOMA's collection has grown to include nearly 14,000 photographs spanning the full history of the medium, from its invention in the mid-19th century to the present day.

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$10; seniors \$7; students \$6. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is a private, not-for-profit institution supported by its members; individual contributors; corporate and foundation support; foreign, federal, and state government grants; and admission revenues. Annual programming is sustained through the generosity of Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the James Irvine Foundation, and the Koret Foundation. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. Thursday evening half-price admission is sponsored by Banana Republic. Reduced admission for seniors is sponsored by SBC.

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