

February 23, 2008

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SFMOMA PRESENTS MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF LEE FRIEDLANDER

From February 23 through May 18, 2008, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) presents the monumental exhibition *Friedlander*. Among photography's most prolific practitioners, Lee Friedlander is also heralded as one of the United States' finest. This retrospective assembles the most comprehensive array of Friedlander's work to date—nearly 400 pictures spanning the 1950s to the present—for a stunning overview of his multifaceted career.



Lee Friedlander, *New York City*, 1966; Carl Jacobs Fund;
The Museum of Modern Art, New York © 2005 Lee
Friedlander

Friedlander's professional work developed his craft and introduced him to a wide circle of friends, like Walker Evans and Robert Frank, whose pictures inspired him to train his eye on the everyday—streets, cars, storefronts, billboards—to capture distinctly American scenes and images. His style is inflected by a sharp wit and sense of humor, frequently taking advantage of elements considered by most to be obstacles, including his own shadow or reflection. *Friedlander* features examples from the artist's extensive personal photo series as well as his commercial work for magazines and album covers. SFMOMA's presentation also includes recent pictures from the sets of high-end fashion shoots, underscoring the breadth of his subject matter and his insatiable appetite for new photographic challenges.

Born in Aberdeen, Washington, in 1934, Friedlander fell in love with photography as a teenager. He studied at the Art Center School in Los Angeles in 1952, and in 1955 moved to the New York City area, where he still lives. He worked for the next 15 years as a freelance photographer for various magazines, and, with a strong interest in music—particularly jazz—he began doing portraits of musicians for their album covers. Examples of this commercial work in the exhibition include color portraits of John Coltrane, Aretha Franklin, and Miles Davis.

Friedlander upended the earnest humanism of postwar photography with his lively, irreverent glimpses of city streets and his tongue-in-cheek self-portraits of the 1960s. The offhand humor and graphic verve of those early

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pictures have never disappeared, but since the early '70s the photographer's mastery of craft, affection for tradition, and voracious curiosity have spawned a fluid stream of observation, ever more nimble and sensuous.

Working in extended series that he often makes into books—two dozen of them so far—Friedlander merges quantity with quality. The exhibition presents hundreds of photographs organized into discrete groups whose subtle variations capture the vitality of a very generous art. Most prominent are several projects, spanning four decades, offering a vivid and far-reaching vision of what Friedlander calls the “American social landscape.” This central theme is supplemented with portraits, self-portraits, landscapes, still lifes, nudes, studies of people at work, and—exhibited for the first time—a current series of landscapes made in the American West.

The exhibition is accompanied by a major publication, *Friedlander*, which includes more than 800 reproductions, essays by Peter Galassi and Richard Benson, and a comprehensive catalogue of Friedlander's books, special editions, and portfolios.

Friedlander is organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The San Francisco presentation is organized by Sandra S. Phillips, senior curator of photography at SFMOMA. SFMOMA's presentation is generously supported by the Bernard and Barbro Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund; Bob and Randi Fisher; and Kay and Frank Woods, in honor of David Robinson.

In conjunction with *Friedlander*, SFMOMA's Education Department will present a variety of related events and programs. For additional information, please visit www.sfmoma.org.

Following the presentation at SFMOMA, *Friedlander* will travel to the Minneapolis Institute of Art (June 29 – September 15, 2008) and the Cleveland Museum of Art (March 1 – June 7, 2009).

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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. The museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year's Day.

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 \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. 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 website at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

SFMOMA is supported by a broad array of contributors committed to helping advance its mission. Major annual support is provided by Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, Koret Foundation Funds, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund. Thursday evening half-price admission is sponsored by Banana Republic. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co. Inc.

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