

## **SFMOMA APPOINTS CLÉMENT CHÉROUX AS SENIOR CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

### ***Major Photography Gift and Fall Symposium Also Announced***



SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 13, 2016)—The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) today announced the appointment of Clément Chéroux as senior curator of photography for the Department of Photography, which includes the Pritzker Center for Photography, the largest space permanently devoted to the display, study and interpretation of the medium at any art museum in the United States. Currently the Chief Curator of the Department of Photography at the Musée National d'Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Chéroux will supervise SFMOMA's photography exhibitions, acquisition program, publications, scholarship and management of the museum's Department of Photography. He succeeds Sandra Phillips, who after a distinguished thirty-year career with SFMOMA, will assume the newly created role of Emeritus Curator as of July 1, 2016, and will focus on special projects for the museum. Ruth Berson, deputy museum director of curatorial affairs, will serve as interim department director until Chéroux joins SFMOMA in early 2017.

“Clément brings deep expertise in the realm of modern and contemporary photography from curation to scholarship and publication, as well as a uniquely global perspective that will build on the remarkable legacy of Sandy Phillips and our innovative photography team,” said Ruth Berson. “His diverse skill set combined with our community of passionate photographers and collectors will yield exciting results in the future.”

SFMOMA also announced a major gift of photographs from collectors Lisa and John Pritzker featuring 78 works by 25 artists. The gift was designed to complement and build upon SFMOMA's existing photography collection, which numbers more than 17,800 works and is the largest of the museum's

holdings. Made in Europe and America between 1925 and 2011, the pictures range from the documentary to the experimental, and from the single print to the unique artist's book.



Of particular note is a group of 14 photographs by modernist great, André Kertész, including an exceptional 1927 portrait of the writer and photography critic, Pierre MacOrlan; conceptual work from the 1970s by Vito Acconci, Dieter Appelt and William Wegman, including Acconci's 1971 *Step Piece* and *Waterways: 4 Saliva Studies*; as well as examples of street photography made in America by the likes of Lee Friedlander, Philip Lorca diCorcia, Paul Graham and Garry Winogrand, including Graham's *23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011, 4.25.14 pm*, the most recent photograph in the gift.

The exploration of photography will continue at SFMOMA with a two-day symposium, *The Photographic Event*, on September 23-24, 2016. Artists and scholars from around the world will join SFMOMA Curator of Photography Corey Keller for a series of panel discussions, presentations, screenings and performances. Online registration for *The Photographic Event* will open in early July at [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org).

## ABOUT CLÉMENT CHÉROUX

Since 2013, Clément Chéroux has served as Chief Curator of the Department of Photography for the Musée National d'Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and joined that museum as Curator of Photography in 2007. Prior to that, he lectured on the history of photography at the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, the University of Paris III and the University of Lausanne, and served as executive editor of the magazine *Études Photographiques* published by the Société Française de photographie. Chéroux has also served as an independent curator. As author or editor, Chéroux has published more than 40 books and catalogs on photography and its history.

Chéroux has curated or co-curated more than 20 exhibitions on modern and contemporary photography such as *Varda/Cuba* (2015), *Thierry Fontaine, les joueurs* (2015), *Anna et Bernhard Blume, la photographie transcendante* (2015), *Valérie Belin, les images intranquilles* (2015), *Qu'est-ce que la photographie?* (2015), *Jacques-André Boiffard, la paranthèse surréaliste* (2014), *Man Ray, Picabia et la*

revue "Littérature" (2014), *Henri Cartier-Bresson: ici et maintenant* (2014), *Paparazzi! Photographes, stars et artists* (2014), *Shoot! Existential Photography* (2012), *Edvard Munch, The Modern Eye* (2011), *Brancusi, photographie, film* (2011), *La Subversion des images, surréalisme, photographie, film* (2009) and *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult* (2004). He is currently preparing a Walker Evans retrospective that will be presented at both SFMOMA and the Centre Pompidou.

Chéroux earned a PhD in Art History from the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, an MA in Aesthetics, Technology and Artistic Creation from the University of Paris VIII and a degree from the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie, Arles. He was a visiting research fellow in the Art History Department at Princeton University and a guest scholar at the J. Paul Getty Museum Photography Department.

Chéroux was awarded the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit (Knight) for the exhibition, *Edvard Munch, the Modern Eye*, the Nadar Award for Photography Book of the Year for *La subversion des images, surréalisme, photographie, film* (with Quentin Bajac) and the Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire for *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult* (with Andreas Fischer).

### **THE PHOTOGRAPHIC EVENT – PHOTOGRAPHY SYMPOSIUM**

*The Photographic Event* will explore photography's multifaceted relationship to time, history and memory through a series of panel discussions, presentations, screenings and performances. Participants will include Corey Keller, SFMOMA curator of photography; artists from around the world, such as Jananne Al-Ani, John Gerrard, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, Owen Kydd and Trevor Paglen; and scholars including George Baker, professor of art history at UCLA; Jimena Canales, Thomas M. Siebel Chair in the History of Science at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Eyal Weizman, director of the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Among many topics, symposium discussions will examine the frontier between still and moving images in the work of Gerrard and Kydd and photographic practices as modes of investigation, from archeological (Al-Ani) to technological (Paglen) to forensic (Weizman).

*The Photographic Event* includes the US debut of Hadjithomas and Joreige's performance of the book *Latent Images: Diary of a Photographer*, the third part of their *Wonder Beirut* project. In addition to its text, this book includes 38 photographic plates selected from among hundreds of reels of exposed, but undeveloped film by the Lebanese photographer Abdallah Farah between 1997 and 2006. The performance of *Latent Images* was presented at last year's Venice Biennale.

The symposium will coincide with the closing weekend of *About Time: Photography in a Moment of Change*, the inaugural presentation of SFMOMA's photography collection curated by Keller in the new, 15,000-square-foot Pritzker Center for Photography. The exhibition considers the way photography's complex and ever-changing relationship with time has reflected and inflected our ideas about permanence and obsolescence, history and memory. It showcases work by Dawoud Bey, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Julia Margaret Cameron, Phil Chang, Owen Kydd and Zoe Leonard, among many others, as well as *Recordings #3 (At Sea)*, a newly commissioned installation by Jason Lazarus.

*The Photographic Event* is the third in a series of major public programs about photography at SFMOMA, following and building on *Is Photography Over?* (2010) and *Bearing Witness* (2014). This trilogy of events is generously supported by the Fraenkel Gallery Fund for New Studies in Photography.

*The Photographic Event* is organized at SFMOMA by Corey Keller, curator of photography; Deena Chalabi, Barbara and Stephan Vermut Associate Curator of Public Dialogue; and Dominic Willsdon, Leanne and George Roberts Curator of Education and Public Practice.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AT SFMOMA: 1935 TO TODAY**

SFMOMA has been collecting and exhibiting photography since its founding in 1935 and was one of the first American art museums to do so. An independent department was established under the direction of Van Deren Coke in 1980. Under the leadership of Senior Curator Sandra Phillips, who joined SFMOMA in 1987, the collection has grown exponentially in size and quality, and the program, based on a philosophy of collecting and interpreting the photographic medium in all its richness and complexity, has earned an international reputation.

Today the photography collection numbers some 17,800 objects, and is the largest collection at the museum. Its strengths include outstanding examples of work by West Coast modernist masters like Edward Weston, Ansel Adams and their counterparts on the East Coast, most notably Alfred Stieglitz and Charles Sheeler. A small but important group of European modernist works by Hans Bellmer, Claude Cahun, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, among others, represents another highlight of this period. The collection also demonstrates a deep commitment to the work of major twentieth- and twenty-first-century figures, including Robert Adams, Diane Arbus, Lewis Baltz, Rineke Dijkstra, William Eggleston and Larry Sultan.

The collection is distinguished in its thematic concentrations, particularly those around photography of California and the Western landscape from the nineteenth century to the present; the documentary tradition from the early twentieth century to the present; and modern and contemporary Japanese photography. It also has particular depth in American experimental photography of the 1970s.

The exhibition program is similarly balanced between a commitment to presentations of the creative expression of individual figures and thematic explorations. In recent decades, SFMOMA has organized a number of landmark monographic exhibitions of major artists—including Diane Arbus, Helen Levitt, Carleton Watkins, Garry Winogrand and Francesca Woodman—whose work previously had not been examined in depth. These ambitious shows not only garnered great public and critical interest, they also enhanced the collection through concurrent acquisitions of notable works by these artists.

SFMOMA is particularly renowned for its thematic exhibitions, presenting photography as a vital modern visual language. This strong interest in photography's social and cultural importance and its defining influence on modern and contemporary visual experience has resulted in noted shows such as *Snapshots: The Photography of Everyday* (1998), *Brought to Light: Photography and the Invisible, 1840–1900* (2009) and *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance, and the Camera Since 1870* (2011). This pioneering commitment to examining the medium's distinguishing—and changing—characteristics continues to grow in relevance as newer generations and evolving technologies influence the proliferation and challenge the very definition of photography as never before.

### **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art**

151 Third Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, a

thoroughly transformed SFMOMA, with significantly enhanced gallery, education and public spaces, opened to the public on May 14, 2016. With six art-filled terraces, a new sculptural staircase and Roman steps where the public can gather, access to 45,000 square feet of free art-filled public space and free admission for visitors age 18 and younger, SFMOMA is more welcoming and more connected to San Francisco than ever before.

Visit [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org) or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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### Image credits:

Courtesy Clément Chéroux

Left: André Kertész, *Pierre MacOrlan*, 1927; gelatin silver print; 4 5/16 x 2 15/16 in. (10.95 x 7.46 cm); Gift of Lisa and John Pritzker; © Estate of André Kertész.

Right: Vito Acconci, *Step Piece*, 1971; gelatin silver prints; 4 5/8 x 6 1/8 in. (11.75 x 15.56 cm); Gift of Lisa and John Pritzker; © Vito Acconci