

**Bowdoin College Museum of Art to Present Photography Exhibition
Exploring How People Observe Each Other**

People Watching: Contemporary Photography since 1965
features more than 120 images from more than four dozen photographers

Brunswick, ME—May 10, 2023—Exploring how humans witness each other, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA) will organize and host an expansive selection of photographs in a new exhibition titled *People Watching: Contemporary Photography since 1965*. The show examines how people look at each other: as a recreational activity, an act of surveillance, a type of harassment, a sign of empathy, and a documentary form of expression. The idea for the exhibition came together in the wake of the global pandemic of 2020, when social distancing and shelter in place orders transformed the understanding of one’s relationship to others, as well as the recent social and racial justice movements, when people were demanding to be seen, heard, and respected. The exhibition brings together a group of images from 1965 to the present that investigate the ways in which artists represent individuals on the street, at home and at work, in the studio, and during journalistic assignments. More than 120 photos are featured by almost 50 photographers from the last 60 years, including Diane Arbus, Alfredo Jaar, Sally Mann, Irving Penn, Accra Shepp, Andy Warhol, and Ai Weiwei, among others. The exhibition will run from June 24 to November 5, 2023.

“We could not help but be inspired by the sudden changes to how we view each other and ourselves in 2020. With *People Watching* we have mined the collection for artworks that will give us and our audiences a chance to analyze the ways in which we look at each other and portray each other,” said Frank Goodyear, co-director of the museum. “In doing so, the exhibition presents important works from the museum’s diverse collection, some of which are going on view for the first time. And while *People Watching* is about noticing differences, it is also about attempts to find common ground, an idea that is especially poignant at this point in time.”

The exhibition features more than 40 works acquired since 2020. This selection includes works generously donated by collectors Nancy Rutter Clark, Joseph Baio, and Robert Freson, among others. It also features many photographers, whose work has only recently been added to the collection, including Adou, Jules Allen, Larry Burrows, Chan Chao, Paul D’Amato, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Mikki Ferrill, Jona Frank, Katy Grannan, Graciela Iturbide, Rashid Johnson, Meryl McMaster, Daido Moriyama, Laurel Nakadate, and Farah Al Qasimi.

Divided into six sections, the show juxtaposes work from different eras to compare and contrast how photographers have depicted subjects in a variety of public and private settings. Sections include:

- The exhibition begins with “On the Street”, a section that features artworks exploring the public lives of individuals and groups. It looks at why people are drawn to street photography: is it to document, understand, scorn, or admire their subjects? Beginning with work from the late 1960s

by Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander, the section also includes artworks by Leonard Freed, Zig Jackson, Elinor Carucci, and others.

- The section “On Assignment” features documentary photography and photojournalism from the last nearly 60 years. This section explores the ethical obligations that photographers confront when presenting human subjects in other parts of the world. Images by Larry Burrows, Sebastião Salgado, and Alec Soth are included here,
- “At Home” presents artworks with a focus on the family and their private lives at home. Larry Clark, Donna Ferrato, Emmet Gowin, and Laura McPhee are featured here.
- “In the Studio” features images of posed subjects, removed from the challenges of working in public. The sitters are all more than they first seem when represented by Cindy Sherman, Robert Mapplethorpe, Shirin Neshat, and others.
- In “Towards Self,” the camera is turned on the photographers, with the artists exploring the fluidity of self-presentation while trying to be their authentic selves. Photographers like John Coplans, Martine Gutierrez, and Jo Spence grapple with themes such as aging, desire, and mortality.
- The final section “Presence/Absence” includes photos where people are present, though often missing in the actual images. Dawoud Bey confronts the ghosts of plantations, Edward Burtynsky shows the impact humans have on the natural landscape, and Adou explores globalization’s impact on China in this section.

Works by Bowdoin College alumni Abelardo Morell (‘71, H’97) and Kevin Bubriski (‘75) are included, as well as by Michael Kolster, a Professor of Art at Bowdoin and Chair of the Visual Arts Division of the College’s Department of Art, showing the strength of both the College’s art and photography programs, as well as its contemporary photography collection. The museum has a long history of engagement with the medium, having started collecting photography in the early 1980s. This collection has proven invaluable to the education of several generations of Bowdoin art and art history students and has been featured regularly in different public exhibitions.

The exhibition’s opening weekend will be celebrated with a free keynote program “Photography Now: A Conversation between Laura McPhee and Michael Kolster” on Saturday, June 24. The two photographers, whose work appears in the exhibition, will be in conversation with Frank Goodyear, co-director of the museum. Additional programming with featured photographers is expected throughout the run of the exhibition; check the museum's website for updates.

Bowdoin College Museum of Art

The Bowdoin College Museum of Art is the cornerstone of the arts and culture at Bowdoin. One of the earliest collegiate art collections in the nation, it came into being through the 1811 bequest of James Bowdoin III of 70 European paintings and a portfolio of 141 old master drawings. The collection has been expanded through the generosity of the Bowdoin family, alumni and friends, and now numbers more than 20,000 objects, including paintings, sculpture, works on paper, decorative arts and artifacts from prehistory to the present from civilizations around the world. www.bowdoin.edu

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