

PACE LONDON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Classics

25 November – 17 December 2016
6 Burlington Gardens, London W1S 3ET

DIANE ARBUS
RICHARD AVEDON
HARRY CALLAHAN
ROBERT FRANK
LEE FRIEDLANDER
IRVING PENN
HENRY WESSEL
GARRY WINOGRAND



London—Pace London is pleased to announce *American Classics*, an exhibition of key works by photographers who emerged in postwar America. On a continuum between artistic vision and documentary investigation, these artists photographed North American people, culture and landscape. Works by Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon, Harry Callahan, Robert Frank, Lee Friedlander, Irving Penn, Henry Wessel and Garry Winogrand will be on view from 25 November to 17 December 2016 at 6 Burlington Gardens.

The works in *American Classics* reveal insights into American culture and history that continue to resonate today. While Callahan, Frank, Friedlander, Wessel and Winogrand captured the natural and social American landscape, photographs from Frank's famous series, *The Americans* (1955–56), reveal the diversity of life and culture in the United States with a disarmingly candid vision. Winogrand's poignant, occasionally humorous images depict American lifestyle mostly in urban parks and zoos.

Portraits of individuals and groups by Arbus, Avedon, and Penn are incisive studies of both famous and marginalized Americans. Avedon's portraits range from the artist June Leaf to actor Charlie Chaplin at the end of his time in the United States. Photographs such as *Patriotic young man with a flag, N.Y.C.* (1967) by Arbus and *Peace Demonstration, Central Park, New York* (1970) by Winogrand contrast modes of American political engagement during the Vietnam War. Arbus represents a man waving a small American flag at a pro-war rally, whereas Winogrand captures the release of balloons in protest of the war. Penn's iconic portraits of Georgia O'Keeffe, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg and 1960s counterculture members exemplify his uncanny ability to chronicle contemporary culture through the faces of our time.

With an eye for eclectic subjects and abstract composition, Callahan found unique perspectives on the natural world, cities, and suburbs. *Detroit* (1943) uses multiple exposures to convey both the dynamism and congestion of his hometown, a city built around the cars it produced. His work *Chicago* (c. 1949) presents the brick façade of a building, its windows creating graphic variety in an abstract, gridded composition. Friedlander likewise focuses on the built landscape, revealing eccentric views of the environments along American roadsides. He also brought a self-reflective and

sometimes slyly disconcerting sensibility to his street photography, as in *New York City* (1966), where the photographer's presence is revealed by his shadow falling onto an unaware subject.

Diane Arbus (1923–1971)

Considered a wholly original force in the medium's history, Diane Arbus studied photography with Berenice Abbott in the 1940s and Alexey Brodovitch in the mid-1950s. It was during a photographic workshop with Lisette Model in the late 1950s, however, that she found her greatest inspiration and began seriously pursuing the work and idiosyncratic style for which she is so widely recognized today. Arbus's first published photographs appeared in *Esquire* magazine in 1960, and she was one of just three photographers featured in *New Documents*, John Szarkowski's landmark exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, in 1967.

In 1962, Arbus began to turn away from the 35mm camera favoured by most documentary photographers of her era and employed a square-format 2 ¼ inch twin lens reflex camera to make poignant portraits of individuals on the margins of society, including street people, nudists, and carnival performers. The boldness of both her subject matter and frank photographic approach to portraiture challenged established conventions concerning the relationship between photographer and subject and yielded images of raw psychological intensity. Arbus's gift for rendering the familiar as strange, and uncovering the familiar within the exotic, produced a revolutionary body of work that is often shocking in its purity and steadfast commitment to celebrate things as they are.

Richard Avedon (1923–2004)

A revolutionary in the genre of photographic portraiture, Richard Avedon was born to parents of Russian Jewish heritage in New York City and joined the Young Men's Hebrew Association Camera Club to learn the medium at the age of twelve. Following two years of service as Photographer's Mate Second Class in the Merchant Marine, he returned to New York to study at the Design Laboratory of the New School for Social Research. Avedon set up his own studio in 1945 and quickly became the preeminent staff photographer at *Harper's Bazaar*. There, under the tutelage of legendary art director Alexey Brodovitch, his rise to the top of the profession was meteoric and he developed an original approach to making fashion photographs.

As Avedon's reputation grew and his signature aesthetic evolved, he remained dedicated to extended portraiture projects as a means for exploring cultural, political, and personal concerns. He examined the civil rights movement in the American South in 1963-64 and photographed students, countercultural artists and activists, and victims during the Vietnam War. In 1976, on a commission for *Rolling Stone* magazine, he produced *The Family*, a composite portrait of the American power elite at the time of the country's Bicentennial election. In 1985, Avedon created his magnum opus, *In the American West*, in which he portrayed members of the working class – butchers, coal miners, convicts, and waitresses – with precisionist detail, using the large format camera and plain white backdrop characteristic of his mature style.

Harry Callahan (1912–1999)

One of the foremost American photographers of the 20th century, Harry Callahan began his photographic career as an untrained amateur while working for the Chrysler Motor Parts Corporation in 1938. Following a workshop by Ansel Adams at the Detroit Photo Guild in 1941 and a meeting with Alfred Stieglitz in 1942, Callahan decided to completely devote his energies to the medium. His talent in the field was recognized in 1946 by László Moholy-Nagy, who invited Callahan to teach photography at Chicago's Institute of Design (formerly the New Bauhaus). The school's experimental philosophy was formative for Callahan, who would become instrumental in introducing a vocabulary of formal abstraction into American photography at a time when descriptive realism was the dominant aesthetic. After a 15-year tenure in Chicago, Callahan moved to Providence in 1961 to chair the Photography Department at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he taught until his retirement in 1977.

Throughout his six-decade career, Callahan repeatedly returned to the same subjects – his wife Eleanor and daughter Barbara, nature, and the city – but continually developed new methods to embrace and depict them. Utilizing different cameras, innovative materials, and pioneering

techniques such as extreme tonal contrast and multiple exposures, Callahan's black-and-white and colour photographs encompass portraiture, architecture, landscape, and street photography in the United States, Europe, and South America.

Robert Frank (b. 1924)

Celebrated as one of the most important and influential photographers of the 20th century, Robert Frank has consistently embraced the narrative potential of carefully composed photographic sequences. His search for "a more sustained form of expression" than the single, static image has resulted in compelling visual stories that actively engage viewers with their deliberately designed progression, compression of time, and layered meanings. Undoubtedly, Frank's best known sequence is *The Americans*, a seminal suite of 83 photographs from 1955-56 cross-country road trips that presents a penetrating portrait of post-war American life. Revolutionary in both subject matter and style, *The Americans* was also formally innovative, as Frank discerningly selected and arranged just 83 images from some 27,000 frames to illustrate his distinct vision of America. Moreover, he allowed the pictures to speak for themselves, employing their titles as the only form of didactic text.

Although Frank's unorthodox cropping, lighting, and focus attracted criticism, his work was not without supporters, as Beat writers Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg felt a kinship with him and his interest in documenting the fabric of contemporary society. Ultimately, *The Americans* jettisoned Frank into a position of cultural prominence and he became the spokesperson for a generation of visual artists, musicians, and literary figures both in the United States and abroad. Frank also redefined the aesthetic of the moving image through filmmaking, which he began in 1959. Characterized by an improvisational quality that belies their careful planning, Frank's best-known films include *Pull My Daisy* (1959) and his 1972 documentary of the Rolling Stones on tour.

Lee Friedlander (b. 1934)

A seminal figure in the history of photography, Lee Friedlander has captured the American social landscape through his camera lens for more than five decades. His work first came to the public's attention in the 1967 landmark exhibition curated by John Szarkowski, *New Documents*, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, alongside that of Diane Arbus and Garry Winogrand. The many exhibitions devoted to his photographs since that time include a major traveling retrospective organized by The Museum of Modern Art in 2005.

With a unique ability to organize vast amounts of visual information, Friedlander is known for his dynamic formal compositions and poignant juxtapositions of subjects drawn from American vernacular culture. His light-hearted and ironic portrayals of the modern world explore the medium's most central motifs, ranging from street scenes, landscapes and interiors to nudes, portraits, self-portraits, and still lifes. In his series *America by Car*, produced between 1992 and 2009 while driving cross-country in an ordinary rental car, Friedlander sets steering wheels, dashboards, odometers, and side view mirrors against roadside billboards, gas stations, and stretches of highway to condense America's open roads into the square format of his Hasselblad camera.

Irving Penn (1917–2009)

Arguably the most prolific and respected photographer of the 20th century, Irving Penn is celebrated for his innovative commercial imagery and ground-breaking editorial contributions to Condé Nast publications. He began his photographic career in 1943 at the suggestion and encouragement of Vogue's then Art Director, Alexander Liberman, and developed his artistic vision over the next sixty years, shooting more than 150 covers for *Vogue* between 1943 and 2004, creating celebrated portraits of leading cultural figures, and producing pioneering fashion editorials noted for their natural lighting and formal simplicity.

In addition to his professional assignments, however, Penn pursued a variety of personal projects – such as nudes, self-portraits, signage, moving light portraits, and still-lives of seemingly inconsequential objects – to maintain an artistic balance throughout his career. Spanning a variety of subjects and genres, Penn's extensive oeuvre explores the boundaries of personal and public expression, and subsequently art and commerce, through compelling images that expanded the

creative limits of the medium. Moreover, his technical mastery of black-and-white and colour photography, as well as the platinum printing process, earned him accolades in the realms of both commercial and fine art, as his photographs transcended the printed page and made their way from magazines to museum walls in New York and beyond.

Irving Penn's work is presented in collaboration with Hamiltons Gallery, London.

Henry Wessel (b. 1942)

Since the 1960s, Henry Wessel has photographed vernacular scenes of the American West, particularly in California. Immediately drawn to the quality of light he encountered during a visit from New York to Los Angeles, Wessel moved cross-country to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1971. From stretches of dusty highway to modest California bungalows framed by telephone poles and palm trees, Wessel's often spare and solitary images capture the idiosyncrasies and irony of American life with a wry objectivity. His photographs of parking lots, beach-goers, and shrubbery – all illuminated by the brilliance of Western light – find beauty and intrigue in the commonplace and document the social landscape in a manner that is casual yet formally compelling.

Taking interest in the medium during the rise of documentary photography, Wessel was influenced by such noted practitioners of the genre as Walker Evans and Robert Frank. Following in their tradition, he set out on several road trips across the country to document his findings. Unlike the well-known Western landscape photographers Ansel Adams or Edward Weston, however, Wessel was uninterested in capturing idealized, uninhabited views of nature. Instead, he recorded man's mark on the American West through images frequently imbued with an element of wit.

Garry Winogrand (1928–1984)

Deemed "the central photographer of his generation" by John Szarkowski in the exhibition catalogue accompanying his 1988 retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Garry Winogrand documented post-war American life with unprecedented zeal. The quintessential street photographer, he voraciously recorded the drama of public spaces with innovative and unorthodox images that pushed the possibilities of photographic description. Taken with a small-format 35mm camera and a wide-angle lens, Winogrand's deceptively casual and seemingly spontaneous pictures defied formal conventions with their oblique perspectives and densely packed compositions, while vividly capturing the distinctive look and mood of the place and era.

While Winogrand seldom worked in series, he repeatedly returned to certain subjects throughout his career. The visual cacophony of New York City's streets was of particular interest to him, as was Central Park, which served as the backdrop for perhaps his best-known image of a couple carrying a pair of well-dressed chimpanzees. Intrigued by "the effect of the media on events," Winogrand also photographed a variety of public gatherings – museum openings, press conferences, peace demonstrations, and sports games, among others – a topic which he further explored at the rodeos, stock shows, and state fairs in Texas. His pictures of zoo animals and their visitors present sly meditations on the human condition, while his images of women not only reveal Winogrand's attraction to his subjects, but also speak to broader notions of gender in the 1960s and 70s.

PACE

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Founded by Arne Glimcher in Boston in 1960 and led by Marc Glimcher, Pace has been a constant, vital force in the art world and has introduced many renowned artists' work to the public for the first time. Pace has mounted more than 800 exhibitions, including scholarly shows that have subsequently travelled to museums, and published over 400 exhibition catalogues. Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide: three galleries in New York; one in London; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Beijing; and spaces in Hong Kong, Paris and Menlo Park, California. In 2016, the gallery launched Pace Art + Technology, a new programme dedicated to showcasing interdisciplinary art groups, collectives and studios whose works explore the confluence of art and technology. Pace London inaugurated its flagship gallery at 6 Burlington Gardens in 2012.

Pace London is open to the public Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
www.pacegallery.com/

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For press inquiries, please contact Nicolas Smirnoff, nicolas@pacegallery.com / +44 203 206 7613

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Image: Peace Demonstration, Central Park, New York, 1970 © The Estate of Garry Winogrand