

Field Experience Guide Text & Images

Front

Shared History: Photographs from the Collection of Martin Z. Margulies

Guest Curator, Jeanie Ambrosio

Florida Atlantic University

Ritter Art Gallery

January 24, 2020 - March 7, 2020



Helen Levitt

New York, ca. 1942

Gelatin silver print

8 7/8 x 5 7/8 inches

Courtesy of the Martin Z. Margulies Collection

School of the Arts, Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, www.fau.edu/galleries

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Back

This Field Experience Guide provides educators with a brief overview of the exhibition and serves as a springboard for collaboration with the FAU University Galleries Museum Education Program. We create custom lesson plans tailored to educators' curriculum needs. You can find a presentation of the exhibition for educators on the Galleries' website at fau.edu/galleries

Background

Shared History: Photographs from the Martin Z. Margulies presents photographs from the early 20th Century through the 1970s by 29 international photographers. The exhibition presents multiple examples of the way that photography can bring images of underrepresented spaces or groups of people into public view. Over time these images illustrate a time period or region and thus create a collective memory of people, places, or events. In addition, the show presents examples of experimentation and explorations of the medium of photography itself, suggesting a collective history of the medium.

Themes

A mini-history of pre-digital 20th Century photography, the exhibition examines effects of the Great Depression, issues of child labor, the changing American landscape, and portraiture—featuring depression era images commissioned by the Farm Security Administration and the National Child Labor Committee, images of the built environment presented as both idealistic modernism and more mundane images of mid-century “sprawl” that explore the effects of urbanization on the nation’s topography, as well as unique African, German, and American portrait photography.

Engage in the Debate

The photographs in this exhibition pre-date digital photography and the rise of social media, each of which has exponentially expanded the quantity and dissemination of images. The analog photographs in the exhibition ask viewers to consider how images were shared prior to our contemporary access to technology.

Farm Security Administration

The Farm Security Administration (FSA) was created in the Department of Agriculture in 1937 and was part of the New Deal program under Franklin D. Roosevelt, designed to combat poverty during the Great Depression. Several New Deal initiatives provided work relief to unemployed workers in rural areas. Roy Emerson Stryker, a former professor, headed the special photographic section from 1935 to 1942. He assembled a team who would become lead photographer figures of American history. The use of photography brought forth the events of the depression to public attention. The FSA archive constitutes the biggest documentary project in America and the negatives are in the Library of Congress. The pictures focus on rural areas, farm labor, and aspects of World War II, including factories, railroads, aviation training, and women working.

National Child Labor Committee

Founded in 1904, the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) was organized to promote the well-being and education of children and youth related to labor. The NCLC consisted of 15

major figures in representation of social welfare and evolved as the largest and most important national child welfare organization of the twentieth-century. The NCLC began advocating for child labor reform on the state-level in 1916, and eventually helped pass the Child Labor Amendment in 1924.

Highlighted Artists

Dorothea Lang

Dorothea Lange intended on becoming a photographer while she apprenticed under Arnold Genthe, a well-known photographer for President Roosevelt and other famous clients in New York City, and in 1918 relocated to San Francisco to become a portrait artist. In the early thirties, Lange began examining the effects of the great depression, and used photography to record the suffering. In 1934 Lange exhibited her photographs of San Francisco's dispossessed, and copies of these photographs reached Roy Stryker, who hired Lange in 1935 to take photographs for the Resettlement Administration, which gave way to the creation of the Farm Security Administration in 1937. Lange's photographs focus on California migrants—farmers forced to move westward as a result of the Dust Bowl—and are a documentation of human conditions on farms during the Great Depression.

Lewis W. Hine

Lewis W. Hine used the camera as a research tool to document America's working class for social reformation. Growing up, Hine first handedly experienced the exploitation of child labor. After the passing of his father, Lewis was forced to sustain his family working 13 hours a day, 6 days a week, and earning only \$4 weekly. Starting in 1908, the National Child Labor Committee hired Hine to document the working and living conditions of children in the U.S. from 1908 to 1924. The photographs provided insight on the study of labor, reform movements, children, education, public health, housing/living conditions, and agriculture.

Robert Adams

Robert Adams is best known for documenting the beauty and commercialization of the American West. Adams's photographs capture the physical presence of human life as it takes over and transforms the previously romanticized landscape of the American West. His photographs expose the hollowness of the 19th century American doctrine of Manifest Destiny, expressing somber indignation at the idea that the West represents an unlimited natural resource for human consumption. Adams emphasizes that his photographs, captured in black and white, are primarily a study of light.

Complementary Exhibitions

Shared History has been organized to complement and expand upon *Shared Space: A New Era, Photographs from the Bank of America Collection*, a concurrent exhibition on view in the Schmidt Center Gallery from Friday, February 14 through Saturday April 11, 2020. The *Shared Space* exhibition acts as a time capsule of our era, traversing our social landscape from 1987 to the present through photographs, two videos and a fragment of the Berlin Wall curated entirely from the Bank of America Collection as part of the Bank's Art in Our Communities program. While *Shared Space* focuses on photography's expanding ability to connect our spaces via technology, the *Shared History* exhibition examines the historic way in which photography has brought unknown spaces to the public.

FAU Exhibition & Program Sponsors:

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Below Information Block reference Fall '19 FEGs

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Credit logos: University Galleries, FAU

Images



Robert Adams

Pikes Peak Park, Colorado Springs, 1969

Gelatin silver print

5 5/16 x 5 3/16 inches

Courtesy of the Martin Z. Margulies Collection



Lewis Hine

Boys Going Home from Glassworks, 1908

Gelatin silver print

18 7/8 x 14 7/8 inches

Courtesy of the Martin Z. Margulies Collection



Dorothea Lange

Family between Dallas and Austin, Texas. The people have left their home in South Texas, and hope to reach the Arkansas Delta for work in the cotton fields. Penniless people. No food and three gallons of gas in the tank. The father is trying to repair a tire. Three children. Father says, "It's tough but life's tough anyway you take it", 1936

Gelatin silver print

7 ½ x 9 ¾ in.

Courtesy of the Martin Z. Margulies Collection



Ed Ruscha

STANDARD, Amarillo, Texas from *Gasoline Stations*, 1962

Gelatin silver print

19 ½ x 23 inches

Courtesy of the Martin Z. Margulies Collection



Malick Sidibé

untitled, 1965

Gelatin silver print, paint, glass, cardboard, tape, string

7 1/8 x 5 ¼ inches

Courtesy of the Martin Z. Margulies Collection