



Release Date: April 9, 2015

The Memory of Time: Contemporary Photographs at the National Gallery of Art, Acquired with the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund at National Gallery of Art



Chuck Close, *Kara*, 2007
daguerreotype. 21.59 x 16.51 cm (8 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund
© Chuck Close, courtesy Pace Gallery

Washington, DC—*The Memory of Time: Contemporary Photographs at the National Gallery of Art, Acquired with the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund*, on view in the West Building from May 3 through September 13, 2015, will explore the complexity of the medium's relationship to time, memory, and history. Seventy-six works by 26 international artists will be presented at the Gallery for the first time. *The Memory of Time* is one of three stellar exhibitions that will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the National Gallery of Art's photography program.

"We are deeply grateful to Mr. Moses and Ms. Schad for their generous gift of funds to acquire contemporary works to make this landmark project possible," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "*The Memory of Time* and its accompanying catalog are the Gallery's first project to focus exclusively on trends in contemporary photography,"

About the Exhibition

"The advent of digital photography has shattered enduring notions of the medium as a faithful witness and recorder of unbiased truths," said Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head, department of photographs, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "For now everything in a photograph can be fabricated; nothing need be real. Photography, once understood as verifying specific facts, capturing singular moments of time, and preserving explicit memories, is now recognized to have a multifaceted and slippery relationship to the truth and to the past. By embracing this complexity, contemporary artists have placed photography at the center of a renewed discussion around the construction of history and memory and the perception of time."

Divided into five sections, *The Memory of Time* examines work made from the early 1990s to the present by artists who explore these complex issues.

The first section—"Traces of History"—presents works by photographers who share a fascination with history, including early photographic techniques. As demonstrated by the 2012 daguerreotype *For Allegra, from the series "My Ghost"* by Adam Fuss (b. 1961) and the ambrotype self-portraits created by Sally Mann (b. 1951) between 2006 and 2012, these artists draw on our collective knowledge of visual and cultural history, and even our knowledge of antique printing processes, as a way of employing the past to shape their present work.

The second section, "Time Exposed," examines photographers whose work gives form to the literal passage of time as well as moments of historic and cultural change. As exemplified by Vera Lutter's (b. 1960) *Ca' del Duca Sforza, Venice II: January 13-14, 2008* (2008), a breathtaking photograph of Venice made over a period of two days, these artists work against the modernist attraction to speed and instantaneity and deliberately plan their

exposures, which often extend over long periods of time. Two long exposures of drive-in movie theaters by Hiroshi Sugimoto (b. 1948) further investigate this theme while simultaneously evoking a bygone era.

Many contemporary photographers are deeply intrigued with the idea of the archive, the subject of the third section of the exhibition. In "Memory and Archive," artists such as Sophie Calle (b. 1953), Deborah Luster (b. 1951), Susan Meiselas (b. 1948), and Carrie Mae Weems (b. 1953) exploit archives as repositories of information and material that can be reexamined to challenge personal and collective memories, calling into question what is remembered or forgotten by history.

The fourth section, "Framing Time and Place," examines how photographs—by artists as diverse as Idris Khan (b. 1978), Andrew Moore (b. 1957), Mark Ruwedel (b. 1954), and Mikhael Subotzky (b. 1981) and Patrick Waterhouse (b. 1981), can make the past vividly present through the depiction of urban vistas and landscapes. For example, Ruwedel's project, *Westward the Course of Empire* (1994–2007), records abandoned railroad lines in the American West in order to create an "inventory," as he has written, "of the landforms and ruins created...by the European occupation of the continent."

The final section, "Contemporary Ruins," features work by Moyra Davey (b. 1958), Witho Worms (b. 1959), Christian Marclay (b. 1955), Alison Rossiter (b. 1953), and Ruwedel that critically examines both literal ruins as well as obsolete, ephemeral objects to reflect on photography's connection to impermanence and deterioration. From abandoned houses to abraded pennies, these photographs speak to the power of ruins to warn of the inevitability of change and death.

Curators, Catalog, and Related Activities

The curators of *The Memory of Time* are Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head of the department of photographs, and Andrea Nelson, assistant curator, department of photographs, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Published by the National Gallery of Art and Thames and Hudson, a fully illustrated scholarly catalog will accompany the exhibition. The essay and catalog entries examine how in the decades since 1990 the concepts of time and memory have made a striking return in the work of many photographers who seek to illuminate how photography constructs our understanding of the world. Authors from the National Gallery of Art include Greenough and Nelson, with Sarah Kennel, associate curator; Diane Waggoner, associate curator; and Leslie J. Ureña, curatorial research associate. The 162-page catalog is available in May 2015 in hardcover for purchase in the Gallery Shops. To order, please visit <http://shop.nga.gov/>; call (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; fax (202) 789-3047; or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov.

Lectures

Building a Collection: Photography at the National Gallery of Art

May 3, 2015, 2:00 p.m., West Building Lecture Hall

Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head, department of photographs, National Gallery of Art. Book signing of *The Memory of Time* follows.

Conversations with Artists: Vera Lutter

May 17, 2015, 2:00 p.m., West Building Lecture Hall

Vera Lutter, artist, and Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head, department of photographs, National Gallery of Art. Book signing of *The Memory of Time* follows.

Conversations with Artists: Mark Ruwedel

June 14, 2015, 2:00 p.m., West Building Lecture Hall

Mark Ruwedel, artist, and Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head, department of photographs, National Gallery of Art. Book signing of *Message from the Exterior*, *Mark Ruwedel: Pictures of Hell*, and *The Memory of Time* follows.

Reading from Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs by Sally Mann

June 21, 2015, 2:00 p.m., West Building Lecture Hall

Sally Mann, artist and author. Book signing of *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs* and *The Memory of Time* follows.

The Diamonstein-Spielvogel Lecture Series: Carrie Mae Weems

September 12, 2015, East Building Atrium

Carrie Mae Weems, artist

Celebrating 25 Years of Collecting Photographs

To celebrate 25 years of collecting photographs, the Gallery will present three major exhibitions in 2015 exemplifying the quality, breadth, and history of its photography holdings. Opening on the same day as *The Memory of Time*, the exhibition *In Light of the Past: Celebrating 25 Years of Photography at the National Gallery of Art* will commemorate more than two decades of the Gallery's robust photography program. In the fall, the Gallery will conclude the celebrations with an exhibition that unveils new acquisitions made in 2015 to honor the anniversary.

Founded in 1990, the Gallery's collection of nearly 15,000 photographs encompasses the history of the medium, from its beginnings in 1839 to the present, and concentrates on the finest examples by the medium's masters.

General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Department of Communications
National Gallery of Art
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785
phone: (202) 842-6353
e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Anabeth Guthrie
Chief of Communications
(202) 842-6804
a-guthrie@nga.gov

Subscribe to Our E-mail Newsletters

Stay up to date with the National Gallery of Art by [subscribing to our e-mail newsletters](#): Web, educators, family programs, fellowships/internships, films, lectures, music programs, and teen programs. Select as many updates as you wish to receive. To edit your subscriber information, please go to our [subscription management page](#).

PRESS KIT

Exhibition Press Release

[Checklist](#) (PDF 303kb)

[Background on the Collection of Photographs](#)

[In Light of the Past: Twenty-Five Years of Photography at the National Gallery of Art](#)

May 3–July 26, 2015

CURATOR BIOGRAPHIES

[Sarah Greenough](#)

Senior Curator and Head, Department of Photographs
National Gallery of Art, Washington

[Andrea Nelson](#)

Assistant Curator, Department of Photographs
National Gallery of Art, Washington

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Department of Photographs](#)

[Exhibition Page](#)

Questions from members of the media may be directed to the Department of Communications at (202) 842-6353 or pressinfo@nga.gov

The public may call (202) 737-4215 or visit www.nga.gov for more information about the [National Gallery of Art](#).

RSS (NEWS FEED)

http://www.nga.gov/content/dam/ngaweb/press/rss/press_feed.xml

NGA NEWSLETTERS:

Stay up to date with the National Gallery of Art by [subscribing to our e-mail newsletters](#): Web, educators, family programs, fellowships/internships, films, lectures, music programs, and teen programs. Select as many updates as you wish to receive. To edit your subscriber information, please go to our [subscription management page](#).



© 2017 National Gallery of Art
