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Statement on the death of American photographer Robert Frank (1924-2019)



Robert Frank, *Trolley—New Orleans, The Americans*, plate 18 (portfolio), 1955, gelatin silver print, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Maria and Lee Friedlander, © Robert Frank, from *The Americans*.

"We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Robert Frank. He was unquestionably one of the most influential photographers of the 20th century. His poetic book *The Americans*, one of the most acclaimed photography publications of all time, looked at our country with the fresh eyes of an outsider to reveal both its ills and its beauty. The National Gallery of Art has had a long and rich history with Mr. Frank and was extremely honored that he selected the museum to be the repository of his work in 1990. With his support, the Gallery has the largest collection of his art.

It has been our great pleasure to work with him on several exhibitions, including *Robert Frank: Moving Out* (1994) and *Looking In: Robert Frank's 'The Americans'* (2009)—both of which traveled to museums around the world."

—Kaywin Feldman, Director, National Gallery of Art

"Robert Frank changed the course of 20th-century photography. His book *The Americans*, published in 1958 and 1959, looked beneath the surface of American life to reveal a country plagued by racism, ill served by its politicians, and rendered numb by a culture of consumerism that promised great choice but provided little satisfaction. But Frank also saw novel areas of beauty in simple, overlooked corners of American life—in our cars, diners, and even the road itself.

Although the book was deeply revered by numerous generations of photographers and artists, Frank did not easily wear its mantle of fame. Endowed with a restlessness that pervaded both his personality and his art, he spent the next 50 years making deeply personal photographs and films that always pushed the boundaries of their craft as they strove to be both more truthful and more honest.

We are all poorer with his death and without the example of his integrity, his fierce commitment to his art, and his constant quest, as he once said, for "less taste and more spirit . . . less art and more truth."

—Sarah Greenough, Senior Curator and Head, Department of Photographs, National Gallery of Art

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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:

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

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