

“All photographs—not only those that are so-called ‘documentary,’ . . . can be fortified by words.” So declared Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965), who conveyed the stories of everyday life with keen and compassionate attention to the human condition. While her work is widely heralded, the connection she fostered between text and image has received scant consideration. This exhibition explores the complex ways in which words—Lange’s own, and those of others—and photographs intertwined over the course of her career.

Lange’s most iconic images—such as *White Angel Bread Line* and *Migrant Mother*—as well as rarely seen works from MoMA’s collection are presented here alongside the words that accompanied them in newspaper and magazine articles, Depression-era government reports, books, and exhibitions. The captions Lange gave her photographs, including those reproduced in the landmark photobook *An American Exodus*, reveal her dedication to sharing the experiences and voices of the people she photographed. Evident throughout is her deep interest in art’s power to focus public awareness on social, economic, and environmental concerns.

By presenting the breadth of Lange’s work in these diverse contexts—and introducing new perspectives and responses from contemporary artists, writers, and thinkers—the exhibition offers a fresh approach to this venerated figure and an invitation to consider words and pictures today.

Organized by Sarah Hermanson Meister, Curator, Department of Photography, with River Encalada Bullock, Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Curatorial Fellow, Department of Photography.

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