

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES MAJOR ROBERT FRANK EXHIBITION, COINCIDING WITH THE ARTIST'S CENTENNIAL, OPENING FALL 2024

NEW YORK, November 9, 2023—The Museum of Modern Art announces *Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue*, an exhibition that will provide new insights into the interdisciplinary and lesser-known aspects of photographer and filmmaker Robert Frank's expansive career. On view from September 15, 2024, to January 11, 2025, the exhibition will delve into the six decades that followed Frank's landmark photobook *The Americans* (1958) until his death in 2019, highlighting his perpetual experimentation and collaborations across various mediums. Coinciding with the centennial of his birth and taking its name from the artist's 1980 film, *Life Dances On* will explore Frank's artistic and personal dialogues with other artists and with his communities. The exhibition will feature more than 200 objects, including photographs, films, books, and archival materials, drawn from MoMA's extensive collection alongside significant loans. *Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue* is organized by Lucy Gallun, Curator, with Kaitlin Booher, Newhall Fellow, and Casey Li, 12 Month Intern, Department of Photography.

"This exhibition offers visitors a fresh perspective on this beloved and influential artist," said Gallun. "The enormous impact of Frank's book *The Americans* meant that he is often remembered as a solo photographer on a road trip, a Swiss artist making pictures of an America that he traversed as an outsider. And yet, in the six decades that followed, Frank continually forged new paths in his work, often in direct artistic conversation with others, and these contributions warrant closer attention. The pictures, films, and books he made in these years are evidence of Frank's ceaseless creative exploration and observation of life, at once searing and tender."

Organized loosely chronologically, *Life Dances On* will focus on the theme of dialogue in Frank's work and reflect on the significance of individuals who shaped his outlook. Frank's own words will be present throughout the exhibition—in the texts he scrawled directly onto his photographic negatives, in the spoken narrative accompanying his films, and in quotes woven into the exhibition catalogue that will be published by MoMA in conjunction with the exhibition. Also revealed throughout the exhibition will be Frank's innovation across multiple mediums, from his first forays into filmmaking alongside other Beat Generation artists, with films such as *Pull My Daisy* (1959), to the artist's books he called "visual diaries," which he produced almost yearly over the last decade of his life.

The exhibition will explore such enduring themes as artistic inspiration, family, partnership, loss, and memory through the lens of Frank's own personal traumas and life experiences. Among the works that will be presented in the exhibition is a selection of photographs drawn from Frank's footage for his 1980 film *Life Dances On*. These works reflect on the significance of individuals who shaped Frank's own outlook—in this case, his daughter Andrea and his friend and film collaborator Danny Seymour. And, like much of his work, the film finds its setting in Frank's own communities in New York City and in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where he and his wife, the artist June Leaf, moved in 1969. An abundance of material will be loaned to the exhibition by the June Leaf and Robert Frank Foundation, including works from the artist's archives that will be shown publicly for the first time, as well as personal artifacts, correspondence, and maquettes.

In conjunction with the exhibition, MoMA will present *Robert Frank's Scrapbook Footage*, an installation in the Morita and Titus galleries, drawn from previously unseen film and video footage compiled by Frank's longtime film editor, Laura Israel, with the production designer

Alex Bingham. With the support of the June Leaf and Robert Frank Foundation, Israel and Bingham have crafted a multiscreen installation from newly digitized and restored materials unearthed after Frank's death. On view for the first time, this film and video footage will present Frank's restless experimentation and an opportunity to encounter the central figures of his life and work in New York, Nova Scotia, and beyond. On the occasion of the exhibition, MoMA will also present a complete retrospective of Robert Frank's films and videos—many of them newly restored by the Museum. *Robert Frank's Scrapbook Footage* is organized by Josh Siegel, Curator, Department of Film, with Lucy Gallun, Curator, and Kaitlin Booher, Newhall Fellow, Department of Photography, and the accompanying retrospective of Robert Frank's films and videos is organized by Siegel.

MoMA has been exhibiting Frank's work since 1950, early in his career. In 1962, the Museum featured Frank's work in a two-person exhibition alongside photographer Harry Callahan. Since then, the Museum has regularly collected and exhibited his work, and today the Museum's collection includes over 200 of Frank's photographs. That collection has been built through important gifts from Robert and Gayle Greenhill in 2013, and more recently, a promised gift to the Museum from Michael Jesselson, comprising a remarkable group of works, many of which will be presented at MoMA for the first time in this exhibition. In 2015, the artist made an extraordinary gift of his complete film and video works, spanning the entirety of his career in filmmaking. MoMA's Department of Film has since been engaged in a multiyear restoration project of these materials. Building upon this significant history with the Museum, *Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue* will be the first solo exhibition of Robert Frank's work at MoMA.

PUBLICATION:

The accompanying publication, edited by Gallun, features photographs, films, books, and archival materials, layered with quotes from Frank on his influences and process. Three scholarly essays, excerpts from previously unpublished video footage, and a rich visual chronology together explore Frank's ceaseless creative exploration and observation of life. 192 pages, 150 illustrations. Hardcover, \$60. ISBN: 978-1-63345-164-3. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and available at MoMA stores and online at store.moma.org. Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson in the rest of the world.

SPONSORSHIP:

Leadership support for the exhibition is provided by the Noel and Harriette Levine Endowment.

Generous funding is provided by the Alice L. Walton Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York.

Major support for the publication is provided by Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder through The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art. Generous funding is provided by the John Szarkowski Publications Fund.

PRESS CONTACTS:

Olivia Oramas, olivia_oramas@moma.org
Sara Beth Walsh, sarabeth_walsh@moma.org
Press Office, pressoffice@moma.org

For downloadable high-resolution images, visit moma.org/press.