

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA'S FIRST EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO ROBERT FRANK COINCIDES WITH THE ARTIST'S CENTENNIAL

Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue

September 15, 2024–January 11, 2025

Floor Three, The Edward Steichen Galleries (3 South)

NEW YORK, September 3, 2024—The Museum of Modern Art presents ***Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue***, an exhibition that provides 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 delves 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 the artist's birth, and taking its name from his 1980 film, *Life Dances On* explores Frank's artistic and personal dialogues with other artists and with his communities. The exhibition features more than 250 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* focuses on the theme of dialogue in Frank's work and reflects on the significance of individuals who shaped his outlook. Frank's own words are 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 published by MoMA in conjunction with the exhibition. Also revealed throughout the exhibition is 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.

By focusing on dialogue and experimentation, the exhibition explores such enduring subjects as artistic inspiration, family, partnership, loss, and memory through the lens of Frank's own personal traumas and life experiences. Among the works 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. 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 1970. An abundance of material was loaned to the exhibition by the June Leaf and Robert Frank Foundation, including works from the artist's archives that are shown publicly for the first time, as well as personal artifacts, correspondence, and book maquettes.

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11 West 53 Street
New York, NY 10019

In conjunction with the exhibition, MoMA presents [Robert Frank's Scrapbook Footage](#), an installation in the Morita and Titus galleries, featuring Frank's previously unseen film and video footage, designed by Frank's longtime film editor, Laura Israel, and art director Alex Bingham. With the support of the June Leaf and Robert Frank Foundation, Israel and Bingham have crafted a multichannel installation from newly digitized and restored materials unearthed after Frank's death. On view for the first time, this installation reveals Frank's restless experimentation and offers 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 Joshua 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 are 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* is 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.

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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.

FILM SERIES:

The Complete Robert Frank: Films and Videos, 1959–2017

November 20–December 11, 2024

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

In conjunction with the gallery exhibition *Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue* and the installation *Robert Frank's Scrapbook Footage*, MoMA presents a complete retrospective of Robert Frank's films and videos, many of them in new digital preservation and remasters, together with a modest selection of films relating to the artist and his circle of family, friends, and collaborators. Recognizing his uniquely important relationship with MoMA, Frank donated all of his unique film and video materials to its collection in 2015. These works span the entirety of Frank's moving-image career, from his 1959 Beat psychodrama *Pull My Daisy* (co-directed by Alfred Leslie and starring the poets Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky, and Gregory Corso; the artists Larry Rivers and Alice Neel; and the actress Delphine Seyrig; with narration by Jack Kerouac) to his 2008 video *Fernando*, a touching portrait of a Swiss artist friend, and *Harry Smith at the Breslin Hotel, 1984* (2017).

Please visit press.moma.org/film for more information and press resources.

Organized by Joshua Siegel, Curator, Department of Film. Thanks to The June Leaf and Robert Frank Foundation, Peter Williamson, Laura Israel, and Nicholas Dawidoff.

CHANEL

Film at MoMA is made possible by [CHANEL](#).

Additional support is provided by the Annual Film Fund. Leadership support for the Annual Film Fund is provided by Debra and Leon D. Black, with major funding from The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, the Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP), and The Young Patrons Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Robert Frank's Photobooks

Tuesday, October 29, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Bartos Theater

On the occasion of *Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue*, join publisher and bookmaker Gerhard Steidl for a conversation on Robert Frank's approach to bookmaking after his landmark publication, *The Americans*. Frank returned multiple times to his autobiographical photobook *The Lines of My Hand* (first published in 1972), adding new works and resequencing images and words. During the last decade of his life, his artist's books published by Steidl—which Frank called “visual diaries”—were his main artistic output, and a space in which he could explore new relationships between his photographs.

Free. RSVP required: <https://robertfranksphotobooks.splashed.com>

Family Photography Workshops

Ages 8–12: October 26, 27; November 2, 2024, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Ages 4–5: November 16, 17; December 7, 2024, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and 1:30–3:00 p.m.

Education Center, Mezzanine, Cullman Education and Research Building

Zoom in on light and shadow in two different workshops for families, inspired by *Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue*. Join one two-hour session focused on image-making for eight- to 12-year-olds and their adult companions on October 26, 27, or November 2. Families with kids ages four and five can join for one morning or afternoon 90-minute session on November 16, 17, or December 7.

Free. Kids and adults participate. Register at moma.org/familyprograms starting October 4 at 10:00 a.m.

ACCESSIBILITY:



Open captions are available for videos with sound in *Life Dances On: Robert Frank in Dialogue* and *Robert Frank's Scrapbook Footage*. Videos without sound are indicated on the wall label.



Robert Frank's Scrapbook Footage includes induction hearing loops for sound amplification. Visitors can turn their hearing aid or cochlear implant to T-coil mode to hear enhanced sound effortlessly. The loop system does not work with hearing aids without telecoil technology.

For more information on accessibility at MoMA please visit Moma.org/Visit/Accessibility.



The Adobe Foundation is proud to support equity, learning, and creativity at MoMA.

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