

# The Museum of Modern Art

## **FACE VALUE: CELEBRITY PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY TO EXPLORE 75 YEARS OF MoMA'S PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE FOR FILM**

**NEW YORK, May 2, 2025**—The Museum of Modern Art announces **Face Value: Celebrity Press Photography**, the first major exhibition of Hollywood studio portraiture to be drawn from the Museum's film stills archive since 1993. On view in the Titus and Morita Galleries from June 28, 2025, through June 21, 2026, the exhibition will offer a revisionist look at the Department of Film's photographic archive, examining the evolution of editorial practice before the digital age, AI technology, and social media reshaped the experience of celebrity. *Face Value* will feature over 200 works from 1921 to 1996, including studio photography of Louis Armstrong, Harry Belafonte, Clara Bow, Louise Brooks, Bette Davis, Mia Farrow, Katharine Hepburn, Dennis Hopper, Lena Horne, Bela Lugosi, Carmen Miranda, Elvis Presley, Diana Ross, Barbara Stanwyck, Elizabeth Taylor, Spencer Tracy, Oprah Winfrey, and many others. *Face Value: Celebrity Press Photography* is organized by Ron Magliozzi, Curator, with Katie Trainor, Film Collections Manager, and Cara Shatzman, Collection Specialist, Department of Film.

"*Face Value* will encourage viewers to see through the facade of glamour at how celebrity is fabricated and exploited," says Ron Magliozzi. Showcasing work by over 58 photographers, the exhibition will juxtapose "untouched" images like Otto Dyar's *Carole Lombard* (c. 1933) with those altered through traditional press practices such as silhouetting, in-painting, masking, sectioning, and collage, like James Manatt's *Joan Crawford portrait for the film Letty Lynton* (1932). *Face Value* examines how these methods shaped representations of not only film stars but also sports figures, socialites, and politicians, from Jackie Robinson to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Eleanor Roosevelt. Presented in thematic suites, the installation highlights radical editing techniques, stylized visual motifs, and the gendered aesthetics embedded in the system, offering a revealing perspective on the fabrication of glamour and fame.

Since the Museum's founding, photography has played a vital role in how it has documented the history of motion pictures. *Face Value* traces the origin of this early initiative to MoMA's first film curator, Iris Barry, whose archival efforts led to the acquisition of editorial collections from *Photoplay* (1911–80) and *Dell* (1921–76), two leading publications that helped define Hollywood's star system. The exhibition includes images of comic stars Buster Keaton, W. C. Fields, Lupe Velez, and Mae West; pioneering actress Hattie McDaniel with Ruby Berkley, the first Black accredited Hollywood correspondent; famed aviatrix Amelia Earhart on a Hollywood film set; and the last photo shoot with Marilyn Monroe. Featuring promotional portraits crafted to cultivate celebrity personas, such as Ray Jones's *Anna May Wong portrait for the film Limehouse Blues, Soul of a Dragon* (1934), the exhibition explores how these images were manipulated for public consumption through hands-on editing techniques long before digital tools became standard.

### **SPONSORSHIP:**

# CHANEL

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

# MoMA

11 West 53 Street  
New York, NY 10019

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.

**PRESS CONTACTS:**

Olivia Oramas, [olivia\\_oramas@moma.org](mailto:olivia_oramas@moma.org)

Sara Beth Walsh, [sarabeth\\_walsh@moma.org](mailto:sarabeth_walsh@moma.org)

Press Office, [press\\_office@moma.org](mailto:press_office@moma.org)

**For downloadable high-resolution images, visit [moma.org/press](http://moma.org/press).**