

The Museum of Modern Art

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MODERN MUSEUM ANNOUNCES ENDOWMENT FOR PHOTOGRAPHY FELLOWSHIP

Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, President of The Museum of Modern Art, announced today that the distinguished American photographer Ansel Adams and his wife, Virginia Adams have endowed a permanent staff position in the Museum's Department of Photography, to be known as the Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Curatorial Fellowship. Mrs. Rockefeller said that the Museum took special satisfaction in Mr. Adams' very generous bequest because it came from an artist of major stature, who by his gift had expressed his faith in the Museum's commitment to the future of his medium.

Beaumont Newhall (b. 1908), universally recognized as photography's most respected historian, joined the staff of the Museum in 1933, and became Curator of the Department of Photography on its formation in 1940. His pivotal 1937 exhibition Photography: 1839-1937 provided the basis for his book The History of Photography, long the standard work in the field, and now in revision for its fifth edition. In 1947 Newhall joined the staff of George Eastman House, in Rochester, N.Y. He retired as Director of that museum in 1971, and is currently Visiting Professor of Art at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Nancy Parker Newhall (1908-1974) began her career as a painter and writer, and became interested in photography after meeting her future husband. She served as Acting Curator of the Museum's Department of Photography during World War II. During this period she directed major retrospective exhibitions of the work of Paul Strand and Edward Weston, and prepared their accompanying monographs. Her many subsequent books include the two enormously influential works Time in New England (1950), with the photographs of Paul Strand, and This is the American Earth (1960), with Ansel Adams. In 1963 she published The Eloquent Light, the first volume of her biography of Ansel Adams. Her

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last book, published posthumously in 1975, was her critical biography of the great English Victorian photographer, P.H. Emerson.

Ansel Adams has long been recognized as one of the great photographers of this century. During the past forty-five years his work has been shown in one-man exhibitions in this country's most important museums. His 1936 exhibition at An American Place was the first awarded by Alfred Stieglitz to a new photographer since the 1917 exhibition of Paul Strand. John Szarkowski, Director of the Museum's Department of Photography, has pointed out that Adams' many books have had a crucial influence not only on the development of the art of photography, but on this country's growing sensitivity to conservation and ecological issues. In addition to books dealing with his own work, Adams pedagogical texts on photographic technique have been a profoundly important influence on American photography during the past thirty years.

Richard E. Oldenburg, Director of the Museum, described the bequest as the most important gift in the history of the Department, and one of inestimable help to the Museum in its effort to remain equal to the task of exhibiting, preserving, and studying this vital and particularly modern art form.

The announcement of the gift was made by Mr. and Mrs. Adams at their home in Carmel, California, at a party celebrating Adams' 75th birthday attended by more than 80 friends from all over the country.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019.
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