

# The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



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## MODERN MUSEUM ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF SPRINGS MILLS SERIES ON PHOTOGRAPHY

Three photography exhibitions and their accompanying publications will be sponsored by Springs Mills, Inc., at The Museum of Modern Art in 1981, it was announced today by Richard E. Oldenburg, Director of the Museum. This represents a major expansion of The Springs Mills Series on Photography at the Museum, and marks the first time a corporation has undertaken the continuing sponsorship of photography books published by the Museum. The three exhibitions and publications to be underwritten by Springs Mills are: AMERICAN CHILDREN, AMERICAN LANDSCAPE and OLD FRANCE, the first in a four-part series of exhibitions planned by the Museum of the work of Eugène Atget.

"The Springs Mills series reflects a remarkably enlightened understanding of the obligations and potential rewards of corporate philanthropy," stated John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, "for it projects support for a wide range of programs over an extended period rather than selecting a single exhibition that might seem to promise extraordinary public attention. The program is an expansion of faith in the art of photography and in the Museum's ability to serve that art with intelligence."

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Springs Mills' commitment to a long-term program of support for projects conceived and mounted by the Department of Photography began in 1978 with JERRY DANTZIC AND THE CIRKUT CAMERA, and continued the following year with GRAIN ELEVATORS: PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK GOHLKE and ANSEL ADAMS AND THE WEST. "Springs Mills is firmly committed to support of the arts," stated Peter G. Scotese, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Springs Mills, Inc. "Our program with The Museum of Modern Art recognizes both the Museum's leadership in photography and the growing awareness of the contributions photography has made to art. We hope that our support will enable many thousands of people throughout the nation to develop a keener appreciation of the work of talented photographers and a more sensitive grasp of the world around us."

The first exhibition and catalog to be sponsored by Springs Mills in its expanded Series on Photography is AMERICAN CHILDREN. The exhibition, which will go on view in January, 1981, will examine the changing concept of childhood in America as it has been reflected in American photography. An ambrotype from 1860, for instance, "captures the Victorian sense of the child as a solemn miniature adult," while Jacob Riis' turn-of-the-century photographs of slum children depict them as society's ultimate victims of hard times and social evil. Contemporary photographs reflect an increasing awareness of childhood as a complex psychological period. Photographers whose work is included in AMERICAN CHILDREN are Lee Friedlander, Diane Arbus, Nicholas Nixon, Robert Frank, Helen Levitt, Walker Evans, Doris Ulmann, Lewis Hine and others. The exhibition will be directed by Susan Kismaric, Associate Curator of the Museum's Department of Photography; the accompanying

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catalog, which will include 60 photographs selected from the Museum's collection, will be published by The Museum of Modern Art and distributed in cloth and paper by the New York Graphic Society, Boston (\$14.95 cloth-bound, \$7.95 paperbound).

AMERICAN LANDSCAPE, to be directed by John Szarkowski and scheduled for July, 1981, will explore the changing concept and definition of the natural site. After the Civil War, Americans turned again to the exploration of their continent. The photographer-as-explorer was a "new kind of picture-maker: part scientist, part reporter and part artist," according to Szarkowski. The work of these photographers was the beginning of a continuing, inventive, indigenous tradition, a tradition motivated by the desire to explore and understand the natural site." AMERICAN LANDSCAPE will include the survey photographs of Timothy O'Sullivan, the aesthetic statements of the pictorialist and Photo-Secession movements by, among others, Edward Steichen and Alvin Langdon Coburn, and the contemporary, interpretive works of Robert Adams, Joel Sternfeld and William Clift. Each of the photographers represented in the exhibition has attempted to define what the earth is like, and has presented new discoveries concerning the structure, the beauty, and the meaning of our habitat.

OLD FRANCE, the third exhibition made possible through Springs Mills' beneficence, launches the four-part exhibition and publication of the Abbott-Levy Collection of photographs by Eugène Atget. In 1968 the Museum bought more than 5000 prints and 1000 negatives from Berenice Abbott who had preserved and publicized the work for the preceding forty years. This extraordinary collection offers a unique and comprehensive perspective of Atget's profoundly intelligent, creative vision.

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Atget's life work will be presented in four successive exhibitions which will open at the Museum -- at approximately one year intervals -- and travel extensively thereafter. They are OLD FRANCE, THE ART OF OLD PARIS, THE ANCIEN REGIME, and MODERN TIMES. Concurrent with the exhibitions the Museum will publish the four volumes of The Work of Atget, co-authored by John Szarkowski and Maria Morris Hambourg. The publication will be, in Szarkowski's words, "the best monograph published to date on any major photographer -- in terms of editing, scholarship, and production quality. The density and richness of Atget's achievement cannot be adequately suggested by a sampler reproducing one percent of his work. The four-volume publication that has been made possible with Springs Mills' support will contain five hundred full-page plates and an equal number of smaller illustrations, and will be published at a price within the reach of a broad audience."

The generous and farsighted support of Springs Mills initiates the Atget exhibition series with OLD FRANCE in September, 1981. "Not a patriotic or political statement, OLD FRANCE is Atget's acknowledgment of the rich endowment of his natural birthright," writes Mrs. Hambourg. "It is a portrait of the seemingly timeless French countryside, an ancient land, long cultivated and impregnated with tradition." The photographs of farms, orchards, village churches, country roads and smoothly flowing rivers span Atget's entire career and illuminate both the roots of his artistry and its flowering.

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