

LACMA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: ROBERT ADAMS: THE PLACE WE LIVE, A RETROSPECTIVE SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

ON VIEW: MARCH 11–JUNE 3, 2012

LOCATION: BCAM, LEVEL 2

LACMA PRESENTS INTERNATIONAL TOURING RETROSPECTIVE OF AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER ROBERT ADAMS

EXHIBITION FEATURES NEARLY THREE HUNDRED WORKS SPANNING ADAMS'S FORTY-FIVE-YEAR CAREER



(IMAGE CAPTIONS ON PAGE 4)

(Los Angeles, February 8, 2012)—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Robert Adams: The Place We Live, A Retrospective Selection of Photographs*, an exhibition that showcases the artistic legacy of American photographer Robert Adams (b. 1937) and his longstanding engagement with the contemporary Western landscape. Featuring nearly three hundred photographs and a key selection of the artist's publications, the retrospective weaves together four decades of Adams's work into an epic narrative of American experience in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Adams's work reflects his dedication to describing the changing Western landscape—the growth of its built environment and the lives of its inhabitants—contemplating the presence of trees, the open plains, the Pacific Ocean, and the deforestation of the Pacific Northwest. At LACMA, the exhibition highlights Adams's extraordinary portrayal of the terrain of the Los Angeles region.

"It is hard to envision the American West without the extraordinary achievements of Robert Adams. Adams conveys the often sharp luminosity and inky shadows of western geography like no other. Yet it is in his reckoning with man's fraught presence that Adams's spare and terribly beautiful photographs continue to challenge us," said Edward Robinson, associate curator of the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, who organized LACMA's presentation.

Exhibition Overview

With nearly three hundred gelatin silver prints, the exhibition features the photographer's major projects, from early pictures of quiet buildings and monuments erected by settlers of his native Colorado, to his most recent images of oceans and migratory birds in the Pacific Northwest. Accompanying the photographs in the exhibition are texts drawn from Adams's own published writings that total more than forty books to date.

The reach of Adams's work has been felt equally through his publications, which are an indispensable element of the artist's creative practice. A selection of these books will be displayed; copies will also be available in a reading area and digitally on iPads in the exhibition, enabling visitors to experience Adams's masterly use of the photographic book as a poetic medium in its own right.

Robert Adams: The Place We Live, A Retrospective Selection of Photographs is organized by the Yale University Art Gallery. The exhibition was co-curated by Joshua Chuang, Assistant Curator of Photographs, and Jock Reynolds, the Henry J. Heinz II Director, both of the Yale University Art Gallery. The exhibition debuted at the Vancouver Art Gallery (September 25, 2010–January 16, 2011) and traveled to the Denver Art Museum (September 25–January 2, 2012). Following LACMA's presentation, the show will travel to the Yale University Art Gallery before beginning an extensive European tour that will begin at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

About Robert Adams

Born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1937, Robert Adams moved with his family from Madison, Wisconsin, to Denver, Colorado, at the age of fifteen. He earned a PhD from the University of Southern California and, intent on

pursuing an academic career, returned to Colorado in 1962 to work as an assistant professor of English at Colorado College. Disturbed by the rapid transformation of the Colorado Springs and Denver areas, Adams began photographing a landscape transformed by tract housing, highways, strip malls, and gas stations. "The pictures record what we purchased, what we paid, and what we could not buy," Adams wrote. "They document a separation from ourselves, and in turn from the natural world that we professed to love." Adams has also written insightful and eloquent essays on the practice and goals of art, which have been collected in the volumes *Beauty in Photography: Essays in Defense of Traditional Values* (1981) and *Why People Photograph: Selected Essays and Reviews* (1994). Since 1997, he has lived in Oregon, the landscape of which has been the setting of his last twenty years of work.

Adams's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Denver Art Museum; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Getty Museum, as well as a major mid-career retrospective organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1989.

Exhibition Publication

Robert Adams: The Place We Live, A Retrospective Selection of Photographs is accompanied by a fully illustrated three-volume publication. A second book, *What Can We Believe Where?: Photographs of the American West* (paperback), presents a sequence of more than one hundred images culled from Robert Adams's entire body of work, an introduction by the photographer, and an afterword by the exhibition curators. Both are published by the Yale University Art Gallery and distributed by Yale University Press. Both publications will be available in the museum store.

Related Public Programming

Gallery Talk: Matt Ritter

Thursday, March 22, 2012, 7 pm, BCAM Level 2

Free, with general admission

Cal Poly botany professor Matt Ritter addresses the flora and fauna that inhabit Robert Adams's photographs, commenting on the history of these plants in California.

Gallery Reading: Susan Straight

Tuesday, March 27, 2012, 7 pm, BCAM Level 2

Free, with general admission

Award-winning author Susan Straight reads an essay inspired by Robert Adams's Southern California landscapes.

Artists in Conversation: Michael Almereyda and John Pilson

Sunday, April 15, 2012, 2 pm, Brown Theater

Free, no reservations

Photographer John Pilson and photography writer Michael Almereyda discuss the legacy of Robert Adams and their future photo book *American Landscape After 9-11*.

Gallery Talk: Anthony Lepore

Tuesday, May 8, 2012, 7 pm, BCAM Level 2

Free, with general admission

Photographer Anthony Lepore provides an informal walkthrough of the exhibition, providing insight about Adams's works on view.

Credit

Organized by Joshua Chuang, Assistant Curator of Photographs, and Jock Reynolds, the Henry J. Heinz II Director, both of the Yale University Art Gallery.

Made possible by Yale alumni and friends: Helen D. Buchanan; Allan K. Chasanoff; Lara Rubin Constable and The Reed Foundation; Nathaniel W. Gibbons; Betsy and Frank Karel; Saundra B. Lane; Melanie and Rick Mayer and the MFUNd; Mark McCain and Caro MacDonald/Eye and I; Mr. and Mrs. Alexander K. McLanahan; Ms. Eliot Nolen and Mr. Timothy P. Bradley; Risher Randall, Sr.; the Shamos Family Foundation; Mary Jo and Ted P. Shen; Jane P. Watkins; the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund; and an endowment created with a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The acquisition of Robert Adams's master prints by the Yale University Art Gallery was made possible through a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund.

The Los Angeles presentation was made possible in part by LACMA's Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund. Exhibition-related programs are organized by the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department and are supported in part by the Ralph M. Parsons Fund.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing *Transformation* project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

Location and Contact: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: noon-8 pm; Friday: noon-9 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday

General Admission: Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

Free General Admission: Members; children 17 and under; after 5 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

Images (page 1): (Left) Robert Adams, *Interstate 25, Eden, Colorado*, 1968, printed 2006, Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a

grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund, © Robert Adams, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

(Center) Robert Adams, *Longmont, Colorado*, 1979, Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Sandra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund, © Robert Adams, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

(Right) Robert Adams, *New development on a former citrus-growing estate, Highland, California*, 1983, Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Sandra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund, © Robert Adams, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

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