

LACMA

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**LACMA RECEIVES MAJOR GIFT FROM WALLIS ANNENBERG TO ACQUIRE
RENOWNED COLLECTION OF 3,500 PHOTOGRAPHS**

LACMA honors gift by naming the Wallis Annenberg Department of Photography



Imogen Cunningham,
Magnolia Blossom, 1925



Edward Weston,
*Nude (Anita
Brenner)*, 1925

Los Angeles—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) announces that it has received a groundbreaking gift from Wallis Annenberg and the Annenberg Foundation in support of photography. A substantial portion of the gift will support the acquisition of The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, a group of more than 3,500 prints that forms one of the finest histories of photography and collections of masterworks from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Highlights, including seminal photographs by Ansel Adams, Julia Margaret Cameron, Edward Steichen, W.H. Fox Talbot, and Edward Weston, will be presented in LACMA's exhibition, *A Story of Photography: The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection*, opening October 5 in the Ahmanson Building. Through the largesse of Wallis Annenberg and the Annenberg Foundation, this collection becomes the most significant and valuable gift of photography in the museum's history.

Wallis Annenberg's tremendous support of LACMA includes not only the acquisition of The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, but also a contribution to a new study room, opening in early 2011, that will allow for access to the entire photography collection at LACMA. Head of the newly named Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, Charlotte Cotton, said, "This staggering acquisition will enable LACMA to present multiple narratives of nineteenth and twentieth-century photography to its actual and virtual visitors, and to enhance the appreciation of photography, as

Marjorie and Leonard always hoped the collection would. Wallis Annenberg, who shares the same vision, has been incredibly thoughtful about what it takes to create a world-class, accessible photography department at LACMA."

LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director, Michael Govan, noted, "Photography claims an ever larger presence within the history of art. Twenty first-century encyclopedic museums like LACMA must have a substantial and growing commitment to photography and media. Wallis Annenberg's gift makes this possible."

LACMA trustee and Annenberg Foundation Vice President, Wallis Annenberg, commented, "I have a passion for photography and a deep belief in LACMA. They will undoubtedly inspire others to love this art form as much as I do. I'm thrilled to see a collection of this magnitude find a home in a local institution that is increasingly an international force in the museum world."

Marjorie and Leonard Vernon, Los Angeles residents now deceased, began to amass their expansive collection in 1976. They cultivated a group of works with global significance that especially highlighted the riches of West Coast photography in the early and mid-twentieth century. The collection grew over the years to include works by 700 photographers, with the earliest photographs dating from the 1840s. The couple were pioneer Los Angeles collectors and supporters of local talent. The collection was acquired from Carol Vernon and Robert Turbin, including a partial gift of a selection of the photographs. Ms. Vernon, daughter of Marjorie and Leonard, noted, "My parents would be pleased to know that the collection they so passionately fostered will remain together in Los Angeles, a city rapidly developing into a photography collecting hub."

Key works on view in *A Story of Photography: The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection* include Ansel Adam's *Moonrise, Hernandez* (1941), one of his most famous and most difficult photographs to print, as well as Edward Weston's *Nude* (1925), from what Weston considered the finest series of nudes he created, and Imogen Cunningham's *Magnolia Blossom* (1925), which

exemplifies the photographer's interest in pattern and especially plant structures. Other iconic works represented are Gustav le Gray's *The Great Wave, Sete* (1856-57), a photograph that demonstrates le Gray's ambition and invention in capturing the rapid movement of the surf at such an early stage of photography's technical development. Julia Margaret Cameron's *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth (née Julia Jackson)* (1867), also in the exhibition, is an example of exquisite framing and masterful lighting with the photographer's niece, later to become Virginia Woolf's mother, as the subject. In addition to the exhibition of collection highlights this fall, visitors to LACMA will see key photographs from the collection in permanent galleries alongside American art, modern, and nineteenth-century European collections and in 2011, first-rate study rooms for photography will open in LACMA West where individuals and educational groups will have regular and easy access to the collection.

About the Annenberg Foundation

The Annenberg Foundation is one of the nation's largest private family foundations. It provides funding and support to nonprofit organizations in the United States and globally. In addition, the Foundation operates a number of initiatives which expand and complement these program areas. The Annenberg Foundation exists to advance the public well-being through improved communication. As the principal means of achieving this goal, the Foundation encourages the development of more effective ways to share ideas and knowledge.

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' uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a new contemporary museum on its campus, BCAM. 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.

General Information: LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or visit lacma.org.

Museum Hours and Admission: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon-8 pm; Friday, noon-9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month and on Target Free Holiday Mondays. After 5 pm, every day the museum is open, LACMA's

"Pay What You Wish" program encourages visitors to support the museum with an admission fee of their choosing.

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(Left) Imogen Cunningham, (United States, 1883-1976), *Magnolia Blossom*, 1925, gelatin-silver print, 9 1/8 x 11 1/2 in., The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, gift of The Annenberg Foundation and Carol Vernon and Robert Turbin, © 2008 The Imogen Cunningham Trust

(Right) Edward Weston, (United States, 1886-1958), *Nude (Anita Brenner)*, 1925, platinum-palladium print, 9 1/2 x 7 in., The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, gift of The Annenberg Foundation, and promised gift of Carol Vernon and Robert Turbin, © 1981 Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents

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