

Center for Creative Photography Exhibition “Human Interest: Photoessays from the Collection”

Next exhibition looks at picture sequences from photojournalism’s golden age

Tucson, AZ – January 18, 2007 – The middle decades of the twentieth century mark the golden age of photojournalism, when heroic cameramen and -women went out into the field to track down stories, hard-working editors crafted layouts and captions, and curious Americans devoured illustrated magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, and *Collier’s*. Leafing through the pages of these magazines, readers would encounter hundreds of photographs, many of them merely supplying the who, what, and where. Other pictures, however, also addressed the how and why.

On February 9 the exhibition *Human Interest: Photoessays from the Collection* will open at the Center of Creative Photography and run through May 27, 2007.

Photoessays—carefully selected and assembled groups of pictures combined with text—told complete stories. In the photoessay, the photographer could express a point of view, share a personal experience, open a window onto other worlds. He or she could also reach huge audiences. *Life magazine’s* circulation peaked at 8.5 million, with an estimated 20 million people across North America and Europe reading each issue.

Photoessays ranged widely in subject, as suggested by the names of *Life’s* three editorial departments: News, Culture, and Modern Living. From battlefields to beauty pageants, from cattle ranches to ranch houses, people were shown on all sorts of stages. The publishers of mass-circulation magazines shared a mission to educate and entertain, and their broad, populist interpretation of "human interest" remains with us today.

Britt Salvesen, curator of the exhibition, said “Photoessays from this period provide glimpses into history, variously provoking nostalgia, amusement, and reflection. Acknowledging their power to shape our view of the past, we can better understand the impact of the media in our own lives.”

As demonstrated by *Human Interest: Photoessays from the Collection*, the Center for Creative Photography is an important repository for the study of **photojournalism**. The process of compiling a photoessay can be traced in the Center’s archives, which include correspondence between photographers and editors, annotated story scripts, contact sheets, and page paste-ups.

“This exhibition concentrates primarily on prints, revealing differences in individual approaches and also tracing innovations and trends over a 35-year period,” Salvesen said.

Human Interest presents 21 photoessays by an international roster of 13 photographers, working between 1937 and 1972. Prominent among the artists is **W. Eugene Smith**, who has been called the "master of the photoessay." Smith’s pioneering, and highly personal, approach to photojournalism reflected his determination "to capture the action of life, the life of the world, its humor, its tragedies, in other words life as it is. A true picture." The Center acquired the W. Eugene Smith Archive in 1979.

Aaron Siskind, Gisèle Freund, and Marion Palfi addressed different instances of poverty in their work; Smith and Peter Stackpole were among the many photographers covering World War II. Stackpole and Andreas Feininger depicted human achievement as evidenced by engineering and architectural wonders.

Freund and Garry Winogrand showed celebrities—such as Eva Perón and Liberace—on and off the public stage. Still other subjects and viewpoints are represented by Richard Avedon, Josef Breitenbach, Dean Brown, Charles Harbutt, Hansel Mieth and Otto Hagel, and Dan Weiner.

With the advent of television in the late 1960s, weekly magazines declined and eventually folded. The photoessay survived in other contexts, now communicating **personal expression** rather than public information. Despite this transition, however, key issues raised by photoessays—editorial manipulation, the ethics of representation, and the influence of market forces on the consumption of visual culture—remain central for all makers and viewers of photographs.

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About the Center for Creative Photography

The Center for Creative Photography holds more archives and individual works by 20th-century North American photographers than any other museum in the world. The archives of over 60 major American photographers—including Ansel Adams, Harry Callahan, W. Eugene Smith, Edward Weston, and Garry Winogrand—form the core of a collection numbering over 80,000 works. The Center for Creative Photography has an integrated program of preservation, access, and education that celebrates the history of photography and its contemporary practice.

For More Information: 520-621-7968 or <http://www.creativephotography.org>

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 am to 5 pm; weekends, 12 pm to 5 pm

Admission: Center for Creative Photography exhibitions, print room viewings, and education events are always FREE and open to the public.

Location: The CCP is located on the University of Arizona campus, Fine Arts Complex, 1030 N. Olive Rd., Tucson, AZ.

Parking: Parking is available at the Park Avenue Garage at the NE corner of Park and Speedway Blvd. The pedestrian underpass gives you direct access to the CCP. Parking directly behind the CCP (off 2nd Street) is free after 5 pm on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday.

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