

THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY PRESENTS ROBERT ADAMS: TURNING BACK, A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNAL OF RE-EXPLORATION

(Tucson, AZ) The Center for Creative Photography (the Center) will present *Robert Adams: Turning Back, A Photographic Journal of Re-exploration* from May 19 to August 6, 2006. Inspired by the bicentennial celebration of the Lewis and Clark expedition (1804–06), American photographer Robert Adams’s most recent project offers a new and unsparing look at the territory the explorers opened for development. His pictures are also a clear-eyed meditation on hope.

“I started photographing where Lewis and Clark reached their goal, the Pacific, and then headed inland,” Adams says. “My conviction was that the real frontier was and still is to the east, where we have to discover how to live in harmony.”

Adams continues, “Because two hundred years ago the Northwest supported one of the world’s great rain forests, I decided to focus on the condition of the region’s trees as a way to look at the condition of the larger geography. What I found as I entered representative samples of the Pacific Coast Range was a ruin. It had been ransacked. Where the great trees of the ancient forest had stood there were now vast landscapes of stumps. The indiscriminate violence suggested scenes from a war. What peace I found was at the edge of the high desert, where there were only a few trees but they were loved. I tried as best I could to express my gratitude for those trees.”

Organized by Sandra S. Phillips, senior curator of photography at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Robert Adams: Turning Back* features 164 black-and-white gelatin silver prints. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated, 234-page catalogue, copublished by Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. Titled *Turning Back*, the book’s 164 tritone images reveal environmental degradation but leave viewers with unmistakable notes of celebration and hope.

Born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1937, Adams moved with his family to Madison, Wisconsin, and, at age fifteen, to Denver, Colorado; he has lived in the western United States ever since. He earned a PhD from the University of Southern California and returned to Colorado in 1962 as an assistant professor of English at Colorado College, with plans to pursue an academic career. Dismayed by the sudden transformation of the landscape in the Denver area, Adams began making photographs depicting the banal tract housing and strip malls of suburbia that had replaced the natural environment, described by Jack Kerouac less than a decade earlier as “like the Promised Land.” Within a few years, Adams wrote, “the area’s ruin would be a testament to a bargain we had tried to strike. The pictures record what we purchased, what we paid, and what we could not buy. They document a separation from ourselves and, in turn, from the natural world that we professed to love.”



(more)

Today Adams lives with his wife, Kerstin, in Astoria, Oregon, at the western end of Lewis and Clark's route.

Adams's work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions in the United States, Europe, and Asia, and his pictures are in the permanent collections of leading museums throughout the world. His work was first shown in 1971 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and has been a major component of such groundbreaking exhibitions as 1975's *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* at the International Museum of Photography in Rochester, New York, which defined a movement pioneered by Adams, and *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960*, organized by John Szarkowski at the Museum of Modern Art in 1978. A traveling retrospective of his work, *To Make It Home: Photographs of the American West 1965—1986*, was organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1989, and the Tate Modern in London devoted an entire room to his photographs in *Cruel and Tender: The Real in the Twentieth-Century Photograph*, a major survey that opened in 2003. Adams also has published numerous photographic books about the West, including *The New West* (1974), *What We Bought* (1995), and *California* (2000).

Robert Adams. From the series *Harney County, Eastern Oregon*, 1999-2003. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. © Robert Adams.

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona actively collects, preserves, interprets, and makes available materials that are essential to understanding photography and its history. Through its archives, collections, education programs, exhibitions, and publications, the Center promotes research into and appreciation of the photographic medium. 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 p.m. to 5 p.m. Selections from the collection are on view in the Permanent Collection Gallery.

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 5:00pm on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday.

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