

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG TAKES VISITORS ON A TRIP ACROSS AMERICA THROUGH THE LENS OF MANY OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHERS

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St. Petersburg, Fla.--The American road has been a muse for writers, musicians, film directors, painters, and photographers. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) and John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley* (1962) are classics in American literature.

Easy Rider (1969), starring Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper, featured the motorcycle, almost as a protagonist and as a symbol of rebellion. *Thelma and Louise* (1991), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis, the first feminist road movie, attracted a large audience.

Organized by the Aperture Foundation, New York, *The Open Road: Photography and the American Road Trip* is a visual tour de force. It opens Thursday, February 9, and continues through Sunday, June 4, in the Hazel Hough Wing.

This exciting exhibition includes approximately 100 photographs that trace the rise of road culture in the United States. It begins with Robert Frank's extraordinary series *The Americans* from the mid-1950s and continues to the present day with images by Ryan McGinley and Justine Kurland. Cars, billboards, signs, the landscape, urban and rural areas, motels and restaurants, and, of course, people dominate.

The Open Road in its entirety has a cinematic quality and has three film stills, including one from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, 1960. (Remember the Bates Motel?) There is even a vintage battery-operated toy car (around 1960s/70s) that stops for the passenger to take a photo.

Ed Ruscha's *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, created as an artist's book, reveals the Modernist imprint on the landscape in the 1960s, and Garry Winogrand's *1964* captures a country in the throes of change. Lee Friedlander's *American Monument* and Stephen Shore's *Uncommon Places* revel in turning expectations upside down.

The acclaimed Japanese photographer Shinya Fujiwara in his *American Roulette* series and Frenchman Bernard Plossu bring the perspective of outsiders to the American experience. Ryan McGinley and Justine Kurland emphasize freedom and experimentation, often by photographing those on the margins of society, including their young friends.

No road trip would be complete without the Sunshine State, reflected in *Florida* (1967 and 1970) by Joel Meyerowitz and Joel Sternfeld's *Wet'n Wild Aquatic Theme Park, Orlando, Florida, September 1980*. Many other leading photographers are represented, including William Eggleston (from his *Los Alamos Portfolio*), Inge Morath (*Road to Reno*), and Alex Soth (*Sleeping by the Mississippi*).

Curated by David Company and Denise Wolff, *The Open Road* takes visitors on an unforgettable journey. It is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

For a complete schedule of public programs, please go to mfastpete.org.

MFA: Make and Take Saturday. Free with MFA admission. No registration necessary. For ages five and older, but entire families are welcome. **Saturday, February 4 and 18, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.:** With the supplies provided, make a miniature car inspired by the photographs in *The Open Road*.

Book Club @ MFA, Second Thursday of the Month, 6:30 p.m. Free with MFA admission, which is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday. Join Keep St. Pete Lit, a local organization that supports the literary community, for a book club connecting the visual and literary arts.

February 9: Jane Lotter's *The Bette Davis Club* follows the laugh-out-loud adventures of 50s-something Margo in her cross-country search for her runaway bride niece.

March 9: Jack Kerouac's autobiographical novel *On the Road* captures the Beat generation like no other and quickly became an American classic. *Modern Library* ranked it 55th on a list of the 100 best English-language novels of the twentieth century.

Coffee Talk with Nan Colton, Wednesday, March 8, 10-11 a.m. Free with MFA admission, Refreshments. In *Finding Voice in Photography*, the MFA's popular performing artist-in-residence portrays Inge Morath (1923-2002), who is represented in the exhibition. She once wrote: "I knew that I could express the things I wanted to say by giving them form through my eyes."

Collectors Circle Lecture, Thursday, March 9, 6:30 p.m. Open to the Public. Free with MFA admission, which is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday. Photographer Stephen Wilkes will introduce his expansive work for the first time in the Tampa Bay area. His many honors include an Alfred Eisenstaedt Award for Magazine Photography; a 2004 Lucie Award, Fine Art Photographer of the Year; and TIME's "Top 10 Photographs of 2012." His series have explored Mainland China, California's Highway One, the long abandoned medical wards of Ellis Island, and the ravages of Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy.

His photographs are part of the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the George Eastman Museum; the Jewish Museum in New York; the 9/11 Memorial Museum; and the Library of Congress. He holds his BS in photography from Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

Cinema at the MFA, Thursday, March 23, 6 p.m. Free with MFA admission, which is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday. The *New York Times* has called Robert Frank (born 1924) "the most influential photographer alive" and "one of the most important independent filmmakers of the last half-century." The MFA will show his short films *Paper Route* (2002), *I Remember* (1998), and *C'est Vrai* (1990).

Thursday, April 13, 6 p.m.: Two more films by Robert Frank will be screened. He collaborated with friend Jack Kerouac on *Pull My Daisy* (1959) and paid tribute to him in *This Song for Jack* (1983). All films are distributed by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Gallery Talk on *The Open Road* by Hazel and William Hough Chief Curator Dr. Jerry N. Smith and Manager of Photographic Collections Robin O'Dell.

Sunday, March 26, 3 p.m. Free with MFA admission.

During the last year, Dr. Jerry N. Smith has served as the Hazel and William Hough Chief Curator and Interim Executive Director. He was previously Curator of American and European Art to 1950 and Art of the American West at the Phoenix Art Museum. He holds his BA and MA from Arizona State University and his PhD from the University of Kansas, all in art history.

Robin O'Dell returned to the MFA in 2014 after earning her MA in photographic preservation and collections management in the joint program offered by Ryerson University in Toronto and the George Eastman Museum in Rochester. She recently curated *Harold Edgerton: What the Eye Can't See* and selected the images in the Miriam F. Acheson Gallery, now dedicated to examples from the MFA's outstanding photography collection.

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The MFA expresses deep gratitude to the following generous supporters: Mark and Marianne Mahaffey; Bill Edwards Presents, Inc.; Jeff and Penny Vinik; The Margaret Acheson Stuart Society; the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and the City of St. Petersburg Office of Cultural Affairs. The *Tampa Bay Times* and WUSF are the Media Sponsors.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The MFA at 255 Beach Drive N.E. has a world-class collection, with works by Monet, Morisot, Rodin, O'Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, and many other great artists. Also displayed are ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art. Selections from the photography collection, one of the largest and finest in the Southeast, are now on view in a gallery dedicated to the medium. **Kristen A. Shepherd** is the new Executive Director.

Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, until 8 p.m. on Thursday, and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. **Admission is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday.** Regular admission is \$17 for adults, \$15 for those 65 and older, and \$10 for students seven and older, including college students with current I.D. Children under seven and Museum members are admitted free. Groups of 10 or more adults pay only \$12 per person and children \$4 each with prior reservations. The MFA Café is open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. For more information, please call 727.896.2667 or visit mfastpete.org.