

Exhibition at Mount Holyoke College Art Museum features photographs by Joel Meyerowitz



Joel Meyerowitz, Pittsburgh, Carnival and train, 1984. Vintage chromogenic print, gift of Robert and Kathi Steinke.

SOUTH HADLEY, MASS.- The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum is featuring two new exhibitions and two collection spotlights this spring, including a selection of vintage chromogenic prints by renowned photographer Joel Meyerowitz, recently donated to the Museum by a syndicate of photography collectors.

The exhibition explores the period of the artist's career following the publication of his influential book *Cape Light* in 1979.

In 2014, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum received a gift of 98 Joel Meyerowitz photographs from a syndicate of photography collectors. More than 30 vintage color prints from this gift comprise a focused exhibition currently on view at the Museum. The donors include Robert and Kathi Steinke, Chris and Melissa Hughes, Earl and Susan Cohen, Frieder Hofmann, Steve Lamantia, Shaun Lucas, Scott Little, Randy and Mary Kohls, Jerri Mattare, Keith Richenbacher, Jeffrey and Jill Stern, and Abram and Maria Roque-Lopes. The syndicate is led by Robert Steinke.

Joel Meyerowitz first championed color photography over black-and-white in the mid-1960s. "[Black and white] expresses light as a matter of intensity," he wrote in *Cape Light*, "there is no meaning attached to [it]." Meyerowitz's adoption of the vintage Deardorff field view camera in the ensuing decades was motivated by a desire for greater detail in his color work. During summers on Cape Cod—the subject of more than 20 photographs on view—Meyerowitz discovered how light permeated objects and materials." His photographs from this period," notes exhibition curator Hannah W. Blunt, "reflect an interest less in objects than in spaces, or what Meyerowitz called 'fields of force' created by light."

A centerpiece of the exhibition is a group of photographs of land, sea, and sky near Meyerowitz's summer home in Provincetown. These images, part of Meyerowitz's larger Bay/Sky series, explore the effects of light on each layer and particle of the landscape. Also on view are portraits Meyerowitz took of friends, family, and acquaintances (including a luminous photograph of author Norman Mailer) by the Cape Cod shore. While making these images, Meyerowitz focused on subtle gestures and atmospheric variables: the temperature of the light, the moisture in the air flowing through clothes and hair, and how squinting eyes affect the shape of one's face. A number of still lifes and other landscape views are also included in the exhibition.

The title of the exhibition is drawn from Meyerowitz's text to his 1985 photo-essay *A Summer's Day*, where he described his photographs as "fragile paper timeships dusted with information." The source information "dusted" across these photographs is often as intangible as his metaphor suggests: the vibrations of the horizon line, the sunlight electrifying a mop of red curls, or the illusion of a glass vase dissolving into the misty sky behind it.