A Summer Exhibition at the Morgan Showcases Photographers Portraying—and Inventing—the Group

Among Others: Photography and the Group
May 31 to August 18, 2019

New York, NY, Wednesday, April 24, 2019 —
The Morgan Library & Museum presents a new exhibition about photography’s unique capacity to represent the bonds that unite people. From posed group portraits and candid street scenes to collages, constructions, and serial imagery, photographers have used many methods to place people in a shared frame of reference. Opening May 31, 2019, Among Others: Photography and the Group brings together more than sixty exceptional works spanning the 1860s to the present to explore the complexity of a type of image that is often taken for granted. Drawn primarily from the Morgan’s collection, the works in the exhibition include images by Amy Arbus, Eve Arnold, Robert Frank, Peter Hujar, and August Sander.

Among Others presents the seemingly endless possibilities of the group photograph, placing historically important portraits alongside records of significant cultural moments and experiments that helped reinvent the genre. In representations of the group, artist, subjects, and circumstances come together to create an image that might call to mind a loving family, a chance encounter among strangers, an embodiment of the democratic spirit, or a
photographer’s ability to read and respond to a crowd. The photographs in the exhibition come in many formats: not just exhibition prints, snapshots, and posters, but also photo books, painted wooden sculpture, collages, baseball cards, and even a wastepaper basket featuring Richard M. Nixon. In their range and ingenuity, the works pose questions about family, diversity, democracy, representation, and the varieties of visual delight.

One section of the exhibition features candid scenes from public life, such as Robert Frank’s *Trolley, New Orleans* (1955), seen in a large-scale print the artist made around the time it graced the cover of his landmark book, *The Americans* (1959). Also on view are photographs of collective actions that came to define significant cultural moments, such as Eve Arnold’s 1960 photograph of a training school for Black sit-ins and Danny Lyon’s image of Haitian women praying in the month after the collapse of the corrupt regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Photographers took a wide range of approaches to representing the group beyond the arranged sittings of families or civic organizations. Bob Adelman’s *People Wall, World’s Fair, New York* exploits the way IBM’s 1965 attraction cast a spotlight on the social and ethnic diversity of fair attendees. For a 1970 recruitment poster for the Gay Liberation Front, Peter Hujar asked the group’s members to run exuberantly toward him on the street, enacting their slogan, “Come Out!!” Camera artists have often embedded themselves in the action they portray, as Susan Meiselas did when mingling with carnival strippers, first to capture them behind the scenes and then to photograph their audience from a performer’s perspective.

When the subjects are beloved celebrities, the portrait seals a relationship of shared admiration between maker and viewer. In 1965, press photographer Jean-Pierre Ducatez made four images that zeroed in on the lips of each of the Beatles, creating likenesses that appealed directly to dedicated fans. In 1981, Amy Arbus happened to snap a photo of a photogenic group hanging out near Times Square, and only later learned they were members of the Clash and their entourage.
The exhibition features items of “pop photographica” that play radically with the conventions of camera representation. In these pieces, individual portraits are mixed and matched to suit the purposes of board games, collectibles such as cigarette cards, and even psychological tests.

“The Morgan’s photography collection has grown and evolved in many directions since its founding in 2012, always with a dual emphasis on the camera’s creative possibilities and its role in shaping modern sensibilities,” said Colin B. Bailey, Director. “We are excited to present this wide-ranging selection of works, most of which are recent acquisitions and have never been exhibited before at the Morgan.”

Joel Smith, the Morgan’s Richard L. Menschel Curator and Department Head, said, “The group is a subject we’re so accustomed to seeing in photographs, it’s easy to forget that the conventions around it had to be invented, and that they shape our picture of reality. This exhibition invites viewers to explore the many ways images have defined—since long before the selfie—how it looks to belong to a group and what it means to be represented.”

Public Programs

LECTURE
Contemporary Reflections on the Group
Zalika Azim & Joseph Maida

As conceptions of community evolve and technology develops, photographers find new ways to represent the bonds among people. Join Zalika Azim, artist, and Joseph Maida, artist and Chair of the School of Visual Arts BFA Photo and Video Department, as they discuss works in Among Others: Photography and the Group in relation to their own contemporary interpretations of the group in photography. Additional speakers to be announced.

Tuesday, June 4, 6:30 PM*
Tickets: $15; $10 for members, free for students with a valid ID.

*The exhibition Among Others: Photography and the Group will be open at 5:30 pm for program attendees.

FILM
A Great Day in Harlem
Director: Jean Bach
(1994, 60 minutes)

A Great Day in Harlem brings to life a remarkable moment in the history of jazz—a moment in which dozens of America’s jazz legends unexpectedly gathered together for a photograph in 1958 that would become emblematic of the golden age of jazz. By illuminating this single, historic event, the film is a window to an unprecedented era in
music history which addresses broader issues of creativity and community in our own time.

**Friday, August 2, 7 PM**
**Tickets:** Free with museum admission.
*The exhibition Among Others: Photography and the Group will be open for program attendees.

**GALLERY TALKS**

**Among Others: Photography and the Group**
Joel Smith, Richard L. Menschel Curator and Department Head, Photography, & Frances Dorenbaum, Edith Gowin Fellow

**Friday, June 7, 6 PM**
**Friday, July 12, 1 PM**

**Organization and Sponsorship**

Among Others: Photography and the Group is organized by the Morgan Library & Museum. The curators of this exhibition are Joel Smith, Richard L. Menschel Curator and Department Head, Photography & Frances Dorenbaum, Edith Gowin Fellow.

The exhibition is made possible by the support of The Thompson Family Foundation, Inc.

The programs of the Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

**About the Morgan Library & Museum**

A museum and independent research library located in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the personal library of financier, collector, and cultural benefactor Pierpont Morgan. The Morgan offers visitors close encounters with great works of human accomplishment in a setting treasured for its intimate scale and historic significance. Its collection of manuscripts, rare books, music, drawings, and works of art comprises a unique and dynamic record of civilization, as well as an incomparable repository of ideas and of the creative process from 4000 BC to the present.

The Morgan Library & Museum | 225 Madison Avenue | 212.685.0008 | themorgan.org