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MEDIA RELEASE

MoPA Presents
Ansel Adams: A Life's Work
May 23, 2009 - October 4, 2009

(San Diego, CA) - For Immediate Release

EVENT SUMMARY:

The Museum of Photographic Arts (MoPA) in Balboa Park is pleased to present *Ansel Adams: A Life's Work*. The exhibition includes over 80 photographs by the 20th Century master, and celebrates Adams as an artist and conservationist. *A Life's Work* will be on view May 23, 2009 through October 4, 2009, and features an overview of Adam's work from his early years in the Sierra Nevadas and Yosemite Valley to his work in the Japanese Internment Camp at Manzanar, as well as his well-known masterpieces.

Ansel Adams: Life's Work will be running concurrently with *Jo Whaley: Theater of Insects* on view from May 16 through September 27, 2009, as well as *Picturing the Process: Exploring the Art and Science of Photography* on view through July 25, 2009.

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

The exhibition begins with survey of Adams' early years with the Sierra Club (1920s-1930s), where his photographs and essays were first published in the Club's *Bulletin*. 1927 marked a pivotal point for Adams, where he participated in the Sierra Club's annual *High Trip*, which took him to the high country of the Sierra. It was during this trip that he exposed the negative of the iconic image *Monolith, the Face of Half Dome*. Adams describes this photograph as "my first conscious visualization; in my mind's eye, I saw the final image."

It was during this first High Trip that Adams met San Francisco-based arts patron, Albert Bender. Bender took immediate interest in Adam's photographs, and published Adams' first portfolio, *The Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras* (1927). The publication included an edition of 100 portfolios of 18 prints each, 75 were printed.

The exhibition features 15 of the rare *Parmelian* vintage prints, as well as eight

photographs from the 1929 Sierra Club Portfolio.

The exhibition continues with a wide range of representative works from the 1930's and 1940's, including commercial work that the artist did for the YPCCO (Yosemite Park and Curry Company). From 1931 to 1937, Adams was hired by YPCCO, a group of businesses in Yosemite Valley, to photograph various winter sports for an advertising campaign. This opportunity provided a much needed source of income for the artist during the Great Depression. The exhibition also includes other various commercial assignments throughout his career, which Adams clearly separated from his fine art photography, but notes as a vital aspect of his career. In his *Autobiography* he wrote: "I have little use for students or artists who scorn commercial photography as a form of prostitution... Let them pay the bills! ...I struggled with a great variety of assignments through the years. Some I enjoyed, some I detested, but learned from them all."

A Life's Work also includes the powerful and poignant images from the Manzanar Internment Camp. In late 1943 through 1944, Adams visited the camps in central California, where over 10,000 Japanese-Americans were interned during World War II. Adams' intention for this self-assigned project was "to interpret the camp and its people, their daily life and their relationship to their community and their environment," wrote Adams in his *Autobiography*. "As my work progressed, however, I began to grasp the problems of the remarkable readjustment these people had to make... With admirable strength of spirit, the Nisei rose above despondency and make a life for themselves... This was the mood and character I determined to apply to the project."

A Life's Work will feature many of his iconic masterworks, including *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*, as well as his works in color, which he experimented with beginning in the late 1940s.

ABOUT ANSEL ADAMS:

As one of the most celebrated and renowned artists of the 20th century, Ansel Adams expanded the practice and appreciation of photography as no other photographer has before, or since. As an environmentalist and a vital member of the Sierra Club, his efforts as a pioneer and crusader for the preservation and protection of America's natural beauty has been duly celebrated and recognized. In 1980, Adams was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Jimmy Carter. Carter noted that it was "through [Adams'] foresight and fortitude that so much of America has been saved for future Americans." His legacy as an environmental activist continues to mount importance and relevance today, as his photographs and images perpetuates the vital message of preservation and conservation for younger generations.

Through his impressive career as an artist, Ansel Adams advanced the importance to the photographic medium, paving the way for the next generations of artists. As a

stalwart advocate for the medium, he helped organize the first museum photography department at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. He is also responsible for creating the first photography department at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute). His efforts and legacy helped expand the knowledge and practice of photography, for which the world owes him great gratitude and appreciation.

Press Opportunities

Exhibition and installation images are available for press reproduction in various high resolution formats. Please contact Aki Martin, Marketing & Communications Manager at 619-238-7559, ext. 203 or via email (martin@mopa.org) with any press-related needs.

MoPA Information

The Museum of Photographic Arts (MoPA) is one of the few museums in the country devoted to photography, film and video. Since its founding in 1983, MoPA has been dedicated to collecting, preserving and exhibiting the entire spectrum of the photographic medium. The museum's endeavors consistently address cultural, historical and social issues through its exhibitions and public programs.

Visit www.mopa.org for information about exhibitions, programs and special events.

- **Hours:** Tuesday through Sunday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Closed Mondays.
- **Gallery admission:** \$6 adults; \$4 students, seniors and military; FREE to members and children under 12. Admission is free to the public on the second Tuesday of the month.
- **Docent Tours** for student groups (elementary through college) are available free of charge with advance reservations. Tours for non-students are also available, with advance reservations, at a discounted admission rate.

The Museum of Photographic Arts is accredited by the **American Association of Museums** and is a member-supported, private, non-profit institution. Additional support for museum programs is provided in part by the **City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation, the Weingart-Price Fund, the San Diego Foundation, Patrons of the Prado, and the National Endowment for the Arts.**

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