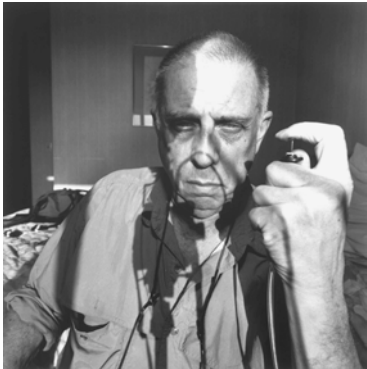


## P r e s s   R e l e a s e



### **Lee Friedlander – the 25<sup>th</sup> Hasselblad Award Winner**

The Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation has selected American photographer Lee Friedlander to receive the 2005 Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography. The prize, consisting of SEK 500,000 (approximately USD 70,000) and a gold medal, will be presented at a ceremony held in Göteborg, Sweden, on November 19, 2005. A new exhibition of Lee Friedlander's work, curated and organized by the Hasselblad Center, will be opened in conjunction with the ceremony.

The Foundation's citation in conjunction with the decision to award the 2005 prize to Lee Friedlander was as follows:

*Lee Friedlander is among the most significant, inventive and influential contemporary photographers, with a lifetime achievement spanning the last fifty years. What distinguishes Friedlander's work is not primarily his technique, but the visual and aesthetic concepts he applies. By recording phenomena of everyday life and by critical observation of the world around him Friedlander has been central in defining a whole genre based on the concept of the "social landscape." His work embodies a "new documentary paradigm", in which stylistic innovations and freedom from established formal practices has influenced the work of subsequent generations of photographers.*

This year's prize committee, which submitted its proposal to the Foundation's board of directors, comprised:

Øivind Storm Bjerke, (chairman) Professor, History of Art, University of Oslo, Norway, Marta Gili, Head of Photography and Visual Arts Department, Fundació "la Caixa", Barcelona, Spain, Gilane Tawadros, Director, Institute of International Visual Arts (inIVA), London, United Kingdom, Peter Weiermair, Director, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy and Thomas Weski, Chief Curator, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany.

Lee Friedlander belongs to a generation of American photographers characterized by having at one and the same time reinvented the concept of documentary photography and added a strong individual and personal touch to their descriptions of the most common everyday objects and environments. Friedlander has been pivotal in creating acceptance for this kind of photography as one of the most significant contributions to art in the twentieth century.

Lee Friedlander's first one-man show was held at the International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House in 1963. In 1967, along with Garry Winogrand and Diane Arbus, he was one of the three artists selected by John Szarkowski for the influential exhibition "New Documents" at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Friedlander's work has since been exhibited all over the world. He is represented in the main collections of photography in Europe and America and included in all the major books on modern and contemporary photography.

The work of Friedlander has been interpreted in the light of the concept of "the social landscape", referring not to his art being an art of landscape photography, but to the interaction between human beings and their environments. He finds his themes mainly in public spaces such as the streets of cities, airports and parks, and he has also photographed nature as marked by mankind. His preferred themes are the most quotidian – they can even be banal, and utterly undramatic. Friedlander shuns the sensational, the freakish and every kind of cheap effect. He prefers understatement and irony, and he is non-judgmental in his description of the social scenery, creating a convincing history of America as he has seen it. Friedlander describes his subject as "the American social landscape and its conditions".

Friedlander can be counted among the photographic artists who contributed, during the 1950s and 60s to the inclusion of photography into the institution of art, through practicing a critical approach to photography: critical in the modernist sense of self-critical practice revealing and making conscious the specific qualities and properties of the medium, and also relating his own efforts to its history.

Although the label "straight" can be attached to his work, this does not prevent it from being highly personal.

However, Friedlander's work is not personal in an eccentric way, on the contrary – few photographers in this idiom have managed to as great an extent as Friedlander to combine the concept of "straight photography" with a strong personal sensitivity to and empathy with his subjects and with the clear formal organization of his pictures.

In his work Friedlander makes the onlooker conscious of the process of transforming the chaos of patterns and shapes in the three-dimensional world into orderly, perfectly sensible shapes on the two-dimensional pictorial plane. As such, his works make us conscious of the problematic nature of representation disrupting traditional conventions in photography. Still, his pictures are not dry theoretical statements. His photography is a pleasure for the eye, a visual feast. His use of shadows, reflections in storefronts, signs, distortions of accustomed perspectives and intersections of parts of human bodies, cars, trees, buildings, etc., can turn the most trivial subject into a surreal experience; giving the view the frustrating feeling that there are obstacles in the way, preventing the revelation of a subject we can sense but not properly see.

Friedlander has developed a personal style, which has been characterized as witty, direct and clear and at the same time open-ended in terms of interpretation of the work in question.

Lee (Norman) Friedlander was born in Aberdeen, Washington, on July 14, 1934. He began photographing in 1948 at the age of fourteen. He studied photography at Art Center School, Los Angeles from 1953 to 1955, receiving private tuition from the artist Edward Kaminski, who advised him to pursue his career in New York. Friedlander moved to New York, where he became part of a circle of photographic artists including Walker Evans, Garry Winogrand, Robert Frank and Helen Levitt. As a freelance photographer beginning in 1955, he worked for *Esquire*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Holiday*, *McCall's*, *Collier's* and *Art in America*, among other publications. He also made portraits of the jazz musicians he counted among his friends. Many of these portraits became album covers. He has been married to Maria DePaoli since 1958 and they have two children and two grandchildren.

Friedlander has received many accolades including Guggenheim Fellowships in 1960, 62, 77, a National Endowment for the Arts Award in 1952, the Medal of the City of Paris, 1981, the Edward MacDowell Medal, 1986, and the MacArthur Foundation Medal, 1990. He was made Mellon Professor of Fine Arts at Rice University, Houston, Texas in 1977. The Museum of Modern Art in New York will present a retrospective exhibition of his work in the summer of 2005.

Friedlander's publications include: *Work from the Same House*, with Jim Dine, 1969, *Self Portrait*, 1970, *The American Monument*, 1976, *Lee Friedlander. Photographs*, 1978, *Flowers and Trees*, 1981, *Factory Valleys*, 1982, *Nudes*, 1991, *Letters from the People*, 1993, *The Desert Seen*, 1996, *New York*, 2000, *The Little Screens*, 2001, *Kitaj*, 2002, *At Work*, 2002, *Stems*, 2003, *Family*, 2004. *Sticks & Stones: Architectural America*, 2004.

## The Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation

The Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation was instituted by a bequest from Erna and Victor Hasselblad. The purpose of the Foundation is to promote scientific education and research in the natural sciences and photography. A number of projects are granted funds annually, amounting to approximately SEK

15 million. One of the awards, the annual international award for outstanding achievement in photography, which is being given this year to Lee Friedlander, has come to attract a great deal of media attention.

In 1989, the Foundation opened the Erna and Victor Hasselblad Photographic Center (the Hasselblad Center) in Göteborg, Sweden. The Center maintains an ongoing exhibition and lecture program. In January 1996, the new exhibition hall housed at the Göteborg Museum of Art was inaugurated. A photographic research and reference library, open to researchers and students, is being established, as is a collection of photographs including photos by all the Hasselblad Award winners and others. The exhibit of Lee Friedlander's work to be opened on the occasion of the award ceremony on November 19, 2005 will be organized by the Hasselblad Center.

Göteborg, March 8, 2005

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