

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, 27 July 2021

LEE FRIEDLANDER

Retrospective

C/O Berlin presents the **Lee Friedlander . Retrospective** from **Sep 11 to Dec 3, 2021**. The **public opening** takes place on **Sep 10, 2021** from **21:00–00:00** at the Amerika Haus in Hardenbergstraße 22-24, 10623 Berlin.

A motorcyclist races straight towards us, headlights on full beam, commanding our attention and carrying the smell of asphalt and gasoline from a TV screen into a non-descript hotel room. This photo is taken from Lee Friedlander's *Little Screens* series, which sees TV sets make their triumphant entry into the daily lives of Americans, as a mass means of explaining the world. Its 1963 publication in *Harper's Bazaar* paved the way for Friedlander's later success as an artist who is now hailed as one of the most influential post-1950 photographers.

Hosted by C/O Berlin, the *Lee Friedlander . Retrospective* exhibition is now celebrating its German debut, showcasing the American master's six-decade long body of work – from his beginnings as a young photographer, snapping jazz legends for record covers, to his first non-commercial projects while on extensive road trips throughout the US and Europe, through to his photographic explorations of his own self and his family. Despite their sheer number, his photographs are highly recognizable and unique in their core visual features. Friedlander, who has yet to go a day without shooting a photo, combines intuitive experimentation with an impressive (re)collection of cultural references, utilizing public spaces to depict narratives of US history, store fronts and street scenes to make social observations. In his self-portraits, he deliberately resorts to devices such as silhouettes and mirror images, revolutionizing a genre in which such methods were long shunned and dismissed as basic mistakes. Many a time Friedlander manages to shift the rigid boundaries of the medium to his benefit. By seamlessly combining stylistic devices reminiscent of his mentors Eugène Atget, Robert Frank or Walker Evans with various approaches rooted in aesthetic formalism, he creates new structures that become an integral part of his work. In terms of image composition, the much-quoted 'decisive moment' (Henri Cartier-Bresson) is less of a concern to him than 'decisive framing': the determining photographic moment yields its central role to a construction made up of multiple image layers. Single elements assembled by association creating new levels of meaning. The emotions he arouses in his viewers are as multi-faceted as his work – ranging from delight, to contemplation, right through to unsettlement.

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The *Lee Friedlander . Retrospective* exhibition offers a complete, chronological overview of his artistic endeavors. Friedlander is known for compiling his work into series, which are expanded and regularly updated over several years. Alongside the projects that produced such highly acclaimed books as *The Little Screens* (1963), *The American Monument* (1976) and *America by Car* (2010), this exhibition features a wide range of portraits, self-portraits, family photographs, nature shots and cityscapes. Over time, his images have acquired an even deeper meaning. They are currently considered some of the most iconic photographs of everyday life in the US, bearing testimony to their ongoing validity as representations of America's social landscapes. 35 years after his first exhibition at the US Information Center of the Amerika Haus in Berlin, C/O Berlin is now unveiling 350 photographs and 50 books as well as miscellaneous material providing a variety of insights into Lee Friedlander's style-defining body of work. This exhibition was curated by Carlos Gollonet, Fundación MAPFRE, in collaboration with Felix Hoffmann, C/O Berlin Foundation. Supported by C/O Berlin Friends.

Lee Friedlander (*1934, USA) started shooting photographs at 14 years old and attended the Los Angeles Art Center School, studying under Edward Kaminski until 1955. He then moved to New York where he became acquainted with Diane Arbus, Robert Frank and Garry Winogrand. In 1960 and 1962, he was awarded Guggenheim Foundation fellowships, allowing him to pursue non-commercial projects. As a representative of street photography, he is known for engaging with urban spaces and situations of everyday life, while also staging intricate self-portraits. In 1967, he took part in the legendary *New Documents* show curated by John Szarkowski at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. In 2005, the MoMA hosted a comprehensive retrospective of his works. Friedlander's photo books such as *Self Portrait* (1970), *The American Monument* (1976), *Nudes* (1991) and *America by Car* (2010) have long since become milestones in their field. In 2005, he received the Hasselblad Foundation Award. Friedlander's works are on display in the most prominent photographic collections throughout the world.

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Exhibition

Sep 11 – Dec 3, 2021

Press Tour

Sep 10, 2021 . 11:00

Opening

Sep 10, 2021 . 21:00–00:00

Opening Hours

Daily . 11:00–20:00

Admission

10 euros . reduced 6 euros

Organizer

C/O Berlin Foundation

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#LeeFriedlander

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