

New exhibition at İstanbul Modern Photography Gallery features 54 photographers

# Gaze - The Changing Face of Portrait Photography

*Gaze - The Changing Face of Portrait Photography* to be held at the **İstanbul Modern Photography Gallery** from **October 3, 2012** to **January 20, 2013** sheds light on the **160 years** of portrait photography through **72 works** by **54 photographers**, on loan from the Bank of America Art Collection as part of the company's Art in our Communities™ programme.

Bringing together artists associated with many of the major developments in the medium of photography, this exhibition explores the evolution of the photographic portrait in terms of technique, content and aesthetics. The exhibition *Gaze* traces changes in society, mind-sets, and artistic tendencies throughout the history of photography, from the first examples of portraiture to the present day. Early studio photography, some of the first depictions of war, pioneers in the genres of photojournalism and documentary photography, as well as well-known contemporary artists, are brought together through this exhibition.

Curated by **Sena Çakırkaya**, the show not only examines portraiture but also traces the social and artistic transformations that have taken place since the emergence of photography to the present. Artists featuring in the exhibition are: Dieter Appelt, **Shelby Lee Adams**, Henry Clay Anderson, **Diane Arbus**, Richard Avedon, **Tina Barney**, Erwin Blumenfeld, **Mathew B. Brady**, George Brassai, **Manuel Alvarez Bravo**, Harry Callahan, **Julia Margaret Cameron**, Chan Chao, **Rineke Dijkstra**, Andre Adolphe Eugene Disderi, **Mike Disfarmer**, Walker Evans, **Roger Fenton**, Gerrit Petrus Fieret, **Robert Frank**, Lee Friedlander, **Alexander Gardner**, Ben Gest, **Emmet Gowin**, Philippe Halsman, **David Octavius and Robert Adamson Hill**, Lewis Wickes Hine, **David Hockney**, Peter Hujar, **Yousuf Karsh**, William Klein, **Gertrude Käsebier**, Nikki S. Lee, **Hellen Van Meene**, Lisette Model, **Zwelethu Mthethwa**, Nicholas Nixon, **Arno Nollen**, Bill Owens, **Man Ray**, James Ross & John Thomson, **August Sander**, Gary Schneider, **Fazal Sheikh**, Malick Sidibé, **Aaron Siskind**, W. Eugene Smith, Albert **S. Southworth & Josiah Johnson Hawes**, Edward Steichen, **Paul Strand**, Thomas Struth, **Roman Vishniac**, Weegee (Arthur H. Fellig), **Carrie Mae Weems**.

This exhibition is part of **Bank of America Merrill Lynch's** art loaning programme: **Art in our Communities™**. The company's art collection has grown in scope and size in recent decades with artworks from various legacy institutions, and has been converted into a unique resource from which museums

and non-profit galleries may borrow complete or customised exhibitions at no cost, allowing them to expand their programmes, reach new audiences and generate vital revenue. Since its launch in late 2008, more than 50 exhibitions have been loaned to museums around the world.

### **Press Meeting**

Chief Curator of İstanbul Modern **Levent Çalikoğlu**, **Ebru Draman** representing **Bank of America Merrill Lynch**, and curator **Sena Çakırkaya** attended the press meeting of the exhibition.

Chief Curator of İstanbul Modern, **Levent Çalikoğlu**, indicated that since the day it was founded İstanbul Modern has been holding joint exhibitions and presenting diverse collections in collaboration with international museums, art institutions, and collections: *“By presenting examples of transformations that occur in photography both in Turkey and in the world, İstanbul Modern Photography Gallery brings to the audience reflections of international art trends in photography and the works of prominent modern and contemporary photographers. Boasting one of the few archives of Turkey, our photography department constantly adds new works to its collection which encompasses different periods and approaches. At the same time, we hold exhibitions that reveal photographic creativity in Turkey and abroad and present works both from our collection and examples that offer innovative and diverse points of view. Today, with the show Gaze, we are delighted to exhibit a rich selection made possible through Bank of America Merrill Lynch’s Art in our Communities™ program. We would like to thank Bank of America Merrill Lynch which provided us with the opportunity to present these impressive examples from the history of photography.”*

**Ebru Draman**, Diversity and Inclusion Leader of Bank of America Merrill Lynch said: *“Bank of America Merrill Lynch has been operating in Turkey since 2006 and our dedication to Turkish cultural life and the local community is unwavering. We are therefore delighted to partner with the İstanbul Modern on ‘Gaze: The Changing Face of Portrait Photography,’ from The Bank of America Collection, and would like to thank them for giving us this opportunity to share our collection with an international audience. We hope that visitors will enjoy the wide variety of portraits on view, which speak for the diversity and breadth of human experience over the last 160 years”.*

Curator **Sena Çakırkaya** believes that the portrait is the gaze that reaches out to us through time and that the gaze of the individual posing in front of the optical lens creates a representation of their identity through the construction of their own gaze and their own image; aware that they are being photographed, they leave a message to the future viewer. *“The portrait stands at the intersection of gazes, namely those of the photographer, the subject, and the viewer. The encounters of these gazes at different times and in various spaces provide boundless possibilities for meaning. The exhibition presents a view of the diverse strata of portraiture, including the construction of identities through sets and costumes, photography’s struggle to be acknowledged as an art form, the*

*confrontation of the realities of the time, and today's politics of identity and power."*

### **"A tangled, complicated web of gazes"**

In her article *Let Us Look Deeply* from the catalogue of the exhibition of *Gaze – The Changing Face of Portrait Photography*, **Shannon Perich**, curator of the Photographic History Collection at the National Museum of American History, analyzes the history of photography through the works in the show. Perich explains the show as follows: "*These photographs employ color, daily life, familiarity, intimacy, introspection, performance for the camera, and trust, dancing between levels of authenticity and truths about relationships among the sitters, the photographers and the viewers—that tangled, complicated web of gazes that inspired the title of this iteration of portraits from the Bank of America Collection.*"

### **Exhibition Activities**

An area is reserved in the exhibition for taking interactive photos based on **Philippe Halsman's** *Jump* series. Pictures of viewers taken as they jump on a platform set next to the portrait of Richard Nixon from the *Jump* series are simultaneously projected on a screen on the wall. Thus the viewer becomes part of the exhibition, one of the famous portraits on the wall. Selected photos will be published in İstanbul Modern's Facebook album.

Through QR Codes placed next to certain photographs in the exhibition, visitors can access links with background information on artists, series, or photographs.

In addition to the four photographs in the exhibition, all of the portraits in Nicholas Nixon's *Brown Sisters* series, begun in 1975, will be screened on a digital frame. For 36 years Nixon has been annually taking pictures of his wife Bebe Brown and her three sisters, thus recording the evolution of both the siblings and their relationship to one another over the years.

İstanbul Modern's Education and Social Projects Department has designed activity sheets for children especially for the exhibition *Gaze*. Four different activity sheets have been prepared for the exhibition which comprises four sections; the sheets have crossword puzzles on the front and information about the exhibition on the back. 7-12-year-olds visiting the exhibition with their teachers or families can either solve a single crossword puzzle about one section of the exhibition or solve all four puzzles and complete the exhibition tour, learning about portrait photography and artists in the process. Furthermore, guided tours are carried out every day of the week except Mondays for children who wish to visit the exhibition *Gaze* with an expert.

### **Different periods of photographic history in four sections**

The exhibition comprises four sections displayed in chronological order, revealing through photographs from different periods and geographies how portrait photography has changed conceptually. These sections, entitled **Fiction of the**

**Self, Inspirations, Candid Lives, and Subjective Reality**, trace the steps in the evolution of photography from its emergence as a technical innovation to its development into an art form, a tool to document reality, and a field in which conceptual works are produced.

### **Fiction of the Self**

In the earliest part of the history of photography, with the development of technology, efforts to define photography's role in society and the arts predominated. The diversity of portraits, as mentioned by Shannon Perich, "*expresses the exploration of processes by photographers creating and establishing artistic standards, and exhibits the public's and consumer's enthusiasm for consumption and distribution within certain cultural contexts.*" As was the case when painting and photography first emerged, portraiture too ceased to be a privilege of the aristocracy or bourgeoisie, and, thanks to developments in technique and technology, it accompanied the process of political and social power spreading to the masses. During that period, having one's portrait taken had symbolic meaning: the portrait ceased to be a class privilege of the aristocracy or bourgeoisie and rendered visible the new identities and lifestyles in newly-emerging democracies. The artistic mystery photography had in its early years, due to the fact that it was mostly practiced by painters and required technical know-how, was gradually supplanted by the mass production of studios. From then on, anyone could become whomever they wished in these studios accoutered with classy furniture. During the golden age of studio photography, everyone could pose as anyone in studios with all kinds of different sets. While thanks to photography it had become possible to experience what until then would have been unthinkable, such as having eye contact with celebrities or standing on a battlefield, the resulting abundance of images marked the beginnings of the apathy towards such visualisations that persists today.

This section of the exhibition, which begins with the first great masters of photography in America, **Albert Sands Southworth** (1811-1894) and **Josiah Johnson Hawes** (1808-1901), features works by the French photographer **André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri** (1819-1889) who earned worldwide renown in the 1880s for creating illustrated *cartes de visite* (calling cards) using a method to serially produce portraits which also attracted the middle classes; the two Scottish partners **James Ross** (-1878) and **John Thomson** (1837-1921) who were among the first to adopt the albumen process in 1849 and were granted a Royal Warrant as "Photographers at Edinburgh to Her Majesty"; **Roger Fenton** (1819-1869), the most influential photographer in England in the 1850s, the first official photographer for the British Museum, and the first war photographer; Scottish painter **David Octavius Hill** (1802-1870) and photographer **Robert Adamson** (1821-1848) who produced some of the earliest works of photography; and **Alexander Gardner** (1821-1882) who photographed portraits of soldiers during the American Civil War (1861-1865).

### **Inspirations**

In the works featured in this section it can be observed that photography drew away from the painting's technical and artistic style and attempted to develop its

own artistic approach. Until 1914, when World War I broke out, many photographic processes coexisted, and new ones emerged frequently. With the Industrial Revolution's contributions of cheaper materials and wider distribution, portraiture became accessible to all. When the 20<sup>th</sup> century arrived, dynamic, contentious, and shifting conversations arose about photography as art; Pictorialism was followed by Dadaism, Cubism, and Surrealism. Though the Pictorialist approach, technical interventions, and special materials drew photography away from its unique characteristics and closer to painting, and over time this form of photography gave way to the exploitation of the inherent artistic qualities of the photographic medium. The photographer's gaze came to the fore with all its individuality - his/her composition, use of light, and the interaction he/she established with the subject all reflect the development of photography's own aesthetic language and its struggle to be acknowledged as an art form.

This section includes: **Julia Margaret Cameron** (1815-1879) who moved in the highest circles of society in Victorian England, and, drawing inspiration from Renaissance painters, photographed the intellectuals and leaders of the day thus creating a photographic legacy that remains one of Britain's most treasured; **Gertrude Käsebier** (1852-1934) who, as one of the rare renowned woman photographers of the late nineteenth century, was influential in encouraging women to pursue a career in photography; American photographer **Edward Steichen** (1879-1973) who became established as one of the best photographers of his time through his tremendously influential style, which came into its own when he became chief photographer of Condé Nast Publications in 1923; **Paul Strand** (1890-1976), one of the founders of the Photo League in New York; **Erwin Blumenfeld** (1897-1969) who, influenced by the Dada movement in the 1920s, made waves with his exuberant and cleverly produced images; **Man Ray** (1890-1976), the only American member of the Paris Surrealist movement, the avant-garde representative of Surrealist photography; Mexican photographer **Manuel Álvarez Bravo** (1902-2002) who was fascinated by Pictorialism and then Cubism and later inspired by the Surrealists; **William Eugene Smith** (1918-1978) who became a full member of Magnum in 1957; and **Harry Callahan** (1912-1999) who used everyday subjects from architecture to family members to transform them into simple, unrecognizable forms.

### **Candid Lives**

The social, economic, and political developments between the two world wars led to great changes in people's everyday lives and perceptions. Photography turned its face to realism in order to record the changes occurring in people's lives, to reveal the effects of war on ordinary people, and to capture celebrities at moments when they were abstracted from fame. With the explosion in mass media, press photography gained prominence.

Artistic movements, technological developments, historical events, and political, social, and cultural changes affected both the image and word of photography as it did Modernism. At the same time, photography manifested its power to document life, transform society and enable individuals to confront the realities of their time. When ordinary people discovered that they had the power to represent, through snapshots of the city, of life, or the frank gaze of celebrities abstracted

from fame, this zeitgeist was reflected in photographs with all its authenticity. From then on both photographer and model challenged the realities of the time as if defying it through their gaze and stance.

Beginning with **August Sander** (1876-1964), who created an innovative art form for the working class and thus revealed social tensions and class relations, this section includes the following artists: **Lewis Wickes Hine** (1874-1940) who took photographs for the National Child Labor Committee for a sociological study called the Pittsburgh Survey (1907–1908) and, after World War I, for the American Red Cross in Europe, and thus led the effort to establish documentary photography as a tool for social change and reform; **Walker Evans** (1903-1975) who became widely recognized as the progenitor of the documentary photographic tradition in the U.S. and whose images of buildings, indigenous peoples and a shifting environment captured the spirit of the country during the Great Depression; **Roman Vishniac** (1887-1990) whose greatest photographic legacy was as a social documentarian; **Fazal Sheikh** (1965) who focuses on the plight of exiles, refugees and those who endure prejudice and abuse in East Africa, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Brazil, Cuba and India; **Aaron Siskind** (1903-1991) whose abstract expressionist style recalls the work of both the sculptor Alexander Calder and his good friend, the painter Franz Kline, and whose photographs were to provide a source of inspiration for many other painters; **Malick Sidibé** (1935 or 1936) who became the first photographer to receive the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale in 2007 and whose work forms an important document of that period in West African history; **Mike Disfarmer** (1884-1959) who recorded the lives of American farmers at a volatile time, when the Great Depression yielded to World War II; **Diane Arbus** (1923-1971) who through her photographs of the marginalized elements of society left an enduring legacy that shows the development of a new visual language; **Robert Louis Frank** (1924) who produced a seminal oeuvre that turned the mirror on the contradictory culture of 1950s America; **George Brassai (Gyula Halász)** (1899-1984) who captured the lives of Parisians through night photography and took portraits of friends, including Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, and Henri Matisse; **Lisette Model** (1901-1983), one of the best street photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; **William Klein** (1928), one of the great iconoclasts of American postwar photography whose experiments with mixed media made him one of the most innovative fashion photographers in the late 1950s and 1960s; **Weegee (Arthur H. Fellig)** (1899-1968) who took photographs of crime scenes at night and explored themes such as circus performers, freaks, and life on the street; **Richard Avedon** (1923-2004) whose oeuvre includes the best-known figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and whose images of miners, cowboys, drifters, and mental health patients make the viewer confront the model; **Yousuf Karsh** (1908-2002), one of the most highly regarded photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who revealed the “inward power” of the most famous characters of the 1940s through to the 1990s; **Lee Friedlander** (1934) whose career began in 1956 in New York with portraits for jazz album covers for Atlantic Records; **Philippe Halsman** (1906-1979), one of the best portrait photographers of France, who photographed many well-known artists and writers, including Andre Gide, Marc Chagall, Le Corbusier, and Andre Malraux, using a twin-lens reflex camera that he designed himself; **Shelby Lee Adams** (1950), the environmental portrait photographer who captured images of Appalachian family life; **Henry Clay**

**Anderson** (1911–1998) who despite his focus on the everyday lives of his time also produced works with strong political overtones; **Emmet Gowin** (1941) who focused on family life in Virginia and used his own family and their relations with their immediate environment to create a sense of place through photography; and **Bill Owens** (1938) who astutely recorded the customs, symbols, and social relationships that characterized American middle-class culture in the 1970s.

### **Subjective Reality**

The idea that identity is socially constructed through representations caught in contemporary art and the social sciences led to the concept of “the gaze” to be considered from different angles as well. The gaze, which can become a surveillance tool for the government, for male domination, or orientalist voyeurism, can never be neutral. Thus, contemporary photography also began to explore the representational power shaped by the gaze and therefore became a tool that reveals the diverse meanings behind images. Today, portrait photography achieves its final form in the mind of the viewer through the questions it poses pertaining to geography, sexuality, private life, migration, and art history. The portrait has become performance and the individual has now become the viewer of his/her own cultural image.

This final section begins with **Dieter Appelt** (1935) who has mined the themes of life, death and the transmission of memory and experience to create images in which he explores the relationship between structure, space and the body. The section continues with: **Arno Nollen** (1964) whose personal obsessions, such as his doubts, aversions and feelings of tenderness, are made manifest in his works and frequently echo the feelings of his subjects; **Peter Hujar** (1934-1987), who is most associated with his black-and-white portraits of New York City’s avant-garde stars, also photographed nudes, animals and the streets of nighttime Manhattan and is one of the most important American photographers of the 1970s and early 1980s; **Gary Schneider** (1954) who produces “portraits” that challenge conventional notions of portraiture and likeness; **Nicholas Nixon** (1947) who in his series *The Brown Sisters*, which he began in 1975, captured a single annual portrait of his wife Bebe and her three sisters consistently posed in the same order, thus offering an ever-evolving portrait of the siblings and their relationship to one another; **Thomas Struth** (1954) who has been engaged in streets and architecture for 40 years, who started to produce family portraits, both in color and black and white in the mid-1980s, who produced a series focusing on anonymous viewers looking at iconic works of art in museums; **Tina Barney** (1945) who uses theatrical devices to reflect the trappings of fortune and the interactions between people; **Ben Gest** (1975) who mostly concentrates on frustrated parents, bored children and lonely housewives in domestic environments of America and thus challenges the traditions of portrait and documentary photography; **Rineke Dijkstra** (1959), whose portraits, photographed at different moments in time, document moments of physical and psychological transition; and **Carrie Mae Weems** (1953) who adapts archival images in order to trace the treatment of African Americans over more than a century and produces photographic series that scrutinize subjectivity and expose pernicious stereotypes.

The exhibition ends with works by: **Chan Chao (1966)** who, hoping to bring a greater awareness to the democracy movement in Burma, documented students fighting Burma's military regime resulting in intimate portraits that highlight the singular characteristics of his subjects; **Zwelethu Mthethwa (1960)** who, to demonstrate the stark contrasts and divisions in South Africa, photographs black South Africans in color, as dignified and defiant, even under social duress; **Nikki S. Lee (1970)** who dresses up as characters from different American subcultures and interacts with these groups in their natural surroundings to explore sociology and look at how relationships affect identity; **David Hockney (1937)** who experimented with Polaroid composites that evolved into borderless photographs to create energetic photomontages which are experimental in their use of printing and photocopying as a means to explore multiple-point perspectives, reminiscent of Cubism; and **Hellen van Meene (1972)** whose images depict adolescents, usually girls, as well as ordinary people from the street whom she guides and directs in order to evoke a feeling of otherworldliness

### **About Bank of America Merrill Lynch and the Arts**

Developing substantive solutions for social and environmental challenges is at the core of Bank of America Merrill Lynch's mission, and the arts and culture platform is a key component of the company's integrated corporate responsibility strategy.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch helps a broad spectrum of arts programmes thrive, encompassing sponsorships, community grants and loans to museums from the company's own art collection. The Bank of America Merrill Lynch Art Conservation Project provides grants for the restoration of paintings, sculptures, archaeological or architectural pieces that are significant to the cultural heritage of a country or region or important to the history of art in order to preserve them for future generations.

Recent and upcoming sponsorships include, *Americans in Florence: Sargent and the American Impressionists* at the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (March – July 2012), *Jeff Koons: The Painter & The Sculptor* at Schirn Kunsthalle and the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt (June – September 2012) and *Roy Lichtenstein* at Tate Modern, London, opening in February 2013. The company is Season Sponsor of the Old Vic Theatre in London, as well as Global Sponsor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which travelled to Russia and Italy this year.

Through the company's Art in Our Communities<sup>®</sup> programme, the Bank of America Collection has been converted into a unique community resource. The collection has grown in size and scope in recent decades with artworks from numerous legacy institutions, and offers museums and non-profit galleries the opportunity to borrow complete or customised exhibitions at no cost. This helps to secure vital revenue for those institutions that may lack sufficient resources to fully curate and manage exhibitions on their own, and also guarantees that the collection is shared with as wide an audience as possible. Since its launch in late 2008, more than 50 exhibitions have been loaned to museums around the world. Shows in 2012 include *Conversations* at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) in Dublin, *Shared Space*, part of PhotoEspaña 2012, at the Real Jardín Botánico

in Madrid (June – July 2012), *Andy Warhol: The Portfolios* at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (June – September 2012) travelling to the Museo del Novecento in Milan in October 2013, and *Gaze: The Changing Face of Portrait Photography*, at Istanbul Museum of Modern Art (October 2012 – January 2013).

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