

Photography and Film Visionary Robert Frank Launches US Exhibition Tour at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts

Robert Frank: Books and Films, 1947–2016,

January 29-February 11, 2016

Tisch School of the Arts / New York University

Department of Photography and Imaging

Film Works Screenings, Michelson Theater, Department of Cinema Studies

January 29, 6-10pm; January 30, 10am-11pm



Robert Frank, Tunnel (video still), color and black & white, 4 minutes, 2005. © Robert Frank

Robert Frank (b. 1924, Zurich) is one of the pre-eminent figures of twentieth-century photography. With his innovative approach to technique and subject matter and through his personal viewpoint, Frank has revolutionized documentary photography and redefined the aesthetics of the still and moving image. *Robert Frank: Books and Films, 1947–2016* is not a retrospective, but a volatile experience focusing on Frank's output as a book- and filmmaker. The exhibition presents for the first time his complete restored films.

Conceived by Robert Frank and Gerhard Steidl, the exhibition is as bold, accessible and humble as Frank's work itself, and has been designed to enable particularly younger generations to engage with his practice. Frank's films and photobooks are placed in the overarching context of his photographs, which are presented in an immediate and straightforward way: printed in sequences of four to five on up to three-meter-long paper banners that are installed directly onto the wall without frames. The exhibition spans Frank's entire artistic career, from 1947 until now.

When Frank left Switzerland for New York City in 1947, he brought with him a handmade book of photographs as his professional portfolio. It was his first exploration into the ways in which the juxtaposition of photographs could convey meaning. Since then the photobook has become one of his preferred media. Without words, narrative or explanatory captions, the power of his sequences lies in the combined presence of his images. The exhibition presents 24 books, all of which were meticulously designed by Frank himself, including *Portfolio* (1947), *Peru* (1948), *Black White and Things* (1952), his highly celebrated *The Americans* (1958 and 1959), and his most recent book *Was haben wir gesehen / What we have seen* (to be published in January 2016).

Frank's masterful handling of sequencing images makes his turn to filmmaking in the late 1950s a logical progression: "A decision: I put my Leica in a cupboard. Enough of lying in wait, pursuing, sometimes catching the essence of the black and the white, the knowledge where God is. I make films. Now I speak to the people in my viewfinder. Not simple and not especially successful." Frank has since produced films and videos between the boundaries of documentary and fiction. The exhibition presents for the first time Frank's entire filmic output, produced between 1959 and 2008, including *Pull My Daisy* (1959), *Me and My Brother* (1968), *This Song for Jack* (1983), *True Story* (2004), and *Fernando* (2008). All film screenings will take place in a two-day marathon at Tisch School of the Arts' Michelson Theater (in conjunction with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) in the Department of Cinema Studies Friday January 29 from 6-10pm and Saturday January 30 from 10am-10-30pm.

Robert Frank: Books and Films, 1947–2016 at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University marks the launch of the exhibition's US tour. Organized by Steidl Verlag, the show will visit up to fifty universities, art schools, museums and other non-profit spaces worldwide, with the aim of doing justice to Frank's life and work. Each venue receives its own set of exhibition prints. By agreement with Robert Frank, all paper banners are to be disposed of after display to ensure that the exhibition is strictly not for profit. The show premiered at Anna Leonowens Gallery, NSCAD University, Halifax, Canada (2014), and has subsequently been presented at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich, Germany (2014); Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2015); and Fotoistanbul, Istanbul (2015). Upcoming venues in 2016 include Leipzig, Germany; Appenzell, Switzerland; and Tokyo.

The exhibition catalogue, edited by Alex Rühle, has been produced in cooperation with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a distinguished German newspaper read by 1.43 million people daily. The catalogue is presented in a newspaper format, using the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as a template, and features several double-page prints of Frank's photographs that fold out as posters. The collaboration between the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and Steidl Verlag has facilitated low production costs and the retail price of \$5.00 USD, designed to make the catalogue affordable for as many as possible. Its English version will be published in January 2016.

About **The Department of Photography & Imaging**

The Department of Photography & Imaging (DPI) at Tisch is a four-year bachelor of fine arts (B.F.A.) program. Founded in 1982, it is centered on making and understanding images grounded in the history of photography through to the evolving media climates of today. Students explore photo-based imagery as both personal expression and cultural dialogue and address the problematic construction of the social, political and aesthetic image.

About **NYU Tisch School of the Arts**

For 50 years, the Tisch School of the Arts has drawn on the vast resources of New York City and New York University to create an extraordinary training ground for artists, scholars of the arts, and creative entrepreneurs. One of the world's leading centers of undergraduate and graduate study in the arts, the Tisch School of the Arts offers acting, dance, design, performance, film, animation, writing for musical theatre, stage, screen & television, preservation, recorded music, photography, interactive media, games, and public policy.

Robert Frank: Books and Films, 1947–2016 will be on view at 721 Broadway January 29 - February 11, 2016 in the Gulf + Western Gallery and Riese Family Lounge in the Tisch Lobby as well as the Eighth Floor Galleries. Hours are from 10AM-7PM weekdays, and noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. The exhibition is open to the public and admission is free. A photo ID is required when entering the buildings. For further information, visit www.tisch.nyu.edu/photo/events/robert-frank, email tischphoto@nyu.edu or call [212.998.1930](tel:212.998.1930)

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