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OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES NEW DIGITAL ARCHIVE DEDICATED TO WORLD-RENOWNED DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER DOROTHEA LANGE

Drawing From Her Personal Archive, a Part of the OMCA Collection, the New Dorothea Lange Digital Archive Will Present a Curated Selection of Lange's Notable Photographs, Negatives, Field Notes, and More, Highlighting Her Significant Documentation of the 20th Century

Though Rooted in Historical Events, Lange's Photography Continues to Inspire New Generations of Artists and Activists Through Its Powerful Connections to Present-Day Social Issues

The Dorothea Lange Digital Archive is Made Possible by a Grant from the Henry Luce Foundation

(OAKLAND, CA) August 5, 2020—Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) announces the launch of the **Dorothea Lange Digital Archive**, a new online experience showcasing the work of world-renowned documentary photographer Dorothea Lange. Drawn from Lange's personal archive, which was **gifted to OMCA over 50 years ago in 1965**, and made possible by a generous grant from the **Henry Luce Foundation**, the Digital Archive brings together a **curated selection of photographs, personal quotes, and historical context** illustrating some of Lange's most notable documentary projects.

As the **keeper of Lange's personal archive**—the most complete collection of Lange's work anywhere, containing 40,000 negatives, 6,000 vintage prints, field notes, and personal memorabilia—OMCA has the unique opportunity to display Lange's most **iconic and career-defining photographs**. The **Dorothea Lange Digital Archive curates and interprets a selection of Lange's work for the first time in a digital format**, following the success of OMCA's internationally-traveled 2017 exhibition *Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing* and the 2020 opening of *Dorothea Lange: Photography as Activism* in OMCA's Gallery of California Art. The Digital Archive was organized by OMCA Curator of Photography & Visual Culture Drew Johnson and Mellon Curatorial Fellow S. Topiary Landberg.

Through the lens of her camera, Dorothea Lange (1895-1965) documented American life with riveting, intimate photographs that captured the human face of major social issues of the 20th century. The Dorothea Lange Digital Archive highlights Lange’s socially conscious photographic work, organized into four main sections: her powerful documentation of the **Great Depression** from **Dust Bowl migrants** to **tenant farmers in the Jim Crow South**; life during **World War II on the Homefront**, including **shipyard workers** and the **injustice of incarcerated Japanese Americans**; **Post-War life** in California and across the nation; and her **personal and early portrait work**.

The Digital Archive features more than **600 items from the collection**, including both well-recognized and rarely seen photographs. **Direct quotes from Lange** combined with **historical information** also shed light on the context and intentions behind the images. The Digital Archive also contains features such as contact sheets, film negatives, and links to related materials as additional resources for the many curators, scholars, and general audiences accessing Lange’s body of work.

“OMCA is fortunate to have Lange’s extraordinary personal archive in its collection,” said curator Drew Johnson. “Though rooted in historical moments, Lange’s photographs make **powerful connections to important themes and events of today**. We are thrilled at the opportunity to share her enduring work beyond the walls of our galleries through this **first-ever digital experience**.”

“As the **holder of Lange’s extraordinary personal archive**, OMCA has the unique opportunity to share her work even more broadly through the Dorothea Lange Digital Archive,” said Valerie Huaco, OMCA Deputy Director & Chief Content Officer. “OMCA is dedicated to presenting profound stories of California’s people and places—whether in our galleries or in a digital space—and there is no artist who better demonstrates the enduring power of visual storytelling than Dorothea Lange.”

The Dorothea Lange Digital Archive will launch to the public on August 10 and will be available online at museumca.org/lange.

The Dorothea Lange Collection Project is supported by a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.

MORE DIGITAL EXPERIENCES FROM OMCA

OMCA at Home

While OMCA may be closed to the public, we are committed to doing what we do best—staying connected with our community. Explore virtual exhibition tours, playlists and virtual Friday Nights at OMCA content, videos exploring past exhibitions and events, educational resources for students and teachers, favorite works from OMCA’s collection, and more at OMCA at Home.

[Dorothea Lange: Photography as Activism](#)

Virtual Exhibition Tour

Experience the iconic life and work of Dorothea Lange, world-renowned documentary photographer, with an expanded installation of her works in the Gallery of California Art. Through the lens of her camera, Lange documented American life with riveting photographs that captured some of the most powerful moments of the 20th century. Drawn from Lange's personal archive, which was gifted to OMCA over 50 years ago, and in response to the popular 2017 exhibition *Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing*, a number of newly added photographs will illustrate the power of photography as social activism. See how Lange's work continues to resonate with millions and inspire new generations of artists and activists.

[In Conversation: Artists Consider Dorothea Lange](#)

Virtual Program

Coming Soon to OMCA at Home

Learn about the ways in which Dorothea Lange's photography has inspired and shaped contemporary artists and thinkers with this special digital program. Join Bay Area artist Hung Liu, one of the most prominent Chinese painters working in the United States today, and photographer and videographer, Paul Kitagaki Jr., whose grandparents were photographed by Lange in 1942, in a discussion led by OMCA's Curator of Photography and Visual Culture Drew Johnson. Learn about Lange's photographs in OMCA's Gallery of California Art as part of a new installation [Dorothea Lange: Photography as Activism](#), meet the artists and gain insight into their artistic practices, and connect with stories from across time and communities.

[Black Power](#)

Virtual Exhibition Tour

Uncover the history of the Black Power movements in California with a compelling addition to the Gallery of California History. In response to the widely-popular 2016 exhibition *All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50*, this new installation will illustrate the creative ways black anti-racist activists in California supported their communities and challenged the U.S. government. Focusing on the example of the Black Panther Party, *Black Power* will bring to light the tensions between a culturally and socially progressive California and examples of economic racism and oppression in the state. This moment in California history will be represented through historic photographs, provocative objects, iconic posters, paintings and interactive prompts that encourage visitors to take action out in the world. Learn more about the Bay Area role in this national story, and the impacts this history continues to have today.

[You Are Here: California Stories on the Map](#)

Virtual Exhibition Tour

We all use maps in our everyday lives—to navigate public transportation, find places to eat, and visualize big data like weather patterns or political opinions. But have you ever considered the deeper stories maps tell us? In *You Are Here: California Stories on the Map*, you'll discover there's more to maps than meets the eye. Showcasing a diverse range of maps from Oakland, the Bay Area, and California—from environmental surroundings and health conditions to

community perspectives and creative artworks—experience how maps can be a powerful tool to share unique points of view and imagine a better future. Explore new perspectives of familiar places through maps made by the community, and mark your own stories on the community map inside the exhibition.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) tells the many stories that comprise California, creating the space and context for greater connection, trust, and understanding between people. Through its inclusive exhibitions, public programs, educational initiatives, and cultural events, OMCA brings Californians together and inspires greater understanding about what our state's art, history, and natural surroundings teach us about ourselves and each other. With more than 1.9 million objects, OMCA brings together its multi-disciplinary collections of art, history, and natural science with the first-person accounts and often untold narratives of California, all within its 110,000 square feet of gallery space and seven-acre campus. The Museum is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year as a leading cultural institution of the Bay Area and a resource for the research and understanding of California's dynamic cultural and environmental heritage for visitors from the region, the state, and around the world.

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