

*The Ongoing Moment: Recent Acquisitions of Photography at the Loeb*



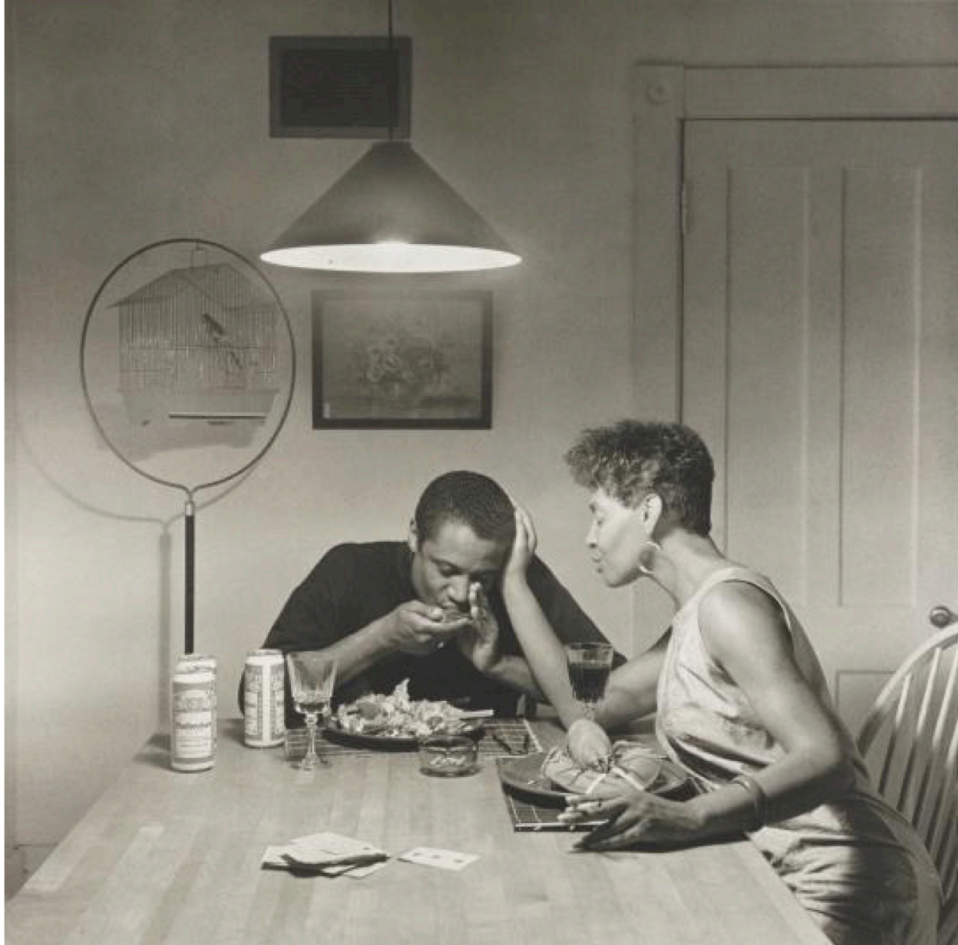
Installation view: *The Ongoing Moment: Recent Acquisitions of Photography at the Loeb*

*The Ongoing Moment: Recent Acquisitions of Photography at the Loeb* features works that are important contributions to the history of photography and major additions in the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center's collection. Curated by Mary-Kay Lombino, Deputy Director and the Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator, and Jessica D. Brier, Deknatel Curatorial Fellow in Photography, the show contains work by Dawoud Bey, Mary Ellen Mark, Ray Metzker, Aaron Turner, and Carrie Mae Weems.

Photography is an integral part of the Loeb, and the Hoene Hoy Photography Gallery is a space solely dedicated to showing works from the museum's collection of approximately 4,800 photographs. The gallery space reinforces the Loeb's long-established commitment to photography as a medium by making it possible to have photographs on public view at all times, and often highlights new acquisitions made through gifts and purchases.

Alongside these acquisitions, Vassar College's Advisory Council for Photography supports key additions to the collection through annual dues and other donations by its members. James Kloppenburg, Chair of the Vassar College Advisory Council for Photography, says "*The Ongoing Moment: Recent Acquisitions of Photography* is an excellent example of how works acquired with the Photo Council's support serve the Loeb's ability to offer a greater understanding and appreciation of photography on campus and beyond."

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Carrie Mae Weems, American b. 1953, *Untitled (Eating Lobster)* from the series *The Kitchen Table*, 1990, Gelatin silver print. Purchase, Francis Woolsey and Helen Silkman Bronson, class of 1924, Fund 2020.5

The photographs in the exhibition supplement some of the Loeb's collection's greatest strengths and specific areas that have been identified for continued growth. The Loeb has deep holdings of American documentary and street photography, contemporary works, and images made by women. Those on view in *The Ongoing Moment* exemplify each of these genres. Dawoud Bey is recognized as one of the most important American street photographers; Mary Ellen Mark was pathbreaking as a woman making documentary photography; and Ray Metzker has been exceptionally important in expanding photography as an art medium. In recent years, the Loeb has made a focused commitment to expanding the representation of photographers of color in the collection. Carrie Mae Weems and Dawoud Bey are among the most celebrated Black American photographers of their generation, and Aaron Turner is an emerging artist of color who provocatively pushes the medium into new directions.

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The works on view in *The Ongoing Moment* demonstrate photography's usefulness in a variety of teaching contexts. The exhibition's curators intentionally combined different styles and modes of expression to encourage connections between works that might not be readily apparent. The variety of images selected convey the diversity of human experiences and perspectives. Brier says: "The concept of using photography to extend time and tell a story, and to picture connections between history and the present, is one that we hope will be widely resonant for students, Vassar courses, and our local communities."

The exhibition's title comes from a 2005 book by the art historian and critic Geoff Dyer, in which he proposes that every photograph is part of a longer, larger narrative. Similar visual tropes are repeated in photography throughout history, a reminder that images become part of shared consciousness and collective experience. Dyer's title refers to what photojournalist Henri Cartier-Bresson called "the decisive moment," the ability of a photograph to capture a particular moment in time. The photographs on view in *The Ongoing Moment* are from the 1950s to the present, yet they do not simply represent single moments frozen in time. The exhibition demonstrates how we can use photography of the past in order to better understand the present. Just as the photographs in the exhibition stand in for personal and historical narratives, our present moment is a part of an ongoing history. Brier says, "These photographs demonstrate the power of images to create, uphold, or shatter stereotypes. They remind us of the gap between what we assume and what we experience. Looking at this selection of photographs prompts us to consider the differences between self-representation and outsider perspectives in picturing the experiences of women, families, communities of color, and unhoused people. Thinking deeply about what perspective a photograph offers, and why, is crucially important to navigating our world today."