

Transcriber's note: Numbers are from transcription program; no time code on audio files.

00:00:46:00 DOMINIC WILLSDON: —this first session of the symposium titled Is Photography Over? My name's Dominic Willsdon, I'm the curator of education and public programs here. Thank you very much for coming. I know many of you have traveled quite some way to be here. And we're actually really overwhelmed with the interest in this event, and we're pretty excited about what the next day and a half are going to bring.

00:01:14:00 This project is made possible by the Fraenkel Gallery Fund for New Studies in Photography. The aim of that fund has been to provide a platform for public debate about, around photography at this museum. And this is actually just the first project that's going to be possible thanks to that fund, and we are extremely grateful to Fraenkel Gallery and Jeffrey Fraenkel for making this all possible.

00:01:43:00 This symposium has been a collaboration between my department of education and public programs and the photography department. On my side, myself, Suzanne Stein, Megan Brian; and in the photography department, Corey Keller, Erin O'Toole, who is assistant curator in the photography department. And Erin and I are going to be co-chairing these two sessions. And also in photography, Karen Rapp and Jessica Brier.

00:02:11:00 Erin and I are going to explain the format in a few moments and introduce the participants. But before that, I just want to ask first Neal Benezra, the director of this museum, and then Sandra Phillips, senior curator of photography, just to say a few opening remarks.

00:02:30:00 NEAL BENEZRA: Thank you, Dominic. I want to welcome everyone to San Francisco. Many of you, of course, from San Francisco, but I think we want to take note of all the visitors who are here from so many different parts of the country and the world. It's the seventy-fifth anniversary year at MOMA, for those of you who are visiting. We've been full of good news this year, wonderful news of every stripe, and this promises to be one of the highlights.

00:02:58:00 When Jeffrey Fraenkel came to us, probably, Sandy, what, about a year ago, I would say, and proposed the idea of a kind of an education program for the public about photography, we were thrilled. And it's one of the more extraordinary things that I've ever seen an individual in the commercial aspect of the art world do, to come to a museum and really try to make a case for education. And so Jeffrey and Frish, we are so thrilled, so grateful to you for doing this. It's just a remarkable thing. And I would make a terrible mistake if I didn't mention the fact that this is the Fraenkel Gallery's thirtieth anniversary year. They have their anniversary show up now; I hope you'll all go see it. And it's a beautiful show. So I'm going to pass the word[?] back to Sandy now, we're on to Sandy, and wish you all two very, very good days here at the museum.

00:03:57:00 SANDRA PHILLIPS: Thank you, Neal. Thank you everyone. I just have very brief remarks. I, too want to thank the Fraenkel Gallery and the members of the Fraenkel Gallery; the education department, who has been wonderful; the photo department staff, especially Corey Keller, who conceived this on her own and who has developed this topic and contacted everyone. I also want to mention that the photography department has an education art called Foto Forum. We promote things like this. And if anyone is interested in joining our group, you can get information about it at the door.

00:04:49:00 PHILLIPS (Cont.): And then finally, this museum has been collecting and exhibiting photography, as Neal said, since 1935, when it opened its doors as the San Francisco Museum of Art. The present strength of the collections are in no small part due to the vitality and excellence of our great local modern artists Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, Imogen Cunningham. But while they supplied us with a strong regional foundation, they also provoked a broader vision.

00:05:22:00 In 1933, newly married, Ansel Adams made the long three-day journey by train to meet Alfred Stieglitz in New York, who granted him an exhibition there three years later. That relationship led directly to the gift and purchase of the significant Stieglitz material in our collection; but also to an adventurousness and ambition in presenting photography that, we hope, has been part of our history since those early days. It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you who have traveled so far, as well as those who are a little closer but no less adventurous, to our event. Thank you.

[applause]