

Sandra Phillips

Senior Curator of Photography

Sandra Phillips has been senior curator of photography for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) since 1999. She was previously the museum's curator of photography from 1987 to 1999. During her time at the museum, the Department of Photography has presented more than 185 exhibitions and accessioned more than 11,000 works. Phillips will retire from SFMOMA at the end of June 2016, and assume the role of Emeritus Curator.

Early in her tenure, Phillips organized *History of Photography from California Collections* (1989), which celebrated the 150th anniversary of the invention of photography, and a retrospective of the eminent San Francisco photographer John Gutmann (1989). Under her direction, the Department of Photography has presented such acclaimed exhibitions as *An Uncertain Grace: The Photographs of Sebastião Salgado* (1990); *Florence Henri: Artist-Photographer of the Avant-Garde* (1990); *Helen Levitt* (1991) and *Wright Morris: Origin of a Species* (1992). In 1994, she organized an important exhibition of the work of Dorothea Lange, the final photography exhibition held in SFMOMA's former building on Van Ness Avenue. Her first major exhibition in the museum's Third Street facility was *William Klein New York 1954–1955* (1995). She also contributed to the exhibition *Public Information: Desire, Disaster, Document* (1995) in collaboration with SFMOMA's curators of media arts and painting and sculpture.

At SFMOMA, Phillips has organized *Crossing the Frontier: Photographs of the Developing West, 1849 to the Present* (1996) and *Police Pictures: The Photograph as Evidence* (1997), the first exhibition to examine historical and contemporary photographs taken as evidence. She also co-organized *Daido Moriyama: Stray Dog* (1999), the first museum exhibition to survey the work of this important postwar Japanese photographer, and which traveled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, followed by venues in Switzerland and Germany. Together with guest curator John Szarkowski, she oversaw *Ansel Adams at 100* (2001), a major reexamination of the celebrated California photographer in commemoration of his 100th birthday. In 2003, Phillips organized *Diane Arbus: Revelations*, the first complete showing of the photographs and writings by this legendary artist. More recently, she organized the exhibitions *Taking Place: Photographs from the Prentice and Paul Sack Collection* (2005); *Robert Adams: Turning Back* (2006); and *Face of Our Time: Four Shows—Yto Barrada, Guy Tillim, Judith Joy Ross, Leo Rubinfien* (2009). Most recently, she organized *Rineke Dijkstra: A Retrospective* (2012).

Phillips's career has combined curatorial activities with teaching, lecturing and publishing. During her years at SFMOMA, Phillips has lectured extensively at schools from San Francisco State University to Musashino Art University, Japan. In 2000, she spent six months at the American Academy in Rome studying the photography archives of the Vatican, and she continues to make regular research trips to Italy.

Prior to her time at SFMOMA, Phillips was a curator at the Vassar College Art Gallery in Poughkeepsie, New York. Phillips received a BA in art and art history from Bard College and an MA from Bryn Mawr College. She earned a PhD in art history from City University of New York, where she specialized in the history of photography and American and European art from 1849 to 1940.