

THE BMA PRESENTS THE WORK OF INFLUENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS HARRY CALLAHAN, AARON SISKIND, AND MINOR WHITE

BALTIMORE, MD (May 11, 2017)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) explores abstraction through more than 40 photographs by three of the most important and influential American photographers of the 20th century: Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, and Minor White. *Black, White & Abstract: Callahan, Siskind, White*, on view May 17-October 1, 2017, is drawn from the museum's Prints, Drawings & Photographs collection, considered one of the most significant holdings of works on paper in the country. Acquired in 2012, Minor White's nine-part sequence *The Sound of One Hand Clapping, Sequence 14* has never before been on view at the museum.



“The major acquisition of White’s series provided an exciting opportunity to organize an exhibition about the abstract, black-and-white photographs of White and two of his important contemporaries Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind, whose work is well-represented in the museum’s collection of 4,000 photographs,” said Rena Hoisington, Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings & Photographs.

Born within a decade of one another, each artist took up photography in the 1930s and achieved prominence in the 1940s and 1950s as they embarked on long teaching careers that would inspire generations of artists. The three worked primarily in black and white, although White and Callahan experimented with color photography. All were interested in extending the expressive potential of the medium while pursuing—and expanding the possibilities of—abstraction, even as their work remained tethered to representational subject matter. Of relevance, too, was each photographer’s interest in exploring formal and/or thematic concerns through the creation of series of interrelated photographs.

The exhibition is curated by Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings & Photographs Rena Hoisington.

ARTISTS BIOS

Essentially self-taught, **Harry Callahan** first took up photography in 1938 and was then invited to teach at the Chicago-based Institute of Design in 1946. He would go on to establish the photography department at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1961. His wife, Eleanor, served as his muse and subject for numerous compositions throughout his career, especially during the 1950s.

Aaron Siskind came to photography in 1930 when he was an English teacher for fifth through ninth graders in the New York City public school system. In 1936, Siskind joined the newly founded Photo League, a cooperative of professional and amateur photographers. Leading the organization’s Feature Group, he

worked on several projects to chronicle city neighborhoods. In the early 1940s, Siskind's interests shifted away from socially conscious documentary photography toward more personal and creative pursuits. Siskind taught with Harry Callahan at the Institute of Design in Chicago, where the two artists worked closely together in the 1950s to modify the photography curriculum. Siskind later was reunited with Callahan at the Rhode Island School of Design in the 1970s.

Minor White established his career in 1937 as a photographer and a teacher in Portland, Oregon, where he documented 19th-century architecture through funding provided by the Works Progress Administration. In 1942, the Portland Art Museum gave White his first one-man exhibition. Later, White began teaching at the California School of Fine Arts. White's work is associated first and foremost with abstract and contemplative imagery of the natural world. During the 1940s, however, he took many figural photographs. In 1953, White moved from San Francisco to Rochester, New York, where he worked at the George Eastman House and then taught at the Rochester Institute of Technology. White moved to the Boston area in 1965 to teach at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he remained until 1974. The following year also witnessed his retirement as editor from the seminal photography journal *Aperture*. White undertook his last major project, the *Jupiter Portfolio*, reprinting 12 of his most important compositions made between 1947 and 1971.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000- square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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Image: Minor White (American, 1908-1976). *Sound of One Hand Clapping, Sequence 14, #9*. 1957-1962. From the series *Sound of One Hand Clapping, Sequence 14*. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, and Roger M. Dalsheimer Photograph Acquisitions Endowment, BMA 2012.174.9. © Trustees of Princeton University.