\mathbf{F} or more than 50 years, Robert Adams (born 1937) has made compelling, provocative, and highly influential photographs that show the inherent beauty and fragility of the American landscape — and the inadequacy of our response to it. Working in Colorado, California, and Oregon from the 1960s to the present, he has photographed a wide variety of subjects, including suburban sprawl, strip malls, highways, homes, and stores as well as nature itself — its rivers and skies, forests and fields, the prairie and ocean. What unites this broad body of work is the almost palpable silence that permeates his art. Adams creates photographs that reveal both the silence the beauty of nature can instill in us — the quietude born of awe and reverence, hope and redemption — and our own silence in the face of its desecration.

Celebrating a half century of work by this seminal American photographer, this exhibition examines the theme of silence in pictures he made between 1965 and 2015. A sense of the sacred graces these photographs of the American West. Adams transforms what he refers to as "the silence of light"— seen in pristine natural landscapes and in those altered by humans — into pictures that not only capture beauty but also question our silence to its destruction through consumerism, industrialization, and lack of environmental stewardship. Together, the three sections of this exhibition — *The Gift, Our Response*, and *Tenancy* — reveal that while Adams' art is a lament for what has been lost, it is also a paean to what remains and to what can give us hope.

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington. It is made possible through the leadership support of the Trellis Fund and a generous gift from Jane P. Watkins.

All of the works in the exhibition are gelatin silver prints unless otherwise specified.

There are at least two kinds of silence that define us. One is the eloquent silence of the world as we were given it — the silence of light and beauty, the silence that holds a promise. It is a stillness especially audible on the prairie or next to trees, but it can be heard in many places throughout the country.

Theodore Roethke spoke of this quiet when he wrote that "hope has its hush." It asks us to care.

There is also sometimes a dark silence within us, one that results from willful blindness and deafness. We struggle against it.

What will America be? Will it accord with the stillness of sunlight?

Robert Adams, 2021

to hate a great many things.

After people live awhile in a place to which they've laid waste, it gets to be easy

Robert Adams, 2006

The Gift

When Adams began to photograph in 1963, he searched for scenes that revealed his conception of nature's gift—its beauty and the peace it inspires in us. His love of nature began as a child, exploring the woods with his father and picnicking with his mother and younger sister near their homes first in New Jersey and then Wisconsin. When the family moved to Colorado (Wheat Ridge, a town outside Denver) in 1952, his experience of nature widened as he and his father hiked in the foothills and canyons of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains and scouted the state's eastern plains.

There, he discovered different kinds of natural beauty — not only the magnificent grandeur of the Rockies, but also the minimal, seemingly empty beauty of the plains where one had to learn to "watch better," as he said, to see its many wonders.

Unlike earlier 20th-century American landscape photographers such as Ansel Adams (no relation), who recorded the sweeping majesty of the West's mountains and national parks, Robert Adams has focused on vast vistas of sparse, fragile prairies and quiet, often overlooked corners. The photographs in this room were made in Colorado and Oregon between 1969 and 2000. They reveal Adams' understanding of "the silence of light" and show how light articulates forms, bathes the natural world in grace, and gives us "courage and ... hope," as he has asserted. They create "a quiet so absolute that it allows one to begin again, to love the future."

Many of the photographs in this room were made with a 4 x 5 inch camera resting on a tripod, which allowed Adams to record the beauty of nature in great detail. He published several in his 1988 book *Perfect Times, Perfect Places*. It expressed the sense of joy and peace that can be experienced when walking through such places as the Pawnee National Grassland in Weld County, Colorado, espe-

cially in the company of loved ones, human or canine.

Some of the pictures that hang along this wall were made as Adams walked through the landscape holding a 35mm camera fitted with a wide-angle lens. By recording the same scene only a few seconds or minutes apart, his pictures show how different the world can look depending on the vantage point and shifting light, whether dappled through the foliage of a tree or reflected off the delicate stems of grass.

Our Response Early Hispanic and Plains Communities

How have Americans responded to the potential and the vulnerability of the West? Divided into several thematic groups and arranged roughly chronologically, this section examines that question, beginning with *Early Hispanic and Plains Communities*.

After spending several years in California, Adams and his wife, Kerstin, returned to Colorado in 1962. Discouraged to find the natural environment

he so loved sadly degraded, he found direction in photography and in studying the art, architecture, and culture of the Hispanic communities along the state's southern borders and the white immigrant settlements on the eastern plains. He wanted to document these settlements because many were abandoned or being transformed by developers. In high school he had taken an architectural drafting course that instilled in him a fascination with the way the built environment shapes our lives and expresses our values. It also inspired him to make his first significant body of photographs.

When he made these pictures, Adams acknowledged the importance of infrastructure to life on the prairie — the gravel roads and farmhouses, the stores and churches. But he also made clear the ways in which early settlers, both Hispanic and white, attempted to achieve a unity with nature, and the important role that faith played in their lives. The Hispanic immigrants, he noted, demonstrated in their art and architecture "an accep-

tance of the natural world, and ... a faith that enabled them to accomplish

what [writer Leo] Tolstoy called 'the most difficult thing...to love life, to

love it even while one suffers."

When Adams first began to photograph in the 1960s, he took advantage

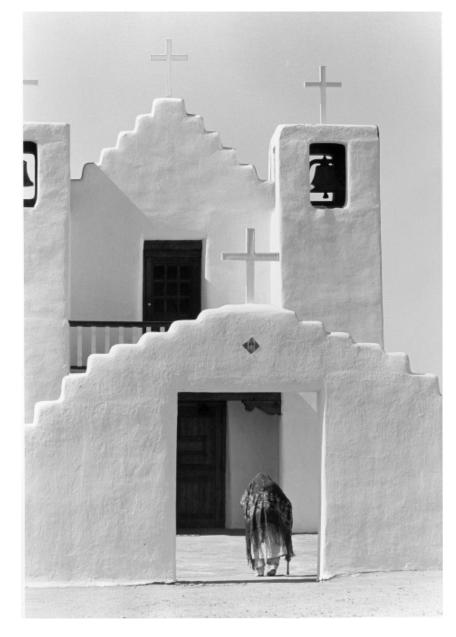


Paul Strand, *Town Hall*, 1946, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Southwestern Bell Corporation Paul

of the library of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, near Colorado College where he taught English. There, he learned about the work of several 20th-century American photographers — particularly Paul Strand and Adams' colleague Myron Wood — whose art and ideas would inform his own. Strand's pictures made in New England in the early 1940s and Wood's photographs of the Southwest

Strand Collection © Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul made in the 1950s and 1960s gave Adams models for recording the art and architecture of Colorado's eastern plains and southern Hispanic communities.

Adams' faith was also an important element in his art. Raised by liberal Methodist parents, he considered becoming a minister until he was



Myron Wood, *Saint Geronimo Church, Taos Pueblo*, 1964, Courtesy of Special Collections, Pikes Peak Library District, 002-1418

about 20 years old and organized religion began to seem narrow, both theologically and culturally. But he never lost his belief in many Christian tenets. Indeed, once he saw Alfred Stieglitz's pictures and understood that photography could find metaphors in the "service of both truth and hope, of fact and possibility," a number of his convictions deepened. His faith, coupled with his fascination with architecture, prompted him to study churches. He was especially drawn to austere structures, such as the

adobe buildings he found in Colorado's Hispanic communities, which

used light to instill a sense of silence and the sacred.

Our Response Our Imprint on the Land

T n the late 1960s and 1970s Adams faced a crisis. The Colorado – and Lindeed the West — that he had loved since childhood was rapidly disappearing. As the population increased sharply, the impact on the once pristine landscape was dramatic, so much so that Adams asked himself if "the big views, the ones you instinctively associate with the word 'West,' [had] been eroded to the point where there is no grandeur left?" Were

the suburbs, "those almost wholly man-altered places," the sole thing that "constituted the American geography? And if so, were words like 'majesty,' so common in 19th-century vocabulary, now without application except for views of clouds?"

Adams explored these questions in a series of pictures made along the Missouri River around the time of the 1976 bicentennial of the United States, a moment of national reflection on the past and assessment of the present. While he recognized that many people thought landscape photographs should only depict the wilderness, he determined "not to lie" and "to include in the photographs evidence of man." It was an easy prerequisite to follow, he noted, "since our violence against the earth has extended even to anonymous arroyos and undifferentiated stands of scrub brush." His aim, however, was not to show the violence but to see if there was still any beauty in this landscape that 19th-century explorers had considered sublime and redemptive. "Was there remaining in the geography," he

asked, "a strength that might help sustain us as it had them?" Was there

something that might give us hope?

Adams began his exploration of the new American landscape at the Missouri River, the boundary in the 19th century between settled areas in the East and the frontier in the West. He did not, however, photograph famous sites along its banks (such as the starting point for Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's *Corps of Discovery* in 1804). Instead, his pictures record nondescript spots where the fabricated and the natural are inextricably intertwined. He did make photographs of "the big views" we customarily associate with the West. But they often depict a landscape that had changed utterly in only a few years, laying bare the moral responsibility this New West posed to those who saw clearly the environ-

mental consequences of such unregulated growth.

As he examined a new kind of beauty, one profoundly different from 19th-century myths of glory, he looked to the work of earlier artists and writers. Just as Henry David Thoreau studied New England's Walden Pond to draw larger truths from its simplicity, so too did Adams search



Timothy O'Sullivan, *Sou Springs, Pah Ute Range, Nevada*, 1867, albumen print, Library of Congress, Washington, Prints and Photographs Division

for places that had been "dismissed as banal, unimportant or even hopelessly damaged" but still had "a sense of grandeur, even a sense of the spectacular." He also scrutinized the work of Timothy O'Sullivan, observing how the photographer recorded nature as "the antitheatrical puzzle it is — a stage without a center." By

placing the nominal subject — the spring in *Sou Springs, Pah Ute Range, Nevada* — in the middle ground, O'Sullivan indicated space and emptiness. Adams does something similar in *Abandoned Car, Carbon County, Wyoming*, on the wall to the left. Here he highlights the deserted car (a

barely visible dark patch in the middle of the picture), encouraging us to

carefully examine the vast, empty vista.

Our Response A New West

A dams' challenge in the late 1960s and 1970s was to determine how to record not only an altered natural landscape but also the new suburbs that were rapidly transforming the West. Concluding that well-reasoned argument, not passionate outcry, was the most effective approach, he resolved to make pictures that were documentary and apparently neutral. But how could he do so in an environment he saw as brutalized, and how could he transform those scenes into something promising, something more universal?

To accomplish this goal, Adams realized that he needed to radically change his style. He abandoned the nostalgic tone of his earlier pictures of rural communities. Instead, he drew on photography's seemingly uncritical acceptance of everything in front of the lens and made pictures that appeared transparent, that seemed to shed the prejudices of their maker and reveal "a hidden order."

He also abandoned his large 4 × 5 inch view camera, which rested on a tripod, and used a handheld camera that allowed him to photograph more rapidly: "The suburbs can be hostile," he explained, "and you have to keep moving." He no longer tried to capture a full tonal range but sought to convey the intense light of the West through brilliant highlights and dense blacks. He printed many of these photographs small, not quite 6 × 6 inches, to encourage close viewing and to mimic the size of amateur snapshots. Finally, he embraced an unapologetically new subject matter: gas stations, highways, housing developments, parking lots, strip malls, truck stops,

abandoned and littered fields, cars and trucks. All these elements were

radically transforming the physical look and character of the suburbs and

the lives of their inhabitants.

In 1976 Adams expanded his investigation of the new suburban landscape by photographing at night. It was a challenging endeavor as the poorly lit streets were sometimes dangerous, his presence aroused suspicion, and motorists occasionally targeted him. He realized,



Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks*, 1942, oil on canvas, The Art Institute of Chicago, Friends of American Art Collection, 1942.51 © Heirs of Josephine N. Hopper / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

though, that it provided an opportunity to capture some of the anxiety of the place as well as its wonder and stillness.

He also explored insights he had gleaned from Edward Hopper, particularly the way light —

or its absence — can imbue pictures of everyday life with a poignancy and enveloping silence. By focusing on the cool light of dusk, when the sky throbs with intensity, or in the dense black of night, Adams

infused these pictures with a sense of beauty and mystery.

Our Response Our Lives and Our Children

In 1970, while Adams was living in Wheat Ridge, he and his wife saw smoke rising near a nuclear weapons plant 10 miles upwind from Denver. Frightened that they were witnessing a nuclear accident, they passed several anxious hours before learning that the fire was outside the plant. Throughout the 1970s, community opposition to the facility escalated as reports indicated significant contamination to the surrounding area, and experts warned that if a fire burned through the roof, Denver would suffer a major catastrophe.

In response, Adams decided to photograph the most important thing that

would be lost if such an event occurred — quite simply *Our Lives and Our Children*, as he titled his subsequent book. He determined to capture people unawares because he knew that if they saw his camera, they would alter their behavior. To do so, he walked through suburban Denver hiding a 2¼ inch camera equipped with a wide-angle lens behind a bag of groceries. When he saw people and scenes with potential, he quickly shifted the bag to his other arm and released the shutter without looking through the viewfinder or adjusting the focus or exposure. As a result, these pictures are sometimes blurry, with odd juxtapositions and occasional light flares — imperfections that sometimes suggest the photographer's sense of urgency and infuse the pictures with a sense of authenticity.

Adams carefully sequenced the photographs when he published them in *Our Lives and Our Children* so that the people depicted display an increasing sense of agitation and anxiety. The final pictures show people looking over their shoulders or up into the sky with great alarm, as if they were witnessing

a cataclysmic event. He also cropped the final pictures, changing them from

squares or verticals to thin horizontals in order to further emphasize this

shift in tone. Together these decisions created a deeply moving work whose

power resides more in the cumulative effect of sequenced images than in any

single photograph.

This gallery brings together pictures from *Our Lives and Our Children* and books published by Adams, who (like many 20th-century photographers) made books an integral part of his practice. In the 1960s and 1970s, few museums regularly exhibited photographs, and books were one of the few ways he could make his work more widely known. With a PhD in literature and as a former English professor, Adams also recognized that a carefully constructed sequence of photographs could convey

a rich story. Throughout his career he has worked closely with his wife, Kerstin, to create more than 45 books, often writing brief statements for them that powerfully summarize the issues his pictures address.

Our Response Southern California

Tn the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Adams returned to California Lafter an absence of several years, he was distressed to see that it had changed profoundly. Operating on the principle that you should "go to the landscape that frightens you the most and take pictures until you're not scared anymore," he determined to photograph it. His pictures show the same discordant vistas he had recorded elsewhere in the West, but they often have a harsher or more melancholic edge, coupled with an unmistakable moral outrage. They also vary in tone. He discovered, much to his surprise, that although the area was under a pall of air pollution, "the light that filters down through that smog is extraordinary." He wrestled with the dilemma of making beautiful pictures of something as damaging as smog, but he found that the polluted light softened shadows and pervaded the scene with an overall luminosity and an unmistakable elegiac quality.

He published many of these pictures in his 1986 book Los Angeles Spring, its title a nod to Rachel Carson's groundbreaking 1962 book Silent Spring. Just as Carson predicted that our profligate use of chemicals would result in a time when birds sang no more, so too did Adams reflect on the profound catastrophe he saw unfolding around him. In the introduction to Los Angeles Spring, he lamented: "Southern California was, by the reports of those who lived there at the turn of the [20th] century, beautiful.... Even now we can almost extrapolate an Eden from what has lasted.... Whether those trees that stand are reassuring is a question for a lifetime. All that is clear is the perfection of what we were given, the unworthiness

of our response, and the certainty, in view of our current deprivation, that

we are judged."

Our Response A Mythic Forest

In 1997, Robert and Kerstin Adams moved from Longmont, Colorado, to Astoria, Oregon. There, they discovered the extent of the destruction of Oregon's once majestic forests, and the impact that clearcutting had on people's psyche. In response, he decided to photograph these clearcuts. From 1999 to 2003, he and Kerstin drove and hiked through some of the remains of Oregon's forests. It was not an easy endeavor: the roads were without signs and not intended for public use, and the ground was some-

times piled high with debris that made walking difficult and occasionally dangerous. As they persisted, they came to believe that the once remarkable rain forests had become "the site of one of the major ecological disasters on this continent."

When Adams photographed the remains of Oregon's forests, he once again set several ground rules for himself: "Not to use the sky, on those rare occasions when there is one here in the Northwest, to rescue the land. Not to be seduced into celebrating the power of men and machines, which can have a Satanic beauty and heroism about it. And not to aestheticize the carnage."

To make his most dramatic pictures of clearcutting, Adams immersed himself in the landscape, showing scenes composed entirely of stumps. He also suggested the extent of the destruction by depicting the carnage stretching as far as the eye can see. In other pictures, he centered the massive, heroic remains of old-growth trees in his frame and occasionally posed Kerstin next to them. Sometimes she rests her hand on the side of the remnants, as if to give comfort.

As he made these pictures, Adams likened his work to war photogra-



phy. He noted the similarity between the violence revealed in his photographs and those by George Barnard, Alexander Gardner, and

George Barnard, *The "Hell Hole" New Hope Church, Georgia*, 1860s, albumen print, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Pfeiffer and Rogers Funds, 1970

Timothy O'Sullivan of Civil War soldiers and trees felled in battle. Adams published his works in his 2005 book *Turning Back: A Pho-*

tographic Journal of Re-exploration, one of his sharpest critiques of American land management to date.

Tenancy

Merging the themes of hope and despair, beauty and desecration, that run throughout Adams' work, *American Silence* ends with a selection of pictures from his 2017 book *Tenancy: Between the River and the Sea; The Nehalem Spit, the Coast of Oregon.* This series of photographs made between 2013 and 2015 along the Nehalem Spit, a two-mile-long promontory on the Oregon coast, is divided into three parts. The first, *The River's Edge*, examines the eastern side of the spit where massive tree stumps have washed up on the banks, brutal evidence of the clearcutting farther up the Nehalem River. The second part looks at the spit itself, a fragile

sanctuary of small trees, meadows, and dunes. The third depicts the everchanging beauty and wonder of the ocean to the west, as well as the people who visit it, seeking to be restored by that beauty.

Signaling that *Tenancy* addresses not just a place or even the more specific act of clearcutting but something more fundamental, Adams began the book with a definition of the title word: "tenancy, the temporary possession of what belongs to another." Aptly named, both the book and this section of the exhibition call out the dangers that imperil the land, yet they also allow us a sense of promise and remind us "of a mystery," as Adams once said, "greater than our failures." The pictures convey Adams' belief that we are only temporary occupants of the earth that nourishes and sustains us.

The Nehalem River originates in a timber-producing region of the Oregon Coast Range and flows parallel to the Pacific for two miles before they finally merge. When he made the photographs in *The River's Edge*, Adams sometimes placed Kerstin beside the giant stumps to indicate their massive size, proof of their age and the power of the river. Potent reminders of the costs of greed, these remnants are, Adams wrote, the "result of clearcutting and the accelerated run-off and erosion that are its by-products." This "radically heedless" practice "attacks the physical and spiritual health of everything that lives."

The second section of *Tenancy* examines the interior of the spit, an area that rests perilously near a large geologic fault. In these photographs, a soft, moisture-laden marine light caresses the delicate grass and shrubs, emphasizing the quiet tranquility of the spit and its fragility.

Taken along the ocean side of the spit, the final group of pictures in *Tenancy* shows the magical interaction of sand, surf, sky, and light. Some of these photographs are nearly abstract views of wet sand, breaking waves, and luminous skies. Others include towering, sunlit clouds. Striving to evoke metaphors for "the whole of creation" (as years earlier Adams had said he wanted to do), some have lens flares that cause both streams of light and brilliant sunbursts.

[DEX 123] [Cat. 3]

Kerstin Enjoying the Wind, East of Keota, Colorado

1969, printed c. 1977 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 124] [Cat. 8]

Sally, Weld County, Colorado

1984, printed 1990 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and David Robinson

Weld County, Colorado 1984 National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and

Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 27] [Cat. 6]

Weld County, Colorado

1984

National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

"It is a mistake to concentrate upon the earth when describing the plains. The sky is what defines them." Robert Adams, 1978

[DEX 28] [Cat. 1]

Weld County, Colorado

1981, printed 1987 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Weld County, Colorado 1981, printed 1988 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Weld County, Colorado

1992

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Adams has a special affinity for trees. He believes, as others have noted, that we would achieve a more equitable balance with nature if we would occupy the land as trees do – taking nutrients from it but replenishing it as well. In 1994 he wrote: "Cottonwoods can seem human. They seem to rejoice, and they seem to suffer. But they also seem to know a stillness that we can't experience, not for long.... The example of trees does suggest [however] a harmony for which it seems right to dream. A friend, a Native American, told me recently that the Lakota refer to cottonwoods as 'the dreaming tree,' a place for visions."

Northeast of Keota, Colorado 1969, printed 1981 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Irrigation Canal, Larimer County, Colorado

1995

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

"Cottonwoods have been our friends for a while. The Arapaho believed, for instance, that the stars come from cottonwoods, from the glistening sap at the joints of twigs. The Hidatsa believed that the shade from cottonwoods was healing. Everything about the tree in fact struck Native Americans as beneficent. They saw that even their horses survived the winter by foraging its inner bark. As, for that matter, did horses belonging to whites. And in other seasons immigrant wagon trains followed along from one grove to the next, with cottonwoods serving as landmarks, shelter, and fuel. But the human side of this friendship has weakened. Agribusiness now wages war on cottonwoods because the trees compete for water, and suburban developers replace them with conveniently small but ecologically disruptive species like Russian olive." Robert Adams, 1994

North of Keota, Colorado

1973

Private collection, San Francisco

Weld County, Colorado

1984

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 153] [Cat. 10]

Garfield County, Colorado

1987

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

In his book *Prayers in an American Church*, 2012, Adams equates respectful viewing of the landscape with religious experience and his act of photographing it with a prayer intended to focus our attention on a blessing. In it, he quoted this song from the Hopi people of northeastern Arizona:

There!

There!

Beautiful white-rising has dawned.

Beautiful yellow-rising has dawned.

There!

There!

[DEX 154] [Cat. 11]

Garfield County, Colorado

1987

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 155] [Cat. 12]

Boulder County, Colorado

1987

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

Boulder County, Colorado 1987

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 157] [Cat. 13]

Boulder County, Colorado

1987

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 210] [Cat. 18]

Poplars, Harney County, Oregon

1999

photogravure

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Linda Hackett and Russell Munson Fund and Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

This picture and the three adjacent ones are photogravures, a printing process prized for its rich, subtle tonal range. At the turn of the 20th century, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz included photogravure reproductions in his acclaimed periodical *Camera Work*. When Adams first began to photograph in the 1960s, he studied *Camera Work* (all 50 issues) and embraced not only the case it made for photography as a powerful mode of pictorial expression but also the high standards it set for design and reproduction.

Poplars, Harney County, Oregon

1999

photogravure

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Linda Hackett and Russell Munson Fund and Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

[DEX 212] [Cat. 20]

Poplars, Harney County, Oregon

1999

photogravure

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Linda Hackett and Russell Munson Fund and Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

[DEX 213] [Cat. 21]

Poplars, Harney County, Oregon

1999

photogravure

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Linda Hackett and Russell Munson Fund and Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund

Baker County, Oregon

2000

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[Illustrate with Strand 1991.216.39]

PAUL STRAND Town Hall

1946

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Southwestern Bell Corporation Paul Strand Collection © Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive

[Illustrate with Myron Wood]

MYRON WOOD Saint Geronimo Church, Taos Pueblo

1964

Courtesy of Special Collections, Pikes Peak Library District, 002-1418

Main Street, Chama, Colorado

1972

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

"Mystery is a certainty. There is everywhere silence in the call of doves, in the flat, soft ring of sheep bells, even in the closing of a pickup door." Robert Adams, 1978

[DEX 163] [Cat. 23]

Adobe Chapel, Medina Plaza, along the Purgatory River, Colorado

1964, printed early 1970s National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 164] [Cat. 24]

Adobe Chapel,

Viejo San Acacio, Colorado

1972

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

"To visit this church in the brilliance and heat of a July day is to discover stillness." Robert Adams, 1974

Presbyterian Mission School, Mogote, Colorado

1967

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 215] [Cat. 26]

Log Addition to an Adobe House near San Luis, Colorado

1972

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

The caption for this picture in Adams' book *The Architecture and Art of Early Hispanic Colorado*, 1974, describes in detail the log addition, with its timber "dressed with a broad ax and arranged in subtle rectangles," its "course of stones" that "reinforces the impression of a powerful box," and its "elegantly proportioned round steps" confirming "that nothing was achieved by accident."

Sandstone Grave Marker, Walsenburg, Colorado

1972

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

"This small lamb with big ears would have caused a six-yearold to smile, as its maker must have wished. To adults it offers a consolation; the direct gaze and neatly folded legs suggest the peace of innocence." Robert Adams, 1974

[DEX 161] [Cat. 28]

Vegetable Garden and San Raphael Chapel, Paisaje, Colorado

1972

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

Clarkville, Colorado

1972

Private collection, San Francisco

"Prairie buildings – spare, white, and isolated – testify to our hope and its vulnerability." Robert Adams, 1978

Arriba, Colorado

1966, printed 1981 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 8] [Cat. 31]

Store, Elizabeth, Colorado

1965, printed 1988 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Catholic Church, Winter, Ramah, Colorado

1965, printed 1982

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Catholic Church, Summer, Ramah, Colorado

1965, printed 1981 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 112] [Cat. 34]

Genoa, Colorado

1970

Private collection, San Francisco

"Even architecture in town finds its reference point at the end of streets, at the horizon; we sense there an expanse so empty that it can almost seem to spin." Robert Adams, 1978 [DEX 1] [Cat. 35]

Movie Theater, Otis, Colorado

1965, printed c. 1977 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

When Adams was a teenager, he discovered Edward Hopper's paintings and etchings, which spoke strongly to him of the commonplace scenes he had experienced as a child in New Jersey. Just as Hopper recognized the expressive possibilities of everyday, often empty, urban vistas, so too did Adams come to see, as he later acknowledged, that all structures and "all places were interesting." Hopper's works also encouraged him to explore that "sense of quiet in American life."

Schoolyard, Ramah, Colorado 1968

Private collection, San Francisco

[DEX 6] [Cat. 37]

Boys in a Pickup, Simla, Colorado

1970, printed 1991 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 2] [Cat. 38]

Summer, Early Morning, Immigrant Cemetery, North of Bethune, Colorado

1965

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[Illustrate with O'Sullivan, Sou Springs, LC-DIG-PPMSCA-11870]

TIMOTHY O'SULLIVAN *Sou Springs, Pah Ute Range, Nevada* 1867

albumen print

Library of Congress, Washington, Prints and Photographs Division

Concrete and Ice, Missouri River, Clay County, South Dakota

1977

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 129] [Cat. 40]

Missouri River, Clay County, South Dakota

1977

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

Quarried Mesa Top, Pueblo County, Colorado

1978

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Patrons' Permanent Fund

Arkansas River Canyon, Colorado

I977

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Lou and Di Stovall

[DEX 86] [Cat. 54]

Boulder County, Colorado

1983

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Looking toward the Mountains in Smog, Weld County, Colorado

1983

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Interstate 25, Weld County, Colorado

1983

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 108] [Cat. 39]

Along the Missouri River, North of Kansas City, Missouri

1979

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Nebraska State Highway 2, Box Butte County, Nebraska 1978, printed 1991 National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Garden of the Gods, El Paso County, Colorado

1976

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

A peaceful gathering place for centuries for many Native peoples, including the Apache, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, Pawnee, Shoshone, and Ute, the Garden of the Gods was given its English name by white settlers in the 1850s. With towering red rock formations, the area was a spiritual site for the Ute, who also paid homage to the healing and holy powers of nearby Manitou Springs. By depicting bright headlights attempting – and failing – to illuminate this sacred, mysterious place, Adams exposed the limits of modern technology.

Abandoned Car, Carbon County, Wyoming

I977

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 134] [Cat. 46]

Larimer County, Colorado

1977

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Jeffrey Fraenkel and Alan Mark

[DEX 135] [Cat. 55]

Highway 287, Larimer County, Colorado

1977

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Umatilla County, Oregon 1978

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Patrons' Permanent Fund

Northeast from Flagstaff Mountain, Boulder County, Colorado

1975

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 167] [Cat. 53]

East from Flagstaff Mountain, Boulder County, Colorado

1975

Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Depicting a landscape that had changed utterly in only a few years, this picture shows a grove of trees in the foreground and, beyond, Boulder's never-ending suburban sprawl.

Lakewood, Jefferson County, Colorado 1976

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Wheat Stubble, South of Thurman, Colorado

1965, printed 1988 Collection of Jeffrey Fraenkel and Alan Mark

[DEX 226] [Cat. 48]

South of the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant, Jefferson County, Colorado

1976

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Adams once said that he tried to create pictures that capture the past, present, and future — or as he phrased it, "ghosts and the daily news and prophesy." This photograph does just that. Depicting tire tracks, a road, cars, and telephone poles, along with age-old geological formations, it records a landscape of the sort Adams once described as "disordered ... confusing ... discordant [and] drastically contradictory. If you walk out there, if you look down at the ground, you find fragments of vegetation and dirt and rock, but you also find plastic, scrap metal, grease, chemicals that you dare not speculate about.... The simplest walk can... induce a turmoil of emotions."

EDWARD HOPPER Nighthawks

I942

oil on canvas

The Art Institute of Chicago, Friends of American Art Collection, 1942.51 © Heirs of Josephine N. Hopper / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

[DEX 176] [Cat. 82]

Sunday School Class, Church in a New Tract, Colorado Springs

1969

Collection of Jeffrey Fraenkel and Alan Mark

Basement for a Tract House, Colorado Springs

1969

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 4] [Cat. 60]

Frame for a Tract House, Colorado Springs

1969, printed 1984 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and David Robinson

[DEX 5] [Cat. 78]

Mobile Home Park, North Edge of Denver

1973, printed 2005 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

Arvada, Colorado

1974

National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Next to Interstate 25, Denver

1973, printed 1991 National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

By the time Adams made this photograph in 1973, the once brilliant light of Denver was often gray with the unmistakable heaviness of pollution and devoid of the radiance he had previously captured. Surrounded by trash, a fence, an overpass, and Interstate 25, the tree is almost humanlike in its steadfast determination to lay claim to this spot of ground.

[DEX 216] [Cat. 68]

Pikes Peak Park,

Colorado Springs

1969

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

Lakewood, Colorado

1973, printed 1979 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 13] [Cat. 95]

Lakewood, Colorado

1973

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Tract House, Longmont, Colorado

1973

Collection of Frish Brandt and August Fischer

Longmont, Colorado

1973

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 15] [Cat. 62]

Longmont, Colorado

1973, printed 1988 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Lakewood, Colorado 1973–1974, printed 2008 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

From Interstate 25, North Edge of Denver

1973

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 66] [Cat. 70]

Longmont, Colorado

1977

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982

Boulder County, Colorado

I974

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982

"I began making pictures because I wanted to record what supports hope: the untranslatable mystery and beauty of the world. Along the way, however, the camera also caught evidence against hope, and I eventually concluded that this too belonged in pictures if they were to be truthful and thus useful." Robert Adams, 2010

[DEX 71] [Cat. 67]

Colorado Springs

1969 Private collection, San Francisco

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Longmont, Colorado
1973, printed 1981
Philadelphia Museum of Art,
Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982
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Longmont, Colorado

1973, printed 1990 National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 75] [Cat. 74]

Lakewood, Colorado

1970, printed 1981 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982

Newly Occupied Tract Houses, Colorado Springs

1968

Private collection, San Francisco

North Edge of Denver

1973–1974, printed 2008 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 101] [Cat. 86]

Highway, Northeast Denver

1973

Stephen G. Stein Employee Benefit Trust

North Denver Suburb 1973, printed 1981 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982

New Tract Housing, Colorado Springs

1968, printed 1981 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982

The intense light of the West was a constant source of inspiration to Adams. It was "like a surgical instrument," he said, sculpting shadows with sharp precision while burning the detail off surfaces. When he was able to photograph this light, "it's as though the whole world is alive."

[DEX 121] [Cat. 64]

Lakewood, Colorado

1974, printed 1981 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982

Colorado

C. 1973

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Colorado Springs

1968, printed 1983 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

The duality between hope and despair, present in all of Adams' work, is especially evident in this picture. He once said this scene shows "the saddest kind of isolation." But he continued, "raining down...onto the roof and the lawn is glorious highaltitude light.... It's a splendor that has no explanation [and is] a kind of forgiveness."

[DEX 142] [Cat. 73]

New Housing, **Colorado Springs**

1969, printed 2005 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Colorado Springs

1968 - 1971

Private collection, San Francisco

[DEX 174] [Cat. 81]

Walking to a Shopping Center, North Edge of Denver

1970 - 1974

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1982

[DEX 175] [Cat. 80]

New Apartments, Arvada, Colorado

1973–1974, printed 2007 Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 179] [Cat. 101]

Denver

1970 - 1974

Yale University Art Gallery, Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

Strip Mall, Boulder, Colorado

1970 – 1974 Yale University Art Gallery, Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 181] [Cat. 88]

Longmont, Colorado

1973–1974, printed 2001 Private collection

Pikes Peak, Colorado Springs

1969

Private collection, San Francisco

Topping 14,000 feet, Pikes Peak has figured prominently in many people's lives. The Ute, whose history says they were created there, call it Tavakiev, the Sun Mountain, because it is the first summit to be illuminated by the dawn's light. Katharine Lee Bates, a young college professor who rode to the top of the mountain in 1893, was so inspired by the view that she wrote the lines of a poem that would become one of the country's unofficial anthems, "America the Beautiful." Some 76 years later, Adams also drew inspiration from this mountain when he took this picture. Made at the beginning of the modern environmental movement, it contrasts the 19th-century myth of America as a pristine frontier promising renewal and redemption with the present-day reality, and it questions how we have cared for the beauty of this country.

Longmont, Colorado

1976

Private collection, San Francisco

Berthoud, Colorado

1976

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with funds contributed by Marilyn L. Steinbright, 1985

[DEX 218] [Cat. 91]

Fort Collins, Colorado

1977, printed 1985 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with funds contributed by Marilyn L. Steinbright, 1985

Longmont, Colorado 1979, printed 1985 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and David Robinson

[DEX 182] [Cat. 75]

Backyard, Longmont, Colorado

1973 – 1974, printed 2007 Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 183] [Cat. 98]

Shopping Mall and Parking Lot, Denver

1974, printed 1980s National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 207] [Cat. 85]

Outdoor Theater, North Edge of Denver

1973 – 1974 National Gallery of Art, Washington,

Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Adams' work, wrote photography curator John Szarkowski in 1974, has a moral: "the landscape is . . . the place we live. If we have used it badly, we cannot therefore scorn it, without scorning ourselves. If we have abused it, broken its health, and erected upon it memorials to our ignorance, it is still our place, and before we can proceed we must learn to love it."

Alameda Avenue, Denver

1968 - 1971 Private collection, San Francisco

[DEX 219] [Cat. 71]

Longmont, Colorado

1973 - 1974

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

North Edge of Denver 1973 - 1974Yale University Art Gallery, Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

ROBERT ADAMS, with a foreword by **THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL**

White Churches of the Plains: Examples from Colorado

(Boulder, 1970) National Gallery of Art Library, David K.E. Bruce Fund

For his early books, such as *White Churches of the Plains* and The Architecture and Art of Early Hispanic Colorado (adjacent), Adams wrote texts that discuss the history of each subject; captions also give further details about the objects depicted and the people who made them. His love of architecture, coupled with his spiritual concerns, prompted him to focus on pictures of churches in both books.

ROBERT ADAMS The Architecture and Art of Early Hispanic Colorado (Boulder, 1974) National Gallery of Art Library, David K.E. Bruce Fund

ROBERT ADAMS From the Missouri West

(Millerton, NY, 1980) National Gallery of Art Library, Anonymous Gift

From the Missouri West includes photographs Adams made between 1975 and 1978 in Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, California, and Oregon, along with an incisive statement he wrote. A quoted passage from Loren Eiseley prefaces the volume: "Nothing is lost, but it can never be again as it was." Together the pictures posit a new kind of landscape photography that looks not for the pristine wilderness, which even then largely existed only in parks, but at the impact of humans on the land.

ROBERT ADAMS The New West: Landscapes along the Colorado Front Range

(Boulder, 1974) National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

The frontispiece in *The New West* illustrates the battle Adams saw, as he wrote in the introduction, between our desire to live "harmoniously" with the land and our struggle to live with "our own creation, the city, and the disgust and nihilism it breeds." Street signs in the foreground indicate that *The New West* begins at the intersection of Querida Drive (the Spanish word for a female romantic partner) and De Cortez (possibly referring to the Spanish invader Hernán Cortéz). This amalgam of love and conquest, desire and brutality, resonates with Adams' assertion that although early settlers thought the American West was "sublime...as a practical matter most people hoped to alter and exploit the region." Yet floating above this desolate scene are several brilliantly white clouds whose irregular and seemingly lighthearted forms contrast with the mechanical rigidity of the structures below. As Adams wrote, "All land, no matter what has happened to it, has over it a grace, an absolute persistent beauty."

[DEX 227]

ROBERT ADAMS denver: A Photographic Survey of the Metropolitan Area

(Boulder, 1977) National Gallery of Art Library, Anonymous Gift

Although Adams published *denver* only three years after *The New West*, the two books are quite different. Whereas the title *The New West* immediately conjures up notions of a mythic 19th-century past, *denver*, with its lowercase spelling, suggests not a specific but a generic place, one that could be easily replicated elsewhere. And whereas the section titles in *The New West* sketch out the route of a 19th-century settler heading west, those in *denver* document the impact of our past and present incursions on the land and predict our future desecrations, for example, "Agriculture Land in the Path of Development."

[DEX 229]

ROBERT ADAMS *Our Lives and Our Children: Photographs Taken near the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant* (Millerton, NY, 1983) National Gallery of Art Library, Anonymous Gift

Perhaps because of its political nature, Adams originally had difficulty finding a publisher for this book. His terse afterword details the perils of plutonium, which was used to manufacture nuclear detonators at Rocky Flats; some of the many accidents that had occurred at the plant and the contamination of the ground around it; as well as the larger dangers posed by atomic warheads stored across the country.

Denver

1980

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 19] [Cat. 111]

Denver

1980

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Denver

1981

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 109] [Cat. 116]

Commerce City, Colorado

1981

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

[DEX 143] [Cat. 115]

Longmont, Colorado

1981

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Longmont, Colorado 1979 Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Denver

1981

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

[DEX 186] [Cat. 106]

Denver

1980

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

[DEX 187] [Cat. 110]

Denver

1981

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

As Adams wrote in his afterword to *Our Lives and Our Children*, 1983, we can "find in ourselves the will to keep asking questions of politicians" only "after we have noticed the individuals with whom we live. How mysteriously absolute each is. How many achieve, in moments of reflection or joy or concern, a kind of heroism. Each refutes the idea of acceptable loss."

Denver

1981

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

[DEX 189] [Cat. 109]

Denver

1981

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Denver

1980

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

Longmont, Colorado

1980

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

[DEX 192] [Cat. 120]

Denver

1980

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Denver

1980

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Denver

1980

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 205] [Cat. 107]

Denver

1981

Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Denver

1981

Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Denver

1980 Robert and Kerstin Adams, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Adams included this excerpt from W.H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles" as the frontispiece to his book *Our Lives and Our Children*:

She looked over his shoulder For vines and olive trees, Marble well-governed cities And ships upon untamed seas, But there on the shining metal His hands had put instead An artificial wilderness And a sky like lead.

[DEX 34] [Cat. 133]

Santa Ana Wash, Redlands, California

1982

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

The largest river entirely within Southern California, the Santa Ana carries little water except during the rainy season, when it is prone to massive floods. Adams depicted the remnants of those floods in this picture, which shows a prehistoric boulder senselessly splattered with paint and surrounded by scrap metal, cardboard, a mattress, and a broom carelessly abandoned by a wasteful civilization.

Remains of a Eucalyptus Windbreak, Redlands, California

1982, printed 1990 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Introduced in California in the 1850s, eucalyptus trees were prized as windbreaks, sheltering orange groves and farmlands. This tall, fast-growing tree became so integrated into the landscape that the Los Angeles Times asserted in 1927 that the eucalyptus "seems more essentially California than many a native plant; so completely has it adopted California, and so entirely has California adopted it." Yet by the 1980s when Adams made this photograph, the trees were being squeezed out by the expanding suburbs.

New Housing, Reche Canyon, San Bernardino County, California 1983

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with funds contributed by Ann and Donald W. McPhail and the Atlantic Richfield Foundation, 1986

Eucalyptus Branch, Redlands, California

1983

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of the Friends of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1986

[DEX 105] [Cat. 140]

Fontana, California

1983

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 114] [Cat. 131]

Santa Ana Wash, Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino County, California 1977–1978

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and with matching funds contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Hauslohner and Harvey S. Shipley Miller, 1980 [DEX 115] [Cat. 126]

Edge of San Timoteo Canyon, Redlands, California

1977 - 1978

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and with matching funds contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Hauslohner and Harvey S. Shipley Miller, 1980

[DEX 116] [Cat. 134]

On Top of the La Loma Hills, Colton, California

1983

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1986

[DEX 117] [Cat. 130]

Broken Trees, East of Riverside, California 1983

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1986

Adams ended the powerful sequence of photographs in *Los Angeles Spring* with this picture. While the book as a whole indicts the mismanagement of the Southern California landscape, this image of a splayed tree with its verdant branches stretched out like the wings of an angel shows a beauty that cannot be destroyed.

Development Road, San Timoteo Canyon, Redlands, California

I977

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and with matching funds contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Hauslohner and Harvey S. Shipley Miller, 1980

[DEX 144] [Cat. 127]

Edge of San Timoteo Canyon, Redlands, California

1978

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

Firebreak, above East Highland, California

1982

National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Rialto, California

1982

National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Ahmanson Foundation and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 147] [Cat. 129]

On Signal Hill, Overlooking Long Beach, California

1983, printed 1990 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

[DEX 196] [Cat. 135]

New Development on a Former Citrus-Growing Estate, Highland, California

1983

Andrew Szegedy-Maszak and Elizabeth Bobrick

For many years, Adams hung in his darkroom a poster reproducing French documentary photographer Eugène Atget's *Saint-Cloud*. There, a statue seems to stand watch over the decaying park in Paris. In his pictures of the Los Angeles basin Adams depicted trees perched like sentries that nobly but vainly seem to guard a decaying civilization.

EUGÈNE ATGET Saint-Cloud

1926

albumen print National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund

[DEX 197] [Cat. 132]

Eroding Edge of a Former Citrus-Growing Estate, Highland, California

1983

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn Fund, 1986

Spanish missionaries planted the first orange groves in Southern California in the 1760s. They thrived in the warm climate and by the late 19th century encircled Los Angeles, giving it the nickname the Orange Empire. By the 1920s citrus was second only to oil as the region's leading industry. Although many groves were lost as the population grew, some were still in operation when Adams was in college and graduate school there in the late 1950s and early 1960s. By the 1980s, they were all but gone.

Interstate 10, West Edge of Redlands, California

1983

Christine and Michael J. Murray

[DEX 199] [Cat. 141]

Eucalyptus along Interstate 10, Redlands, California

1978

Collection of Frish Brandt and August Fischer

Old Estate Road, Redlands, California

1983

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

GEORGE BARNARD The "Hell Hole" New Hope Church, Georgia

1860s albumen print The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Pfeiffer and Rogers Funds, 1970

[DEX 21] [Cat. 149]

Clearcut, Coos County, Oregon

1999

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Clearcut, Coos County, Oregon

I999

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

Clearcut, Clatsop County, Oregon

200I

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 149] [Cat. 148]

Kerstin, Old-Growth Stump, the Last Evidence of the Original Forest, Clatsop County, Oregon

C. 2001

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund and Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 158] [Cat. 143]

Pacific County, Washington

20II

Yale University Art Gallery, Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

Adams later recorded quiet pockets of beauty that could still be found in a few small parks and published them in his 2012 book Skogen, the Swedish word for forest. Adams wrote skogen was evocative by its sound "of shadowed depths, and of our awe."

Pacific County, Washington

2012

Yale University Art Gallery, Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

[DEX 200] [Cat. 145]

Clearcut, Clatsop County, Oregon

C. 2000

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

Kerstin next to an Old-Growth Stump, Coos County, Oregon

I999

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

Clearcut, Clatsop County, Oregon

c. 2000

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Robert and Kerstin Adams

[DEX 203] [Cat. 154]

Clearcut, Clatsop County, Oregon

c. 2000

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Purchase through a gift of an anonymous donor

[DEX 204] [Cat. 155]

Clearcut, Clatsop County, Oregon

C. 2000

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund

Clearcut, Coos County, Oregon

c. 2000

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser

[DEX 209] [Cat. 152]

Columbia County, Oregon

1999 – 2001

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Purchase through a gift of an anonymous donor

[DEX 223] [Cat. 142]

Ecola State Park, Clatsop County, Oregon

C. 200I

Yale University Art Gallery, Purchased with a gift from Saundra B. Lane, a grant from the Trellis Fund, and the Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund [DEX 55] [Cat. 156]

The River's Edge

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 37] [Cat. 157]

The River's Edge

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

The River's Edge

2015

[DEX 57] [Cat. 159]

The River's Edge

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 81] [Cat. 160]

The River's Edge

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

The Interior of the Spit

2015

[DEX 58] [Cat. 162]

The Interior of the Spit

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 60] [Cat. 163]

The Interior of the Spit

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

The Sea Beach

2015

[DEX 82] [Cat. 165]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 62] [Cat. 166]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

The Sea Beach

2015

[DEX 44] [Cat. 168]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 46] [Cat. 169]

The Sea Beach, Albatross

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

The Sea Beach

2015

[DEX 48] [Cat. 171]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 45] [Cat. 172]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

The Sea Beach

2015

[DEX 64] [Cat. 174]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 65] [Cat. 175]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

Tenancy ends with pictures of people walking and sitting on the beach, many quietly looking out to sea. "Their reasons for coming are personal," Adams wrote, "but if one watches as they leave their cars and stare seaward it is a fair guess, I think, that many are looking to escape illusion and to be reconciled."

[DEX 51] [Cat. 176]

The Sea Beach

2015

[DEX 52] [Cat. 177]

The Sea Beach

2015

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

[DEX 53] [Cat. 178]

The Sea Beach

2015 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Stephen G. Stein

This photograph is the last one in *Tenancy*. Adams placed these lines by the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova on the preceding page:

...the sun goes down in waves of ether in such a way that I can't tell if the day is ending, or the world, or if the secret of secrets is within me again.

New Development on a Former Citrus-Growing Estate, Highland, California

1983

Andrew Szegedy-Maszak and Elizabeth Bobrick

For many years, Adams hung in his darkroom a poster reproducing



French documentary photographer Eugène Atget's *Saint-Cloud*. There, a statue seems to stand watch over the decaying park in Paris. In his pictures of the Los Angeles basin Adams depicted trees perched like sentries that nobly but vainly seem to guard a decaying civilization.

Eugène Atget, *Saint-Cloud*, 1926, albumen print, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mary and Dan Solomon and Patrons' Permanent Fund