

# National Gallery of Art

## NEWS RELEASE

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**INNOVATION AND STYLISTIC EVOLUTION MARK EXHIBITION**  
**OF HARRY CALLAHAN'S REMARKABLE PHOTOGRAPHS OVER FIFTY YEARS,**  
**PREMIERES AT NATIONAL GALLERY, MARCH 3, 1996**

Washington, D.C. -- Harry Callahan (b. 1912) has made some of the most expressive, innovative, and influential photographs of the twentieth century. His remarkable contribution to American photography is examined in Harry Callahan, an exhibition opening in the National Gallery of Art's East Building on March 3 and continuing through May 19, 1996. It will travel to Philadelphia, Atlanta, Detroit, and Chicago.

"From his earliest images of the 1940s to his most recent work, Callahan's tireless creative experimentation has inspired generations of photographers and continues to move audiences," said Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery. "This exhibition furthers the National Gallery's commitment to present the work of the masters of twentieth-century photography."

The National Gallery in the past few years has organized a series of exhibitions examining the work of important twentieth-century photographers, including Alfred Stieglitz (1983 and 1992), Ansel Adams (1985), Paul Strand (1990), Walker Evans (1991), and Robert Frank (1994).

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Harry Callahan is the first major traveling retrospective of Callahan's work in the United States since 1976. Unlike other recent Callahan exhibitions which have often focused on a particular theme or aspect of his art, for example the color work, or images of his wife Eleanor and daughter Barbara, this exhibition will examine Callahan's work chronologically so viewers can see the visual and stylistic evolution that has occurred in his art in the last fifty years.

The selected images span 1941 to 1992, from the personal and immediate world of his family and the streets of Chicago, to more recent studies made of cities during his world travels. Records of the work of a lifetime, they examine and reveal Callahan's feelings and visual relationship, as he wrote in 1946, "to the life within and about me," and his unrelenting desire to present the world in a new way.

On view will be 116 photographs, including many earlier works that have not been seen before, which illustrate the themes that have occupied Callahan throughout his career: his wife Eleanor; nature; and the constantly evolving theater of the street and buildings -- the structure of the city itself. In these photographs, he can be seen shifting between techniques and subjects, methodically exploring all possibilities of a given motif. Celebrated images in the exhibition include his studies of trees in the snow; multiple exposures of crowded streets in Detroit; Cape Cod; color work from the late seventies and

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eighties, including Morocco; and Eleanor with her arms over her head.

The twenty examples from his series of images of Eleanor included in the exhibition demonstrate not only the plethora of technical and aesthetic experiments he brought to his tireless investigation of a subject, but the discovery of a muse that allowed him to blend many of his preoccupations. Callahan recorded his wife in parks and on city streets at home and abroad, on the beach, in the water, the woods, and in the privacy of their home. Yet what remains most affecting is his revelation of the meaning of their ongoing life together.

A teacher at the Institute of Design in Chicago, Callahan was a disciple of Moholy-Nagy and the Bauhaus. With a strong commitment, as Callahan says, "to do it--see it--in a different way," the photographer has worked in black-and-white and color photography in a variety of camera formats, producing photographs that range from multiple exposure and out-of-focus images to prints concerned with texture, tone, and detail. In addition, though, Callahan was deeply inspired by Ansel Adams and Alfred Stieglitz, and learned from them that through his photographs he could express his relationship to the world around him.

"Callahan merged European and American modernism, blending Moholy-Nagy's fascination with experimentation with Alfred Stieglitz and Ansel Adams' precise delineation of the American landscape to create an art which is both distinctly modern and

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distinctly American," says Sarah Greenough, National Gallery curator of photographs and exhibition organizer.

A fully illustrated catalogue, with more than 100 tritone reproductions, is published by the National Gallery of Art and distributed by Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown and Company. The catalogue includes an essay by Greenough and an extensive annotated chronology.

After closing at the National Gallery, the exhibition will travel to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, September 14 to November 24, 1996; The High Museum of Art, February 11 to April 6, 1997; Detroit Institute of Arts, April 26 through July 6, 1997; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, August 2 through September 28, 1997.

The National Gallery of Art, located at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For general information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at (202) 842-6176. For information on visitor services, call (202) 842-6690, weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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