

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT MILTON ROGOVIN'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WORKING CLASS AUGUST 18 – MARCH 19

SAN JOSE, California (August 2016)— The San Jose Museum of Art will showcase the work of American photographer Milton Rogovin in an exhibition on view August 18, 2016 – March 19, 2017. *Life and Labor: The Photographs of Milton Rogovin* comprises thirty-eight black-and-white photographs by the self-proclaimed social documentary photographer. Rogovin photographed “the forgotten ones,” as he called them, including people from working class neighborhoods and multi-ethnic communities. Drawn entirely from the permanent collection of the San Jose Museum of Art, this exhibition presents photographs from three series: “Lower West Side, Buffalo” “Working People” and “Family of Miners” *Life and Labor* marks the public debut of these photographs, which were given to the Museum’s collection in 2011.

Rogovin shed light on important social issues of the time: the plight of miners, the decline of the steel industry in upstate New York, and the everyday struggles of the poor and working class in Buffalo, New York, where he lived. While working as an optometrist in the 1930s, he was distressed by the widespread poverty caused by the Great Depression and became increasingly involved in leftist political causes. He began attending classes at the New York Workers School and reading the Communist newspaper *The Daily Worker*. He was influenced by the social-documentary photographs of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine. In 1957, with the prevalence of cold war anti-Communism in the United States, Rogovin was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, but refused to testify. Along with other artists, he was publicly persecuted and blacklisted by the committee.

Soon after, he devoted himself to photography and turned his lens towards the poor and underprivileged. He spent more than three decades creating naturalistic portraits of the working class in the Lower West Side of Buffalo, photographing people in their homes, at work, and on the street. For his “Working People” series, Rogovin photographed workers in factories in and around Buffalo, documenting the often overlooked efforts of industrial labor. He later photographed in places such as Appalachian towns in Alabama, Kentucky, and West Virginia; Isla Negra, Chile; and later in China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Greece, Mexico, Scotland, Spain, and Zimbabwe. He photographed miners in many of these places and created the series “Family of Miners.”

“Rogovin believed deeply in photography’s ability to be an agent of social change,” said Marja van der Loo, curatorial assistant at SJMA and curator of the exhibition. “In addition to their aesthetic value, his photographs represent his egalitarian ideals and serve as important records of the changing neighborhoods and communities he documented over the course of many decades.”

RELATED PROGRAMS

The exhibition will open with the program “Third Thursday: What’s New” on **Thursday, August 18**, 5 – 8 PM. The program will include tours and a DIY Art activity for adults. Tickets are \$5 (free to members).

Marja van der Loo will give a gallery talk in the exhibition on **Thursday, September 1, 2016**, at 12:30 PM. The talk is included with Museum admission.

In honor of Rogovin’s interest in labor, SJMA will be open on Labor Day, **Monday, September 5**, from 11 AM – 5 PM. Members of labor unions will be admitted free.

On **Saturday, October 1**, from 1 – 4 PM, SJMA’s will offer a workshop on black-and-white photography as part of its Art 101 series. Registration is \$30 (\$15 for members). ART 101 is limited to 30 participants ages 13 and up. Space is limited and advance registration is strongly recommended.

On **Wednesday, October 5**, at 12 noon, Ken Light, Reva and David Logan Professor of Photojournalism at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, will give the Lunchtime Lecture “Champions of Labor and the Other America in Photography.” The lecture is included with Museum admission.

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The San Jose Museum of Art celebrates new ideas, stimulates creativity, and inspires connection with every visit. Welcoming and thought-provoking, the Museum rejects stuffiness and delights visitors with its surprising and playful perspective on the art and artists of our time. SJMA is located at 110 South Market Street in downtown San Jose, California. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, 11 AM to 5 PM and until 8 PM or later on the third Thursday of each month. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$6 for students, and \$5 for youth ages 7-18. Members and children For more information, call 408-271-6840 or visit www.SanJoseMuseumofArt.org.

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