

## **MMPA Gallery**

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Tu, Th, F, Sa, 11-5

## **Steve and Judy Halpert Collection**

April 21- June 10

Opening reception Friday April 21, 5-7pm

Talk May 12, Friday 5-8pm Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest and Stephen Halpert will speak and answer questions.

June Talk: TBD



Lotte Jacobi, *Portrait of Lotte Lenya*, 1930, Silver print, 10 x 12 inches

The Maine Museum of Photographic Arts is proud to present the Steve and Judy Halpert Collection curated by Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest. This assortment is Maine focused and illustrates Steve Halpert's career as native curator, academic and owner of an arthouse theatre in this state for the last 60 years; The Movies on Exchange Street. On display are works from the 1900s to today. Additionally there are artist books and some thoughtful works for sale.

*Art collections, by their very nature, are a product of curation, guided by the interests, vision and aesthetics of the collector. Steve Halpert's vision seems mostly guided by his interest in the human condition. We find elements of this in most of the work in this collection. It is present in the city photographs of Todd Webb, the street shots of Bernice Abbott and Eugene Atget, the photographs of Native Americans by Edward Curtis and the many portraits by Arnold Newman, Lotte Jacobi, George Daniell, and many others. Even in some of the photographs that at first sight start out with an abstract composition and where we don't find humans in the picture, such as the library shot by Abelardo Morrell, the funeral table setting by Denise Froehlich or the photograph by Tanja Hollander titled, "Where Noah was sleeping," the human element is still very present. The photographs by Judy Glickman, Ed Richardson, Robert Pennington and Dan Dow are addressing what we humans are all about as well.*

*The task of the curator, when curating an exhibit of an art collection, is mostly to find and show the narrative that runs through it. Steve told me that he never started to collect photographs with the purpose to build a collection. When Edward Steichen produced the Family of Man exhibit, he wrote in his foreword, "We sought and selected photographs, made in all parts of the world, of the gamut of life from birth to death with the emphasis on the daily relationships of man to himself." Steichen planned his exhibit and purposefully assembled the work to fit his theme. The Steve Halpert collection happened very differently...intuitively. Steve acquired works that he liked, and after a while it became clear to him that he had a collection. The only reason the pieces were acquired was because Steve liked them, they fit his aesthetic realm, and when investigating the collection we get to know Steve. "Family of Man" was a masterful exhibit but by today's standards often thought of as somewhat contrived and dated. The Halpert collection, on the other hand, was not planned but grew spontaneously and randomly. This is what gives it strength. To curate this excellent collection was a privilege. - Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest*