

PRESS RELEASE

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JANUARY 4, 2022

ONE MONTH LEFT TO SEE IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM: A RETROSPECTIVE AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

Major retrospective for groundbreaking 20th-century
photographer closes February 6



SEATTLE - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM)'s special exhibition, *Imogen Cunningham: A Retrospective*, closes February 6, 2022. The photographer's first major retrospective in the United States in more than 35 years, the exhibition is a visual celebration of Cunningham's immense contribution to the history of 20th-century photography. It features nearly 200 works from her seventy-year career, including portraits of artists, musicians and Hollywood stars; elegant flower and plant studies; poignant street pictures; and groundbreaking nudes.

The exhibition is organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; the SAM curator for the show is Carrie Dedon, Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. Dedon wanted to highlight Cunningham's friendship with sculptor Ruth Asawa, bringing in 6 additional sculptures by the artist to amplify Cunningham's portraits. "It's been thrilling to share such an expansive look at Cunningham's career with Seattle audiences, where Imogen came of age as an artist," says Dedon. "Her life story of innovation, determination, and collaboration is an inspiration, and her work places her as one of the most important photographers of the last century."

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976) had deep connections to the Pacific Northwest; born in Portland, she grew up in Port Angeles and Seattle. She completed a chemistry degree at the University of Washington in 1907 and in 1910 opened what is considered the first studio for artistic photography in Seattle, making portraits of local figures as well as her own works in the then-popular Pictorialist mode, including some early daring nudes.

Cunningham then moved to California, where she created photographs that are regarded today as historically radical and groundbreaking, including modernist botanicals and portraits. She began to earn international attention, and created portraits of people from her artistic community as well as celebrities including artist Frida Kahlo and actor Cary Grant.

SAM's iteration of the exhibition highlights Cunningham's collaborations with artists of many mediums, particularly dancer Martha Graham and sculptor Ruth Asawa. Another section of the exhibition features examples from the famous Group f/64, including Edward Weston and Ansel Adams.

The exhibition also explores the last 42 years of Cunningham's life, as the artist continued to face challenges and late-in-life triumphs in her career. She created clever examples of street photography, taught and mentored young artists, and embarked on a final important series on aging. Visitors can also watch *Portrait of Imogen* (1988), a short documentary film directed by Meg Partridge.

TICKETING

Museum Hours

- Closed Monday & Tuesday
- Wednesday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm
- Holiday hours on the website

Special Exhibition Prices (advance; see website for day-of pricing)

- \$29.99 Adult
- \$27.99 Senior (65+), Military (with ID)
- \$19.99 Student (with ID), Teen (15-18)
- FREE for children (14 and under)
- FREE for SAM Members

Special Prices

- First Thursdays: Free to all
- First Fridays: Free general admission for seniors (65+)

Details are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on planning a visit, go to seattleartmuseum.org.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A 256-page catalogue with 199 color illustrations published by Getty Publications will be available for purchase on site and online at [SAM Shop](#) (\$60). Also titled *Imogen Cunningham: A Retrospective*, (ISBN: 978-1-60606-675-1), the catalogue is edited by Getty associate curator Paul Martineau, who also contributes an essay.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

This exhibition is organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Presenting Sponsor



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Photo captions: Installation view of *Imogen Cunningham: A Retrospective* at Seattle Art Museum, 2021, photo: Natali Wiseman

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.