



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HIGH MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION OF EVELYN HOFER'S CITY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ATLANTA, Sept. 26, 2022** — Premiering at the High Museum of Art this spring and organized in collaboration with The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, “Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City” is the first major museum exhibition in the United States in over 50 years dedicated to Hofer, a highly innovative photographer whose pioneering work spanned five decades but remained underrecognized in her lifetime. The exhibition focuses on her series of widely distributed photobooks devoted to European and American cities, published throughout the 1960s, and will feature more than 100 vintage prints in both black and white and color from those publications. The works are drawn exclusively from the artist’s estate and from the collections of the High and the Nelson-Atkins. After its presentation at the High (March 24-Aug. 13, 2023), the exhibition will travel to the Nelson-Atkins, where it will be on view Sept. 16, 2023-Feb. 11, 2024.

“The High has one of the nation’s leading photography programs, which features an extraordinary collection of 20th-century documentary photography and significant holdings of Hofer’s work,” said Rand Suffolk, the High’s Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director. “We are delighted for the opportunity to present these photographs together for the first time in our galleries and to highlight Hofer’s important artistic contributions, including as an early adopter of color photography.”

Born in Germany in 1922, Hofer left with her family for Switzerland in 1933 in response to the rise of fascism, settling first in Geneva, where as a teen she studied photography with Hans Finsler, a pioneer of the “new objectivity” movement. After time in Madrid, the family moved to Mexico, where Hofer worked briefly as a professional photographer. In 1946, she arrived in New York, where she worked with art director Alexey Brodovitch to produce photo essays for Harper’s Bazaar. She quickly expanded her practice and became an acclaimed editorial photographer.

Though celebrated for her editorial work, Hofer never received wide acclaim, due in part to her unique style and methods. New York Times art critic Hilton Kramer notably referred to her as “the most famous unknown photographer in America.”

“At a time when spontaneous black and white pictures were the hallmarks of avant-garde photography, Hofer favored cumbersome large-format cameras and embraced color materials,” said Greg Harris, the High’s Donald and Marilyn Keough Family curator of photography and co-

curator of the exhibition. "Subtle and rigorous, her photographs possess a captivating stillness, exactitude and sobriety that ran counter to the dominant aesthetics of the day and the frenetic energy of her fellow street photographers of the post-World War II era, such as Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander. As a result, she never achieved recognition commensurate with the quality and originality of her work."

Hofer ultimately made her greatest impact through the photobooks featured in "Eyes on the City," which include "The Stones of Florence" (1959), "London Perceived" (1962), "New York Proclaimed" (1965), "The Evidence of Washington" (1966), and "Dublin: A Portrait" (1967). Produced in collaboration with the notable writers Mary McCarthy, V.S. Pritchett and William Walton, the books combine landscapes and architectural views with portraiture to convey the unique character and personality of these urban capitals during a period of intense structural, social and economic transformations after World War II. The photographs also reveal Hofer's exquisite sensitivity to the impact of place, environment and situation (including class, race, gender and generation) on the lives of individuals from all walks of life. "Eyes on the City" will include prints from each of her city photobooks as well as select works from "The Presence of Spain" (1964), produced in collaboration with Jan Morris, and an unrealized publication on Paris (1967), along with manuscripts and archival documents.

The exhibition and accompanying catalogue offer new scholarship about Hofer's understudied practice, tracing the early development of her career; the exchanges between her editorial and fine artwork, her mastery of color, her contribution to the history of 20th-century photographic portraiture, the nature of her intense collaborations with writers, and the ways her photographs intersected with emerging discourses and practices around post-war urban planning. In addition to essays by Harris and co-curator April Watson, photography curator at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the catalogue will feature a contribution by UC Berkeley Associate Professor of Geography Brandi Thompson Summers.

The exhibition will be presented in the Lucinda Weil Bunn Photography Galleries on the Lower Level of the High's Wieland Pavilion.

### **Exhibition Organization and Support**

"Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City" is co-organized by the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. This exhibition is made possible by Premier Exhibition Series Sponsor Delta Airlines, Inc.; Premier Exhibition Series Supporters ACT Foundation, Inc., Sarah and Jim Kennedy, Louise Sams and Jerome Grillhot, Harry Norman Realtors and wish foundation; Benefactor Exhibition Series Supporters Robin and Hilton Howell; Ambassador Exhibition Series Supporters The Antinori Foundation, Corporate Environments, The Arthur R. and Ruth D. Lautz Charitable Foundation, and Elizabeth and Chris Willett; and Contributing Exhibition Series Supporters Farideh and Al Azadi, Sandra and Dan Baldwin, Mr. and Mrs. Robin E. Delmer, Marcia and John Donnell, Mrs. Peggy Foreman, Helen C. Griffith, Mrs. Fay S. Howell/The Howell Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Baxter Jones, Joel Knox and Joan Marmo, Dr. Joe B. Massey, Margot and Danny McCaul, The Ron and Lisa Brill Family Charitable Trust, Wade A. Rakes II & Nicholas Miller, The Fred and Rita Richman Fund, USI Insurance Services, and Mrs.

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### **About the High Museum of Art**

Located in the heart of Atlanta, the High Museum of Art connects with audiences from across the Southeast and around the world through its distinguished collection, dynamic schedule of special exhibitions and engaging community-focused programs. Housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High features a collection of more than 18,000 works of art, including an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American fine and decorative arts; major holdings of photography and folk and self-taught work, especially that of artists from the American South; burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, including paintings, sculpture, new media and design; a growing collection of African art, with work dating from prehistory through the present; and significant holdings of European paintings and works on paper. The High is dedicated to reflecting the diversity of its communities and offering a variety of exhibitions and educational programs that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit [www.high.org](http://www.high.org).

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### **DIGITAL IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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