

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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San Diego Museum of Art Presents *Richard Avedon: Portraits of Power*
Year of Modern Art Opens with Acclaimed Photographic Exhibition

San Diego, Calif. — Following the 2008 presidential election season, the [San Diego Museum of Art \(SDMA\)](#) brings *Richard Avedon: Portraits of Power* to San Diego. The exhibition showcases more than 150 political portraits by Richard Avedon, pre-eminent portrait and fashion photographer in the United States. SDMA is the exclusive West Coast venue for this special exhibition.

On view at SDMA Sat., June 6 to Sun., Sept. 6, the exhibition traces Avedon's interest in, and fascination with, politics from the 1950s until his death in 2004. *Richard Avedon: Portraits of Power* contains rarely seen photographs — many of which are drawn from the collection of The Richard Avedon Foundation — and never-been-exhibited or published works.

Richard Avedon was the most important American fashion photographer and portraitist of his time. Starting as a photographer in the Merchant Marine during World War II, Avedon learned the ropes by creating identification portraits. He later photographed for such notable publications as *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue* and *The New Yorker*.

"Throughout the history of art, portraiture has been used to show and honor leaders," explained Derrick R. Cartwright, SDMA's executive director. "Walking through SDMA's galleries, visitors can see images ranging from Van Dyck's portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria of England to the Avedon photographs of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and Barack Obama. Avedon's portraits reveal aspects of these leaders' personalities that one might not have noted before. They evince character and show us vulnerabilities."

Featured in the exhibition is the groundbreaking series, *The Family*. Commissioned by *Rolling Stone* magazine in 1976, this series contains portraits of elected officials, government bureaucrats, lawyers, and lobbyists — all members of the American political, military, media, and corporate elite. Contrary to his normal practice, Avedon allowed his subjects to choose their own poses in this series in order to provide a more naturalistic representation of each model's personality.

"Richard Avedon's name became synonymous with portrait photography in the late 20th century," said Cartwright. "As part of a year-long program during which we are going to celebrate the creative work of that century, there is no better way for us to kick off this thematic emphasis than to pay homage to Avedon's talent. SDMA is honored to have the opportunity to display Avedon's work in one of two U.S. showings."

In addition to the exhibition, SDMA will offer two related programs. *From Art History to Art Making*, a lecture by Arthur Ollman will be held Sat., June 13 at 1 p.m., followed by a pinhole photography workshop. The lecture is free with museum admission. There is a \$5 materials fee for the workshop.

Free with admission, Sun., June 21 is Family Drop-in Day from 1–3 p.m. This program, for families with children 6–12 years old, encourages exploration and learning about self-portraits by surveying *Richard Avedon: Portraits of Power* in a variety of child-friendly activities.

Richard Avedon: Portraits of Power is organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., with the cooperation of The Richard Avedon Foundation, New York, and the Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco. The exhibition is curated by Paul Roth, senior curator of photography and media arts at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The exhibition is accompanied by a 350-page, fully illustrated catalogue published by Steidl in association with the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Julia Marciari-Alexander, deputy director for curatorial affairs at SDMA, is the organizing curator for the presentation of this exhibition in San Diego.

The local presentation of this exhibition is made possible by the generous support of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP. Additional funding is provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, the County of San Diego Community Enhancement Program, and members of the San Diego Museum of Art.

Museum Information:

San Diego Museum of Art is located at 1450 El Prado in Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif. 92101

General Information (619) 232-7931, Group Sales: (619) 696-1915, Web site: www.sdmart.org

Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday, noon – 5 p.m.

Admission Prices: Adult \$10; Senior (65+) and Military with ID \$8; Student \$7; Youth (6–17) \$4. Children 5 and under are free. (Specially priced tickets may be required for certain exhibitions. Please contact the Museum for more information.)

The San Diego Museum of Art provides a rich and diverse cultural experience for more than 400,000 annual visitors. Located in the heart of beautiful Balboa Park, the Museum's nationally renowned collections include Spanish and Italian old masters, South Asian paintings, and 19th- and 20th-century American paintings and sculptures. In addition, the Museum regularly features major exhibitions of art from around the world, as well as an extensive year-round schedule of supporting cultural and educational programs for children and adults, as well as a research library. At SDMA exhibition text is always in English and Spanish.

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