

# HEMPHILL

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**CONTACT:**

Caitlin Berry  
HEMPHILL Fine Arts  
1515 14th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.234.5601  
caitlin@hemphillfinearts.com  
www.hemphillfinearts.com

**Photographs from the Tom Birch Collection  
January 26 - March 2, 2019**

Washington DC — HEMPHILL is pleased to announce the exhibition, *Photographs from the Tom Birch Collection*, opening on Saturday January 26, with a reception from 6-8pm. The exhibition will remain on view through March 2, 2019.

There is something inherently strange about a photograph: its pretense of veracity, the illusion of an unpremeditated subject, and the feeling of an unmediated presence. Herein lies the beauty of the medium and the opportunity for collecting photographs to become an adventure. A collection of photographs can tell us many things. In the best photography collections, each photograph is a knot on a thread leading to ever deeper and more penetrating experiences of beauty. Sometimes it is an elusive beauty captured from the real world. Other times beauty is exposed within something boring, horrible or shocking, revealed by the craft of the photographer and the willingness of the viewer to engage.

The Tom Birch Collection tells us he collected fearlessly, always reaching for the next new beauty. In reviewing personal collections one becomes used to seeing the predictable pantomiming of the reassuring qualities of the museum's canon. One sees collections based on themes that barely recognize the inner dynamic of individual artworks. Some collections reflect only the desire to soothe, never to challenge, when so much more can be experienced. It is clear Tom Birch was spurred onward by a willingness to explore the widest range of what photography had to offer. This manner of collecting nudges the idea of taste away from a fixed set of rules into an evolving narrative of personal discovery. For Tom, each photograph is a moment on a clock spinning backwards through his life, telling him of the places his consciousness occupied before and then after acquiring each picture.

Some collections are broken up among heirs, some rightly go to institutions, and others are sold. In the selling of the Birch collection there is the goal of setting the artworks free to travel into the hearts and minds of other people, expanding their experiences of strange and wonderful beauty. Now, it is time for each of the photographs to become milestones in other collectors' lives.

Photographs from the Tom Birch Collection includes works by:

Ansel Adams	Félix Bonfils	Graciela Iturbide	Ralph Steiner
Merry Alpern	William Dassonville	André Kertész	Steve Szabo
Manuel Álvarez Bravo	Robert Frank	Yevgeny Khaldei	Ruth Thorne-Thomsen
A. Clarke Bedford	Lee Friedlander	Jacques-Henri Lartigue	George Tice
Zeke Berman	André Gelpke	Helen Levitt	Joel-Peter Witkin
Karl Blossfeldt	Jan Groover	Danny Lyon	

HEMPHILL was founded in Washington DC in 1993. The exhibition schedule features modern & contemporary art in all media by artists ranging from emerging to mid-career to modern masters.

**GALLERY HOURS**

Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00am–5:00pm, and by appointment.

*Image: Danny Lyon, Ellis Unit, 1968, Printed c. 1982, gelatin silver print, mounted, signed below image, 7½" x 11"*

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR REPRODUCTION.

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