

Collecting Through the Decades  
Jan 26–May 16, 2026

MoCP  
at Fifty

1976  
2026

Education  
Guide

**MoCP** Museum of  
Contemporary  
Photography



**Above:** Raul Corrales (Cuban, 1925–2006), *Maria and Mario. Dos Fotografos, Dos Epocas, Dos Estados*, 1980. Gift of the family of Esther Parada: Adam Wilson, son; Susan Peters, sister; Margo Davion, sister; Ben Glaser, brother, 2006:296.

**Cover:** Yasuhiro Ishimoto (Japanese American, 1921–2012), *Untitled* from *Chicago, Chicago*, 1958–1961. Gift of Roberta and Jack A. Jaffe, 1981:104.

**This guide serves as a supplement to the exhibition *MoCP at 50: Collecting Through the Decades* and includes information about the works on view, questions for looking and discussion, activities, and suggested readings. You may learn more about educational programs at [mocp.org/collection/education-resources](https://mocp.org/collection/education-resources). To schedule a tour of the exhibition or print viewing with your class, book at [mocp.org/visit/booking-form-school](https://mocp.org/visit/booking-form-school).**

MoCP's 2025–2026 exhibition season is sponsored in part by the Comer Family Foundation, Efroymsen Family Fund, Henry Nias Foundation, Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation, Pritzker Traubert Foundation, the Rowan Foundation, Terra Foundation for American Art, United States Artists, and Venable Foundation.

MoCP acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council and a CityArts grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.



# INTRODUCTION

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The Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago (MoCP) celebrates its 50th anniversary with this exhibition that reflects on five decades of collecting and the evolving role of photography. Since its founding in 1976, MoCP has assembled a collection of more than 18,000 works by over 2,000 artists, encompassing a wide range of aesthetics, technologies, and processes. Each gallery features

one decade of collecting, tracing the museum's transformation from its early focus on post-1959 American photography to a more inclusive and conceptually expansive collection that reflects global perspectives. By reexamining gaps in representation and embracing new forms of image-making, *MoCP at 50* highlights the museum's ongoing commitment to collecting as an educational and evolving process.

## Where to Begin: Reading Wall Labels and Accession Numbers

When you visit a museum, including here at MoCP, you will see a wall label next to the artwork. These labels provide key details that help you learn more about the work you're viewing. Information typically includes the artist's name, their birth year, the artwork's title, the date it was created, the materials or process used, a credit line (meaning who owns the artwork), and oftentimes an accession number.

An accession number is a unique reference number assigned when an artwork formally enters a museum's collection. At MoCP, the first four digits indicate the year the museum acquired the work, while the remaining numbers show the sequence in which it was added to the collection. For example, 1992:56 would mean that this was the 56th artwork acquired in 1992. This numbering system allows museums to manage and document their collections over time, whether artworks are on display, stored, or temporarily loaned to another institution. Accession numbers are especially useful for distinguishing between works that may share similar or identical titles.

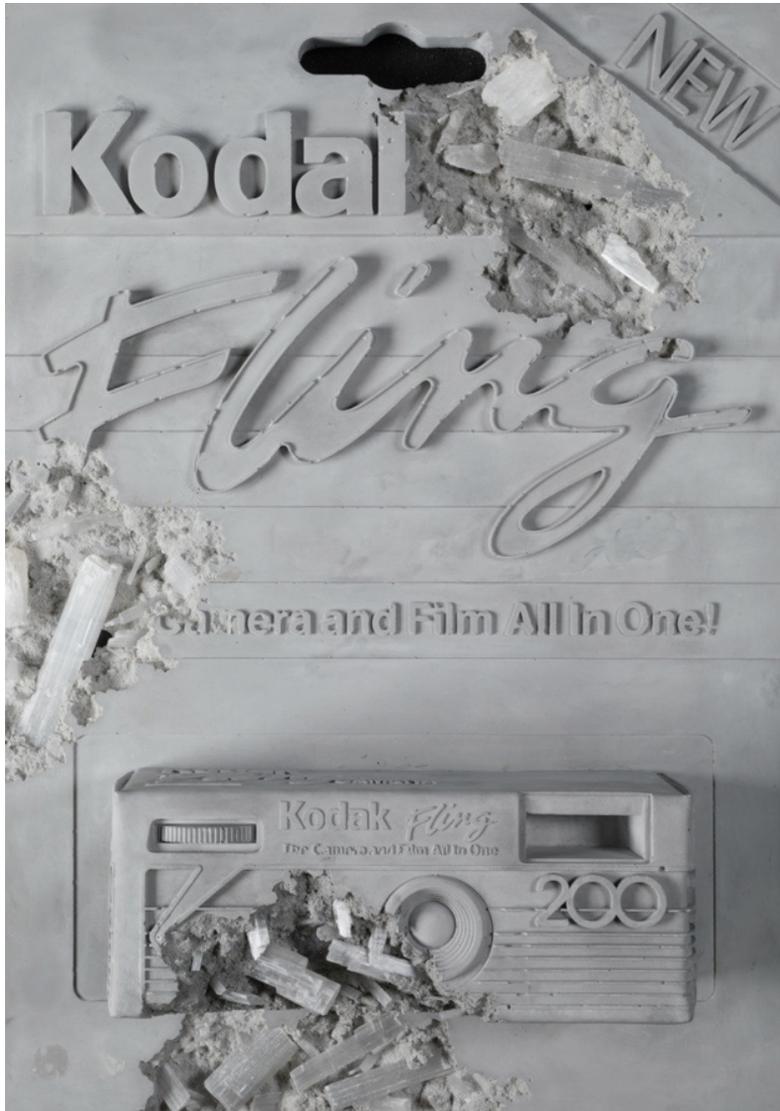
Barbara Crane (Artist's Name)  
American, 1928–2019 (Artist's nationality and life date)

*Eye Zones*, 2001; printed 2007  
Polaroid (Media)  
Gift of the Barbara Crane estate (Credit Line)  
2024:186 (Accession number)

## KEY THEME

# Photography About Photography

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Daniel Arsham (American, b. 1980), *Grey Selenite Eroded Disposable Camera*, 2022. Donated on behalf of the artist and Perrotin Gallery, 2025:27.

This exhibition includes a selection of works that turn the camera back on photography itself, revealing the medium's mechanisms and materials. These self-referential images often include visible cameras, tripods, photographers, or digital printing guidelines within the frame, inviting viewers to consider not only what is being photographed but also how and by whom. By exposing the tools and processes, these works highlight photography's layered relationship to truth and authorship.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

# *The End of Photography* by Judy Fiskin

(American, b. 1945)

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*The End of Photography* (2006) is a Super-8 film mourning the decline of popularity of black and white analog photography. The film shows a sequence of Los Angeles homes and yards paired with a voiceover of a woman asking, “What was lost?” The voice goes on to inventory the darkroom equipment that will no longer be used with the rise of digital media: “no more film, no more canisters... no more enlarger, no more timer, no more safelight,” and finally ending with, “no more photography.”

Though comprised of still shots, the shakiness of the frames makes it clear that the film was made with a handheld camera, conjuring Super-8’s roots in amateur filming. The resulting film is unabashedly nostalgic but not without irony, since the film is screened and distributed on DVD.



Judy Fiskin (American, b. 1945), *The End of Photography* (still), 2006. Museum purchase, 2007:201.



### **Deeper Reading: Super-8 Cameras and Film**

Like black and white photography, Super-8 was an accessible medium during the mid-twentieth century that could be used for home movies or taken up as a hobby. Fiskin’s film features homes and apartments, where residents may have used Super-8 to document their family events. In keeping with the technical limitations of the medium, the film’s length of two-and-a-half minutes corresponds to the length of a Super-8 reel shot at the industry standard of twenty-four frames per second.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

# *Ifugao Belle* by Jason Reblando

(Filipino American, b. 1973)

In his project *This is Captured Paper* (formerly titled *Field Notes*), Jason Reblando creates digital collages using archival imagery produced by American colonizers in the Philippines during their occupation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By including technical image-making tools such as color strips and rulers, he questions the role of the medium of photography in codifying colonial power. Reblando states: “By physically cutting, pasting, and rearranging various elements of images upon images, I aim to deconstruct and critique the colonial gaze, while attempting to reclaim the photographic narrative.”

### Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Consider the quote by the artist above about deconstructing the colonial gaze through the process of collage. Collage has traditionally been used by activists as a form of creating new and imagined forms from existing materials. Can you think of examples of collages that use the medium as a form of activism? What visual elements in Reblando’s piece stand out to you most and why?
- The artist elaborates on this point about cutting up photographs further by stating: “I’m trying to disrupt this colonial gaze, whether it be cut patterns or shielding of them—just covering them up and trying to confuse the viewer and reclaim that photographic narrative. I’m not necessarily saying I’m rewriting history, but I think there is a way to engage with these images rather than just accepting them for fact.” What does it mean to consider images as factual evidence? Do you think photographs can be truthful documents?



Jason Reblando (Filipino American, b. 1973), *Ifugao Belle* from *This is Captured Paper*, 2022. Museum purchase, 2023:23.

## KEY THEME

# Photography About Collecting Photography

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Beyond featuring works about photography itself, this exhibition also highlights works that examine how photography is shaped by the contexts in which it is collected and displayed and how the meaning of photographs can shift depending on how and where they are encountered. These works, among others, invite viewers to reflect on how photographic collections influence the ways we remember, organize, and share our lived experiences.



Matthew Finley (American, b. 1972), *Dormitory dance* from *An Impossibly Normal Life*, 2024. Museum purchase, 2024:6.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

# *Suitcase Museum* by Dayanita Singh

(Indian, b. 1961)

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Dayanita Singh explores how books, images, and museums shape the circulation and evolution of the archive. Her work is often interactive, inviting viewers and institutions to engage with it as an endlessly adaptable narrative. *Suitcase Museum* (2015) comprises 44 framed book covers housed in two suitcases that are presented as part of the installation. Singh refers to these covers as “book-objects,” originating from her *Museum of Chance* project, in which she collaborated with publisher Gerhard Steidl to pair photographs from her archive at random on the front and back of book covers.

For *Suitcase Museum*, these “book-objects” are placed in wooden structures, allowing them to be displayed on walls as art objects, rearranged and re-sequenced to both create and disrupt patterns, connections, and stories. “To me, a photograph is something you touch and you move and it warps and it gets dented,” Singh says. “It’s alive.”



Dayanita Singh (Indian, b. 1961), *Suitcase Museum*, 2015. Museum purchase with funds provided by The David C. and Sarajeana Ruttenberg Impact Fund for Photography; Courtesy of Golden Square, London, 2021:237.1-46.b.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

# Album No. 198 by Max Dean

(British, b. 1949)

In his 2012 project *Albums*, Max Dean collected about 600 discarded family photo albums over a decade and created a traveling installation where visitors could adopt the albums. By redistributing these personal yet anonymous collections of memories, *Albums* invites viewers to reflect on the shifting value of photographic archives and how personal histories change meaning when separated from their original context.



Max Dean (British, b. 1949), *Album No. 198* from *Albums*, 2012. Donated on behalf of the artist, 2012:12.

### Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Both Dayanita Singh and Max Dean play with the ways we engage with photography collections, privileging notions of access and interactivity over strict archival preservation and safekeeping. Think about your own collection of photographs. Do they exist as physical objects, digital files, or both?
- Where does your collection live? Can anyone else access it and if so, how? In a perfect situation, how would your personal collection of photographs be preserved for the future? Is it important for people in the future to see the photographs you are creating and preserving?

## KEY THEME

# Never Before Exhibited Works in the MoCP Collection

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MoCP at 50 presents many works on view in an exhibition for the first time in MoCP history, offering visitors a fresh look at the depth and diversity of the museum's collection. While MoCP is home to iconic and widely recognized works that have shaped the history of photography, this exhibition emphasizes the equal importance of artists whose contributions have been historically overlooked or overshadowed by the canon. By bringing these lesser seen works into dialogue with celebrated pieces, the exhibition highlights the museum's ongoing effort to broaden representation and reconsider how photographic histories are written.



Ilse Bing (German, 1899–1998),  
*Spider Web*, 1951. Gift of Peter Chatzky,  
2012:155.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

# Two Glass Cubes Striations by Carlotta Corpron

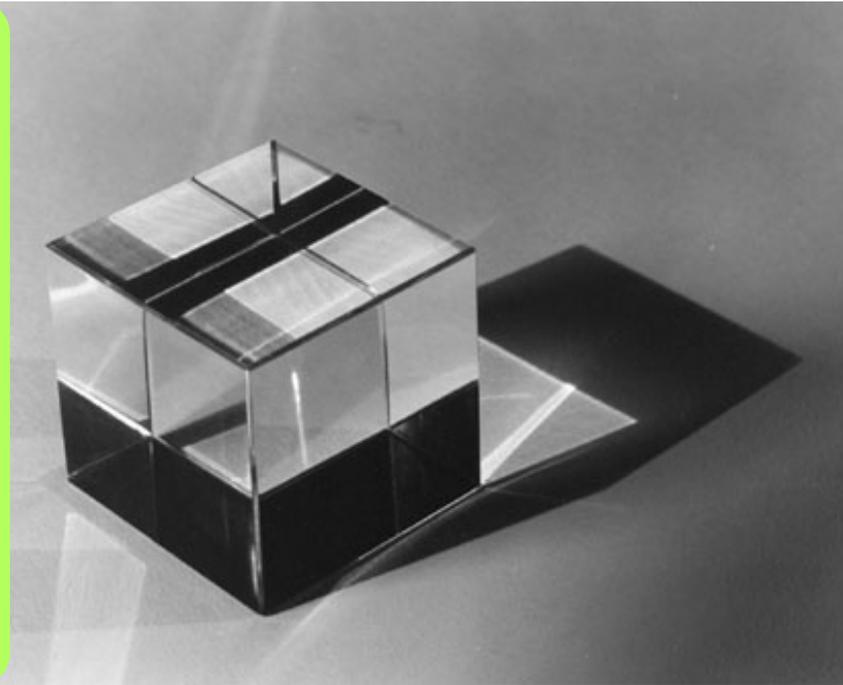
(American, 1901–1988)

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During the 1930s and 1940s, Carlotta Corpron investigated the expressive potential of light in six successive series of photographs. Initially she experimented with solarization techniques and used the camera to record moving lights, making what she called “light drawings.” In the mid-1940s, she began to concentrate on studies of light in a controlled studio setting. The selections of Corpron’s work held in MoCP’s collection are primarily from her *Light Patterns* and *Space Compositions* series, made between 1944 and 1947. To create many of the works in the *Light Patterns* series, she photographed the modulated play of light on paper forms suspended inside of a perforated box. In other images, she photographed light as it passed through clusters of glass cubes. Corpron continued this exploration of light in relation to three-dimensional forms in the *Space Compositions* series, in which she photographed still lifes accompanied by reflective surfaces which enhance the illusion of space.

### Questions for Reflection:

- Corpron’s techniques align closely with The New Bauhaus school’s approach to experimental photography. An extension of the original Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany, this school was founded in Chicago in 1937 and led by László Moholy-Nagy. Corpron met Moholy-Nagy when he came to Denton, Texas in 1942 to lead a light workshop, where she was an instructor at the Texas State College for Women (now Texas Woman’s University). How does celebrating Corpron’s work, alongside that of other under-recognized photographers, challenge notions about whose contributions to photography are remembered and prioritized?



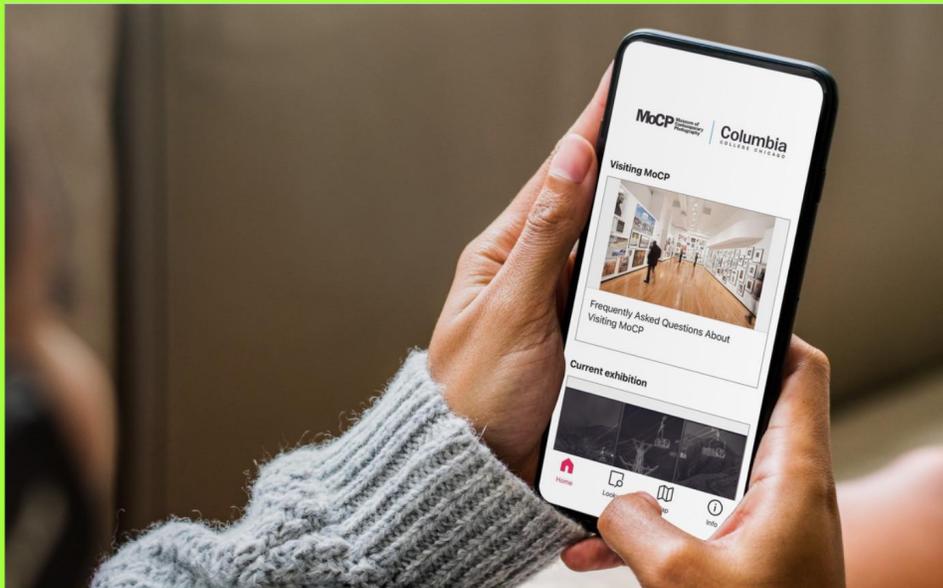
Carlotta Corpron (American, 1901–1988), *Two Glass Cubes Striations* from *Light Patterns* and *Space Compositions*, 1945. Gift of Sonia and Theodore Bloch, 1993:25.

DEEPER READING

# Bloomberg Connects

Learn more about selected photographers in the exhibition through the Museum of Contemporary Photography's guide on Bloomberg Connects. The guide features expanded artist biographies and curatorial insight that provide deeper historical and conceptual context. Visitors may also access exclusive audio reflections from MoCP staff and student workers offering multiple perspectives on selected works in the exhibition.

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# ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS GUIDE

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## **VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS**

**VA:Re7.2.K-12** Perceive and analyze artistic work. Visual imagery influences understanding of, and responses to, the world.

**VA:Re8.K-12** Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work. People gain insights into meanings of artworks by engaging in the process of art criticism.

**VA:Re9.K-12** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. People evaluate art based on various criteria.

**VA:Cn11.K-12** Relate artistic ideas and works with social, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.

## **MEDIA ARTS STANDARDS**

**MA:Re7.1.PK-12** Anchor Standard 7 Perceive and analyze artistic work. Media artworks can be appreciated and interpreted through analyzing their components.

**MA:Re8.1.PK-12** Anchor Standard 8 Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work. Interpretation and appreciation require engagement with the content, form, and context of media artworks.

**MA:Re9.1.PK-12** Anchor Standard 9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Skillful evaluation and critique are critical components of experiencing, appreciating, and producing media artworks.

## **SOCIAL SCIENCES STANDARDS**

**SS.H.8.9-12** Analyze key historical events and contributions of individuals through a variety of perspectives, including those of historically under- represented groups.

**MoCP** Museum of  
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Photography

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Simon Menner (German, b. 1978), *Spies Photograph Spies* from *Images from the Secret Stasi Archive*, 2011-2012. Gift of the artist, 2014:55.