



## THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

**THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA), PRESENTS  
*REAL WORLDS: BRASSAÏ, ARBUS, GOLDIN***

**March 4–September 3, 2018  
MOCA Grand Avenue**



**LOS ANGELES**—The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), presents *Real Worlds: Brassai, Arbus, Goldin*, an exhibition that brings together the works of three of the 20th century’s most influential photographers of modern life. Drawn largely from MOCA’s extraordinary collection of photography, the exhibition provides a remarkable opportunity to explore the ways in which Brassai (Gyula Halász) (b. 1899, Brassó, Hungary (now Romania); d. 1984, Èze, France), Diane Arbus (b.1923, New York; d. 1971, New York) and Nan Goldin (b. 1953, Washington, D.C.) use the camera to reflect and transform the world around them. *Real Worlds* features an exceptional trove of approximately one hundred works by the three artists, including Brassai’s unforgettable images of the nocturnal denizens of Paris, Arbus’s most memorable and unsettling portraits, and Goldin’s searingly poignant documentation of herself and her community. The exhibition is structured around MOCA’s nearly comprehensive collection of photographs that appear in three legendary photobooks: Brassai’s *The Secret Paris of the 30’s* (1976), the posthumous *Diane Arbus: An Aperture Monograph* (1972), and Goldin’s *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1986).

In the 1930s, the photographer known as Brassai photographed what went on “behind the facades” of Paris’s illustrious nightlife. Forty years later, he published the images in his influential book *The Secret Paris of the 30’s*; MOCA’s collection includes prints of nearly every photograph in Brassai’s volume. With these photographs, Brassai seductively documented the nocturnal city, from its exuberant nightclubs to its covert brothels, and preserved a demimonde that, with the coming war, was on the verge of disappearing.

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Also featured is a selection from the museum's complete collection of photographs included in *Diane Arbus: An Aperture Monograph*. Taken in the 1960s and early 1970s, these indelible photographs by Arbus capture a diverse range of individuals—from nudists to suburban families to people pushing the limits of gender—in moments that are at once euphoric and banal. Arbus redefined the boundaries of a photographic encounter, revealing the vulnerability of subjects positioned on both sides of the camera lens.

The most recent series of work included in the exhibition is *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, Goldin's raw and intimate color photographs documenting the social lives of the artist and a bohemian cast of characters during the 1970s and 1980s in Boston, New York, and Berlin. MOCA's collection contains the full set of 126 photographs published in the 1986 book adaptation of the original 35mm-slide installation, which portrays friends and lovers in cheap hotels, dive bars, and transient spaces across the globe as well as within the charged domestic setting of the artist's New York City apartment. For Goldin, who describes the camera as an extension of her hand and this collection of images as a public diary, photography is not only a form of commemoration but also a means for confronting the deep ambivalence of desire.

In addition to the photographs, the exhibition includes a digital presentation of Goldin's original 35mm-slide installation *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1983-2008), allowing viewers to experience the artist's photographs as both static and moving images. Spanning more than sixty years, the bodies of work in this exhibition together trace a dynamic history of how the representation of identity and the category of "social documentary" were challenged and newly conceived in the 20th century, and how photobooks have contributed to this history. *Real Worlds: Brassai, Arbus, Goldin* provides an extraordinary opportunity to explore nearly a century of enduring and influential photographs, works which continue to resonate with intimacy and immediacy in today's image-filled world.

The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color publication featuring conversations between MOCA Assistant Curator Lanka Tattersall and three of today's most magnificent thinkers: writer and critic Hilton Als, writer Maggie Nelson, and artist A. L. Steiner. Als, Nelson, and Steiner lend their critical voices to the simultaneously elegant, brutal, and tender works of Brassai, Arbus, and Goldin.

*Real Worlds: Brassai, Arbus, Goldin* is organized by Lanka Tattersall, Assistant Curator, with Rebecca Matalon, Curatorial Associate, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Exhibitions at MOCA are supported by the MOCA Fund for Exhibitions with lead annual support provided by Sydney Holland, founder of the Sydney D. Holland Foundation. Generous funding is also provided by Judith and Alexander Angerman, Delta Air Lines, and Nathalie Marciano and Julie Miyoshi.

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Image credit: Nan Goldin, *Picnic on the Esplanade, Boston*, 1973, cibachrome print, 11 x 14 in. (27.9 x 35.6 cm), courtesy of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The Nimoy Family Foundation

## **RELATED PROGRAMS**

### **MEMBERS' OPENING: *REAL WORLDS: BRASSAÏ, ARBUS, GOLDIN***

Saturday, March 3, 7–9pm

MOCA Grand Avenue

INFO 213/621-1794 or [membership@moca.org](mailto:membership@moca.org)

FREE for MOCA members; no reservations necessary

Please check [moca.org](http://moca.org) for updates on related programs.

### **THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA)**

**About MOCA:** Founded in 1979, MOCA's vision is to be the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth with three Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; a world-class permanent collection of more than 7,000 objects, international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking

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monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

**Hours:** MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue in Downtown Los Angeles) is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11am to 6pm; Thursday from 11am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm; and closed on Tuesday. The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (located at 152 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012) has the same hours as MOCA Grand Avenue during exhibitions. Please call ahead or go to [moca.org](http://moca.org) for the exhibition schedule for The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA. MOCA Pacific Design Center (located at 8687 Melrose Avenue, West Hollywood, CA 90069) is open Tuesday through Friday from 11am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm; and closed on Monday. The MOCA Store at MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue) is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 10:30am to 5:30pm; Thursday from 10:30am to 8:30pm; and Saturday and Sunday from 10:30am to 6:30pm.

**Museum Admission:** General admission is free for all MOCA members. General admission is also free for everyone at MOCA Grand Avenue and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm, courtesy of Wells Fargo. General admission is always free at MOCA Pacific Design Center. General admission at MOCA Grand Avenue and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA is \$15 for adults; \$8 for students with I.D.; \$10 for seniors (65+); and free for children under 12 and jurors with I.D.

**More Information:** For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213/626-6222 or access MOCA online at [moca.org](http://moca.org).

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#### MEDIA CONTACTS

Sarah Stifler  
Chief Communications Officer  
[sstifler@moca.org](mailto:sstifler@moca.org)  
213/633-5363

Eva Seta  
Communications Manager  
[eseta@moca.org](mailto:eseta@moca.org)  
213/633-5322