

MEDIA RELEASE

25 July 2016

Exhibition has wider angle on influential photographer's work

A groundbreaking show of one of America's most influential twentieth-century photographers will go on display at Victoria University of Wellington's Adam Art Gallery this week.

It will be the first presentation of the work of Walker Evans in New Zealand and will be accompanied by works from three contemporary artists that expand on Evans and his photographic legacy.

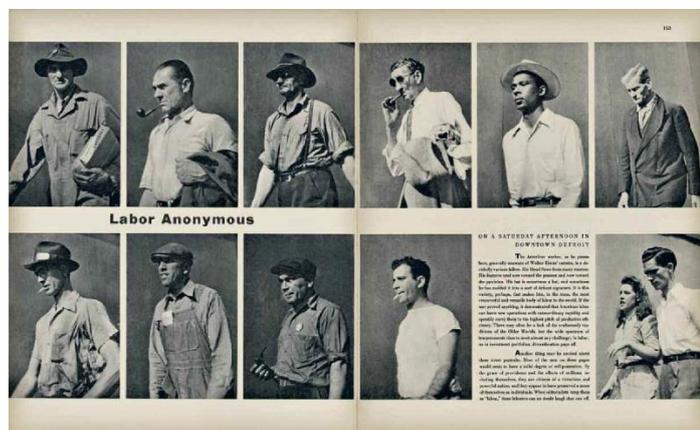
[Walker Evans: The Magazine Work](#) is conceived by acclaimed British curator and writer David Company and focuses on Evans' work for magazines, which he produced throughout his 50-year career until his death in 1975.

London-based Company will be in Wellington for the opening of the show and is giving public talks this week at City Gallery Wellington, the Adam Art Gallery and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/ Len Lye Centre in New Plymouth.

Evans is celebrated for his documentary photographs that captured people, places and things through a turbulent period of modern American history. While he was awarded the first exhibition devoted to the work of a single photographer at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1938, he was as committed to his work for magazines. In that work, he not only published his photographs but also chose his subjects, wrote the copy and designed the spreads.

Company has focused on this magazine work in a groundbreaking show exploring the way the photographer created photo-essays in dialogue with text on the page.

According to Company: "Evans never used the pages simply to showcase his talents as an image-maker. He was truly committed to fashioning a counter-commentary on America and its values but from within its mainstream magazine culture."



Walker Evans' 'Labor Anonymous' page spread in *Fortune* magazine, November, 1946. Image: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Adam Art Gallery curator Stephen Cleland says the magazines and enlarged reproductions of page spreads demonstrate the degree the famed photographer was invested in print matter.

“Campany’s exhibition revisits Evans’ commercial work that until now has been overlooked. It explores ideas around the interplay of word and image, the importance of context and how design layout can itself tell a story.”

To accompany the exhibition, the Gallery has selected the work of three contemporary artists who have responded in some way to Evans or the printed page.

Christina Barton, Adam Art Gallery director, is excited that the leading American artist, Sherrie Levine will be presenting a new body of work, ‘African Masks after Walker Evans’, updating her famous 1981 series ‘After Walker Evans’.

“Sherrie Levine is credited with transforming our understanding of photography as an expressive art form, and it is a great honour to be the first gallery in New Zealand to be presenting her work.”

The Gallery also presents a specially-designed installation by New Zealand-born, Melbourne-based artist Patrick Pound titled *Documentary Intersect*. Ms Barton says he is an inveterate collector of images.

“He has a deep knowledge of the history of photography, in particular the work of Evans, and a lively way of putting images together that create unexpected connections. His project playfully explores the archival approach Evans took in his own photography.”

Wellington-based artist and designer Sonya Lacey’s *Newspaper for Vignelli* is the third project. Her moving-image work, which is part of the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection, takes famed modernist designer Massimo Vignelli as its subject, filming an imagined reconstruction of his *European Journal* as if it was just another remnant of a world awash with information.

What: *Walker Evans: The Magazine Work*
Sherrie Levine: African Masks After Walker Evans
Patrick Pound: Documentary Intersect
Sonya Lacey: Newspaper for Vignelli

When: Opening night, 6pm, Friday 29 July

Exhibition dates: 29 July-18 September

Where: Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University of Wellington, Gate 3, Kelburn Parade, Wellington

Cost: Free

For more information contact Stephen Cleland on 04-463 5229 or stephen.cleland@vuw.ac.nz

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