



Garry Winogrand
Centennial Ball
Metropolitan Museum, 1969
Collection of Vancouver
Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund

Roy Arden
Soil Inspector,
Richmond, B.C., 1950
Collection of Vancouver
Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund



REAL PICTURES: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE COLLECTION OF CLAUDIA BECK AND ANDREW GRUFT

January 29 to
May 29, 2005

Over the past three decades, Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft have played an important role within the Vancouver art community.



Margaret Bourke-White
The New Tractor
Tractorshow, USSR, 1930
Promised gift of Claudia Beck
and Andrew Gruft
and Galerie Jahnke & Schotte,
Cologne and Munich

They have functioned as patrons, writers, occasional curators, critics, boosters and proprietors of Nova Gallery, an influential commercial gallery specializing in photography that, between 1976 and 1982, was a nexus for artists, curators and collectors. Gruft came to Vancouver from South Africa during the 1960s and Beck arrived from the United States in 1970. After meeting at the University of British Columbia, where they both taught, Beck and Gruft developed a shared passion for photographic imagery. They made their first purchase, a work by Vancouver-based photographer Robert Minden, in 1974. Since that time they have been unwavering in their dedication; over the ensuing thirty years they assembled a collection of historical and contemporary photography that is outstanding in its breadth and quality.

Covering the period from the medium's invention in the mid-19th century up to the present, the Beck/Gruft collection includes iconic images by artists whose importance in the history of photography has been widely acknowledged: William Henry Fox Talbot, Julia Margaret Cameron, Nadar, August Sander, Margaret Bourke-White, Ansel Adams, Aaron Siskind and Robert Frank. The collection also includes work by lesser-known figures—Ernest Brown, Frederick Dally and William Notman, for example, commercial photographers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who worked extensively in the Canadian West. In addition, the collection encompasses significant photographs by contemporary artists based in Vancouver, the USA and Europe, including Roy Arden, Marian Penner Bancroft, Larry Clark, Judy Dater, Stan Douglas, Thomas Ruff, Stephen Waddell and Garry Winogrand. Real Pictures presents a selection of approximately 350 photographs that provide an overview of this extraordinary collection. The exhibition offers a unique opportunity to consider different approaches to the medium, the way in which meanings become attached to photographic images and the commitment on the part of Beck and Gruft that has brought this vital collection of photographs together.